

2/9/05-----Ephraim Catz

אפרים אלי בן יעקב צבי וחנה קץ

Birth Day March 7, 1879

Birth Place: Falticeni Romania

State Archives in Suceava - Register for births. Falticeni No. 65

1879 March 7, 11 a.m, Birth certificate of Froim Ilie, Jewish, male, born yesterday in Falticeni, in the house from Strada Mare Str. 547 son of Iancu Hersh Catz, 32 years old, merchant, and Hana, 25, without profession, residents in Falticeni. Declaration made by the father. Witnesses: Avram sin Shaia Elli, 40; Maier sin Hershcu, 52, both without profession, residents in Falticeni, who, signed together with us Costachi Balomir, vice-mayor and Registrar,

Spouse: Sabinia Rosenfeld

Marriage Date: Before 1907

Marriage Place: Bucharest Romania

Children: Josefina, Melanie, Rosi, Moshe Mendel (MS) (Mishu),
Avraham, Madie

Other Spouse: Cecil Rosenthal?

Death: 1956

Burial: Haifa Central Cemetery

Occupation: Farmer, Teacher

Education: University of Bucharest

Religion: Jewish

According to Rachel Reisenberg, an attempt was made to marry him off to Leah Blum, Miriam Catz Blum's daughter. He was the son of Yaakov Tzvi Catz, later Cohn, Miriam's sister. It was not unusual for first cousins to marry, as in the case of Moshe Meirovici and Anutza, Leah and Adele's children respectively. Instead he married Sabinia. Leah Blum was known to comment in later years that she would have gotten to Israel much earlier had she been married to him.

Ephraim's parents, Yaakov Tzvi and Hona, according to family tradition came from Russia (Bukovina) to Bucharest around 1850. Odds are that Yaakov Tzvi's father or perhaps it was Hona's fathers name was also Ephraim, and that this Ephraim's death took place prior to 1877, since in the year of 1879 two first born sons were born, one to Yaakov Tzvi &

Hona, and one to Yaakov Tzvi's sister, Miriam (Cohen) and her husband Yekutiel Zalman Blum (Bloom) Jack H Blooms grandfather, and both boys were named Ephraim.

From letter of Dr. Misu Solomon--Efraim Catz was married to Sabinia, born Rosenfeld, who was my mother's older sister. As you correctly wrote in your study (The Bloom Genealogical Tree) they had six children, four daughters and two sons. As I remember, his father's name was Yaakov-Hersh Catz (later Cohn). He had other three children, two daughters, Rosa and Florette (Frima) who lived in Bucharest (Romania) from where they emigrated to Israel in the mid 1950's and a son Marcu who emigrated as a youngster to France (Cherbourg, France MS (Caen-Calvados)).

Ephraim Catz with Sabinia and their six children emigrated to Palestine in 1924. They left Romania in the winter of 1924 (Nov-Dec) He was an outstanding man, very intelligent and exceptionally cultivated (perfect knowledge of at least six languages). I met him for the last time in Bucharest in 1938. When I went with my wife to visit Israel in 1974 neither he nor my aunt Sabinia were alive. A younger brother of mine, Virgil, who emigrated to Palestine in 1947 and who fought in the War for the Independence of Israel, became very close to our uncle Ephraim and our aunt Sabinia, as well as to our cousins who were living that time in Israel....

From letter Gil Press re; groundbreaking photograph. "The groundbreaking picture is from December 1924. This is the groundbreaking of the part of Haifa that until this day is called "Ahusa" (estate in Hebrew), although no one knows (or care to know) why. Ephraim bought with his own money a large parcel of land on top of Mount Carmel, divided it into small lots, and sold them at no profit (or practically gave them away?) to Rumanian Jews, thus luring them to come and settle in Haifa. (*In Misu Solomon note upon seeing this material, Solomon offers that He, (Catz) was very generous but not irrational!* He called the area "Herbert Samuel's Estate" after the first high commissioner to Palestine. Sir Herbert and Mrs. Samuel are in the picture you sent me. I enclose a xerox copy of a xerox copy of a larger photo my father sent me recently, where he also indicated who's who in the picture.
-Gil Press

JHB-Ephraim and Sabinia Catz were the first settlers in what is today Kiryat Bialik. /Sabinia. Their home which I slept in back in 1953 on a visit is currently a community center. Their home was the rebuilt one, when the Arabs came during the "disturbances" of 1929 and destroyed much of Sabinia farm, including trees and the house. Ephraim and Sabinia were saved by dint of the fact that they were staying "in town"(Haifa) at the time. from MS (always on Shabbat) From tape of Madie (Every other Shabbat).

Gil Press told that correct signing of Catz as Catz and not Katz was crucial in resolving issue of fraud on Ahuza. Since other person signed it with Katz. According to Gil Press, a partner of Ephraim tried to swindle him in 1929, supposedly Ephraim was so upset he had a stroke and was in bed for a year. --which according to Gil is not so. Partner tried to swindle him-- the proof that he was cheating was that he signed the name Catz with a K, Katz

Misu Solomon 7/2/95. The legend goes that Ephraim's father was a rich man went to the States, lost came back as shochet, he was known as Zeyda Rosa by his grandchildren. "(Rosa" stemmed from his daughters name who was better known by the children), because his wife was so prominent.

Catz gave 10% of profits to charity. Misu Solomon told a story of how a horse and wagon driver had come down in the world and Catz got him to come the next morning and purchased a horse and wagon, and told him-- now go to work. Misu Solomon's father, Alexander was according to Misu, Catz's best friend. Alexander Solomon, Misu's father owned a pharmacy, and was apparently well to do. Jews got Romanian citizenship after 1919 Misu born citizen.

Ephraim Catz a shochet's son on Yom Kippur," Children, lets go have lunch!" Sabinia; Catz; What are you doing? it's Yom Kippur! He would go eat lunch- didn't care about religion. Atheistic. But a Zionist. Misu's father was his best friend. After 1929 offered help. Catz said that for him it was a choice only of Palestine or the sea. Had picture of A.C. Cuza a leading anti-Semite. Said he was the biggest Zionist in the world. He screams all day long; "the Jews to Palestine, - what else do we want.

From meeting with Aharon Press, April 1995

[About Ephraim Catz's childhood]

JHB: He didn't want to put on tephilin?

AP: Exactly, and he went to Bucharest and studied English and then became a professor of English in Bucharest. And he left his home in Bucharest very early and became a professor of English. He thinks that he taught the Romanian Queen English. Left all this to go to Eretz Yisrael. His wife who had a very good business in hat making (JHB: Sabinia) a very famous hat maker in Bucharest. She apparently didn't want to go with Ephraim- to live in the desert.

N.B. from Misu Solomon; "He (Catz) was the fist Jewish teacher at a Romanian high school in Bucharest. To claim that Catz taught the Queen, Misu replies; Ridiculous! The first Queen of Romania was Queen Elisabeth. (The literary pseudonym Carmen Sylva) the wife of the first King of Romania. She died at an old age in 1916. She was German born. The second one, Queen Mary (Maria) born in Edinburgh was Queen Victoria's grandniece. I guess they didn't have to take English lessons from Catz."

They came here to Haifa and he bought a plot of land in Ahuza (today a very prominent part of Haifa). There was some monkey business between him and.... He bought this plot of land and went back to Bucharest and made propaganda for Jews to buy plots of land in Ahuza. And that was in 1922 when Madie was born. Then a few years later, for some reason he lost the possibility to buy the land - some other Romanians did it so they/that did him in and on his doorstep was written "entrance to Romanian Jews is forbidden." meaning him and one day in HaAretz, the paper HaAretz somebody wrote that some man bought Ahuza so I wrote back according to Madie's wish, to show that Catz and his wife and the high commissioner and the maps of the land. That was the foundation of Ahuza.

JHB: What can you tell me about Lollie?

