

## Finding my Roots in a Junk Yard in Rockland, Maine

By Jeffrey Marc Rockland

I generally felt lucky growing up with the last name Rockland, aside from the few times I was called “Rockhead.” Family summer trips resulted in our passing through the town of Rockland, Maine en route to points further north. Ironically, I had relatives who lived on Rockland Street in Rockland Maine, who were on my mother’s side of the family and had a different surname. As a young adult, I eventually learned that the family name I would pass on to my children had been invented by my paternal grandfather. So, our last name had no authentic connection to Rockland Maine, and no connection to who we were or where we came from. Still, I always liked my last name, and trips through Rockland usually resulted in my obtaining another t-shirt with a Lobster on it and my last name ‘**ROCKLAND**’ in bold, capital letters. Being a Rockland, passing through Rockland Maine, with family living on Rockland Street, made me feel special and connected to this place. It’s as if we had a family flirtation with imagined fame and importance. Today, as I write this essay, little remains of this connection other than the empty lot where a family junkyard stood for close to a century.

Having the last name Rockland has meant that I can “pass,” with my Jewish identity undetected by those who don’t know me. Today, two of my children, with this same last name, have the added “disguise” of being half Thai with physical traits from both mom and dad. I say “disguise” because, although blatantly incorrect, there still exists a stereotype of what being Jewish looks like. Rockland has resulted in various responses to my Jewish identity being discovered, such as, “That’s funny, ‘Rockland’ doesn’t sound Jewish,” or “You don’t look Jewish.” Having one’s identity somewhat invisible can also result in discovering how much bias and bigotry comes forward; ignorant people think it is “safe” to spew hurtful and even hateful rhetoric freely, in the absence of an identifiable objector.

European Jewish Immigrants from many countries, who came to the United States in the late 1800's and early 1900's, spoke Yiddish. Their children grew up with this language in their home, but most did not pass it on to the next generation. In my family, the language has practically disappeared. What remained, until recently, was our connection to the junkyard legacy of our immigrant ancestors in the coastal town of Rockland, Maine.

My family tree on Ancestry.com has provided glimpses of relatives who were not able to immigrate to America or Israel during and leading up to World War II, a war many Jewish immigrants served in including one of our relatives from Rockland Maine. Looking up relatives who didn't get out, I found that many appeared with an approximate year of death followed by the word "Holocaust." According to my parents' recollections, relatives who came to the United States from 1905-1922 did not share details of their previous homes, only vague hints. Born in 1960, I had one set of grandparents, born in the United States, who we called Grandma and Grandpa and one set, immigrants from Poland and Latvia/Ukraine/Russia,<sup>1</sup> who we called *Bubbe and Zeyde* (Yiddish for grandmother and grandfather). Time and politics have a way of rearranging or even reinventing history and geography. I share this family identity story at a time when the Holocaust is almost completely absent from my children's public-school education, American hate groups have been emboldened by divisive politicians who align with dangerous conspiracy theories and Hamas terrorists have, in Israel, just carried out the most murderous one day attack on Jews since the Holocaust.

Not only Jewish history is at risk of being forgotten or reinvented. The current rewriting of Black history in Florida is a shocking and frightful example of just how far some will go to "protect their children" from learning painful truths of history, including almost 300 years of slavery in these United States of America.

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<sup>1</sup> The location changing its jurisdiction as borders changed over time.

Taking a journey through historic US census and property ownership documents can teach one a great deal about how people were historically counted and categorized. Latvia, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Poland, are the countries of origin that show up on old census reports where original family names appear. Race is often listed as “Hebrew.” Mother tongue appears as “Yiddish” or “Jewish,” depending on the document year and the person filling it out. Rumors of an entire community destroyed in the flames that consumed their synagogue, with everyone locked inside, is all that I have of one part of my family. Speaking with Black friends, I have learned that they experience the added trauma of seeing their ancestors listed as the property of slave owners. How horrible this must be for them to relive this injustice while trying to trace their family history. Jewish immigrant/refugees who escaped persecution in Europe before it was too late, learned to survive in new places, sometimes welcomed and sometimes not. They came to foreign lands, drawn by the hope of becoming citizens with equal rights. They struggled. Some failed and others succeeded. They were not always accepted, but they came to the United States as free people and felt lucky to be alive. I am privileged to live well today, because of the struggles and survival of those who came before me.

