

Name: **Solomon Bloom**  
Son of Samuel Bloom and Sarah (Sally) Segall Bloom  
Birth Date: 19 Feb. 1925  
Birth Place: Union City, N. J.

Heb. Name Date: Shlomo b. Shmuel ve Sarah  
**שלמה בן שמואל ושרה**

Spouse: Helen Goldberg  
Marriage Date: 31 Mar 1947  
Marriage Place: Sabena, Palestine  
Status: Divorced Early 70's  
Children: David, Raanan, Daniel  
Other Spouse: Erlinda Tejero

Occupation: Animal Nutritionist

Education: BA Iowa St. MA Penn St. Ph.D Iowa St.

Religion: Jewish

Sol and Helen's wedding, 31 Mar 1947, the day before Passover took place at the home of Ephraim Katz, named after his first wife Sabena. The name remains today, as does the house, which is known as Beit Katz and is located in Kiryat Bialik, between Haifa and Acco.

Your most recent note indicates that no record exists in "Manhattan" on our parents' marriage and perhaps you should try Brooklyn. I say this as I know Jenny Locker, Mother's sister lived in Brooklyn, from between 1930 to 1940, their place was one of the prime visiting places on our family's agenda. I also remember that when Mother came to the U.S. in 1918, she stayed with her sister in "Brooklyn" and to that point Dad must have come to court her. If this is so, it may be most probable that the marriage took place in that borough of New York City., and almost sure not in the Bronx or Queens.

Now as I remember, weekend visits to family, from West New York and Palisades, we were always crossing Manhattan, but not our destination there. We would either turn up to Bronx and visit Uncle Froim and his many children, or go across one of the bridges taking us to Brooklyn and

down, I think, Prospect Blvd. This lovely broad thoroughfare I remember, as it was the first time we had encountered staggered traffic lights, and remembering Dad showing me that if he adjusted speed to 35 or 40 MPH, we would coincide our course with the lights changing in our favor all the time. So, as I remember, Manhattan was seldom our goal on family visits.

Now let me bring out a few more pictures of childhood and I suppose I can only go back to 1930.

Addr; 234 11th street (4th floor S.W.. corner apt.) West New York., N.J.

1. The first car dad ever had was a Jewett. This must have been 1929-1930. It was a four-door sedan. My only remembered ride in it was infamous. Dad, took us for a scenic drive on East Blvd., which sits atop the Palisade and I looked across the Hudson to the skyline. We were heading toward Weehawken, the next town south of W.N.Y. and as we reached the end of the East Blvd., with its monument of Alexander Hamilton, killed in the duel with Aaron Burr on that spot, the right rear wheel of the Jewett just fell completely off its axle. I can't recall sequential events, but what vividly remains is a virtually screaming Momma, lambasting our ugly fate on this joyride and imprecations of Dad's unthriftiness in buying such a wreck. Whatever happened to that first Jewett (a diminutive Semite?) I can't remember.

2. When Mom and Dad opened the store on Bergenline Avenue, they were both gone from the house and Norman was in charge when alone. One time on the ceramic base of the kitchen range we built a little fire with safety matches but luckily our act was snuffed out in time, I believe by a neighbor, the Seidels next door.

3. With Dad on the road, Mom in the store, it was a walk of about 12 blocks north on Hudson Ave. to 17th then west on 17th to the store and as the business grew the family had to have a maid. She was Swiss and one of her duties was to prepare a lunch for Momma in the store which Norman and I would carry those 12 blocks. Soup in a leaky container was part of this transport, and can recall the warm wet sticky feel of that boy with about 1/2 arriving safely for Mother. Once a letter came for our maid with tragic news that her brother had been fatally gored by a bull at their farm, and I believe she left us to return to the old country and family.

4. My first whiff of politics came at 7 years old with the campaign between Hoover and Roosevelt. Perhaps there was a polling station in the public school across the street, and a dispute arose among voters. The fight got bad enough to have the paddy wagon of the W.N.Y. police dept. park by Merkens Candy store and the patrolman arrested and took away a number of men.

5. A prime summer joy was the trolley-car trip straight north from 11th st., the tracks ran right by the east side of our apartment building, to the wooded setting of Palisades Amusement Park at Cliffside, N.J. That public service trolley line ran a rustic route, unshared with other road traffic and so the swaying rush of the car was most satisfying and the trip pleasantly long. We would go on the weekend for then not only did you have all the rides to enjoy, but there was a vaudeville show gratis to all entrants. There was minor ritualism linked with those shows, for Dad would invariably buy Norman and me a box of "Cracker Jacks", a treat I thought was enjoyed exclusively at the Amusement Park, for I never saw or sought Cracker Jacks at Merkens back home. We'd settle into our seats, hunt for the prize in each box, (oh how the quality and allure of those prizes have evaporated lately) and really anticipate the puzzle, tiny booklet, or tiny toy figure we found. That box of caramel popcorn lasted through the show, and I especially enjoyed their brown skinned glazed peanuts hiding between the longer popcorn segments.

Those shows were really good and there would be a progression of magicians, trained dog troupes, acrobats, dancers which made the variety so satisfying. That outdoor stage had its back to the New York skyline on the top of the Palisades so it's location was also appealing. The usual finale was the high diver who would climb this immense ladder (so it seemed to a 6 year old) higher and higher until he reached a small platform, upon which he set himself looking 1/2 the size he had when he began his climb. Then as he prepared to dive into this tub of water (maybe it was 8-10 feet high and no more than 30 feet in diameter), the assistant would torch the waters surface into which with much preparatory fanfare and suspense, the diver would jump, his tremendous splash putting out the fire with him emerging triumphant to our cheers. Yes, those summer evenings; rides, "Cracker Jacks", show, the diver hero, and the swaying lulling trolley car ride - by now fast asleep against Dad - were the high points of kid's life for Norman and me.