AP; He studied marine engineering in France- in L'Havre, I'm not so sure, or one of those cities where there is shipping. Perhaps Paris but I'm not

so sure. But then again he was in France as a Marine Engineer by Zim who built ships in the harbor. He was supervising the building of the ships and he lived in Paris for some time. He was employed by Zim He was the chief officer. There was when we were in Paris and that was in 1950/1960. He came to visit us in the hotel in 1961. It was a hotel that had plenty of mirrors around.

JHB: Was he the naval attaché in Paris?

AP: No. (*Misu Solomon thinks he was.*)

He was active in the Haganah here, one of those people who look like Arabs and stay in the Shuk and listen to what is going on. It was still new at the time but now today it's organized. It started with British Army. Everything was hush hush... *Misu Solomon-"In one word he was in the intelligence."*

JHB: Anything you can tell me about Josephina?

AP: She was married to Yehezkel JJ Zohar. He is in LaRouse-- a chapter mentions him as one of the architects in Palestine. He died 40 years ago. ? 1943. 40 years before his wife died. 1943 -1950

JHB-I have 1961, is that OK? *According to Misu Solomon Josephine died in 1992 or 1993 in Haifa. JJ Zohar and Josephina attended our wedding (Solomon's) in Bucharest.*

AP He was born in the Yugoslavia the part that is Hungarian. On the border place that belonged to Hungary and then became Yugoslavia. When, I don't know.

JHB: [Misu] Even with the handicap he married. --Tony but no children.

AP: That's right. He was fine mentally but physically with his hands. He worked here and there but nothing. *Misu Solomon note; Not true! They emigrated to Canada, Montreal where we visited them twice. (first time in 1968) Both of them died around 1990, Tony first.*

JHB: Michael Frank in Switzerland.

AP: Yes Michael Frank in Switzerland, in Basle *Misu Solomon note; Where he earned a Doctoral Degree in Economics. He was working with Hoffman LaRoche Inc. where he held a managerial position. I met him in Basel in 1964.*

JHB: I wrote to him because of you- he answered.

AP: What happened to his sister Rina?

JHB: Rina is in Washington.

AP: She was in tourist office. ___ came up and said I am looking for Dr. Press, - he's my uncle the one who speaks very quickly and was getting oranges every winter.

JHB: So how old is Rina. I have her birth date but not the year. I have May 16 but I don't have a year.

JHB: Miriam Press was one of the first Hebrew writers and wrote for a paper called Olam Katan.

Received a letter from Aharon Press dated 7/20/95

Dear Jack;

At long last I send you the picture of the formation of Ahuza by Mr. Catz. I think I have told you the story but I will repeat it again. Mr. Catz before settling in Sabinia has had the idea of building a residential quarter on Mount Carmel and inviting particularly Romanian Jews to buy plots and later build houses and as a result to encourage them to come and settle in Palestine.

A group of these settlers deposed Mr. Catz (the details are not clear to me) then Mr. Catz settled in Sabinia and on his door step for sometime there was a warning notice.

The entrance to Romanian Jews is forbidden."--interesting story is it not?

The Picture is the best proof that Ephraim Catz has founded this residential area in the wilderness of Mount Carmel, and the High Commissioner for Palestine has honored the occasion by his presence because the name is Ahusat HaLord (Herbert) Samuel for short Ahusa.

this picture is a proof against that group of people that deposed Mr. Catz by tricky means and claim that they have founded Ahuza.

I hope Ingrid is well and the same you.

Yours Aaron

According to Misu Solomon (telephone conversation 8/9/95) the name of the person who did the dirty things to prevent Ephraim Catz from realizing his Ahuza dream was Mr. Marcus. Misu said that his parents bought a plot there. He does not know what happened to it.

In a personal interview Misu Solomon noted that before he became a Zionist, Catz went by the name Friedrich.

From paper by Eleanne Hattis (Ephraim Catz's great granddaughter written in 1983

"My great-grandfather, Ephraim Catz,.. moving from Rumania in 1924...founded the agricultural settlement and community of Sabinia in Haifa Bay.

The founding of Sabinia was a turning point in Catz's personal life... Before Catz arrived in Haifa Bay, the area consisted of drifting sands and swamps. After Catz built his settlement, it became the scene of Arab-Jewish tensions and eventually, a prosperous suburb of the city of Haifa.

Ephraim Catz became a Zionist because he experienced anti-Semitism from one of his Rumanian pupils and because he was influenced by Herzl.

Ephraim Catz, my mother's maternal grandfather, was born in 1878 (JHB note; March 7,1879-deduced from letter to JHB of 3/21/54 in which he describes his 75th birthday.) in Falticeni, (JHB note Falticeni) Rumania the son of the local rabbi. (JHB editors note. Yaakov Hirsch after whom I am named was a shochet). Following his immigration to Palestine, in 1924, his surname, originally Cohen, was changed to Catz. In 1892, when Catz was fourteen, he left his father's home and moved in with his uncle in Bucharest, where he was to get an education. In spite of the popularity and influence of the French and German languages in Rumania, the English language fascinated him, and he set out to study it seriously on his own. Previously, at his father's house, he had studied and mastered the rules of English grammar by candlelight at night. As a result of becoming fluent in English, he later became an English professor, a lecturer at the University of Bucharest, and a teacher at Hebrew schools. In 1905, Catz fell in love with one of his new students, his wife-to-be, Sabinia. He was

so excited when he proposed to her and she agreed, that he dipped his pen into his coffee instead of his inkpot.

In 1918, when World War I ended, Catz visited Palestine for the first time, traveling by ship from Constanza, Rumania, to Constantinople, Turkey. From there, on horses and in carriages, he traveled through Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon, finally arriving in Palestine. After investigating the entire country on horseback, Catz was attracted to the Haifa Bay area and decided to settle there in the future. He bought plots of land in Ahuza, Haifa in order to sell them to Rumanian Jews when he returned to Bucharest. In 1923, Catz returned to Palestine, this time with Fina, his eldest daughter. He bought 114 dunams of land in the Haifa Bay area: two dunams for each of his six children and his wife and one hundred for his farm in Haifa Bay. (At that time a dunam of land was worth twelve pounds sterling;

The land was located in the Zevulun Valley which extends along the coast from Haifa to Acre.

In 1924 Ephraim Catz set out for Palestine with his wife, four daughters, and two sons. The family boarded the ship in Constanza, Rumania and sailed to Haifa, bringing a great many belongings and household furnishings along with them.

When they arrived in Palestine, and until their own home was built, the Catz family lived in a large house in the German Colony in Haifa, and from the roof of this dwelling they could see Haifa Bay and the plots on which Catz would soon build his farms, "Sabinia" and "Kishon". Having decided to become a farmer, Catz studied agronomy...in the same way that he had studied English: industriously and on his own. My great-grandparents started to build and develop their farm in 1925; it would be completed in 1927. Catz named it "Sabinia" after his wife, Sabinia. While they lived on the farm, the children lived in the German Colony house under the care of a housekeeper, and on alternate weekends the children came to Sabinia or Mr. and Mrs. Catz came to the German Colony. Although they had two cars, an Overland and a Buick, commuting was difficult and hazardous because of the poor road between Haifa Bay (where the farm was) and the city of Haifa. In 1926 a road started to be developed near Catz's farm that was completed in 1927, thus it gradually became easier for the family members to see one another every Saturday.

At the farm, Catz built a dairy barn, a goat shed, stables and two cabins, one for the family and one for the laborers and watchman. He planted a grove of eucalyptus trees in order to drain the swamps because malaria

was rife. In addition, he planted an orange grove, a vineyard, a banana orchard, a vegetable garden, and lemon, grapefruit, guava, peach, walnut, apple, and pear trees. He raised cows, chickens, goats, and horses. From America, he imported threshing machines and sophisticated harvesting equipment. In 1927 Catz leased 10,000 dunams of land from the Palestine Land Development Company and established at the Kishon farm, not too far from Sabinia. Here he grew sunflowers for the cooking oil industry in Haifa, wheat and barley for the large four mills in Haifa, and flax.

