

Birth Certificate No. 93/1906

Today appeared Froim Rahmil Blum, 28, merchant, resid. Hirlau, Stefan cel Mare Str. 48, who as father declared the birth on July 21, 1906 of his daughter with Hanna Blum, b. Abramovici, resid. Hirlau, Stefan cel Mare Str. 48. The child was named Ida. Witnesses: Pincu Blum, uncle of the father, 45, merchant, resid. in Hirlau; Eli Gherman, 60 tailor, resid. in Hirlau, who signed on July 23, 1906.

Iris, born in Hirlau, remembers that El(l)a was very sick as a baby. Rabbi was called in to do a ceremony that changed her name so the Angel of death couldn't find her. Iris remembers standing at the cradle during the ceremony. As Iris remembers it, she lived a couple of blocks away from Tanta Sura Zeilingher.

Iris started working at 8 years old for a woman who had a makeshift post office kiosk type arrangement so farmers and peasants could come get mail from the war front on Sundays. Iris read letters to peasants for 1 Lei a letter and then wrote letters from them for 1 Lei, back to their relatives fighting at the front. Then she went back and cleaned the house of the woman who owned the kiosk. She remembers her name-Clarasuta-same name as grandma-

Jenny's mother had the Cinema Lumina in Hirlau, which Iris remembers as only being open on Sundays. Sura, Jennie's mom, was a large woman and had a Grocery, Nahum her husband was small. Iris remembers the farmers and peasants coming in to see the "film" but sitting with backs to the screen and looking AT the projector instead of the screen!

Iris remembers the Russian soldiers-an officer and his orderly-billeted with the family for 2 years. This was lucky for the family because they shared their food with the family and also, Iris remembers that the officer was very nice and handsome. Clarasuta's father (grandma's father was a pharmacist--Grandpa Frank was a "soiher" (businessman) a trader. He traded eggs, hay whatever. Iris remembers ox drawn carts, wagons, peasants' huts and farms.

Esther went to live with Miriam Blum, who had been widowed, with her cousin's Aunts Leah and Adele (Froyim's [Frank] and Sam's sisters,) in Frumusica for all the years before they left for America. Grandma didn't want her to go, but Grandpa Frank insisted they couldn't take care of all the children. Esther resented that for her whole life. Froyim sent enough money for them to get to Paris, where they ran out of money and had to wait until more money arrived in order to board the La Touraine.

They arrived in the US on La Touraine March 4 1920. According to Iris, though La Touraine has Frank Blum on it, the name had already been changed and she remembers going to school as Bloom.

Upon arriving at Ellis Island, Iris remembers having been looked over and inspected. She had an infection under her chin, which she says bothered her for a good number of years. Adele had an infected foot. It was Pinchas' sons Morris and Solomon who helped them out and took them to Williamsburgh Brooklyn. They found an apartment because Morris worked for someone on Manhattan Ave. An apt on McKibben 112 (according to Lil Bloom they came to that apartment because Morris and Tillie and family were giving it up. From letter to Iris from Jack H Bloom with info from Lilian Bloom

Dear "Ida"; (Iris' given name on Birth Certificate)

“Thought you might enjoy the manifest of La Touraine, on which you and your siblings are listed. And even your new address, on McKibben Street. Incidentally, in checking it through, Lillian Bloom was born on McKibben Street, Brooklyn, in 1910, so Uncle Morris must have lived there at the time. Though a full 10 years before you arrived, he must have known some folks on the street.

The first nights there they all slept in the apartment on mattresses spread over the floor. The landlord? had been old only three children. then 7 kids. They went to Public School right across the street. It was a 2 Bedroom apt--they slept 2-3 in a bed. Bathroom door opened into the kitchen--9 in Apt. All of them became citizens through their father Frank in 1914.

After McKibben—they were on the move. Raleigh Place in Flatbush #1--upstairs apt. From there to Brighton Beach. Frank worked for a wholesale grocery company. in Brooklyn. From Brighton Beach to the Bronx. Iris' first job was answering the telephone in a herring store on Suffolk Street in Manhattan-Iris walked to work over the Williamsburgh bridge- to save a nickel. Got a quarter a day. Iris went to night school. I'm going to a friend's house--Borrow it I'll give it back. Described Srul (Len and Murray's father,) as honest person. Levi (Srul's father) was the roue of the family. After the herring selling job Iris go a job in the garment center packing dresses and went to school at night, She learned to use the Borroughs bookkeeping machine and “that's how I got into the bank and became a statistician. Sol, her brother got his PhD in Brooklyn College.

How did she meet Joe? As a statistician, her task was to analyze every checking account, and process same whether the check was for \$1 or \$1000. She had to determine what it cost the bank to carry each item. In back of NY Times magazine section had an account called Wallace Brown called dollar stationery. By Tuesday or Wednesday got hundreds of low amount checks. The bank had to give Federal Reserve 15% . She determined that the cost was phenomenal. Iris' job was to analyze accounts and to call Wallace Brown, The bank couldn't charge him all it was worth, she had to convince them that they had to pay a part. Bookkeeper of one of accounts called and chatted, at a time that Francis' (Joe's sister) husband was moving his office from his home. He lit a match threw it and it exploded and he died the next day. Would you like to meet Francis?--Francis said all girls are having a party—Iris went and Joe who had a rinky dinky car, was going to take some of the girls home, One of the girls had eyes on Joe, Freddie Schwarz, She wanted him to take everyone home and take her home last. Instead he took Iris home last. Love at first sight Met in October 32 Married in June 10, 1934, in the Bronx.

