

8. **Jacob<sup>4</sup> Singer** (Yehuda<sup>3</sup> Chazanovich, Moshe<sup>2</sup>, Yudel<sup>1</sup>)<sup>150</sup> was born May 15, 1881 in Miroslavas, Lithuania<sup>150,151</sup>, and died June 21, 1951 in Akron, OH<sup>152</sup>. He married **Fannie Laura Waterman**<sup>152</sup> November 22, 1904 in Portland, ME<sup>153,154</sup>, daughter of Bernard Waterman and Sarah Elbaum. She was born January 18, 1886 in Russia<sup>154,155,156</sup>, and died April 23, 1966 in Akron, OH<sup>157</sup>.



Notes for Jacob Singer:

Jacob was born May 15th or 16th in 1881, probably in Miroslavas, Lithuania, where his family was known to have lived. His Hebrew name was Yakov, and a common version used in Lithuania was Yankel with the diminutive Yankele.

According to Jay Berger, Jay's grandmother Sara had said that Jacob was her favorite sibling. Jacob had blue eyes and blond hair, and was almost 6' tall.

Jacob probably came to the US (Lewiston, Maine) in 1898 at age 16 or 17. It had been thought that he and all his brothers emigrated at age 15 to avoid conscription into the czar's army at age 16, so his listed birth year of 1881 could be incorrect. (The 1900 Federal Census shows Jacob living in Lewiston and having arrived in America that same year, but both the 1920 and 1930 census agree on the 1898 emigration date.)

The family story is that he started out as a "pack peddler" who carried goods from town into the countryside to sell them. In 1900 he was living at the same address as his brother Abraham (and sister Sara), but as a different household. He was listed as "renting." His occupation is listed as "salesman, dry goods," indicating that he may have been working for Abraham at the time.

He apparently started his own dry goods business in Brunswick soon thereafter, probably in 1901. According to an article about Clara Hennessey, a former employee, she had worked at a business called Libby's that closed in 1901 after just a few months of operation, and then worked for Singer Dry Goods. Jacob moved into the 2-story building in Brunswick, at 50 Maine St., where he "carried a full line of dry, fancy and millinery goods." An article in the Board of Trade Journal dated November 1904 noted that "his patronage is large," and ends with the statement, "Although he has been in Brunswick but five years he has earned for himself an enviable reputation of which he may well feel proud." According to his niece Rebecca Robinson, he lived in a very nice apartment above the store. The article noted that he owned the building, but Rebecca said that he had rented the building. The "five years" comment is also questionable, since the 1900 census showed Jacob living in Lewiston.

According to his niece Rebecca, Jacob had been a dashing young man and very successful in his business. He was known as being very kind, and Rebecca said that every Saturday night after paying his employees, he took them out for ice cream. After marrying in 1904, however, he seemed to have had money problems. According to Rebecca, Abraham arranged for his brother

Max to take over the store, and told Jacob to take a position as Max's employee. Rebecca said that Abraham's motivation was that he wanted his brother Max to leave Lewiston so that there wouldn't be two Singers running dry goods businesses there. Jacob and Fannie subsequently left town with their family, and apparently Jacob rarely spoke of Abraham afterwards. (Jacob's son Maurice was unaware that he had an uncle Abraham until traveling to Maine in the 1970s.)

Rebecca recalled that Jacob and Fannie left Brunswick in 1907, the year that Jacob's second child Pauline was born. The 1910 census shows the family living in Rumford, Maine, which is about 40 miles northwest of Lewiston. Jacob is listed as the proprietor of a grocery store. Apparently it wasn't successful, and by 1912 the family had moved to Akron, Ohio, where Jacob planned to work in the rubber factories.

Originally it was thought that the family might have moved from Maine to Troy, NY, where Fannie had a brother. Daughter Pauline remembered being in Troy, N. Y. as a little girl when her maternal grandmother died. However, the 1910 census now suggests that wasn't the case. In fact, Fannie's mother Sarah, whose death Pauline remembered, didn't die until the 1920s, -- well after Jacob had moved to Akron. Therefore Pauline's memory must have been from a visit at that time.

Pauline thought that her family moved to Ohio in 1909, and this is stated in Jacob's obituary, but they do not appear in the Akron telephone directory until 1912, and were still in Maine in 1910, so probably arrived in Akron in 1911. The 1912 directory shows Jacob with the occupation "works Goodyear" and living at 685 Edgewood Avenue. Also living at the same address were Isadore Singer and his wife, who according to granddaughter Roz were family friends, but not related.