6. Jack, do you remember Dad taking us into his bed on Sunday mornings and with the help of two boxes filled with pamphlets would instruct us into mental and bodily virtues. He had collected, it must have been through the 20's, literature from any number of companies who through allegorical tales instructed one how to live well, and at the same time, subtly, or not so subtly, encourage one to use the product. There were pieces from "Scott's Cod Liver Oil Emulsion", with a leather fisherman in oilskin hat and cape aboard a storm tossed trawler, Borden's, Metropolitan Life Ins. Co., toothpaste companies, Ovaltine, and other trademarks of that day which catered to personal hygiene, nutrition and the good moral life. Dad, even had one pamphlet programmed to instill a deep loathing to smoking. To a 5 -6 year old this fierce picture instilled fear: Picture a hapless man, entwined from toe to above his head with the suffocating coils of "Serpent Nicotine", with scales, piercing eyes and flaming breath. With the poor man completely in its grip, she is placing a lighted cigarette between his lips, which the victim with insufficient strength tries vainly to push that cigarette away. And as I remember the word "**nicotine**" in ornate letters covered the scaly coat of this monster. This is how Norman and I learned not to smoke.

Every Sunday we would spend an hour going through this indoctrination to help us live cleanly ,healthily, and happily. So we learned the importance of bathing, brushing teeth, drinking a quart of milk daily, though Dad did not believe in Scott's Cod Liver Oil Emulsion, he kept in ready supply a big bottle of Squibbs Cod Liver Oil in the ice box, and each morning after breakfast and before school, we would get a whole tablespoon of Vitamin. A & D Rich fresh oil, followed mercifully by a big green olive, whose salty tangy flavor cut the loathsome fish flavor out of our mouths by the time we reached public school across the street.

7. One more incident at 234 11th Street. As I said the trolley ran by our apt. and terminated at the 42nd St. Ferry Terminal. For a number of New Year Eve's, Dad had the ritual of greeting the New Year along with the multitudes at Times Square. Mother never went on these jaunts. We would take the trolley, which descended the Palisades by a long sloping downward cut in it's side. Then across the 42nd Street Ferry, and we always hoped there would be floating ice to hit and crush on our way over. Then another trolley up 42nd Street to Time Square. Sometimes this adventure had it's pain, especially if the weather was cold, and no matter how insulated by clothing, to a youngster waiting in the throngs

with toes so cold it seemed an eternity for that last 1/2 hour of the year to pass and, as last night, 62 years later, we kept our eyes on the Times building for the blessed announcement of the Holiday. Then we would push our way to the Horn and Hardart Cafeteria on Time Square and got the treat that warmed and satisfied; three big griddle cakes with butter disappearing rapidly between their hot sides, accompanied by a foaming cup of hot chocolate, dispensed through the tube surrounded by a marvelously sculptured metal lions head. We were then cozy, happy and would from warmth see the happy crowds through the broad panes of the Horn and Hardart.

Name spelling change: Dad was most proud that he applied for U.S. citizenship ASAP after disembarkation. He remembered the name of the judge and it was an Irish one linked to a Mc. Dad gave his name and then the judge told him that if he wished the pronunciation Bloom, he would have to change the spelling of Blum to Bloom. Dad agreed to that and so we officially became the Blooms.

Shipyard Work: Dad used to tell us that during 1917-1918 after the U.S. had entered the war, he had worked in a shipyard. How long a period it was he didn't say and his exact task remains unknown. However, he did say that one day at work he had taken off his coat and put it somewhere close by in his work. Apparently they were riveting plates to the sides of the hull and at the end of the day's work he went to get his coat. During the work however, another riveter had placed plates over the place where his coat lay and it was permanently sealed within the hull with no chance of retrieval. This is the sum of what I know of Dad's shipyard experiences.

Stores: This is what I remember of the stores on the block. When Mom and Dad first went into business it was a small store with only one glass front and it was the 3rd or 4th store from the 17th Street corner. First their was an undertaker, then a German Bakery and then their 1st small store. Then no more than 1.5 to 2 years later they moved 3 or 4 storefronts towards 18th Street. I know I was pleased with the move for 684 had 2 display windows and the first store had only one display window and was really too narrow to handle the bulky rolls of linoleum. At that time remnant pieces sold for \$0.18 a square yard, whereas regular rolls sold for \$0.39 to \$0.49 square yard.

other stores  
Undertaker  
Sunshine  
Market  
Zeitlin  
Furniture  
Blooms  
Bargain  
Floor  
Covering  
Saputo  
Italian  
Bedmans  
Pharmacy  
Notion  
Store  
Original  
German  
Bakery  
Store  
Grocery

**Bloom's Bargain Floor Covering**  
*Go where the thrifty go to save*  
**684 Bergenline Avenue**  
**West New York, New Jersey**

684

18thSt (now 62<sup>nd</sup>)                      Bergenline Ave West New York. New Jersey ca  
1930                                      17 St. (now 61<sup>st</sup>)  
6/5/00

Jack; here are the stores I recall from the corner of 17th St. to 18thSt on Bergenline Ave.

1. Early thirties when we had the first store closer to seventeenth St. which was much smaller than the one we moved into in about 2 years which was in the center of the street. Also its glass display front was small.

**<-18th  
17th->**

Shemesh/ Luncheonette/Hat Blocker-Shoe Shine/ Zeitlin's/  
Saputo's/Berman/ Bloom's/Notions/ German Bakery/Funeral Home

**Shemesh Grocery** (Jewish rye at \$.17 and butter and cheese out of tubs with angry looking knives for portioning fixed in those wooden staves when not in use)

**Luncheonette** as best as I recall: remember a donut making machine in window.

**Hat Blocker-Shoe Shine** (Run by a Greek)

**Zeitlin's Baby Carriage and toy store**

**Saputo's Italian Grocery** (all those enormous cheeses hanging on hooks)

**Berman Pharmacy** (with those big blue and red gloves in the front window)

**Bloom's Floor Covering**

**Notions Shop**

**German Bakery**

**Funeral Home**

2. Later thirties and early forties:

Shemesh/Luncheonette/Liquor/Levy's /Blooms/Saputo/Ziegler/Two small storefronts/German Bakery/Funeral Home

**Shemesh** the grocer on the corner of eighteenth street.

**Luncheonette** and seems the Greek had moved up to that from hat blocking

**Liquor Store**

**Levy's Sporting Goods**(Ah the smell of a new 1st baseman's mitt)

**Bloom's Bargain Floor Covering-"Go Where the Thrifty Go to Save"** (jhb) Our Larger store with those big glass fronts bordering the entrance.

**Saputo Italian Grocery** still producing a plethora of pungent smells

**Ziegler Furniture and Appliance Store**; believe it took the place of

Berman's Pharmacy. I (jhb) can corroborate that-have memory of going into store two doors down and recording "By the Shores of Gitchee Gummi, Longfellow's Hiawatha.