In 1929, politics intruded on Sabinia. Arab national and Moslem religious feeling flared up in murderous outbreaks against the Jewish population which were incited by agitation over Arab and Jewish holy places in Jerusalem. When the riots started, two British policemen were stationed in Sabinia in order to protect the farm. When Catz discovered that the Arabs planned to attack the farms, he knew that the two British policemen were not enough to protect both farms; therefore, he asked the British army and police for additional assistance. They declined, refusing "to send a score of soldiers to fight against thousands." As soon as Catz realized that the

British authorities would not come to his aid; he immediately went to Haganah (the Jewish defense organization in Palestine) to ask for protection. They also refused, saying that they barely had enough men or arms to protect the Jewish population centers. They said that it would be useless to send one or two men to protect the farms, since everyone would probably be slaughtered. The Haganah suggested that Catz move to Haifa, where it was safer.

That August, in order to supply the four mills and the oil industry in time before the attack, Catz frantically harvested his crops, and in a few weeks the entire harvest, stored in silos, was ready for delivery. On Saturday, August 15th, 1929, Arab attackers destroyed the entire harvest. At the Kishon farm, they set all unharvested fields on fire. At the Sabinia farm, they destroyed all the agricultural equipment and set the farm, its livestock, its groves, and various structures on fire. The family, which was supposed to spend that Saturday on the Sabinia farm, happened to be in Haifa at the German Colony house because one of the daughters (my grandmother) was ill; thus they were all saved. Ephraim Catz, whom the British authorities prevented from rushing to his farm, stood on the

roof of his Haifa home, watching his lifelong effort burn to the ground. He went into a state of shock and suffered from amnesia for an entire year. On August 17th, the Arab attackers returned to finish what they had started and cut down whatever trees remained. A British plane fired at the attackers, killing three while the others fled. Had the British intervened two days earlier, such destruction would not have occurred. The damage was assessed at 16,000 Palestine liras, which at that time was equivalent to approximately 80,000 dollars. As a result of the attack, the Catz family was completely destitute and remained in the German Colony until 1930, when they moved to the Jewish part of Haifa, Hadar Hacarmel. The causes for the move were the 1929 riots and the Nazi orientation of young Germans in the German Colony.

When Catz recovered from his illness in 1930 he decided to go back to farming. He could not restore the Kishon farm, where everything had been destroyed, because he had too many debts and could not afford to lease the land. Sabinia, however, belonged to him, and he decided to rebuild it, proving to himself that once again he could grow citrus and other fruit in the sandy soil. Catz obtained the money to rebuild the farm by selling his wife's jewelry. His new home, which still stands today, was constructed like a fortress, with heavy stones, bars on each window, a cellar, and an attic. Catz restored the farm by planting new orange groves, banana groves, and grapefruit, lemon, apple, pear and eucalyptus trees (which in time became "The Catz Forest"). He built a dairy barn, stables, laborers' dwellings, and cement irrigation channels to irrigate the trees. He raised 200 cows and some leghorn chickens. The Catz cellar served as an incubator for the farm's chickens as well as for those of surrounding kibbutzim (collective farms).

The British took an active interest in Catz's welfare. British authorities sent him a crate containing three rifles and a revolver which he was to use only during emergencies. The crate was always locked and, every three months, the British came to check whether the arms had been used and to clean the rifles.

Catz's hospitality and initiative contributed to the further development of Sabinia and the Haifa Bay area. One evening, the British manager of Palestine Railways spent the night at Catz's farm, because darkness prevented his driver from continuing their journey across the Haifa Bay. Catz provided food, conversation, and lodging for the men. The following

morning, before leaving, the manager wanted to pay for his keep; Catz refused to accept payment, but his guest persisted in wanting to repay the hospitality. Finally, Catz requested a railway station near the farm; the manager had it built, and it was named "Sabinia." (The railway line can be seen on the map in Appendix C.)

Between 1931 and 1932, new families from Rumania settled in the Haifa Bay area and bought or leased land from Catz. They first worked on his farm and then moved to their own lands. In 1933, the town of Kiryat Haim was established in the Haifa Bay area adjacent to the Sabinia farm, and the Catz family was no longer as isolated as in the past. After the establishment of Kiryat Haim, Catz himself installed an electric power line to the farm. A new asphalt road replaced the old road which in the past was long and tiring and had no road signs indicating where the farm stood.

During the first twelve years of the British Mandate, Jewish immigration was limited by the authorities in such documents as the two White Papers, one of which was issued in 1922 and the other in 1930. In 1934, however, a period of large Jewish immigration began as Hitler's barbarous persecution drove the Jews out of Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and all of central Europe. Palestine was the principal "haven of refuge" in the world. Over 100,000 Jews were admitted between 1934 and 1935, leading to great developments in industry and agriculture. The urban Jewish population in the Haifa Bay area expanded with the establishment of Kiryat Bialik, Kiryat Motzkin, and K'far Bialik, reaching the Sabinia farm. Many people started visiting the farm, thus the family, which in the past had lived in almost total isolation, started adjusting to the new conditions. In 1934, the British nominated Catz the "Mukhtar" (an Arabic word meaning the head or official representative of the village, the headman, the elder) of Kiryat Bialik and surrounding area.

The possibility that a Jewish majority in Palestine could exist within a relatively short period of time because of so much immigration provoked disturbances once again by the Arabs. These disturbances became particularly severe between the years 1936 and 1939. During these riots, the Arabs did not dare attack the farm, for Sabinia was surrounded by Jewish settlers and was not as isolated and unprotected as in 1929.... The area surrounding the farm became more and more urban in character, thus, my great-grandfather had to sell his lands and liquidate the farm,

which was hampering urban growth. He kept only a much smaller operation: the house and some fields surrounding it. In 1940, Catz helped establish a bus line from Haifa to Kiryat Bialik. Refusing any profits offered to him from the operation of the line, he and his family were granted life-long free rides on the bus route with special attention to Mr. and Mrs. Catz, who were to be driven to their door.

In 1944 Sabinia Catz died of typhoid fever, having lived her last twenty years with her husband in Palestine. Catz later married a widow and lived in his house in Sabinia, surrounded by lush, thick greenery, until his death in 1957. Gradually, he gave up farming as his land was in the residential section of the developing Haifa Bay region; Catz parceled the land and lived on the income of the sales. His children, after his death, donated the building to the local municipality and council in order for it to become the cultural center of an ever-growing community. That it became and still is today. It is known as "Beit Catz" (or the "Catz House"), and thousands of people both young and old benefit from the many activities which take place there.

After the end of World War II, in 1947, Britain gave up the mandate and turned over the problem of Palestine to the United Nations which partitioned the country and created the state of Israel. Sabinia, a prosperous suburb of the city of Haifa, is one of many communities in the modern state of Israel. Its development would never have occurred the way it did without my great-grandfather, his vision, and his work. The turning point in Catz's personal life, moving to Palestine, becoming a farmer, and founding Sabinia, contributed to the taming of the wilderness in Palestine, which is one of the turning points in modern Jewish and Palestinian history.

Interview with Dr. Misu Solomon October 14, 1995

Part of Interview is missing due to partial destruction of tape. Sent to Dr. Misu Solomon for review, editing and improvement.

Missing--

MS; Friedrich (that Catz used to use that first name) When he became Zionist, changed it to Ephraim.

A lot missing here.

JHB: The Transylvania picture.

MS: We often used to go on vacation _____ and I remember I was a kid, we went to the mountain where the kings had the castles and Uncle Catz and my father rented a house. After dinner I remember it all like yesterday. We came out on the deck with the children around sitting on these stairs and went down surrounded by trees. It was beautiful and the sky was blue with stars and a full moon. Meni Catz, we called him, He started to sing a poem by a Romanian poet. (poets name here) It was a most famous poem and he died in an asylum, a little bit of _____ but he had a few nice poems and some of them to music. Uncle Catz, he loved to sing the song "Why are you Swaying. The forest of old trees. He used to sing it and the words were something like this..."why are you swaying and trying _____. Why are you swaying this old wood in these big trees when no wind is blowing, no rain is falling and the forest answers "why aren't you swaying when the _____. The days become shorter the nights longer, winter is coming, summer is past and my singers, my birds, they are leaving." He was sentimental. The same time I remember (?also in Kusmaru?) he would awake us in the morning "lets go children and pick the vine strawberries. They grow in the woods in the _____. And he had a cane and we also used a stick we _____. Each one had a small basket _____. He was so excited by nature. He was a very, very nice man.