Note that the Goodyear rubber factory had been established in Akron in the 1890's where they were serving the booming market of providing tires for bicycles, and then for "horseless carriages." The rubber business received further impetus in 1905 when Firestone obtained an agreement to provide tires for Henry Ford.

Jacob didn't like working at Goodyear and by the time son Bernard was born in April 1912, Jacob's occupation was listed on the birth certificate as "peddler." In the 1913 directory Jacob was still listed as a peddler. He and Fannie had moved to 457 Spalding. In 1915 Jacob and Fannie had moved again, to 899 Holloway, and Jacob was listed as a "huckster" (peddler). He seems to have had this occupation through at least 1920.



During this time, he owned a horse and wagon and son Maurice related fond memories of being taken out of school to ride into the country with his father. He said that the farmers were happy to see them, and they stayed overnight with the farmers because the round trip was too long to make in one day. Jacob sold fruits and vegetables in the city, and probably carried dry goods to the country.

Maurice told a story from this period about how Jacob once confronted a man who was treating his horse poorly. He apparently took good care of his own horses ("Babe" pictured on the prior page with Jacob, daughter Pauline, and a neighbor boy).

In about 1917 (according to the 1920 census, but unsubstantiated by documentation) Jacob was naturalized.

By 1919 the family lived at 752 Raymond Street in Akron and they are shown at that address in the 1920 census record. Pauline's memory from 1926 when her maternal grandmother died was of Jacob sitting on an orange crate in the living room while friends and relatives filed in to pay respects. It was a Jewish custom to observe several days of mourning "while sitting on something hard."

The 1930 census shows the family still at the same address on Raymond Street. Jacob's occupation is shown as a produce peddler. In 1930 Maurice, age 24, and Bernard, age 17 are still living at home.

Granddaughter Rosalyn shared a family story: "The horse knew the way to the fruit market and home by heart so grandpa would sleep on the way. One morning while grandpa was sleeping he woke up to the sounds of a train. The horse had stopped while going over the railroad track!"

Some time prior to 1933 Jacob opened his own fruit market (Singer's Market) in Akron, at Bowery and Bartges Streets (at 156 W. Bartges). He operated the business with his son Maurice until Maurice opened his own market in about 1934. Fannie worked as a cashier in the store. Maurice wife's Ruth also helped out. The market supported the family during the Depression, but they apparently were frugal, as Jacob bought a truck in about 1934, and family members recalled that it didn't have a windshield.



Fannie often complained that Jacob was too good-hearted as a businessman, selling produce at under its cost and giving special deals to people who were down on their luck, who then took their

business elsewhere when they had money. (This is arguably not a sign of a poor businessman, since Jacob was dealing with perishable produce.)

Daughter-in-law Esther and granddaughter Roz remembered that when new items came in to the market, Jesse White's mother would offer to make jelly out of strawberries, etc. and then give some jelly to Jacob. [Jesse White became an actor, popular in 1950's and 60's television.]

Jacob's daughter-in-law Ruth told her children that Jacob used to call Ruth's youngest, Laurel, "the little darling," which he pronounced "the little darlink." So apparently he had a little bit of an accent.

Jacob retired in 1941, and at some point Jacob and Fannie moved in with their daughter Pauline and her husband Bill and lived there until their deaths. Jacob died in June 21, 1951, after a "prolonged illness." [Note this date of death doesn't exactly match the date on his tombstone, but comes from the death certificate, so should be accurate.] According to the death certificate, he had hypertensive arteriosclerotic disease (hardening of the arteries, a common diagnosis) and died from complications of this disease.

His daughter-in-law Ruth shared this family anecdote in a letter to her daughter in 1978: "Either on a recent TV show or in a magazine article, I read that it has been customary through the ages for the Jews to have hired mourners at the death of a loved one. We well remember, when Grandpa Singer died, that a Jewish man by the name of Mr. Bleiman...who, by the way, was a good friend of Grandpa's...approached Dad at the funeral (cemetery, I believe) and offered to sit ...and 'mourn' for a fee. Dad was offended and gave him a brisk brush-off. Neither of us understood what it was all about. Strange that Dad never knew about the custom."

Jacob's obituary read in part:

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Jacob Singer, 70, of 861 Packard Dr, who had been in the retail produce business at Bowery and W. Bartges streets for years until his retirement 10 years ago, died today in City Hospital after a long illness.

Born in Poland [sic], Mr. Singer came to this country in 1896 and to Akron from Brunswick, Me., 42 years ago [1909]. He was a member of the Anshe Sfard Congregation. He was one of the first produce dealers in Akron to use a horse and wagon in his business.

Services will be held at 4:30 p.m. today in the Kesler funeral Home. Burial will be in Sandy Hill Cemetery.