**Two small storefronts**, one of which held our first store and don't remember what they later had, but one was still that notions place.

**German Bakery**

**Funeral Home**

From e-mail letter-11/27/2000-- David turns 50 in December 2000. He was born in Mary Greely Hospital in Ames, Iowa. I had just won the Borden award for the highest grade point in the Dairy Dept of Iowa State, which was \$300, and presented it as a gift to Helen in celebration of his birth.

Thanks for reminding me. I don't think the trip to enjoy with all the mispacha will be possible.

The sclerosis I inherited from Dad, z'l'bracha, is getting worse with age and I've developed a limp which makes walking uncomfortable. In fact, it's been recommended I get a cane to steady me; imagine Erlinda wanted to get me one for my birthday, but I've put it off. But you know, Jack, I have to be thankful for this bum right leg.

It was the leg that kept me from going with the 99th Infantry Div. in 1944. That division replaced a tired division on the Ardennes front and they took hell when the Nazi's made that last winter offensive. So, each time the leg almost trips me, I praise G-d.

I trust someone will video the proceedings so vicariously I will be able to enjoy this great simcha. After all, that's how I had such naches when you showed me the video of Rachel receiving her chayelet award. Come to think of it, the honors, baruch haShem, flow at decade spaced intervals for you and your wonderful family.

Ace Shlomo

What a wonderful, momentous time with you, Ingrid and two "dorot" of wonderful children. I really caught up on Bloom family history: being abroad so long distorted time and events. Going over all this history, with your wealth of data, was so necessary for my life.

The family enjoyed the photos very much: I'm sure the convocation was "videoed" and wonder if some day the NE Blooms can get a copy.

Will write Ben & Lee this weekend.

Oh yes, that sweat shirt for Erlinda. Female size extra-large, but no rush. Try to get Connecticut or Fairfield emblazoned across the bust or back. Let us know how much we send for it.

Question: I may have left one short-sleeved blue shirt in Fairfield (maybe its happily hiding in the Doll House)

Great news about Sol F. Bloom's book.

Erlinda really enjoyed getting to know the whole Bloom family, circa

1935 at Norman's zl'bracha Bar Mitzvah photo & I pointed out our "intellectual giant" the professor standing in the left upper corner. (They sure forgot to bring you in the baby carriage into the assemblage!)

Love you all much & more each day

Ace

Sol and Israel

First the 35, known as the lamed-heh, Hebrew letters for 35

Background;

Ace;

Came across this on one of my rabbi lists. Thought you might be interested. I must have deleted Rabbi Feintuch's original message. But I can get it if you want it. I'm also including what I posted to the list.

RAVKAV Digest 1319

Topics covered in this issue include:

- 1) Yossi Feintuch's query.  
by Rothschild-Berlin@t-online.de (Walter Rothschild)
- 2) The Lamed-Hey on the way to Gush Etzion  
by Walter Zanger <walterz@netvision.net.il>
  
- 4) Arab Shepherd and Lamed Hay  
by Wendy Spears <rabbiwendy@earthlink.net>

From: Rothschild-Berlin@t-online.de (Walter Rothschild)

Re. Yossi Feintuch's query about the fate of the "Lamed Heh", the 35 Haganah men who tried to bring support to the Etzion Bloc settlements in the Israeli War of Independence:

1. I have "The Faithful City" by Dow Joseph, on the Siege of Jerusalem in 1948. p.73:

"On January 18, a group of thirty-five volunteers had set out from Jerusalem to try to break the Arab blockade and bring help to Etzion.

The group included some of the finest young Jews in Palestine, top students at the Hebrew University and a few young scientists who were already well enough known to be considered national assets. It was a tragically small force to send deep into enemy country, but they were all trained in patrol and reconnaissance techniques and in night fighting. They were commanded by an experienced and able officer.

The first night they started from Bet Hakerem, along a mountain path which had been carefully planned. But they failed to reach their goal by daylight, and the commander brought them back unharmed. The second night they went as far as Hartuv [now Beit Shemesh] in armoured cars, taking full equipment, arms and ammunition, and proceeded by a route the Arabs were not likely to expect Jews to take. But they must have been spotted too early. The Arabs put in a 'fazaag', their own form of grapevine alarm, to the villages of the neighbourhood. Some hundreds of armed Arabs were assembled, and the Jewish force was intercepted in a ravine not far from its objective. Arabs say the critical battle was in daylight. For some unknown reason it was not on a ridge, where the Jewish group's tactical training should have put them. They fought until their ammunition was exhausted. Every one of the thirty-five was killed. In death one of the men held a stone in his hand, a last desperate effort to fight the enemy."

2. In Netanel Lorch "The Edge of the Sword, Israel's War of Independence", p.62:

"Kfar Etzion emerged from the assault with its meager reserves of arms and ammunition depleted and cried out for reinforcements. [On the previous day 30 defenders had killed 150 Arabs and wounded another 150] Convoys were allowed to move only under strict British supervision, and the transportation of arms was practically impossible. It was therefore decided to send a select platoon of thirty-five men, comprising one-half of HISH and the other of Palmach, as reinforcements by way of tortuous mountain trails. Commanded by Danni Mass, a Palmach veteran who, until one week before, had been in charge of the Etzion bloc, the platoon left Hartuv in the evening, but day broke before it had reached its destination. An Arab, it is believed, met the platoon, deliberately misled it, and meanwhile mobilized the Arabs from the entire area. They swarmed

from their villages to attack the platoon and to destroy it in revenge for the earlier defeat. The platoon took up a position near the opening of a cave on the road to Surif. There it stood and fought to the last man. No one remained to tell the story and their end is shrouded in legend. A British police officer said that he found the body of one boy with a stone, his last weapon, in his hand.

Six cryptic messages, in the logbook of the Etzion bloc tell the same tale:

**Jan. 15, 1948.** Message 20, Jerusalem to Uzi (the new commander of Etzion bloc, who had relieved Dani Mass): 'Platoon left Hartuv on foot tonight on its way to you. It carried explosives for demolition of bridges between Hebron and Kfar Etzion. If possible carry this out tonight.'

**Jan. 16.** Message 31, Uzi to Jerusalem. 'Reinforcements have not yet arrived. Time 10.30am.'

**Jan. 16.** message 29. Jerusalem to Uzi. 'Unconfirmed information from Arab sources concerning destruction of Jews near Beit Safa. That is close to you. Do your best.'