JHB: His parents were very religious right?

MS: His parents? He was a shochet.

JHB: Did they live up in Hirlau?

MS: They lived in Bucharest in the same neighborhood as my father had the farmers _____. He was Jewish.

JHB: His sister (my fathers mother) Catz's sister Miriam.

MS: He had a sister?

JHB: My father and he were first cousins. Sure, that's how I'm related to him. His (Yaakov Hirsch's) sister Miriam was my father's mother. She was frum. She was so frum that she had a reputation for being frum. He was totally different.

MS: I remember that he had some cousins in Falticeni. Its a small city in northern Romania..

JHB: Well maybe that's where.... My grandmother and his father were brother and sister.

MS: Maybe they came from this _____. It was very close to(Moldavia?_____ because all the Jews came from Galicia, Russia, from Poland. Only the Sephardim came from the South. They were around the Danube..

JHB: That's why my name is after his father. Yaakov Zvi. Yaakov Hirsch. That's my name. They were so totally different. Its interesting that as I get to know him through everything that he was the same "meshuganeh" that my father had and that my grandmother had. They were single minded. Couldn't change their mind.

MS: Yeah, couldn't change his mind. "I don't want to hear anymore the word zhidan?. Zhidan? in Russian, in Romanian Zhidan is the pejorative word for Jew.

JHB: Did you tell me that there was a story about his father going to the U.S. and coming back.

MS: This was a legend. I know that he was a shochet. Sometimes I saw him at the Russiche Baker. Across the state where he lived it was Rushe _____. Probably he was also a man of some culture. All this comes to me now like from a dream. Because I saw him the bakery sitting and discussing with this _____ Russian baker. Probably he came from Russia. He had a white beard but still _____ but Ephraim Catz. He cared about Palestine and Israel. The first time, when he went to Palestine.

JHB; Do you know when that was?

MS; Yesterday was the birthday of Fina. October 13th was birthday of Josephine, and my mother's birthday and my older brothers birthday. Different years. Fina --- that's another story. She went once to the market place. If you wrote what I told you, she (Daisy) would kill me. She

tells me; why don't you write your memories. If you don't want to write you have such a device (tape recorder?)

JHB: I'll provide an armed guard. When did Catz first go to Palestine.

MS: I cannot tell you the year. I know when he left because it was a tragic day for us. What you have there is not right. And he left after Yom Kippur? It's not right. It was a very bad winter in the North and they went to Constanza, the Black Sea and they stayed over one week. I remember Madie Press and ?tante Sabinia. They came to my parents silver anniversary. And they had to stay in Istanbul, Constantinople, I don't know how many days. The Black Sea was frozen. They came by train.

JHB: Had he been to Palestine before he took the whole family in 1924.

MS: It was once-- I started to tell you before...once she (Fina) went with her mother to the market and she saw in the butcher this pieces of calves and cows and she asked; is this what I'm eating? And she never touched it anymore. And she never touched it. When Catz decided to go to Palestine to start the ?investigation? and she asked him to go with him for company. He said that there was one condition that you start to eat meat..

JHB: But, you don't remember when that was. Was it a long time before they took the whole family. It wasn't before the First World War?

MS: No, it was back in 1920's. I was young. Fina was also a young girl. Catz was very determined.

JHB: I have a tape of Madie in Hebrew. Do you speak Hebrew? I have to get it translated.

MS: No, when we were bar mitvahed we studied Hebrew in the house as children. We had a tutor. So, I spoke German. But if you don't practice...and now I cannot speak Hebrew.

JHB: She told a story that in 1929. (from JHB's memory) that when Catz awoke from his Coma/Amnesia, the first thing he did was to ask for the Architects, Engineers etc. to rebuild Sabinia. Do you know anything about this.

Misu; This is the story about the concession for driving that Catz gave the two men. Much of it is lost in the destruction of the tape. Anything you can do reconstruct it would be appreciated. Any other stories you have that are missing or that you can add, would be appreciated. Jack.

MS:.....We are penniless, we have no jobs. Will you give us the concession. (to drive the route?)

Ephraim Catz; Of course, why not, with pleasure.

But, what have we to pay for this?.

Ephraim Catz; Oh, a lot. You let my family ride for free. This is what he took to let these people exploit a bus line. This was a fortune. He was generous..

JHB: You know what came in the package yesterday from Rina? The free pass with the picture of Rina and her mother. The free pass for her and her mother to ride the bus.

MS; This was Ephraim's right to exploit.....Let's go in OK?

Letter from Ephraim Catz to Jack H Bloom 3/21/54

Sabinia 21 III 1954

Dear Yakob,

we are very much worried, not knowing what happened to you or your family. We are sure that you did not forget to write, because you are very punctual in such matters.

We therefore await your speedy reply to the cause.

As on March the 7th it was my 75th birthday. My children made a small festivity for me and we were sorry that you could not remain here in order to participate in it as we consider you as a very near and pleasant relation to us all..

In the hope that nothing unpleasant happened at your place.

We send you our best good-wishes as well as your parents and the rest of your family.

Sincerely yours

Catz & Cecile

JHB note; I was in Israel from August 1953-Jan 1954. Left at that time. Don't know if I offered a proper going away.

In telephone conversation with Misu Solomon on 11/25/95--Catz had a cousin from Falticeni by the name of Fanny Zeider. (Does this imply that Hona's maiden name was Zeider? JHB) She went to the "folkshule" in Bucharest. Stayed with Yaakov Tzvi and Hona.

Catz's farm was intended to be self-sufficient. Got no help from formal agencies. They who supported Kibbutzim were opposed to his efforts.

Perhaps a page from Golda Meir's Autobiography, My Life p.79 explains why.

"The next step was to make this land (the emek)arable. In the nature of things, private farmers (which is what Catz was and intended to be) did not and could not interest themselves in a backbreaking and dangerous project which would obviously take years before it showed any profit. The only people who could possibly undertake the job of draining the Emek swamps were the highly motivated pioneers of the Labor Zionist movement, who were prepared to reclaim the land, however difficult the circumstances and regardless of the human cost. What's more they were prepared to do it themselves, rather than have the work done by hired Arab laborers under the supervision of Jewish farm managers....

From brief telephone conversation with Dr. Misu Solomon 6/29/98. Ephraim called himself Frederick while he was professor of English in a high school in Bucharest, on whose faculty he was the only Jew.

From a letter of Gil Press

Efraim Catz

My maternal grandfather Efraim Catz was born in 1879 in Falticeni, a small town in Rumania, where his father was a rabbi. In 1892, Efraim moved in with his uncle in Bucharest, where he could get a better education. He taught himself English, and later taught it at the Royal University of Bucharest. He married Sabina Rosenfeld, the daughter of a government official supervising the tobacco industry. The couple was very well to do and led a comfortable life.

In Bucharest Efraim became a Zionist. Rumania was a hotbed of Zionist activity much before the establishment of the Zionist Congress. Efraim used to keep in his office in Bucharest a photo of Cuza, a leading anti-semite. To astonished visitors he explained that Cuza was the biggest Zionist in the world, as he was constantly calling for Jews to leave Rumania for Palestine. In 1881, the "Association for the Settlement of Eretz Israel" was established in Bucharest. A year later, it sent a ship with 228 Rumanian Jews, the first ship ever with all of its passengers planning to settle in Palestine. They and others that came after them founded Zichron Yaakov and Rosh Pina, the first two Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine.