As early as 1905, the same year his son, my zeyde Joseph was born, great-grandfather David Shafter<sup>2</sup> first came to America, leaving his wife Raisel and their five sons. It appears he may have made a return trip to Russia in 1910, possibly to bury Raisel who likely passed from typhus. In 1914, The Shafter junkyard was established as a business on Rockland Street in Rockland, Maine. Activity between 1905 and 1914 is a bit vague. My research indicates that David met and married Lena Meyers, an Austrian-Jewish immigrant, 15 years his junior in Chelsea Massachusetts. Work leading up to the establishment of the Rockland junkyard began in 1912 and the two children David and Lena conceived were born in 1916 and 19183. Apparently, having Jewish contacts in Massachusetts, resulted in David heading there after landing by ship in America. Census records from 1920 show the Shafter household with David, Lena and

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<sup>2</sup> Who’s name prior to immigrating was Dovid Schechter

<sup>3</sup> According to records obtained via Ancestry.com.

their two children, Sydney Lazer and Sylvia Toby, on Rockland Street in Rockland Maine. No mention is made of Raisel and the five sons conceived before David first travelled to the US.

By 1922, David was able to obtain immigration papers and finances to bring sons still alive in Russia, including Samuel (Sam), who ended up taking over the junkyard business and Joseph, my zeyde. Zeyde would have been approximately 17 years old, when he travelled by boat with his brothers. During this voyage, fellow passengers put together a simple Bar Mitzvah ceremony so that he would enter America as a man within the fold of the Jewish community. Arriving in America, he found work as a glazier and eventually joined the glazier's union. A few years later he met my bubbie, Shayna Bella Dunsky, a Polish-Jewish immigrant, at the Yiddish Theatre he frequented. Smitten, he walked her home that night. And so began a romance that would lead to marriage and my mother and Aunt Linda being born. Bubbie and Zeyde had one child prior who passed away as an infant. This child had been named Raisel after my zeyde's diseased mother. Bubbie and Zeyde worked hard and lived a simple life in their apartment in a largely Jewish immigrant neighborhood in the Bronx. They weren't religious in a conventional way, but they always lit candles and made Shabbes (Yiddish for Sabbath) even when all they could afford was half a loaf of challah bread. Ceremony connected them to their ancestry and to those who were left behind. In their small apartment, my mother Mae, who later became an artist, would draw on the baseboards when she lacked paper for her creative expression. Each day, zeyde bought the Yiddish newspaper and each week, during the 1930's, they waited for news from the "Old Country."



Photo by author of great uncle,  
Samuel Shafter provided by author's mother.

The above picture is of Sam Shafter, my zeyde Joe's older brother who took over the junkyard in Maine after their father passed. Notice the resemblance to my zeyde in this photo taken around the time of his marriage to my bubbe.



Reproduction of photo of Joseph and Shayna Bella Shafter provided by author's mother.

In the picture below, you can see *gute bubbe* (great grandmother – in Yiddish) Raisel (David Shafter's first wife) with their five sons in Russia. My zeyde is on the far right.



Copy of photo of Schechter family, absent David who was in Maine, by an unknown photographer in Russia, approximately 1915.

My mother recalls the postcards that would come from Poland for her mother. As time passed, the messages sounded more desperate as German occupation took place and life for Jews deteriorated and then became murderous. But one day, the pleading stopped and there was never another postcard from Poland. My mother recently shared copies of these postcards which she discovered after her parents passed away. She also shared copies of translations she purchased from a friend with greater fluency in written Yiddish (which uses Hebrew letters). They appear to be from family members, including various cousins, and reference relatives who made it to America as well as those left behind. Some of the writing is heartbreaking, with pleas for clothes to stay warm. One letter says that “without sweaters and warm underwear, we have remained naked without shoes.” I can only imagine the last fragments of our family in Europe barely surviving before being slaughtered by those who didn’t consider them human.