**Jan. 16.** message No. 40. Jerusalem from Uzi. 'Three detachments have been sent to search for reinforcements in the direction of Bet Safa, Nahlin and Jaba.'

**Jan. 16.** 8.30 am. Message No. 34, Jerusalem to Uzi. 'This morning 80 men left to search for the platoon. Has the platoon reached you yet?'

**Jan. 17.** 8.10am. Message No. 44, Uzi to Jerusalem, after the bodies had been brought to the Etzion Bloc by British policemen: 'Send immediately names of dead.' "

3. Christopher Sykes in "Crossroads to Israel" does not mention the incident at all, though he mentions Haganah and other 'atrocities' against Arabs.

4. In "A History of the Israeli Army" by Ze'ev Schiff there is nothing on the incidents of January 1948 but some useful historical context for what happened later:

p.28f. "In this second stage of the war another 1,253 Jews, among them 500 civilians, were killed, and following Operation Nachshon the road to Jerusalem was again closed to Jewish convoys. Grimmer yet, in mid-May four settlements of the Etzion bloc near Jerusalem fell. Earlier proposals made to the Haganah command to evacuate the bloc

settlements had been rejected, but the shock caused by the fall of the bloc resulted in a decision to evacuate a number of settlements around Jerusalem (Atarot, Neve Yaakov, and Hartuv, and the potash works at the north of the Dead Sea). The Arab irregular forces that descended on the Etzion bloc settlements were joined by a battalion of the Arab Legion, and the final charge was mounted on the morning of May 11. Legion armoured cars penetrated the village of Kfar Etzion, followed by thousands of armed men from the local Arab villages. One hundred and fifty inhabitants of Kfar Etzion were massacred. In the last stage of the fighting, only eighty men and women remained. After surrendering, they were brought to a field and cut down by machine-gun fire. A few tried to reach their weapons, but then all were killed save four. Two of these succeeded in reaching a nearby settlement; one hid and was saved by an elderly Arab; while the other, a girl, was caught by two irregulars who attempted to rape and kill her, but an Arab Legion officer shot them and took her prisoner. When the fate of the inhabitants of Kfar Etzion became known the following day, the three other settlements of the bloc surrendered. Two hundred and fifty defenders of the Etzion bloc had fallen in battle."

5. "A Job Well Done", the history of the Palestine Police, also makes no mention of the incident.

So - from the sources at my easy disposal, there seems to be no direct confirmation of the event/myth Yossi has heard, except insofar as there WAS some contact with an Arab who saw the poor fellow - whether they caught him, spoke with him, spared him, is not ascertainable from the these sources, and of course there were no Jewish survivors to tell the tale - if this story exists, it must have come from some Arab source.

Shalom, Rabbi Walter Rothschild. Berlin.

The story of meeting the Arab shepherd, sparing his life, and being betrayed by him, is widely told and just as widely believed. But it probably didn't happen. There were no Haganah survivors of the battle, of course, and obviously no chance of interrogating the Arabs who were involved. The most obvious reason not to believe the story is that shepherds, Arab and otherwise, do not wander about the hills at 2 AM in the middle of the winter. Not if they value their sheep.

An interesting side-light; this very same story was told about an army patrol in Lebanon a decade ago which was said also to have spared the life of a shepherd, and walked therefore right into an ambush as a result. The son of friends was killed there. But that story, though published in the Hebrew press at the time, was apparently not true either.

Walter Zanger  
Ein Karem,  
Madregot Ha-Bikur 58  
Jerusalem ISRAEL 95745  
Tel/Fax 972-2-641-9963

From: Wendy Spears <rabbiwendy@earthlink.net>

For Yossi Feintuch and all others interested,

From my husband the historian: To the best of my knowledge, this event of Jan. 16, 1948, regarding the Arab shepherd is factual. Please see Dan Kurtzman's book "Genesis 1948."

All the best,  
Wendy Spears, C'91

Ace;  
This is the e-mail I posted to the list in response;

Friends and Colleagues;  
I missed the beginning of the thread, which I believe began with Yossi Feintuch. I am curious what it was.  
My brother Shlomo (Solomon Bloom) was almost one of the lamed heh. He was taken off the truck at the very last moment due to the fact that he was married. He was a US Army veteran, who made aliyah in 1946 aboard the Marine Carp. He was in the Agricultural program of the Hebrew University. He and his then wife Helen were spending the 1947-48 academic year at the Hebrew University. If anyone wants some information, I think he would be glad to share it. His e-mail is bloom@ini-agworld.com and his snail mail is Solomon Bloom Ph.D 5918 S. 152nd Ave Omaha, NE 68137 402 896 3039/f 402 331 0169  
Sincerely,

Jack H Bloom

Ace; Let me know that this arrived.

luvya  
Jack

From Yossi Feintuch

Dear Jack,

(I mistakenly emailed this personal note to the whole Ravkav list. It was meant for you personally.)

When I originally posted my question regarding the Lamed Heh, I had many doubts whether I'd connect with anyone. Yet, I knew that if I did not try, I'd never be closer to finding the answer I was looking for. January 16/5 Sh'vat (1948) is the Yahrzeit of the L"H. Surprisingly, there were quite a few responses to my question, which was whether there's any historic credibility to the (folkloric?) story about a nightly encounter between the L"H and an Arab Shepherd.

Accordingly, the L"H spared the fellow's life but he went to alert the whole area. My sense at this point is that there's no evidence of such an encounter.

I thank you for your (obvious) interest and response. I will contact your brother.

L'shalom,

Yossi

From Ace;

1/14/02

Thanks so much; I did not know this incident was in "The Faithful City." I'll have to look it up; perhaps the JCC library has it here. I do remember the officers of my g'dud discussing why I shouldn't be sent and it

hinged mainly on what would happen if an American was lost and a wife bereaved in Jerusalem. You know, a yeshiva bochur went in my place; his name Moshe Perlman. I also remember, the British radio announcer reporting the massacre, and there was an attempt, luckily aborted, to follow up and seek revenge on the responsible Arabs.

Actually, my initial devotions each morning should be in praise of Helen for enabling my life to proceed to this day.

Greetings Rabbi Feintuch!

