

5. **Sara<sup>4</sup> Singer** (Yehuda<sup>3</sup> Chazanovich, Moshe<sup>2</sup>, Yudel<sup>1</sup>)<sup>93</sup> was born April 1874 in Miroslavas, Russian Poland<sup>94,95</sup>, and died March 05, 1926 in Throop, PA<sup>96</sup>. She married **Bennett Berger**<sup>97,98</sup> February 03, 1901 in Maine<sup>99</sup>. He was born September 1861 in Lithuania<sup>100,101</sup>, and died May 1942<sup>102</sup>.



Notes for Sara Singer:

Sara was probably born in the town of Miroslavas, where her family was known to have lived. However her marriage certificate shows her birthplace as Russia, rather than Russian Poland (where Miroslavas was located at the time). This is probably just an error on the certificate, as the birthplace was "ditto-ed" from that of her husband.

Jay Berger writes of his grandmother:

"She was brought to America by her older brother Abram, who also helped financially to bring other family members to the United States. She arrived in the late nineteenth century. As was the custom in those days, Sara worked in the household of her benefactor, as a means of paying for her transportation. Rebecca Robinson relates that much of the family was quite upset by this arrangement, but they were financially unable to help Sara. This apparently led to a rift in the family between Rebecca's parents (Max and Bessie Singer) and Abram. Sara apparently worked extremely hard and was treated like a servant.

"She eventually married Bennett Berger, moving to Throop, Pennsylvania, and raising three children from his previous marriage, and six of her own.

"She led a very difficult life, raising a large family, compounded by a number of health problems. She suffered both from diabetes mellitus and later from tuberculosis, dying of the latter at just 47 years of age."

The 1900 census shows Sara listed at age 26, living with Abraham, Minnie, and their children Nettie, Ida and Simon (probably Sam). Sara is shown as born in May 1874. This census shows that Sara had immigrated in 1897 (at age 23) so had lived with Abraham's family for 2 ½ -3 years.

She married early in February 1901, still shown as age 26. Rebecca Robinson thought that Sara was actually 28 years old, which is possible. Both men and women often gave conflicting information about their ages (immigrants often did not know their exact ages). It was especially common for unmarried women to understate their ages. Sara is listed on the marriage certificate as having the occupation "housework," which supports the belief that she was working as a housekeeper for Abraham.

Given her rather late age for marrying, Sara may well have come to America because her parents didn't have the money for a dowry, which would have been necessary for her to marry in her hometown. This was a common problem and a common reason for women to immigrate.

The later 1920 census shows that she immigrated in 1900, indicating that she lived with Abraham's family only one year before marrying. (Generally speaking, an earlier census is probably more likely to be accurate, if the census information was given by a family member.) This 1920 census shows her as having been naturalized in 1888. Note this date is prior to Sara's immigration. Wives (along with minor children) were automatically naturalized when their husband was naturalized, and this is the year of her husband Bennett's naturalization. (It's questionable whether Sara was naturalized, since she had not been married to Bennett at the time.)

No immigration record has been found among the Ellis Island on-line database records. Like other family members, she may have arrived at Boston, rather than New York.

Jay Berger shows Sara's date of birth as 1878, which differs from what is shown in the census report, and from Rebecca's estimate. Her death certificate lists her birth date as Feb. 11, 1880. Her address at the time of her death was 534 North St., Throop.

Jay said that Sara's children and her stepchildren adored her. Her children remembered her as "a hard working, loving mother, who ran a typical Jewish household. She loved to sing Yiddish songs to her children, and many of them continued to sing them in their later years."

1920 Census information is in Enumeration District 126, page 6A and 6B.

More About Sara Singer:

Burial: March 06, 1926<sup>103</sup>

Cause of Death: Pulmonary tuberculosis<sup>103</sup>

Location: Throop, PA

Notes for Bennett Berger:

Jay Berger writes, "Bennett Berger was born in the early 1860's and immigrated to this country from Lithuania as a young man, settling in Fort Kent, Maine, apparently where other family members and fellow townsmen had settled earlier. He was married twice. He and his first wife had 3 children (Anna, Esther, and Dave). I believe that she later died in childbirth. Bennett subsequently remarried Sara Singer."

According to their marriage record, Bennett's parents were Isaac Berger and Annie Grobowsky, both born in Russia. At the time of Bennett's marriage, in 1901, Isaac was shown as a merchant living in Canada, and Annie was deceased. Isaac probably died by 1905, at which time Bennett and Sara named a son for him.