Visiting Bubbie and Zeyde was always comfortable and comforting. There were special foods, 7-Up and always lots of cigarettes being smoked by my zeyde. He practically smoked nonstop and drank hot tea from a glass. Practically everyone smoked for decades starting at the turn of the century. Zeyde

got lung cancer, however, his falling out of the window of their 6<sup>th</sup> floor Queens<sup>4</sup> rent controlled apartment, is what killed him. My bubbie died a year later. To this day, I have a reoccurring dream where I am trying to return to and enter their apartment in Rego Park, Queens. Every time I wake from the dream I am left with a sad longing and the feeling that if only I could enter my bubbie and zeyde's apartment, I could connect to my origin, and all would be well in the world.

After Zeyde died in 1979 and Bubbie in 1980, a hole was left in me that had been filled with a personal connection to the "Old Country." It is why I cry during scenes from *Fiddler on the Roof*, as if I am longing for a place that I have never been, a place that represents how I felt when I was with them. While I dream about going back to my bubbie and zeyde's apartment, I have never gone back to the building where they lived to see what it looks like. Their apartment was 6E. A one-bedroom apartment on the top floor of a six-floor Queens apartment with an old and tired elevator. Knocking on an apartment door in Queens where my bubbie and zeyde lived 40 years ago sounds creepy, but the scene revisits my dreams.

I did knock on the door of the last remaining formerly Shafter home on Rockland Street last summer. In the summer of 2022, I was passing through Rockland after a family reunion in upstate Maine and family members agreed to pass through to see what remained of our family's legacy in Rockland. As we drove down Rockland Street, we saw that one of the original Shafter homes on Rockland Street, number 19, remained<sup>5</sup>, so I decided to knock on the door to see if I could learn about this part of my family, with whom I had lost touch over the years. What I found was much more than I expected. A man by the name of Dan Dalrymple answered the door, as if expecting us, and proceeded to graciously share a great deal of information about our family! During our visit, he expressed interest in seeing how his research into the Shafter part of this Rockland family could contribute to a larger body of research

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph and Bella Shafter moved their family from the Bronx to Queens when I was quite young.

<sup>5</sup> A fire in the 1990's and deferred maintenance due to financial decline resulted in other Shafter homes on Rockland Street being torn down at the beginning of the new millennium.

covering Maine Jewry, housed in a museum in Portland. As we entered, it was apparent that he was using the building as a workshop, and he told us he was restoring two other homes he had purchased across the street. I noticed a plain brass mezuzah nailed to the door frame that looked like it came from the 1930's or 1940's. While I would have loved to have this artifact from our family's past, Dalrymple explained that he wanted to keep all artifacts and information to donate to a museum in the future. The home and all it contained belongs to Dalrymple but perhaps, one day, there will be mention of our family junkyard legacy in a museum, in Maine.



Above is a photo by the author of the Shafter home mezuzah noticed by the author as he entered 19 Rockland Street.

For nearly a century, the junkyard that David Shafter registered as a business in 1914, sustained the Shafter name in Rockland Maine. The junkyard continued until 2012 when this business came to an end. When I was a child, my family stopped by on one or two occasions to say “hello” to these relatives. According to the recollection of my second-cousin Bill Shafter<sup>6</sup>, we once stayed overnight. While my father has confirmed this, I have no recollection of spending the night on Rockland Street.

In the 1990's, there was a fire in one of the Shafter homes that housed valuable items. Dalrymple hypothesized that they may not have had insurance and therefore suffered a substantial loss. The junkyard and houses near it have been torn down, leaving a large empty lot next to #19 Rockland Street. And what further remains are a fair number of gravestones with the name Shafter on them, occupying a small

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<sup>6</sup> Son of David Shafter's youngest child, Sydney.



section of the Jewish portion of Owls Head, Maine's cemetery just outside of the town of Rockland, off Rt. 73.