Efraim visited Palestine for the first time in 1917, touring it for about six months. Among the few things the family knows of this trip is the following anecdote. On the way back to Bucharest he was forced to stay for about a month in Constantinople because ships were not allowed to leave the port. Efraim did not dare eat or drink because of an outbreak of cholera. Wandering the streets in despair, Efraim ran into a young Rumanian officer who happened to be one of his former students and who just arrived aboard a Rumanian war ship. Efraim pleaded with him to get him out of Constantinople, took out his gun, put it to his head, and promised to kill himself unless the young man obliged. Later that night, the frightened student brought him an officer's uniform, and thus managed to smuggle Efraim aboard the ship and into his cabin. When the Turkish authorities searched the ship before departure, and knocked on the door of the officer's cabin, he told them that he just finished his night shift and they should go away and let him sleep. The ship brought Efraim back home.

The ordeal of the first visit apparently did not deter him. He returned to Palestine twice more, the second time, in 1923, with his eldest daughter, my aunt Josephine (Fina). She recalled that when they traveled from Jerusalem to Jericho, they saw an Arab shepherd, sitting under a lonely tree in the arid Judean hills, playing the reed pipe while watching his sheep. Efraim stopped, enchanted by this vision of pastoral life, and said that this is how all Jews should live in their ancient homeland.

Ussishkin and Sokolov, the leaders of the Jewish community in Palestine, tried to persuade him to settle in or near Tel-Aviv, but the wilderness near Haifa attracted him more. There, he could prove to the world that Jews can be farmers and that the seemingly barren parts of Palestine can become the biblical land of milk and honey (or, at least, bear fruits and vegetables).

My paternal grandfather, Isaiah Press, the geographer and the author of the Topographical-Historical Encyclopedia of Palestine (Eretz Israel), described this area in his

1921 tour guide as follows: “Between Haifa and Acre is the Acre Valley, which is connected by the Kishon river to the Valley of Israel. The sand dunes block the rivers Kishon and Belus (Na’aman) from flowing to the sea and, as a result, the valley is covered with swamps and marshes. In its sandy soil only some grass and small bushes grow and in the marshes - only reeds and canes.”

A few years later, Arthur Koestler used to drive with his friends at night from Haifa to Acre, taking a late night dip in the Mediterranean: “Our remaining choice for a binge was to hire a taxi-cab on a night of full moon and drive along the sandy beach to the ancient fortress of Acco. At that time Haifa Bay... was still a desert; there was nothing to see except the moon and the sea, a few palms on the dunes, and an occasional Arab sleeping in the moon-shade of his camel...” Even the neighboring, fertile, Valley of Israel, where many of the first agricultural settlements were established later on, did not seem fit for human habitation: “In 1926 it was still mostly a stony desert, infested with malaria, typhus, and marauding Bedouin tribesmen. The hills bordering the valley were dotted with Arab mud villages, dissolving by an act of natural mimicry in the violet haze of earth and rock... In the summer the heat was stifling, aggravated by the Khamsin, a hot desert wind with a peculiarly unnerving effect. Mosquitoes, flies, cockroaches and bugs of all varieties abounded - the only abundance which nature provided in that region, for the earth was arid and stony, and had not seen a plough for a millennium and half before the [Jewish] settlers arrived.”

This was where Efraim bought about 30 acres in 1923, and established a farm which he called Sabinia, after his wife.

A reporter for “Ha’aretz” (September 13, 1929) later recounted the first days of the farm: “During the initial work in the farm, Arabs from the neighboring villages tried to stop the workers who were ploughing the land. Mr. Catz had to call the Haifa Police and for two months, under police protection, the work continued and wooden huts were erected.”

The farm consisted of a dairy, a goat shed, and stables. Efraim planted eucalyptus trees to drain the swamps and also an orange orchard, a vineyard, a banana grove, a vegetable garden, and lemon, grapefruit, guava, peach, walnut, apple, and pear trees. Later he raised cows, Leghorn chickens (imported from England), goats, and horses. Largely self-taught in all matters of agriculture, he imported threshing machines and the latest harvesting equipment from the United States.

Efraim did not sell the fruits of his labor. The farm was established to serve merely as a one-man public relations campaign: to prove to the world that the Land of Israel was

ready to accept the Jews of the Diaspora and that with toil and sheer determination they could make it, again, the Horn of Plenty. With no running water - the water had to be hauled in trucks - or electricity, he calculated that the cost of growing and harvesting each orange was about 400 times more than what it would fetch in the market. Efraim's reward came when strangers would appear at his door asking to see "the orange trees growing in the sand dunes."

Efraim's Zionism-by-example campaign extended beyond farming. In the early 1920s, he bought plots of land on top of Mount Carmel in Haifa and sold them at cost to Rumanian Jews as a way to motivate them to leave Rumania. In 1924, a groundbreaking ceremony in the presence of Sir Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner to Palestine, established the place as "Ahuzat [the estate of] Herbert Samuel." This Haifa neighborhood is still called "Ahuza."

But the Sabinia farm was Efraim's main occupation. He settled there at age 45, living in a wooden hut with his 46 year-old wife, alone among the jackals and the snakes, in conditions that were as far removed from their Bucharest life style as one could imagine. He installed his six children (four of them still at school) in a very large house in Haifa, complete with a shipload of furniture from Rumania, a cook, and a maid. Even though the family had two automobiles, getting from Sabinia to Haifa - a ten-minute drive today - was a difficult and long journey. More often than not the vehicles got stuck in the sand dunes or in the marshes. The parents and the children took turns: One Saturday Efraim and Sabina would come to Haifa; the next Sabbath, the children, after swallowing large doses of quinine to inoculate them against malaria, would visit them.

In 1927, emboldened by his initial success with the Sabinia farm, Efraim leased (from the Haifa Bay Land Development Company) a 2500-acre parcel of land about six kilometers from Haifa, and established there a second farm. In 1929, he contracted with the flourmills and the cooking-oil factory in Haifa and planted wheat, barley, sunflowers, and flax. Depending on the season, the farms now provided work for up to forty workers, Jews and Arabs. With the growing number of workers, it became necessary to have public transportation between Sabinia and Haifa. A train line already connected Haifa to Acre, but there was no stop near Sabinia. Fortunately, one day in 1929, the British manager of the Palestine train authority lost his way and his horse while hunting in Haifa Bay and discovered, in his words, an "oasis in the desert." Shortly thereafter, at Efraim's request, a "Sabinia Station" sign went up near the railway tracks a short walk from the farm, where the train would slow down.

By the summer of 1929, Efraim Catz's dream of a new Jewish life in the Old-New Land became a reality. And then the Arab riots broke.

On Saturday, August 24, Efraim and Sabina stayed in Haifa - although this was the children's turn to visit them - because one of their daughters was sick with malaria. The daily Ha'aretz told later (September 13, 1929) the rest of the story:

"The next day, the Arab riots have started in Haifa and of course prevented Mr. Catz from going back and seeing what was happening to his farms. Only on the 27th was he informed that Arabs from the neighboring villages "visited" his farms the day before, took all the grains they could find, all the cattle (23 heads), six horses, and machinery parts. In Sabinia, they took also the furniture. He was also told that the robbers were going to come back the very same day and burn all the buildings. Despite all of his efforts, Mr. Catz could not save his property because the authorities did not let him, as the following details show:

Already on Monday (the 26th), Mr. Catz submitted a written request to the authorities, asking that police be sent to his farms to guard them or that they would give him several rifles so he can defend the farms himself. But his request was declined. In the meantime, the robbers did return to Sabinia on Tuesday afternoon and burned everything they did not take the day before. The two cars and the garage were burned completely. The other farm also was put on fire and the tractors and other machinery there were destroyed. The fire burned for a few hours and the smoke was seen from afar.

The cabins were not burned completely - the Arab guard put the fire out and the other Arabs did not notice it. The damage that was done to Mr. Catz's property is estimated to be about 16,000 Palestine Pounds [the equivalent of about \$80,000 at the time]. This is how 10 years worth of hard work and a lot of money has been destroyed in just two days. The lives of Mr. Catz and his wife were spared only because they happened to be in Haifa.