More About Bennett Berger:

Occupation: Grocer and proprietor of dry goods store

Marriage Notes for Sara Singer and Bennett Berger:

In 1900, according to the census of that year, Bennett was a 38-year-old widower living in Fort Kent, ME, with three children - Ann (born July 1893), Esther (born May 1896), and David (born July 1898). He was looking for a wife to care for his family. Cousin Rebecca Robinson wrote in 2001, "Bennett Berger (Fort Kent) wrote to a Mr. Lelansky in Portland saying that he needed someone to take care of this three children. Sara was 28 years old and worked for Abraham as a maid. Twenty-eight was old not to be married and here was an opportunity to make a better life

(so she thought). She was married before she went to Fort Kent to live with Bennett Berger. She did not have a happy life with him."

The 1910 census shows the family in Throop, and Bennett at age 47 is shown as a laborer doing odd jobs. Son David is a newsboy, and they appear to be the only support for the family. They are shown living at 51 North Street. This census seems to say that Bennett came to America in 1881 or 1888; the next two census records give the year as 1880. (He does not appear in the 1880 census index. Given that his father lived in Canada, it's not clear if Bennett lived there first.)

The 1920 census, taken January 2-3rd of that year, shows the family living (and renting) at 534 North Street. Bennett is age 58 and listed as a merchant, with a grocery store. Son David is listed as a driver for a bakery. Daughter Esther is listed as a bookkeeper for a furniture company. Daughter Rose, age 17, is listed as a clerk for a coalmine. Younger children are Max, age 15, Isaac (later Edward) age 14, Sam, age 9, Minnie, age 7, and Goldie, age 7 months. Sara and Bennett are shown with Yiddish as their native tongue.

The 1930 census, taken April 22, 1930, shows the family owning the home at 532 North Street (ED 201, page 35A). In this census, Esther (age 29) and Rose (age 27) are listed as bookkeepers. Max (age 26) works in a gas station. Isaac (later Edward, age 24) is a laborer in a coalmine. Samuel (age 20) is a salesman for a bakery wagon. Minnie (age 18), Goldie (age 11) also live at home.

From Jay's family tree: "My suspicions, although I do not know if they are true, is that the 2 families (Bennett's and Sara's) knew each other in the old country. Sara was probably 15 to 20 years younger than Bennett. Their first child (Rose) was born in Fort Kent, and then shortly thereafter they moved to Throop, a small coalmining town outside of Scranton, PA. This was around 1903-04. Their reasons for moving appear to have been financial, Bennett opening a grocery store, and later a dry goods store. The coalmines were booming at that time, and again, former townsmen from Lithuania had led them to the area. Members of the family inherited the old home in Throop well into the late 1960's and I remember a great deal about it. At one time, a barn with chickens and a few cows was at the back of the property, facing a large yard and the back of the home. The lower floor of the front of the house was the store. The house was quite large, at one time filled with 9 children. Bennett died 3 weeks before I was born, but the house remained much the same until the mid-1950's. My sister Joyce and I spent many happy moments at the old homestead."

Children of Sara Singer and Bennett Berger are:

- i. Rose<sup>5</sup> Berger<sup>105</sup>, born December 23, 1901 in Fort Kent, PA<sup>106</sup>; died June 23, 1998 in Scranton, PA<sup>106</sup>. She married Hyman Kauffman<sup>106</sup> 1953<sup>106</sup>; born November 10, 1901 in Poland<sup>107,108</sup>; died February 1970 in Scranton, PA<sup>109</sup>.
- + ii. Max Berger, born January 15, 1903 in Fort Kent, ME; died March 06, 1992 in Orlando, FL.
- iii. Edward Berger<sup>111</sup>, born November 08, 1905 in Brunswick, ME<sup>112</sup>; died November 1986 in Throop, PA<sup>112</sup>. He married Sarah Sicherman<sup>113,114,115</sup> 1947 in Scranton, PA<sup>116</sup>; born 1907 in Scranton, PA<sup>117</sup>.
- + iv. Samuel Joseph Berger, born April 08, 1910 in Throop, PA; died November 04, 2003.
- v. Minnie Berger<sup>119</sup>, born February 12, 1912 in Throop, PA<sup>120</sup>; died June 23, 1977 in Scranton, PA<sup>120</sup>.
- + vi. Goldie Berger, born June 03, 1919 in Throop, PA.