After our visit, Dalrymple mailed me copies of documents relating to my family history. I was quite surprised and grateful. What luck that the last remnants of our family immigrant legacy in Rockland, Maine end up in the hands of a person who recognized their value and relevance? In searching for my own connection to origin and personal ancestry, I met a stranger who was also researching my family history! And without any appointment or prior contact, Dalrymple was home when we happened by. It is amazing if one considers that all remnants of our Shafter existence could have just as easily ended up in a landfill, to be forgotten forever.

In 1956, my great grandfather David Shafter, passed away. My mother recalls that before he died, he had been overjoyed that his granddaughter, Mae Shafter married a man whose last name, ironically was Rockland. Assimilation held great hope and promise. Jewish immigrants to America recalled living as second-class citizens in Europe, often separated from non-Jews; sometimes walled into ghettos for generations, only allowed to take up certain occupations and often refused the right to own land or homes<sup>7</sup>. To have an American business in an American town and future grandchildren who would carry the name of that town forward was a sign of great success to David Shafter, who started life in America as a junk dealer going door to door collecting people's trash that he would later resell to others. In time, he found ways to sell scrap metal and rags and eventually established a full-fledged junkyard on Rockland Street in Rockland Maine, in the lot across the street from his home. He and his son Sam expanded the business as well as real estate holdings in Rockland Maine for several decades.

The fact that my mother's grandfather settled in a town with the same name as my father's family name is more bizarre than mere coincidence. I say this because my father's family name wasn't always

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<sup>7</sup> *The Jews and Europe – 2,000 Years of History*. Elena Romero Castelló and Uriel Macias Kapón. Henry Holt & Co. Inc., NY, 1994.

Rockland, in fact we have some relatives today who have maintained the original family name and others who are Rocklands. His father changed their family name, but the names of uncles and cousins remained. As my father put it, “One day, I was going to school and my name was ‘Rubin’ and the next day it was ‘Rockland’.” His parents told him they changed the name to make it closer to what it had been before his grandfather immigrated to America. However, my father believed that they changed it so his older brother could get into medical school at a time when there were quotas restricting Jewish students. It was understood that being Jewish in America would be easier if your identity was unknown among non-Jews. Many immigrants including Jews, Italians, Poles, and others chose to Americanize their names to fit in. While stories exist of the mispronunciation of immigration officers resulting in family name changes, today, it is more commonly recognized that immigrants made this choice as an attempt to assimilate and for social mobility<sup>8</sup>; eliminating names that would identify them as foreign. No one wanted to be reminded daily that they didn’t really belong. The best thing one could hope for was to disappear into the melting pot of American culture.

My father, whose parents were born in America, and my mother, whose family hoped to capture the American dream, were raising American children, who knew little to no Yiddish at all. Both sets of grandparents spoke Yiddish. This was the primary language spoken in the home of my mother’s parents. My father’s parents spoke English but switched to Yiddish when they didn’t want their children to understand what they were speaking about. The perspective of my baby boomer generation was that Yiddish was a language that evolved from centuries of exclusion suffered by our ancestors in Eastern Europe. It was a language that gave dispersed populations of Jews a language that served them as they migrated. In Hebrew school, I was taught that it was a mitzvah<sup>9</sup> to learn Hebrew and make *Aliyah*<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> *Rosenberg by Any Other Name*. Kirsten Fermaglich. NYU Press, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> *Mitzvah* is a Hebrew word meaning “good deed” or “obligation.”

<sup>10</sup> *Aliyah* is another Hebrew word meaning “going up” or “ascending” but in this context, it refers to a Jew who decides to move to the Jewish homeland, Israel.

Instead of moving to Israel permanently, many joined a Bar Mitzvah summer camp as part of their Jewish upbringing. This was something my father made sure his children experienced.