On Thursday, the 29th, Mr. Catz pleaded with the head of the British Army to give him a military escort but was refused again. He also requested the help of the High Commissioner to Palestine, but has not received any answer as of this writing. Even today, two weeks after the riots that destroyed ten years of his work, what remained of the farms is not protected by the authorities.

As for the robbers - it is known that these were the farmers from the neighboring villages in the Acre Valley. But so far nothing was done by the authorities to start an investigation or even to look for what was stolen. In the meantime, the robbers had enough time to hide the stolen goods.

In spite of the sudden and horrible catastrophe, Mr. Catz has not despaired and he is determined to establish again at least the Sabinia farm."

Neither the reporter nor Efraim were aware of the extent of the damage. When the Catz family could safely go back to the farms they found out that all the young trees were cut down. The Arabs did not come only to steal and vandalize. They came to take revenge of a successful farmer, one who accomplished what they and their ancestors never tried – to turn the marshes and the sand dunes into fertile land.

The sight of his fruit trees broken and mangled broke Efraim's spirit. He fell ill and was bed-ridden for a year. When he recovered, he set out to rebuild the Sabinia farm. Having lost all of his fortune the first time around, he asked for assistance from the various Jewish organizations in Palestine but managed only to acquire the nickname "Crazy Catz." To raise the necessary funds, Sabina sold her jewelry.

A newspaper clipping (with a date – May 5, 1931 -- but no name of the publication) in my family's collection of documents about Sabinia, describes the impressions of a visitor from Haifa two years later: "The road led me to the wilderness of Shfaram. All around, as far as I could see, one could not spot either a tree or a bush. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, behind a sand dune, a row of eucalyptus trees rose. Approaching them, you could see a few nice buildings, a young orange orchard and ripened banana trees." The reporter (a certain Davidi) remembered how he received news of the riots of 1929 in Africa, where he was stationed at the time, and how out of all the horrible news, the story about the destruction of the Sabinia farm stood out: the description of the burned banana trees and young orange trees cut in half. He thought then about the years of hard work that were lost and was certain that the settlement could not be rebuilt.

Now he entered the rebuilt farm to find a man "in his forties" (Efraim was actually in his fifties at the time), "standing tall, with a face of a younger man and eyes that expressed laughter and sadness at the same time."

Efraim, according to the journalist, was not bitter and did not complain about the past. He was just very proud about what he was able to create (or, rather, re-create) in a very short time. The house was rebuilt (this time it was made of stone and resembled a small fortress with bars on the narrow windows), as were the chicken coop, the stables, and the cowshed. Scattered all around were burned parts of farm machinery. When Efraim described how he hauled heavy soil to the sand dunes of Sabinia, Davidi understood why people called him a "stubborn lunatic." The orange trees were planted again, but they did not look very healthy, no longer protected by the tall pine trees that were also cut down by the Arabs. Catz needed to hire workers to help him in rebuilding his farm, but did not have the money. He did not answer the obvious question, why didn't the Zionist

institutions help him. The reporter knew the answer: They refused to assist Catz because he was not a “Kibbutz” or a “Moshav” (collective farms), “he did not belong.”

The reporter commented: “Of course, he could have supported another half a dozen workers’ families. And they could have learned the beautiful craft of farming for farming’s sake, without politics, without ideology... Catz does not engage in highfalutin talk about Zionism or Karl Marx. He does not fly a Zionist or red flag. It is enough for him to work hard everyday, with the help of other Jewish workers and his wife - to plant orange trees, to replace the ones destroyed by the savages. He provides drinking water to any passer-by or nomad. He is a farmer without casuistry. He came to Palestine a wealthy man and he lost everything. Not because he speculated in real estate, but because he insisted on building his farm where only savages, hyenas and vultures lived. Today Catz is the Arabs’ friend and they understand the wrong they have done him. They wanted to honor him with one of their titles but he refused. If there are other people like Catz among us, we cannot lose hope.”

On a smaller scale, Efraim Catz continued with his pioneering work for a few more years. He replanted the orange, banana, and other fruit trees. He raised again cows and Leghorn chickens. The cellar of his home housed an incubator for the farm, used also by the surrounding kibbutzim who did not have the proper equipment.

The Catz family now had to live more modestly than before. The younger children moved in with their parents. That was made easier by the fact that all around them the landscape has changed very rapidly. Roads were paved and a bus service connected Sabinia directly to Haifa. The change was symbolized by the demolition of the Sabinia cowshed to make way for the new highway between Haifa and Acre. Efraim supported all of these changes and little by little further reduced the scope of his farming activities.

With the great wave of immigration of the German Jews fleeing Nazism in 1933, the Zionist organizations have decided that the area around Sabinia would be entirely urban. Within a few years, many German Jews built their houses there, establishing a new town which they called Kiryat-Bialik

In 1946, two years after Sabina died of typhoid fever, Solomon Blum (the grandson of Efraim's aunt) visited Sabinia. Efraim was no longer a farmer. His house was now just one among many in the Sabinia neighborhood of Kiryat-Bialik. In 1946, the postman used to deliver the mail for all the people in the neighborhood to Efraim, for further distribution. Solomon Blum described how it was done: “Cousin Catz would sit at the table in the courtyard awaiting all those coming for mail. Thus in these afternoons, I heard many languages, for those in Sabinia had either escaped the Holocaust, had been settled in Palestine for some years, or like me, newly arrived from America. No matter the origin of

the recipient of mail, our cousin managed to converse successfully with all. To his wife [Efraim by then remarried] Rumanian; to those from Poland in Yiddish; Hebrew to veteran settlers; to his married daughter and her children French, for they had just left the Francophile culture of Beirut where her husband had managed the Skoda agency; German to those from that benighted place; and English to me. Had an Arab farm worker entered his courtyard, I'm sure the greetings would have been most appropriate."

Efraim Catz died in 1957 in his home in Sabinia. In 1965, the town of Kiryat-Bialik built, next to Efraim and Sabina's old stone house, a large building housing the town's memorial to its fallen sons, its public library, and a community center. The entire complex was named "Beit Catz" – the House of Catz.

From a series of Reminiscences written by Solomon Bloom Ph.D-Ephraim Catz's first cousin once removed.

THE MARINE CARP AND COUSIN KATZ

(Solomon Bloom, Ph.D.)

I set out for Palestine in late 1946 aboard the S.S. Marine Carp. It was bound for Haifa, with a stop at Beirut, and its passengers were a strange mix of young spirited Zionists eager to help build the future State, and old Levantines returning to their Middle Eastern origins to complete life after living in the United States for many years. The ship itself of 12000 tons had carried troops in the war just recently ended, and had not changed its facilities for these post-war civilian voyagers. We slept on sheets of canvas, lashed to metal tubing suggesting the shape of a bed, which in turn were stacked in four or five tiers on metal rods extending the height of the deck. This was my introduction to maritime life and the Marine Carp plodding along at 12 knots took two weeks to reach the eastern recesses of the Mediterranean.

A few memories of those two weeks. The Atlantic was already uneasy in those first days out of New York, but I was always at ease with the rocking, shuddering and vibrating of the ship in those rolling hillocks of waves. Those first days were gray without sun, and life was surrounded by variations on this single hue. The clouds light gray, the rain sleet gray, the waves slate gray, the ship a rusty gray, and even the old Army food trays off which we ate in the paint gray mess section had a silvery gray cast. It warmed and cleared as we sailed into the Mediterranean and made for our first port of call, Beirut to discharge the old returning

Lebanese and for our group of young American Jewish Zionists to have the first taste of Arab enmity.