Well, well-Columbia, MO. Three times yearly from '85-'89, I flew into the Columbia Reg. Airport. From there the Dawe's Laboratories rep. ( I worked with this company out of Chicago) took me through Columbia and up to Glasgow on the Missouri River, where I did animal nutritional work for the Glasgow Coop. Also I've been to the Univ. of Missouri at Animal Science meetings a number of times. Also one of the most illustrious members of the Animal Science faculty there from the thirties to the sixties was a Dr. Samuel Brody--a nice Jewish boy of Russian origin. Dr. Brody wrote the text "Bioenergetics and Growth" wherein he developed and set out the equations used to calculate the energy requirements of domestic animals. To this day, animal scientists use and quote Brody's pioneer research. I'm sure the Univ. library has his book in their stacks.

In 11/47 the Haganah assembled all the Americans attending the Hebrew Univ. Most were veterans of World War II using the "GI Bill" to study there. We were asked to join the Haganah, all but one I remember, a fellow named Blum, in poultry work from Cornell, agreed to this demand.. Early 12/47, a group of us were sent by armored bus to a Yemenite moshav outside Jerusalem. We trained, dry run entirely-never fired a weapon, because of British control and local Arabs. We returned to the gedud bordering on the Katamon(Arab) section of Jerusalem. Later, I was posted to a unit near Beit Hakarem. It was from there the Lamed Hay set out. Being married, I heard the officers discussing my married status. They decided for compassionate and possible future diplomatic problems not to send me in case something should happen to me. In my place went Moshe Perlman, an American yeshiva trained young man who had been with me in the Haganah training. I remember with pride and awe the heavily armed and equipped "chevra", some of the yeshuv's best, leave on their fatal mission. I believe it was about 36 hours later that a local British radio announcer told of the massacre.

Before that announcement, our gedud had prepared to set out reinforcements to learn of their position, this plan aborted by the radio report.

I cannot verify the "Arab shepherd's spared life", but throughout my stay in Israel- '57-'61, this was the standard story whenever the tragic loss came up. I was busy with a young family and engrossed in dairy cattle research work at Beit Dagan, so had no time to pursue the validity of that story. This was better left to historians and writers doing research into that troubled but heroic period.

Shalom Rav

Shlomo Bloom

From a letter to his daughter Ruth; re; the lamed-heh

Oct 27 2003

Netiv Ha-Lamed-He

This is the story I told my daughter Ruth as the fateful year of 1948 began in Jerusalem. I was then in the Haganah. There was no formal induction for as an American citizen it was illegal to fight in the armed forces of a foreign country. To do so could forfeit my citizenship. But we American students at the Hebrew University were in a very odd situation. Let me explain:

- President Truman we felt was friendly to the aims of the Jewish settlement in Palestine. Our opinion was that he would not take action against us, even if we did enter the "illegal" Jewish armed forces
- Since the Jewish population, at that time in Palestine had not attained statehood, we would be in armed forces that did not represent a recognized nation. So it would have been hard for the United States to establish for whom we fought.
- We students joked, at that time in Jerusalem, that before going off to train in the Haganah, we would take our passports to the American counsel in Jerusalem. We would ask the staff there to keep our passports in their safe. We then would pick them up after finishing what

had to be done with the Arabs to establish the Jews' place in the sun as a recognized country.

Only about half of the American students in late 1947 at the Hebrew University had been in the armed forces during the Second World War. The others had no military training nor knowledge as to how to handle and use weapons. But we were all gathered together and sent to a Haganah training base. This base was at a small farm settlement outside Jerusalem, settled partially by Jews from Yemen. We got into a bus to make this trip. The seats in the bus had been taken out, and the sides of the bus had been reinforced with steel armor plate to protect passengers from Arab gunfire. So we all sat on the floor and so began the trip, and without mishap along the way we arrived safely. The hills around Jerusalem were bleak in early winter, and the crude living quarters we were assigned did not help our cheerfulness. Now, since the British were in active control of Palestine, all training was carried out without the firing of a single weapon. Such firing would have surely alerted the British to our illegal presence and would have nullified any attempt for proper training. So those of us familiar with rifles, grenades and machine guns, along with the Haganah officers detailed to our group, instructed our innocent companions in the use of these weapons. We sharpened our skills as how to maneuver in the hilly surroundings, how to take proper cover against the enemy, and we went on simulated night patrols. In the dark, we learned how to move in proper military formation, and how to keep from losing contact with each other at night.

I really felt sorry for those student recruits with no prior military experience, for this was a hell of a method to inculcate our comrades into the basic skills of being foot soldiers. Anyway, we did the best we could and spent about two weeks at this improvised and largely silent, undetected Haganah base.

While there, we received intelligence that an Arab group was planning an action in our vicinity. To counter their move, part of our group would go on patrol to learn what the Arabs were up to. Since I had been in the U. S. army for almost three years, I was selected among others to take part in the patrol. We spent anxious hours before the time set to move out, and I was most worried about this operation's outcome. Well, about two hours before "zero time" it began to rain heavily and the patrol was

canceled. That sound of rain drumming noisily on the metal roofed barracks was, I felt, the sweetest music I had ever heard. From that night onward, I determined never to get angry with rain in my life, no matter how much of a problem or inconvenience it might make for me.

We completed our training, returned to Jerusalem in that same armored bus, and were assigned variously to Haganah units in neighborhoods closely adjacent to Arab enclaves in Jerusalem. We were quartered in regular residential homes, where during daylight hours we remained out of sight, so that the British patrols- attempting to keep peace between Jew and Arab- would be unaware of our presence. However, at night activity began. We were assigned guard duty on the roofs of the houses to which we were posted. Now, in January-February it is cold in Jerusalem at night, and to do guard duty four hours at a stretch was not easy. You're all alone on the roof, its very difficult to stay warm in the damp cold, and your continuous shivering, was a combination of weather discomfort and the inherent fear of an action or patrol by our Arab foes, just a few rooftops away.

Now, during this dismal winter, my then wife Helen was, of course, apart from me. She was staying at our room at Pension Har-Aviv in Beit Hakarem. She too had to make the best of these troubled times with the companionship of the wives and single female students from our group still trying to attend classes at the University. The fact that I was married saved my life in Jerusalem. Here is the story.