My great grandfather, David Shafter's son Sam initially took over the junkyard and, later, Sam's son Ronald was the owner until the business closed. I recall thinking of the junkyard as proof that part of our family remained stuck in poverty. There was an unspoken separation between city folk and country folk, especially when the country folk were living in the state of Maine, which one only visited occasionally, during the short summer months. And while Yiddish culture influenced my mother's art a great deal, it wasn't until later in life, after both of her parents had passed, that she joined the Boston Workers Circle A Besere Velt Yiddish Chorus. With parents long gone, singing in the Yiddish chorus provides my mother with a connection to her childhood.



Photo by author.

Seeing the BLM poster and an article about the passing of Ronald Shafter's wife Mona in windows on opposite sides of the front door, I immediately felt a sense of comradery with Dan Dalrymple.

A few days after encountering Dalrymple at 19 Rockland Street, he mailed me copies of items he had gathered in researching the Shafters in Rockland. Receiving his drawings and research took me on a journey into family history. Dalrymple's package included a wonderful map he drew of what he called the "Shafter Empire." When I saw this, I was dumbfounded to discover the perception that my poor immigrant family had been successful to the extent of building what Dalrymple considered an "empire." My recollection was that the part of my family in Maine existed as if still in a shtetl (a little village where Jews were forced to live in Eastern Europe).



Photo by the author of a map drawn by Dan Dalrymple.

The above map, which Dalrymple drew, illustrates where and when Shafter family members lived or acquired property on Rockland Street, a side road off Main Street.

Dalrymple also shared a family tree he had begun which included me, but not my siblings, perhaps because he had only met me.



Photo by author of Shafter family tree by Dan Dalrymple.

Dalrymple sent these artifacts along with a kind letter written on a piece of stationery he found in the former Shafter structure he was using as his workshop. This stationery was from when my great uncle Sam (my zeyde Joe's older brother) ran the junkyard.



Photo by the author of the letter received from Dan Dalrymple.

Dalrymple shared his deep respect for the contributions of the Jews who came to Maine from Russia and Ukraine at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A Jewish historical society, that can be found online at [www.mainejews.org](http://www.mainejews.org), keeps records of this distinct population that, according to Dalrymple, has mostly vanished through assimilation over time. In this organization’s records, David Shafter is listed as originating from Ukraine, even though census records I was able to pull from Ancestry.com indicate “Latvia, Russia.” There is a vast history of changing borders in Eastern Europe, just as there is a vast history of persecutions and pogroms against Jews there and elsewhere. I have no recollection of relatives expressing a longing for the “old country” they were glad to escape. Therefore, while the songs from *Fiddler on the Roof* pluck my heart strings, I have never had the desire to visit Eastern Europe, where so many Jews including family members were murdered.

Meeting Dan started me on a journey of rediscovering the immigrant past that my family lost touch with over the decades. As I write this, anti-Semitism is on the rise, so, it's nice to meet a philosemite who shares a passion for my people. In my research, I found many articles about Jewish immigrants in Maine. I also discovered that my great half-uncle Sidney fought in World War II along with other Jewish Mainers. I further learned that my great uncle Sam, junkyard successor to David, served as president of Rockland's Adas Yeshurun Synagogue from 1943-1949.

Beginning in the late 1920s and into the 1930s, the United States severely restricted immigration from most of the countries Jews were trying to escape. The situation became desperate as the Nazis came to power. Jews who were already in America considered themselves quite advanced and their assimilation resulted in the perception that new immigrants from Eastern Europe were less sophisticated or modern. The United States held great promise and, when World War II began, David Shafter's youngest son Sydney joined the army. His second youngest child and only daughter, Sylvia, was a successful author under the name "Toby Shafter." In 1954, a year before the death of her mother Lena and two years before the death of her father David, she wrote an essay for Commentary magazine titled "From the American Scene: Maine Pastoral, with Duck." In this article, she captures the essence of my great grandfather David. Most likely, the story that is told by David in this essay was spoken in Yiddish. I come to this conclusion, recalling my zeyde speaking very little English and reading the Yiddish newspaper daily. I also recall him drinking hot tea from a glass the way his father David does in the story.