Beirut then was lovely, twinkling at dusk as we entered its harbor. We were excited at the prospect of going ashore to imbibe our first draught of Levantine life and color, and surely we thought, with our American passports, this would be granted handily. The Lebanese port control officers must have known that on the Marine Carp were these Zionist zealots hell bent to make further trouble for their brothers in Arab Palestine. Our passports clean of any reference to religious leanings, were scrutinized by name and a Goldstein, Levy, Cohen, were denied the right to go ashore. Since other Americans, how Waspish they were I can't remember, had their passports stamped to proceed down the gangway to enjoy fabled Beirut, we Americans were incensed at this injustice. We convened a meeting on the aft-deck, our group having grown strong and unified over two weeks of close living, discussions, Hebrew study, of singing and dancing together, and decided that if we could not go ashore then no further Americans could enjoy that right. A natural leader had evolved among us and following him, we all stormed the two Lebanese bureaucrats stamping other passports, and hustled them off the American territory of the Marine Carp, pushed them down the gangway and last saw one of them brandishing his pistol aloft and cursing us, as we did them, as they drove off the pier and to Beirut in what I distinctly remember was a GI issue Jeep. Then, without Beirut to enjoy but proud of our action to support international law, and with the fading scent of Turkish tobacco and Araq brought aboard earlier by Arab stevedores unloading cargo, we danced and sang for hours sending the strange sounds of our hopes for a future Israel to the puzzled ears of Arabs on the pier and beyond to Beirut.

The next morning we left and made the short jaunt to Haifa. Father had, of course, written to our cousin Ephraim Katz of my expected arrival. I knew that in the perpetual confusion of youth arriving in a strange new land, that I would somehow meet up with this exalted relative, the proud pioneer who had left a comfortable life in Bucharest to plant his family and his wheat and citrus on land just north of Haifa in the early years of the British Mandate in Palestine. It was the letters of Cousin Katz to Sam Bloom in New Jersey that created my calling to agriculture, and this first encounter, the most significant to my young life, would not only

introduce me to the exemplar of all the Blooms, but would begin with his blessing, my many years of study in farm animal nutrition.

My passport properly stamped by his Majesty's official, my belongings carried by a eager porter, I came down the gangway of the S.S. Marine Carp into a milling crowd on the pier. I had no idea where to turn or to whom, and in what language, to address my inquiries. As I remember this state of confusion lasted perhaps three minutes, for I saw this man, strong in bearing with close cropped salt and pepper hair approach me with supreme confidence, and without a word, enclose me completely in his strong embrace. He introduced himself to me, and when I asked how he knew whom to embrace he replied that the stamp of our family was on my face, and he had recognized me without qualm or question.

On the way to his home in the Mifratz, the bay area north of Haifa, Ephraim Katz was full of questions about my father whom he had not seen since 1914, about my immediate family and about all the Blooms who were now in America. I tried to answer the questions, but naturally I was fascinated by the scenes flashing outside the car. This was my first time abroad, and while I had been well versed in the story of Jewish settlement, I was not prepared for the Arab world I saw lining both sides of the road just outside Haifa. The dress, sounds, and smells of the Middle East needed my immediate attention as they were completely exotic to anything experienced back home, but Cousin Katz kept plying me with questions and it was difficult to answer them while trying to satisfy my curiosity of this completely different culture. Finally we turned left, approached the small Jewish towns in the Haifa bay area and arrived in the semi-rural setting of my cousin's home.

This most famous of all homes of our family, had originally been the only house in the area surrounded by citrus orchards and wheat fields. It still had the aura of the pioneer era, with rough-hewn blocks, mortared to each other in rough lines, heavy in texture and with iron bars securing the small windows of the structure. It exuded solidity and strength to protect the family against those tenuous times in which it was built. By 1946 the kiriyot, or small suburbs of the Bay area had encroached upon the original solitude of the area, and Cousin Katz had also built a few houses opposite his front yard. Beit Katz had become the center of a small neighborhood, and besides housing his children there may have been twenty families in the area.

I remember five members of the family. Cousin Katz had lost his first wife Sabena to typhus, hence the name of his neighborhood, so there were his second wife, the youngest daughter Mady, a second daughter married to an agent of the Czech Skoda company and their children, and a son with some shadowy connection with Haganah intelligence. They were all pleased to have this idealistic Halutz relative among them and there followed days full of talk, exotic meals and feeling so much at home so far away from home. All the affairs of that family and neighborhood centered around our Cousin and the postman delivered the mail for Sabena to him for distribution, and therein is a splendid story.

Cousin Katz would sit at the table in the courtyard awaiting all those coming for mail. Thus in those afternoons, I heard many languages, for those in Sabena had either escaped the Holocaust, had been settled in Palestine for some years, or like me, newly arrived from America. No matter the origin of the recipient of mail, our Cousin managed to converse successfully with all. To his wife Romanian, to those from Poland in Yiddish, Hebrew to veteran settlers, to his married daughter and her children French, for they had just left the Francophile culture of Beirut where her husband had had the Skoda agency, German to those from that benighted place, and English with me. Had an Arab farm worker entered his courtyard, I'm sure the greetings would have been most appropriate. What pride I had in family at that moment and what respect for this pioneer in Israel, this warm, superb cosmopolitan.

Second Story from Solomon Bloom Ph.D

EVENTS WITH COUSIN KATZ & FAMILY (1946-48)

(Solomon Bloom, Ph.D.)

When I arrived at Sabena that fall of 1946 cousin Katz no longer farmed, but still did chores on the field surrounding his home. He did ask me to help him and one morning we did, what chalutzim have done relentlessly since their earliest return to the soil of Israel, remove rocks from its fields. We labored together and as the sun rose high, sweat flowed freely and I asked if he wanted to rest. "Oh no," he said, "I'll have plenty of time to rest when life is over, so let's get on with it." This seemed odd to me, for he was so vigorous, sinewy and with a little gray in short cropped

hair, I could not quite comprehend this statement. He also kept geese, and together in the heavy morning dews would gather up land snails which these large waddlers would consume with relish.

This work reminded me of my first agrarian pursuits in the Borscht Belt where the family vacationed each summer at the Esther Manor near Monticello, New York. Dad has us pick blueberries which grew in the gill back of the hotel, for he wanted to convert them to brandy. I know we picked enough for him to make gallon jugs of the brew, corked, then sealed with red wax and brought back to age in the little cold room in the basement of our house on Inwood Terrace. Those jugs I believe were only opened and consumed at Jack's Bar Mitzvah.

Before returning to the Katz family, let me describe how I was indelibly imprinted to become a dairy nutritionist. At the Esther Manor, cows were kept to supply milk for the guests and cared for by the father of the owner. I was always there helping to bring in the cows from pasture and to close gates as we passed from meadow to meadow. One morning after milking, this old Jewish farmer asked me to help him with some posts he had to secure. I held the wood post and he drove them with a sledgehammer. The next thing I knew was my intimacy with the ground and a warm sticky feeling of blood on my forehead for that hammer had mistook my head for the post. Moments later I saw the farmer's 1935 Dodge sedan alongside and in a moment he was rushing me down to the doctor in Monticello. I remember the stitches going in, the tetanus shot in my bottom, and the ice cream cone to assuage my pains. We came back to the hotel, my head swathed in bandages and Dad very upset-- Momma was minding the store in West New York--forbid me ever to practice dairy husbandry with the old man. When Mother came up that weekend she wanted to sue, but Dad put the whole incident in humane context. So, the only visible scar on my body, high on the left forehead was my initiation into the profession later followed.

But back to the Katz family. Living at the home was Ephraim's second wife and three children that I can remember, though I believe there were other grown children beyond the household. Previously mentioned was a married daughter with two children and their father, the Skoda agent for that region. He had been in his business in Beirut, but with the escalating tensions in the region came to stay with the family in Palestine. The melodious flow of French filled the air whenever they came over from

their adjacent apartment and with two girls under ten joining in, there was this soprano patina which made their fluid words even more engaging. All the Romanian, Yiddish, Hebrew and Italian, remember Dad mastered this for the linoleum business, I had heard in twenty-two years seemed harsh, perhaps a bit uncouth, compared to this first sweet seamless flow of French mastered by a branch of our own family.