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The inscription on Jacob's tombstone reads, in Hebrew:

Our beloved father, Yakov son of Yehuda. Died on the 13th of Sivan 5711 [June 17, 1951]. May his soul be bound up in the bonds of everlasting life.

More About Jacob Singer:

Burial: Anshe Sfard Cemetery, Akron, OH<sup>157</sup>

Cause of Death: <sup>157</sup>

Location: Akron, OH

Occupation: in about 1930, Owned Fruit Market, Akron, OH<sup>157</sup>

Notes for Fannie Laura Waterman:

There was a family note that Fannie was born in Marijampole, Lithuania, but more likely Fannie was born in Bialystok, which is where her parents lived and where her older siblings were born. Bialystok was part of Russia when she was born, and was part of Poland when that country was independent. It is now located in Eastern Poland, near the border with Lithuania. Fannie's mother Sarah Elbaum Waterman had come from an aristocratic family that owned a tobacco factory in Bialystok, and Fannie's father Bernard Waterman was also said to have owned a tobacco factory and been well off. The fortunes of the family seem to have changed for the worse in the United States where Bernard and his sons were at one time working as clerks in a store.

Bernard was a Hebrew teacher, and was in charge of a cheder in Bangor at one time. It was said he was a "petty tyrant" and that his children were all eager to get away from home.

Fannie was considered to be very attractive as a girl. She played the piano, and apparently accumulated a good deal of piano music over the years. Daughter-in-law Esther said that Fannie was very intelligent.

The 1900 Census shows Fannie enumerated with both her parents, and with her sister's family. It's not clear which was her regular residence. The two census reports show two different birth dates.

According to her niece Rebecca Robinson, Fannie "didn't know the value of a dollar" and, for example, demanded a maid, though they couldn't afford one due to financial problems.



Jacob and Fannie had lived in the same building above Rebecca's family, and Rebecca's mother Bessie thought that Fannie was standoffish. Rebecca related a story: Fannie had given Rebecca \$.50 to go to the store to buy carbolic acid. Apparently Rebecca gave her the wrong change in return. Fannie wrote a letter to Rebecca's mother Bessie, saying that Rebecca should get up early the next morning and retrace her steps to find the missing money. Bessie just gave Fannie the money to make up the difference.

When asked why Fannie wrote a letter to Bessie, when she lived in the same house, Rebecca replied, "She was a little odd."

Rebecca said that Fannie wrote her a nice long letter when she (Rebecca) was living in Lisbon Falls, and wanted to know all about Minnie's family. The implication was that Fannie was more interested in Minnie's family because they were well off. Rebecca said that she and Fannie exchanged a few notes, but then Rebecca didn't hear from her.

Fannie did send her sister a photo of daughter Pauline, lovingly inscribed, "This is Little Miss Pauline Singer."



After Jacob opened his fruit market in Akron, Fannie worked there as a cashier. She was hit by a milk truck one day when carrying money from the fruit market to the bank. The money was stolen and Fannie's legs were severely injured. She was an invalid for the rest of her life and developed severe arthritis in her old age. One of her nieces remembered that Fannie's son Bernard would offer to carry her out of bed, so that she could get outside, - but she never wanted to go.

Fannie was apparently upset that her son Maurice married Ruth, a non-Jewish woman, but since Ruth helped out in the fruit market during the early days of her marriage, the two did communicate. Ruth never mentioned the estrangement to her children, and the families (Maurice's, Pauline's and Bernard's) saw one another periodically, -- more so when their children were grown.

In her last years Fannie had a dog, Smoky, and cat, Kitty Cat she loved.

Fannie's tombstone reads:

Our beloved mother, Faiga, daughter of Dov Ber. Died on the third of Iyar 5726 [1966]. May her soul be bound up in the bonds of everlasting life.

More About Fannie Laura Waterman:

Burial: Anshe Sfard Cemetery, Akron, OH<sup>157</sup>

Cause of Death: Complications from diabetes

Marriage Notes for Jacob Singer and Fannie Waterman:

Jacob was 23 years old, and Fannie 18 when they married. According to Rebecca Robinson, another woman named Sophie Mikelsky had taken an interest in Jacob when he was single, and Jacob might have married her, but Abraham's wife Minnie wanted Jacob to marry Fannie. Fannie was prettier and considered to be from a well off family, because she lived with her sister Thressa Bernstein who owned a jewelry store. Rebecca said this was important to Minnie. (It's not clear how the families knew each other. Thressa and Fannie lived in Portland.)