"A long time ago," my father began, "there was one Jewish family in Waldoboro—the only Jewish family that ever lived there. They are both gone now—peace be with them. The man, he was a tailor, a very fine Jew indeed. They had two wonderful children. The daughter played the piano like an angel from heaven.

"Went to New York and married a fine young man. The son was a wonder. He was a streetcleaner... summers. Worked his way through college that way and became a



famous doctor. Married into the Straus family—a cousin or a granddaughter. His mother and father were at the wedding and so was Nathan Straus. But the wife, now there was a lady!" My father's face crinkled with laughter.

"Well? Well? What happened? What's the story?" our guests urged my father on, for his stories were notable for their sardonic wit. But my father was not to be hurried. He licked his lips lightly, reached for his tall, steaming glass of tea, and thoughtfully put four heaping teaspoons of sugar and a thin slice of lemon in it.

"How a man can eat so much sugar, I don't know," my mother interposed in a tone of combat. "He will come down with diabetes yet."<sup>11</sup>

November 23, 1956, three months away from his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday, and a year after his wife Lena died of a heart attack at age 65, David Shafter was struck dead by a drunk driver at 10 in the morning as he headed out to work<sup>12</sup>. David's son Samuel took over and ran the junk yard and scrap metal business until 1971, when his son, Ronald Shafter began operating the business and continued for about 40 years. The final chapter of the Shafter Junkyard on Rockland Street was in the hands of Ronald and Mona Shafter, who had no children. Primogeniture dictated that the eldest son take over the family business. In the picture I shared previously of Raisel and their five sons, the son sitting down with the hat appears to be the eldest and the boy to the left of my zeyde Joe (who is furthest right) looks most like the later photo of great uncle Sam who inherited the junkyard. This leads me to question whether the eldest son perished while taking care of his mother. Questions like this will likely never be answered.

Neither of David's American born children stayed in Rockland, Maine. Sylvia became a successful writer and moved to New York where she published a biography of the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. Millay was born in Rockland Maine, raised in nearby Camden and at one time was considered America's most

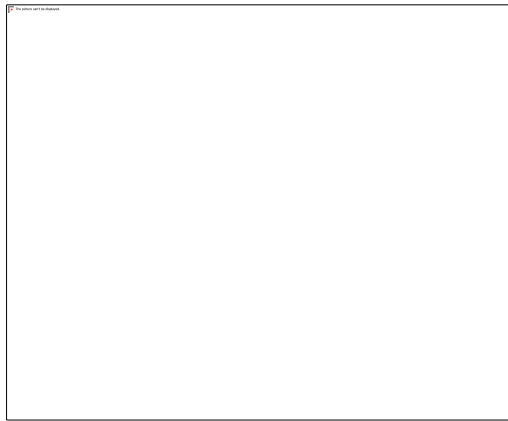
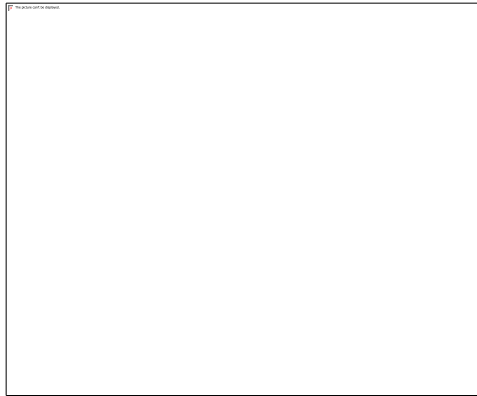
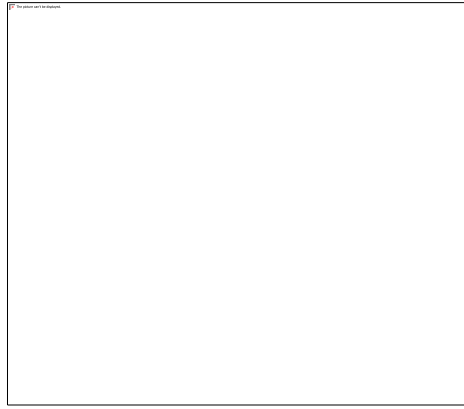
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<sup>11</sup> Toby Shafter. "From the American Scene: Maine Pastoral with Duck." *Commentary* magazine. February 1954.

