

In memory of Al Leeds z'l

A number of years ago, I wrote a brief vignette for Rom-Sig News about a discovery that Al Leeds and I made concerning our grandfathers. Though we signed our e-mails to each other, Al Frumusican and Jack Frumusican and became e-mail buddies, circumstances dictated that we would never meet. Though Al and his wife Gloria would come to visit friends each summer, close to our home in Connecticut, what with vacations etc. it just never worked out. Recently I was told that Al died. I experienced a truly sad heavy feeling for a man I had never seen, but to whom I owed a genealogical debt.

Recently I received from Professor Gyemant, my father's birth certificate. I have added it to complete this story, in tribute to and memory of my friend, Al "*Frumusican*" Leeds

Leeds Lead Leads to Prize-The Complete Version
by Jack H. Bloom <jackhbloom@aol.com>

A number of years ago on the Romanian Special Interest Group's Family Finder—which is a list of people with genealogical interest who are looking for relatives with a certain last name and from a special city or town in Romania—I had posted that I was looking for Blum or Segall in Frumusica or Hirlau. (Segall was my mother's maiden name). A Mr. Al Leeds of DelRay Beach, Florida contacted me, to say that his grandfather, Froim Leibovici, was from Frumusica. After some discussion, the best we could come up with was together concluding that our grandfathers, living in that hamlet, probably knew one another. That was something but not very much.

Well, one thing leads to another and Al Leeds hit pay dirt. Professor Gyemant forwarded to him a copy of a birth registration from Frumusica dated March 21, 1895. The document recorded the birth, to Froim Leibovici and his wife Hudla, of a daughter; Esther Ruchel Leibovici. Who should be signed as a witness but my then-38-year-old grandfather, Zalman Blum! Zalman was at that time the father of 15-month- old Samuel Blum, my father.

Just a few months ago, Professor Gyemant obtained and forwarded to me, my father's birth certificate. My father had always told us that his birthdate was December 28, 1894. The birth certificate said it was December 2, 1893. That

was interesting but the exciting moment came as I saw Froim Lebovici's signature as witness.

Zalman's and Froim's signatures appear, as virtually all Jewish signatures on these Romanian state documents do, in both Hebrew and Romanian. It was a thrill to see, even in photocopy, further evidence of Zalman's being, and his obvious closeness to Froim Lebovici, Al's grandfather. I have a photo of Zalman in an 1899 wedding, (see cover) and a picture of him as a local honcho with a group of fugeyers of Botosani County, which appeared in an early edition of ROM-SIG news, long before I knew it existed.

Fugeyers (literally, those who go by foot) were Romanian Jewish emigrants who walked across Europe to Hamburg where they took ship to America. Family stories about Zalman, which I heard from his daughter Leah in Israel in 1976, indicated that he was an important figure in the little town. Leah, in her nineties when I interviewed her, described him as the unofficial mayor.

So now Al Leeds z'l and I know, thanks to the Family Finder and Al's careful perusal of his document, and my noting my father's, that our grandfathers were good friends.

Attached for your viewing and genealogical pleasure are translated copies of the evidence:

Registration. for births No 30

1895 March 22; 10 am; Birth Certificate of Esther Ruhla, Jewish, female, born yesterday, 8 a.m. in the house of her parents from Frumusica. Daughter of Froim Leibovici, 50, and Hudla, 47, merchants, residing in this village. Declaration made by the father who presented the child to us. Witnesses: **Zalman Blum, 38,** Herscu Feler, 32, residing in this village, who signed together with us.

Theodor Lupaceanu, mayor, and Registrar of Storesti.
(Storesti is a village about 8 miles north-northwest of Frumusica JHB).

State Archives in Botosani-Frumusica Register for Births No. 72

1893 Dec. 4, 10 a.m. Birth certificate. of Smil Solomon Blum, Jewish, male, born in DEC, 2, 12 at night, in the house of his parents in Frumusica, son of Zalman

Blum, 45, and Marim, 40, both merchants, residing, in this Village. Declaration, made by the father, who presented us the child. Witnesses; Froim Leibovici, 40; Moise Sfarti, 30 both merchants, residing in this village, who signed together with us Gavril Bancianu, mayor and Registrar of Storesti.