Jacob had opened a clothing store in downtown Brunswick, ME, and apparently was doing well. He bought Fannie a diamond necklace for the wedding. Fannie wore her sister Thressa's wedding dress, and as of 2004 dress is in the possession of Thressa's granddaughter Ruth Frank, who lives in Jerusalem.



Their wedding was announced in the newspaper as follows:

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Singer-Waterman

Tuesday evening at Wilson's dancing academy in Portland Jacob Singer of Brunswick and Miss Fanny Waterman were united in marriage in the presence of about 200 relatives and friends. The ceremony was performed at 8 o'clock by Rabbi Wenstein, assisted by Rev. Glassman. The bride was given away in marriage by her brother-in-law J.S. Bernstein. The bride was gowned in a white tulle dress trimmed with gold spangles and carried a bouquet of pinks and roses. She also wore a handsome diamond necklace, the gift of the groom.

The maid of honor was Miss Pauline Bernstein. Miss Bernstein wore a pink silk dress and carried a bouquet of pinks. The best man was Ellis Waterman, a brother of the bride.

The ushers were Morris Waterman, Samuel Sacknoff, John Draker and Sol Soloway of Portland; Samuel Leavitt of Fall River, Mass.; Mitchell Fitzner of New York and Samuel Magdad of East Boston.

After the ceremony a supper was served in the banquet hall under the direction of a committee composed of Messrs. J. S. Bernstein, Mr. Waterman, Harry Stein, Miss Blumentahal, Miss Lena Levinsky and Philip Livinsky.

During the evening music for dancing was furnished by the Fort Williams military band. Prizes for the best dancers were awarded to Master Harry Stein and Lena Levinsky.

Ninety-five telegrams and letters of congratulations were read during the dancing, from relatives and friends in different states of the Union.

After a brief wedding trip to New York and as far west as St. Louis, Mr. and Mrs. Singer will take up their residence in Brunswick, where Mr. Singer is engaged in business.

Among the out of town guests in attendance were: Mr. and Mrs. A. Singer, Mr. and Mrs. M. Singer, Mr. and Mrs. Silverman, Mr. and Mrs. Feldman, Mr. and Mrs. Lambert, Mrs. Jane Kurtz, all of Lewiston; Mr. and Mrs. B. S. Waterman,. Bangor; Mr. and Mrs. Mack, Brunswick; Mr. Mitchell Fitzer, Troy, N. Y.,; Mr. Samuel Maggett, Boston.

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Rebecca Robinson said that initially Jacob and Fannie lived in a nice apartment above Jacob's store, where Maurice was born. Apparently marrying an attractive girl paid off in one area, -- Rebecca's mother Bessie said that she hated to admit it, but Jacob's babies were prettier than hers. (!) She thought Maurice was the "handsomest baby in Brunswick."



After Pauline was born, the family moved to Market Lane so that the children could have more room. Rebecca wrote that at Market Lane her family "lived on the first floor and he and his family resided above us."

Rebecca said that Jacob had been doing very well in business before he married, but that afterwards he had money problems and may have filed bankruptcy.

Rebecca said that Fannie's home was a mess, and that she remembers Fannie's baby Maurice as being very cute, "but dirty." When Fannie and Jacob moved out of the apartment, the landlady was so disgusted with the mess they left behind that she boxed up all the trash in a wooden crate and mailed it to Fannie and Jacob! Perhaps these things had something to do with Fannie's aristocratic origins in Bialystok, and lack of training in how to take care of a house and family. Also, there seem to have been some mental illness in Fannie's family (she had a brother who was institutionalized), so it's possible that she suffered from depression, which might have explained some things about her behavior.

Finances were always a cause of friction between Fannie and Jacob. Jacob went from being a prosperous young merchant who owned his own store to peddling from a wagon. Fannie felt that Jacob had been somehow "cheated out of his dry goods business" in Maine.

Daughter-in-law Esther confirmed in 2002 that Jacob and Fannie were not religious, and that neither of their sons was bar mitzvah-ed.



Maurice and Bernard

Children of Jacob Singer and Fannie Waterman are:

- + i. Maurice Henry<sup>5</sup> Singer, born September 07, 1905 in Brunswick, ME; died November 04, 1990 in Akron, OH.
- ii. Pauline Eunice Singer<sup>159</sup>, born January 25, 1907 in Brunswick, ME<sup>159</sup>; died September 09, 1997 in Willowick, OH. She married Bill Finkel between 1929 - 1930<sup>160,161</sup>; born June 10, 1908; died July 1983 in Akron, OH.
- + iii. Bernard Sanders Singer, born April 19, 1912; in Akron, OH, and died September 06, 1984 in Los Angeles County, California.



Maurice and Pauline