The settlement Ramat Rachel, slightly south of Jerusalem, was being besieged by the Arab Legion. The Haganah decided to send a small force of thirty-five soldiers, most from the Pal Mach's best veterans, plus a few from our group of American recruits, to try to lift the terrible threat at Ramat Rachel. I was one of the Americans selected to join the thirty-five. During the final determination of who was to go, I was on my bunk listening to the officers of our battalion discussing those to be sent. One said; " Well we can't send Shlomo Bloom, he's married." The other officer asked; "Why not?" The reply came back; "Well suppose Shlomo becomes a casualty and doesn't get back here after this action. Then we have his American wife sitting, grieving alone here in Jerusalem. We can't handle all the problems that would come up. There will be too many diplomatic and political problems if that happens; we just can't be concerned with such a problem." So I was struck from the

list and Moshe Pearlstein, whom I had trained with but had no previous U. S. army experience, was selected in my place to join the thirty-five.

I will always remember how formidable- yes, how heroic- the "35" appeared in all their battle gear, as they assembled on the edge of Beit Hakarem. They were the Yishuv's best and seemed invincible in my eyes. The group went out to reach Ramat Rachel, but never made it through the Judean hills. Twenty-four hours went by and no word from the "35." Then our officers assembled a further group, I among them, to seek them out. Just before we started, the officers were listening to the news and there was this British bulletin stating that the "35" had been caught in an Arab ambush and there were no survivors. This tragedy was a terrible blow to the Haganah, the kibbutz fell to the Arab Legion a few days later and its surviving members were taken prisoner.

My dear daughter Ruth, I write this story forty-seven years after its occurrence. Being married to my first wife Helen in January of 1948 was my salvation. And what eternal gratitude I have for that Haganah officer who decided not to send me because of my marriage. That sweet soul Moshe, my good friend from training days and life together in the Haganah, became, as far as I know, one of the first Americans to fall in the war of independence for Israel. His sacrifice has given me a long eventful life- baruch ha-shem. And it was just that twist of fate that I was luckily married at that time.

Ruth, if you should ever visit Israel again, be sure to ask the location of the "Forest of the Thirty-five." Yes, there is today a forest planted to memorialize those "35" hero soldiers of Israel

Sol's Stories;

**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.

## PARIS AND THE KETUBAH

(Solomon Bloom, Ph.D.)

When Helen and I left Israel in 1948 to continue my studies in agriculture, we traveled by ship to Marseilles and continued back home on the S.S. United States. While in Paris we ran into difficulties in travel accommodations which leads into this interesting story.

We had been married in the courtyard of Cousin Katz's home, and naturally give the Ketubah then standard with the religious community in Palestine. On the French ship from Haifa no questions were asked as to our relationship, thus no problem arose as to cabin quarters and we just moved in. However, when we went to book our cabin with the United States Line office in Paris, Helen's passport was in her maiden name, Goldberg, so we couldn't get a cabin together.

I promptly pulled our Ketubah as evidence of our proper status, but this was of no help confounding the clerk with a page of Hebrew script. In order to travel together we would need legal certification that the Ketubah did bind us as man and wife. How were we to do this as strangers in Paris? Naturally we turned to Jews for help. We told them that we needed someone in Paris, not only versed in Hebrew translation to English, but also empowered legally to notarize that translation. Finally they came up with just the person we needed.

There was a Jew in Paris by the name Lipsky, who had lived through the Nazi occupation and whose profession had been that of the official interpreter for the Tribunal de la Seine, one of the courts in Paris. An official at the Joint Distribution Committee provided written directions, and after a number of transfers on the Metro, we finally arrived at the apartment building where Mr. Lipsky lived. He heard us out in English, of course, and set about with the translation of the Ketubah and when completed made it kosher with the French legal seal of his office.

Back at the United States Line office, the clerk was satisfied with the notarized translation and finally assigned us a two-bunk cabin. With the problem resolved, we were able to enjoy the few days before

boarding ship at Le Havre. We had very little money, so decided that all day we would eat their marvelous bread and dates that were in season from Algeria, and this frugality would allow us one good meal daily. So for the following evenings we sampled French, Russian, Chinese cuisine and the final evening meal was the Kosher restaurant in the reviving Jewish quarter.

This incident entered our memory store, and from September of 1948, when I did one semester at Franklin & Marshall College, in Lancaster Pa., before I could begin my studies at Iowa State in February, I was then immersed in studies taking up to 18 hours each quarter. I took the BS in Dairy Husbandry, completed by Masters in Dairy Nutrition at Penn State and decided to complete the Ph.D. back in Iowa State since they had the superior program in my field. It is now 1954, deep in my research, living in the barracks for veterans back of the campus, and of course friends with the few Jewish students and two couples studying agriculture for their return to Israel.

One evening at that time, Helen had baked her famous cinnamon rolls and we had invited the Nachmanys, the Angels, the couples bound for Israel, and another Jewish friend, originally from Germany who was doing his Ph.D. work on the economics of raising irrigated alfalfa on the high plains of Nebraska. Mark Angel was married to a French cholutzah who was doing graduate work in animal breeding. Michelle at that time was the only woman in that department, and she was an oddity on field trips measuring genetic traits of cattle with all the male staff around her. So, in her profession and passion for Israel she was, we might say, a pioneer twice over.

Our conversations revolved about our studies, our goals related to Israel, our survival budgets, our children and of course our travel experiences. So this evening we recalled the Ketubah in Paris and especially with Michelle, who was from that city, expounded on all the details of this experience. When I completed the story I asked Michelle; " You lived in Paris, and though it is a metropolis, did you ever hear of a Mr. Lipsky, who worked with the Tribunal de la Seine and who translated and notarized our Ketubah?" A growing smile covered her face and she replied; "Of course Shlomo, I know Mr. Lipsky very well. He is my father!"

## 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 hat 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 Chalutz 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.

## THE BLOOMS AT KIBBUTZ GVAT - NEWLYWED IDEALISTS (Solomon Bloom, Ph.D.)

Once married at the Katz home, I took Helen with me to continue my agricultural training at Gvat. Up to that time, I roomed with other young people in small concrete structures erected to handle the "illegals" from Europe. I remember standing with Helen beneath the palm trees fronting the communal dining hall and discussing couple housing with the "chaver" in charge of this activity. He was one of the original settlers and looking us over, this soft idealistic couple from rich America, he said' "You know, we went through our period of the romantica many years ago, and it is only right that you have this privilege now. Follow me and we'll get you settled properly."

This we did and he led us down the concrete pathway, where between rooms housing veteran members , he stopped before a large tent and said; "You'll live here." I wasn't quite ready for this for I had had a regular roof over my head to this point, and had not imagined that my bride and I would have canvas over our heads. At least, the tent was fairly roomy, had a concrete base with ceramic tiles and for furnishings a dresser, a small table with lamp, and a bare double metal bedstead with paltry springing and no mattress in sight. Objections would belay idealistic motives and we accepted this taste of the romantica.