The grown son, his name not remembered, didn't divulge his occupation, but through innuendo and scraps of conversation around the table understood that he had some role in naval intelligence with the Haganah. He took me to my first steak dinner in Palestine, at the Zion Hotel in Haifa, and he did speak disparagingly of the disruptive role the Arabs pursued with Jewish settlement. He, at that time, introduced me to the term "WOG" for wily oriental gentleman, and on occasions that evening would toss his head over in the direction of those fitting his definition.

But his blond urbane daughter Mady galvanized and monopolized my attention. This was the daughter of a Chaltz in Palestine? My concept of pioneer women in Palestine had been plugged into my brain over the summers I spent at Zionist camps in the Catskills. They had to be robust, thick torsoed, clear of decadent make-up, single minded in desire to work the land and, at first meeting, would immediately begin to teach you Hebrew. No, Mady had all the trappings of bourgeois Jewry in the Diaspora with no link, or so it seemed to me, to the purpose of or to the impending struggle for our place in the sun in Palestine.

Mady was of medium height with the blond hair and pale fine complexion, which has always been linked to Jewish women from Romania. She always wore make up and dressed in fashions a bit grand for the time, day or occasion. She had grown up the daughter of a private and capitalist landowner, and had been educated at the American University in Beirut. While I was already Anglophobic, she would speak sympathetically of the British role in Palestine and do so, in what seemed to me, a pronounced attempt to speak the King's English in context and accent. Even her brother would contest her political leanings. Never once did she mention or show interest in the "kibbutz" movement, and quite distinctly told me that she had never visited one, though the closest one was within ten kilometers of Sabena.

For all her charms and as much as I wanted to add her to the armory of beautiful women of the bloom family, I had to hold her aloof from this

honor. Somehow she just couldn't fit in to the scheme of idealistic living I had, with Dad's help, chosen for myself in Israel. Mady was my only disappointment in the Katz family.

Now I have to take you to the following year and the period between Passover and Lag B'omer to continue these events. Helen had of course arrived, I had been training at Kibbutz Gvat where I had worked in its wheat and cornfields, in its vegetable gardens, harvested plums and apples and mucked out under the poultry house and in the cattle pens. Our wedding took place, of course, under the chupah at Cousin Katz's place. The rabbi was busy with such affairs, because of the time of year, and we had already made reservations for our honeymoon at the Lev HaCarmel Hotel which stood proudly on the top of the promontory overlooking Haifa harbor. The rabbi came late because of his busy schedule that day, and got us joined by Mosaic Law just with enough time to reach the hotel before curfew.

Well why curfew? Days and nights in Palestine then were often violent with Jews, Arabs and the governing British giving and receiving punishment. Just a few days before our wedding, Menachem Begin, then the young Irgunist, had blown up the Haifa refinery, so the British had clamped down a sunset curfew on the whole area. So with the rabbi late, and the sun declining there wasn't much time to enjoy this unique family occasion at the Katz home. So the blessings and "mazeltovs" were given in haste, the taxi was waiting and we just made it to Lev HaCarmel before the wailing sirens tore the evening atmosphere.

A third story of Solomon Bloom with references to Ephraim Catz

IT HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO SABENA

(Solomon Bloom, Ph.D.)

Early in 1948 Helen and I were in Jerusalem. Classes at the Hebrew University had been cancelled, and most of the American students were asked to volunteer for service in the Haganah. I was assigned to a unit guarding the perimeter of a Jewish sector of the city opposite Katamon, which was an Arab quarter. We kept guard during cold nights and moved weapons secretly by taxicabs or carried by women in the Haganah, as the British were trying to keep the peace, supposedly, by disarming both

sides following the sporadic Arab attacks after the UN declaration in November, 1947.

The families decided to get their children of those troubles, and we were told to make arrangements to leave Palestine. It was not easy getting the necessary passes to leave Jerusalem, as space on the infrequent Egged buses was tight. Anticipating Arab attacks, the busses were fitted with armor plate along their sides, and over the windshields in the front to protect the drivers. Even at the early time in the conflict, the bus drivers were our heroes for they kept lines of communication open despite the great hazards of constant travel through those Arab towns located on the routes to Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem. Finally, we managed to get aboard and started down out of Jerusalem bearing the guilt of leaving the city at that time. The British had a checkpoint on the outskirts and all passengers had to show their papers. I remember the acid remarks of the Tommy scanning our passports and his disbelief that Americans would want to be in that damned place. As we passed through Arab towns the way to Tel Aviv, the driver would command all to hunker down in our seats to make smaller targets, while he lowered the armor plate over his windshield which left him a small rectangular sight hole to navigate through Rammalah and the other Arab enclaves on the way. We arrived safely at Tel Aviv and then traveled the less hazardous route to Haifa, where we were to stay with Cousin Katz until we left.

We set out from the central Egged bus station in Haifa, again in a crowded armored bus taking workers back to their homes in the bay area where Sabena is located. It was getting dark and it was a cold gloomy setting with fog and mist about as we started. There is always a lot of conversation on a Jewish bus, and this time on the increasing troubles with Arabs. But the driver stopped it all with the warning that we were approaching a bridge across a wadi in the Arab part of Haifa, and that there had been some gunfire on traffic crossing this bridge. Now, the British were supposed to have patrols in this sector but that evening they were not keeping the peace between Jew and Arab and their absence.

I had crossed this bridge times before and remembered what splendid setting it was for disrupting traffic between Jewish Haifa and its suburbs in the bay area. The British understood the problem, had armored patrols in this area, and may have periodically searched the houses above the weapons, which however could be moved about and hidden as quickly and

as well as we had done in the Haganah. But this darkening evening the British patrols were absent.

The driver lowered his armor plates over his windshield which limited his visibility through the small rectangle cut out of the metal. In the dark mist he hit the abutment at the approach to the bridge, and the force of that contact was enough to shatter the windshield while he regained the open road across the wadi. The passengers reacted to this with fear for many didn't know exactly what had happened, but sitting up front I had seen it all as we moved across the bridge.

About mid point there was machine gun fire and instantly every child was covered by an older person and we all huddled down as much as we could. There were perhaps as much as five or six shots, and in all this the driver increased speed for the remaining meters of that bridge, and once over we were immediately sheltered from further firing by buildings obstructing the line of fire from the gun emplacements above the wadi.

The driver now slowed and asked if anyone had been hit. Luckily no one had and it is hard to describe the sounds of relief, deliverance, and thanks to the driver and the Almighty for getting us across in that old armored Egged bus. We still had ten minutes to the kiriyot, the thankful buzz continued and we were all live and whole. Helen and I had sat on the long bench in the front part of the bus, and I turned to caress the armor plate behind me which covered the side of the bus from the windows down. Moving my fingers over the metal in this caress of thanks, I felt two warm raised areas protruding from the flat surface of the metal. Turning around, I saw two raised circles of metal which, when I aligned myself in the original position of my seat on that bus, were exactly at the level of my kidneys. Helen joined me in examining this and by the time we got off at our stop we had pieced a story together of what had happened behind my back.

It was night now and outside the bus we stepped back to the third or fourth window from the front where we had sat. There, along with three or four more further toward the back, were two bullet holes holding two Arab projectiles that had been destined ,if not for some Jewish armor plate, for my waiting kidneys. Of course, there as much consternation then relief when we described all of what had happened to Ephraim Katz and his family.

Those were the last days that I saw Cousin Katz as we prepared to return to the States. Upon my return to Israel in 1957, and at my friend's home, Mendel Cohen, at the Weitzmann Institute I learned that Ephraim Katz had died a few days prior to my arrival.

Of course, to make arrangements for passage on a French steamship to take us to Marseilles, we had to cross that wadi again. This time it was morning and the danger of firing from the hills above the wadi vastly diminished. Even so, and with perhaps only ten passengers aboard, our bus driver said as we approached the bridge, "Chevra, bevakasha, lower all the windows, we don't want all that glass flying around if our Arab friends open up on us again."

Father: Yaakov Tzvi Catz
Mother: Hona Catz
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