When Iris' friends wanted to give her a shower, her mother Clara objected, thought it was a rather crude American custom. When Iris went back to her friends, they insisted that they wanted to do something and Clara finally ok'd a book shower. Iris got Shakespeare and a whole bunch of books that stood her in good stead. Not one of the Bloom sisters had a shower. It was an American custom of which Clara with her fine upbringing did not approve.

Iris reports that none of them ever chewed gum. Also one of the family objections. Said that went they went on the trolley, with its benches, they saw people across from them all moving their mouths. Came to conclusion that there was something wrong with Americans who always had to move their mouths.

Joe; Born in Flemington New Jersey. He met Iris when Iris came to visit Francis. Love at first sight. He says she took me out. A year and a half later he decided to marry her.

He blames economics. “She was working at a bank. I wasn't working. I thought she would bring home samples.” Joe was unemployed. He bought and sold used cars, and opened a used car place. He lived on Bruckner Boulevard in the Bronx. He got married in 1934 in the midst of the depression, Business was not so good so he got a job house painting- 5 dollars a day for 8 hours. He raised a couple of thousand dollars and bought a garage and gas station. In 1937 he went broke

owing a lot of money. Then he started in the used tire business- a customer taught him the business.” I did well in that.”

When Laura was five, she gave him the whooping cough. That put him out of tire business temporarily. When he got better, tire business was too heavy. He happened to be in New York with a lawyer—who was hollering at another man on the phone. He owned a building on Lexington and 117th St.. Joe bought a share of the building for \$500 and went into the Real Estate business. But he didn't make a living in Real estate. Did make a living for a while in tire brokerage.

The following was written as a birthday gift to Iris for her 96th Birthday, by her daughter Laura.

July 21, 2002

Iris Bloom in Central Park
(Personal History)

Time comes for her in small cocoons,

One child or another of us; or
her melancholy memory of her husband -
scenes of the city in which she lived, knowing
her generous and boundless energy improved it.

Firmly framed early scenarios weave in:
as a child, writing letters for illiterate lovers
collecting for each a Roumanian dime;

Shivery, watching as the sickest, youngest sister,
hopelessly received a new name from the rabbi
to elude the angel of death.

The Villagers in Harlau's first cinema
(owned by Tatia Sura Zeilinger)
Scorned the screen, gaped backwards instead at
the projector. Well, she thought, that was fascinating, too.

On the long trek to Bremerhaven,

she learned to hold it in for hours,
tasted the fear of the voyage to America
where never could she pee in a public restroom.

Her name change at the gate, Eda to Iris,
Blum to Bloom, and Americans knew!
for shortly after, the New York Times headline
read, "Iris Bloom in Central Park!"

Their first trolley, all seven kids
passed a blazing tenement, and as one,
leaped to their feet, shouting in
Roumanian, the word for "fire!" "FUK! FUK! FUK!"
(humiliated when everyone laughed.
Didn't they care that people could be hurt?)

Today's pictures rarely focus.

Not like the one, still sharp as steel, our dad crooned
"My Blue Heaven," the family anthem,
substituting her name for "Molly and Me,"
He sings, "...and our babies three.. " and
out of tune, she will hum his parody.

Grit. The Red Cross Bloodmobile she wielded through traffic.
Real: The frantic races, the crush of cars, the satisfaction of delivery.
Guts: The time she nabbed the Yonkers' "car burglar." Really.

"What a blessing," she'll say, "that your dad didn't suffer,"
the totality of that thought overwhelming twenty years of his decline,
and her own imprisonment in his suffering.
That's the blessing.

In the prodded moment, the pall of forgetfulness falls from my mother's face.
In the the click of her quip, she flashes still sunny dimples.
Of course she knows the trolley story is hilarious,
and she's grasped a picture, one piece of her life.

By Laura Walcher, on the occasion
of my mother's 96th

birthday.

Greetings!

Here are two memories of Iris, whose wonderful presence in our "mishpocha" gives us all a wonderful window on the entire twentieth century.

1. At 234 11th street West New York, New Jersey, in the mid-"30's", Norman z"l aged perhaps 8 to10 and me about 6, elegant cousin Iris came to take my brother on a visit to the newly opened Empire State Bldg. Boy, was I taken with this sophisticated well dressed cousin, compared to Mother's z"l plain workaday dress. I was too young to go, and remember my childish tantrum at not being allowed to go. Boy was I jealous and have never forgiven her for leaving me behind. I believe Iris, at that time, was a secretary in NYC.

2..Shortly after Mimi's birth we went to visit Joe z'l and Iris at their Brooklyn apartment. The infant Mimi had some typical ailment of the first months of life. Mother was giving Iris some veteran advice on proper care and treatment of Mimi, which, I remember, wasn't too well received by Iris and led to some heated dispute between them. Joe took me from this small family spat to his pickup truck loaded with used tires on some errand while the others simmered down back at the apartment. Being with Joe, so staunchly ebullient, was always a delight for a child. But you had to be careful about Joe's handshake which seemed able, in one overwhelming grasp, to convert a youngster's hand of bone, muscle, tendons and skin to the consistency of chocolate pudding.

Solomon Bloom Ph.D