"But where is the mattress," I asked? "No problem," replied the housing director, "just go over to the warehouse and they'll get you a mattress." So it was and after we had moved our belongings into the tent I started off to get that essential part of married life.

Once settled in with the exception of that mattress, I went over to the warehouse and explained my need to the man in charge. In a moment he comes out with a large double sized mattress cover, and I thought this considerate, for Mother had always protected our mattresses at home in this way, and asked again for the mattress itself. "You don't understand", was the reply, "this is the mattress." You just go over to the straw storage shed and fill it with straw to you liking." Now this was a blow for young Americans, for we had always slept on innerspring mattresses in a family which sold them from their store on Bergenline

Ave. But we were to be treated equally with all the many newcomers, stretching the ability of the kibbutz to absorb its quota of "olim."

Without telling Helen I go over to the huge pile of golden wheat straw and start stuffing the furthest seam of the mattress cover. The work went slow as I punched in the brightest straw into the furthest recesses of that coarse poplin sack. It seemed to go on forever for it sure takes a lot of straw, and you have to try getting it even and that meant building up the volume with great care. As I was doing this, kibbutznik on their barnyard duties came by and graced me with smiles and snickering as I stuffed away to fulfill my potential conjugal aspirations.

Finally, the bag was fully stuffed but despite my newly acquired skills in mattress making, I could not get it flat and even across its surface. Somehow, the straw down the middle length of the bag was much higher than at the sides, and despite my blows to correct the bulge, it would not level itself. I was ready for the final step, to sew it shut. I go again to the warehouse for a big needle and coarse thread, and on the way think out how to transport my creation from the straw pile to our tent. We had two teams of horses and their wagons for transport needs, but they were too big and certainly unclean for my needs. But then I remembered Nannele, the jackass which pulled the small cart used for taking rocks from the fields, carrying sacks of feed or the milk cans from the dairy. With permission I brought Nannele and cart to my site of production, and by this time Helen knew of what I was doing for mutual future pleasure and brought our Brownie camera to record the event. Lost these many years was the photo describing my artful sewing motions, Helen urging me on with resigned good humor, and Nannele standing munching straw waiting for us to finish.

Finish we did. Together we hoisted the mattress onto the cart and steadying this load, overspreading the confines of the cart, I clucked Nannele into motion. It seemed that all of Kibbutz Gvat was enjoying this spectacle as we made our way to our tent, and manhandled this monstrosity of a mattress onto the bare metal bed frame. With our curiosity and mild trepidation we looked forward to our first night together on that oddly ridged mattress that Bloom made.

The straw mattress served the purpose but brought other problems. Both Helen and I had hay fever, so we slept on a vast bed of innoculum

with constant sneezing mixed with itching and running noses. Human pressure finally leveled our mattress, and in a few weeks the center was much lower than the sides. So we survived this period of "romantica" and managed enough rest to carry out our daily work, and in a small way through our efforts, contributed to the future realization of the State of Israel.

### **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 Ramallah 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 Weizmann 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."

## THE BLOOMS AT KIBBUTZ GVAT - ALONE IN COMMUNAL LIFE (Solomon Bloom, Ph.D.)

As I was not a son of a farmer, the Agricultural Faculty at the Hebrew University required their students to spend a year at a mixed farm, and Kibbutz Gvat, overlooking the fertile Jezreel valley, was chosen as my introduction to agrarian practices. I arrived there in November 1946, and my adventure in communal life on the land began.

The kibbutz had been established by Polish and Russian chalutzim in 1920 and by my arrival had developed into a diversified farm with a total population of 600 on 4000 dunams producing a wide range of agricultural products. In tree crops we had olive, apple, plums, and citrus; field crops of wheat, corn, and cattle forages; a large section produced vegetables of myriad variety befitting the four seasons; and poultry, dairy cattle and a flock of sheep in animal production. The last but most beautiful branch was the vineyard, rolling down the hillside towards the valley, where its dry gnarled vines of winter would change to a supreme summer green, heavy with delicious table grapes for market.

All 600 on the kibbutz were not members. A good third on the settlement were the illegal immigrants of that day, plus a group of teenage Bulgarians who had been saved and brought to Gvat by the Jewish Agency. Also, there was a small group of young Egyptian Zionists eager to work the land, while receiving the most delicious Halvah ever from their families in Cairo. So I too joined this mix, equally ignorant of farming and we were all dubbed affectionately as "P'cok." Now this in Hebrew is "a cork" and as a cork bounces easily from place to place, so all new workers were sent to work in many different areas, depending on the specific daily schedules set by the managers of each specialty on the kibbutz.

While I told the work coordinator of a vague desire to work with dairy cattle, he intimated that I couldn't be immediately entrusted with such valuable stock and should in the first months enjoy their diversity of kibbutz activities. For a starter he suggested the vegetable garden, and my very first day's work was preparing the cement foundation for a root crop washing machine, so that carrots, turnips could be marketed cleanly and attractively. Aching days followed where I lagged behind women, inured to duck walking, as I tried thinning out young plants sown too

thickly. Tomato picking certainly was much easier, but left your hands black with tomato plant secretions, which you finally washed off with a few green tomatoes at work's end. I've gleaned potatoes missed by the potato picker, and attempted a straight furrow with a mule, whose sense of direction was not controlled by my reining skills, and made a mockery of my first day behind the plow.

The road from Haifa to Afula bisected the land worked by kibbutz Gvat, and the vegetable plot lay to the North of the road and bordered the first small hills of the lower Galilee. One morning at dawn, we were assigned to pull carrots for market and made our way across the road to the plot just as the sun rose over the horizon. Heavy dew hung on all vegetation and especially on the lush delicately pinnated leaves of a full dunam of carrots. As we neared the carrots, the early sun's rays caught every dewdrop and transformed all those carrot tops into a veritable field of glistening diamonds. It was if we were to pull gems, not carrots, from that field and we stopped for a moment in awe of the shimmering beauty created by light and dew. The praise for dew in scripture was verified in this gleaming field of diamond carrots. Directly approaching our work, the angle changed, the sun rose a bit more, the illusion was over and we bent over to pull carrots, whose tops drenched our hands, clothes and shoes with the long praised dews of Israel.