<sup>12</sup> I learned the details of these deaths from my second Cousin Bill Shafter and verified dates via my research on Ancestry.com.

popular poet. The youngest of David Shafter’s seven children, Sidney, married Virginia Bragdon and together they raised William and Elizabeth Shafter in Cape Elizabeth, a bedroom community of Portland Maine. William, who goes by “Bill,” had a long career as a realtor in Maine and fathered a son by the name of Wilder Shafter. Ronald Shafter (the final owner of the junkyard) passed away March 30, 2016, at the age of 85, at Quarry Hill, an independent living facility, in Camden<sup>13</sup>.

Three days earlier, a home he had owned was foreclosed on for back taxes by the town of Rockland. Two years later, 9 Rockland Street was completely torn down. As writer Sarah Thompson reported, “city workers supervised from an adjacent property once known as a junkyard, the house at 9 Rockland Street was felled Tuesday, March 27. Its debris, which included rooms full of items abandoned by the previous owners, was hauled away.”<sup>14</sup>



The Thompson article went on to report that, “as many as three generations of the Shafter family owned 9 Rockland Street and the adjacent lot. The family sold its ownership of 15 Rockland Street years

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<sup>13</sup> Obituaries. *The Courier-Gazette*. March 31, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Sarah Thompson. “Abandoned Rockland Home Levelled.” *Penobscot Bay Pilot*, 3/27/2018.

ago, according to Gil Merriam, of the Rockland Historical Society.”<sup>15</sup> After Ron Shafter’s death, his wife Mona moved to California to be with her niece Karen, who she had helped raise as a child in Rockland. Then, on August 25, 2021, after an extended illness, Mona Shafter passed away in West Hills California. At that time, the town of Rockland had not yet decided what to do with the empty lot and former home of the junkyard<sup>16</sup>.

Bill Shafter has helped me fit together pieces of the Shafter family history. In a recent message, he shared that he believes David Shafter came to Rockland Maine because its Jewish community, environment, and weather reminded him of Eastern Europe. Bill recalls conversations with his aunt Sylvia (the author) in which she told Bill that her father, David Shafter, the pioneering immigrant, and patriarch, had close to half a million dollars when he died in 1956. That would equal over 5 million dollars today. How could this be? Our Maine relatives were impoverished immigrants who somehow managed to survive in the remote north.

Where did this fortune go? Did the family not carry adequate insurance to deal with downturns, accidents, or fires? Bill shared that the split up of the cash was the subject of generations of Shafter animosity. To my knowledge, my own part of this family was not involved in any way.

Regardless of our lack of involvement Maine relatives, there was one final attempt to foster a family connection to Rockland. After Ronald’s death, my brother David reached out to Mona to see if she would want to sell any property. <sup>17</sup> Apparently, she wanted nothing to do with it. Owning and managing real estate is not always as simple as it looks. Perhaps what worked in one generation fell apart when challenged by misfortune and change. Perhaps she didn’t want family to know how things had turned out. I may never know what caused the downfall, but this final chance for the Rockland Family to have a

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> “Rockland doesn’t want to turn contaminated former junkyard into parking lot.” *Bangor Daily News*. September 28, 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Named after gute-zeyde David Shafter.

Rockland, Maine presence where our Shafter presence used to be, never materialized. Today, Dalrymple, a newly discovered friend, holds the only remaining trace of what he called the former “Shafter Empire” at 19 Rockland Street, in Rockland Maine.

Understanding my own connection to origin requires me to recognize and accept fragments of facts and memories. I wonder if my children will one day have a better understanding of where they come from. Likely, their search for connections will be even more complicated as their lineage now includes that of my two spouses who have roots in the Canada, Ukraine, Italy, and Thailand.

As many of us do, I still long for a fuller understanding of my origins. My connection to Rockland, Maine is like a favored patch on a familiar antique quilt or remnants found on the ground where a junkyard once stood.