I also enjoyed working in fields of early wheat which seemed to stretch endlessly on the flat plains in the valley. The manager of field crops provided me with a few sacks of red dyed poisoned wheat, with instructions to lay down a few grains at each mouse hole, I found. This was done faithfully and while finding many burrows, I can't remember ever seeing a mouse. But as I walked hour after hour through young wheat protected by poisoned wheat from the ravages of rodents, I did see the small moshav in the center of the valley far beyond our lands, the distant hills of Ephraim looming up through heat's haze at the south end of the valley, and occasionally the steam powered train puffing slowly across the valley, as it had since Turkish times, from Haifa to the Jordan Valley.

Trains had always fascinated Norman and me, and Dad purchase of the Lionel gunmetal gray locomotive and passenger cars was the high point of young life at 684 Bergenline Ave. So naturally this train crawling across the most fertile valley in Palestine drew my attention. On winter

mornings, stepping out of the room shared with another trainee, I would see steam puffs rising through the cold mist from the locomotive and those round buns seemed to hover in the same place, and only after a moment's careful watch, were you convinced that the train was indeed moving forward. That train had an exemplary record for tardiness, and earned the following story about its most famous trait.

One morning a kibbutznik went through the poisoned wheat routine in wheat fields bordering the narrow gauge tracks of our famous valley train. He puts his lunch bag and his ceramic water jug in the shade of an eucalyptus tree to provide cool water and food at noon. Just as he steps out to begin work, he looks up and sees someone lying across the railroad tracks. He tells him, "Hey, you better get off those tracks or the train will come and kill you!" To this he gets the reply, "Leave me alone. My beloved has run off with someone else and I want to die." Well the kibbutznik leaves this unfortunate to his own mishigas and goes off to destroy wheat field mice. He comes back for lunch and there under the tree sits the unfortunate eating a sandwich. "Didn't you tell me this morning," asks the kibbutznik, "that you're waiting for the train to kill you; so why are you eating now?" To this he gets the reply, "What, do you want me to starve to death until that train comes!"

Another link of memory brought that train to mind upon reading "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom" by Lawrence of Arabia. Did you know that British officer and his band of fighting bedouins attacked this then Turkish train? He describes laying in wait for the train at night, in the middle of winter, with a cold rain pelting down. The damp, the cold, the clinging black fertile mud made them all miserable, shivering and aching all over as they waited to destroy the train. This author was describing my exact body responses during muddy, wet and cold winter days at work in fields so close to that famous train raid by Lawrence. The same aches, the same mud sucking your boots right off your feet. To have someone describe your feelings exactly does send an emotional shiver through you as his words become part of your body. And its interesting that the old-timers on the kibbutz, having come from rigorous winters in Russia and Poland in their youth, complained bitterly about the much milder winters in the Valley of Jezreel. Their exposure to Middle East heat made the winters doubly hard to bear.

A day on the kibbutz was patterned into "before shower" and "after shower" segments. Up at 5:30 you would get a cup of milk-coffee at the communal dining hall and heat for work, then return two hours later for the big breakfast. The tables were loaded with a dark bread baked earlier, bowls of sour cream, farmer cheese, vegetables in season, porridge, margarine, halvah, jam and urns of the kibbutz version of "cafe con leche." Your daily egg was delivered by a member pushing a cart down the aisle with bowls of soft or hard eggs, and at this time you could express individuality in choosing which type you desired. Then back to work till the noon meal which usually had a heavy type soup as a main course and plenty of bread, margarine and jam to fill up on. The Middle- East climate now demands a siesta, and it would last until 1:30 and then back to work for another three hours. This was daily work life before the "shower", and this mighty communal tradition prepared all for transition to the leisure of relaxed evening activities.

You are tired, hot and sweaty in your soiled khaki work clothes, so you stop at the laundry where the member in charge pulls out an identical set of clean khakis from your personal cubbyhole. Then to the one bathhouse serving all, a large structure divided for the sexes with a wall that is only seven feet high, so that all the chatter, gossip in treble and base registers flows freely as the steam over both sections. Though betrothed to Helen, but part of a highly- sexed family, I would try to link high voices over that wall to their nude forms based on how they filled their khaki clothes at work. But here people started to relax and chatted mostly, in this work-driven idealistic society, about their accomplishments at work and the progress of the kibbutz. The shower prepares you for evening activities, which for me was the evening meal, Hebrew study, and early to sleep to recoup strength for the next day's work. Members with children would now go and fetch them from their quarters, as during the work day children and parents go completely separate ways.

## How Sol Got His Job in Israel-courtesy Helen Bloom

Sol's studying to go back to agricultural experimental station in Rehovot. At Ames, Iowa location of Iowa State University.

Whenever a couple came to study we would invite them for dinner. A woman who was working at Vulcani, Tzafirah Nisan today head of dept. who had her Masters, and was getting her Ph.D wrote to Raanan Vulcani to tell him about Sol.

Another couple came to Ames--by name of Nahmani, They too came to dinner. started talking roots-Where are your parents from? Mother- 3rd generation from Zichron. Father from Rumania. Funny little town called Frumusica, a one-horse town. Each wrote to their fathers. Turned out that they were best of friends two of three who were best friends. Third friend was a gardener in Rehovot at agricultural experimental station. . Sol gets doctorate, but there was no budget to be hired. Gets depressed. Opening at Univ. Puerto Rico. (No 4H experience. -no farm background. While we were in Puerto Rico, Sam looks up friend, goes to Rehovot to meet gardener. Gardener accuses him- what kind of a Jew are you-three sons and no son who made Aliyah. Gardener took Sam to Raanan Vulcani's office-Next a telegram to Sol and Helen that there was a job. Israelis thought Sol and Helen were rich American kids. Got passage paid for by Jewish Agency, traveled against State Department ruling. subsequent to Sinai Campaign. Norman gave rugs, but we had no furniture. In our. rented apartment in Puerto Rico we had gotten furniture from a kind of student warehouse. Maybe there's something like this here in Israel. What we got was furniture destined for North African immigrants.-four steel cots a little wooden table four stools and a petilyah to cook with. You can imagine Vulcani's reaction when he came to see our apartment. Helen got job at Bar-Ilan due to dad. Heard that there was opening at Bar Ilan. Why don't you Helen go and apply. Interviewed by Shmuel Fishman of Camp Massad. Assumed Datiyut and Helen got the job.

