

## The history of Macy Meisal Slott's family as told by the Patriarch himself<sup>i</sup>

Just in case you don't recognize me, I am your grandfather Patriarch, zaida Macy Meisal. Some of you are named after me, all the Miltons, Michaels, Morris's, Macys, Michels, Melvins and Matthews...all named after me, and I am flattered that your parents held my memory in such high regard. My wife was named Faga and all of you Fannies, Fagas, Florences, Frances, were named after her. Our parents made the chiddach between Faga and me before we ever met each other. Boy, were we scared! But, little by little we became acquainted and we had eight children, four boys and four girls.

Our first born was a girl. We named her Michla. She married a man named Itzic Schemer and they had eight children, four boys and four girls. Michla and Itzic did not leave Pushalot, our home shtetl. But many of their children did go to America. I am flattered and delighted to see here tonight descendents of their sons, Berra Hirsha, Fivah, Helman, and Valval, and their daughters, Faga Cohen and Malcha Rose...many of Michla's family live in Jacksonville and are well known to each other. It is especially wonderful to see so many from out-of-town: from Texas, Faga's children - Ben Cohen and his wife Marjorie, Ely Cohen and his daughter Sandra, Frank Cohen (Fort Worth's 1975 physician of the year) and his wife Sara, daughters, Ann Prenovitz and husband Jacob of Boston, Sary Zimmerman and husband Raymond of Texas...will you all stand so the eyes of Jacksonville can gaze into the eyes of Texas. More of Michla's out of town family through son Helman, Ben Schemer and his wife Helen, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, William Schemer and his wife Val, Miami. Through son Fivah, all from Miami, Maurice Schemer and his wife Dorothy, Stephen Schemer and his wife Esther, Isadore Schemer and his wife Laura, Fannie Siegel and her husband Irvin. Through son Berra Hirsha, Dorothy Legum and husband Irving and son Terry, Richmond Virginia, Lynn Legum from Philadelphia Pennsylvania, Cheryl Lebeau and husband Jerry, Atlanta Georgia, Lee Schemer and wife Val, Newport News Virginia. Through son Helman, Barbara Zwerin and husband Harley, Clearwater Florida. Through daughter Malcha Rose, Etta Drashin and husband Bob, St. Augustine Florida. The oldest descendent here tonight is Minnie Morgenstern, 86, who just beat Max Rose, 85.

Our second child was also a girl and we named her Etta. She married Yudi Carmel. They brought their three boys and three girls to America in 1899. All of my children were wonderful but my Etta was an exceptional person. She was the most unselfish, charitable, kindest, energetic person of her time. She brought many of our family to America. She provided for them in every way until they could help themselves. She shared her worldly goods and love with everyone. She was a regular saint, you should pardon the expression. Children of her daughter, Esther who is 94 and living in Baltimore, and daughter Fannie, who just passed away at the age of 96, and children of her son Frank, have come a long way to be with us tonight. From Virginia, Macy Carmel and his wife Rose, Melvin Carmel and his wife Sylvia, Percy Carmel, Miriam Carmel, Harriet Kirsner, Mildred Fox, Louis Richman and his wife Tznia and their three daughters. Hilda Kirsner from Charlotte, North Carolina. From Baltimore Maryland, Harriet Hackerman, Dolly Hackerman Asbell, Milton Hackerman and his wife Mildred.

We don't know exactly how Melvin and Kay Zweig of Chevy Chase, Maryland and Lester and Eileen Gordon of St. Petersburg, Florida, fit into the family. If they are not michpaucha, we certainly wish they were...will all please stand.

My next child was Rossa. She was married to Sarya Sherman, and they had five boys and two girls. Rossa's children came to this country but Rossa passed away in Pushalot as a very young woman. From Hallandale, Florida, Ruth (Cissy) Sherman Levy, who is the daughter of Rossa's son Harry, and her husband Sam is here representing that branch of our family...please stand.

Our fourth child, finally we had an ingelleh and could make a bris. We called him Itzic. He had two boys and two girls, all of them came to this country and the families of his sons, Harry and Abe and daughters Malcha Kramer and Faga Foor are represented here this evening. Irvin Slott and wife Lois from Bethesda Maryland, William Foor and wife Carol, Miami Florida, Elise Foor Haas, husband Frank, Boynton Beach Florida, Renee Slott Montaigne, son Jeffrey, Atlanta Georgia. Dr. Marvin Slott, Gainesville Florida...please stand.

Our next daughter we named Miriam and she married Mayer David Cohen. My was I proud to have a Cahan in the family. They had four boys and four girls, and all came to live in America. Some of their family live here in Jacksonville and others have travelled thousands of miles...Sadie Cohen and Forence Levin, Baltimore Maryland, Dr. Eileen Cohen, Pennsylvania, Bessie Cohen Eisenstat and husband Berry from Atlanta Georgia, Carl Proser and his wife Helen from Greenville South Carolina, Helen Sloat Samuel, Sacramento California, Lisa Sloat, Miami Florida...please stand.

Then we had another boy and we named him Herschel. He called himself Harry, and Harry was some sport. He took the last name of Goldman when he came to this country. Our name in the old country was Zloty. It is a Lithuanian coin made of gold. All of our family took the name of Slott to make it more acceptable in America, but Harry took the last name of Goldman, represented by the gold coin. He came to Jacksonville in 1887 because there was another Pushaloter family here named Finkelstein but they are not mishpocha, just landsleit. He built a big business, was a city councilman and very active in the local community. He brought and helped to establish many of our family to Jacksonville. He had two boys and two

girls. His reputation and accomplishments earned him recognition, and biographical history is on record in the Florida archives in the history of the state of Florida.

Our next child was Lippa. He called himself Lippman Slott in America and had three boys and five girls and lived in Chicago where he established a meat packing business that his descendents still operate.

Our last child was also a boy whom we named Shopsal. He was everyone's favorite. He came to America but returned to Pushalot to be with Faga and me. I needed him in the business.

It is touching to think that we perhaps have family who still live in Lithuania now and are not known to you in America or maybe only the ones who have survived are you in America. You must certainly count your blessings and bless the memory of your parents who had the initiative and gedult to leave the tiny, familiar world of Pushalot to risk their lives and future to establish a new life and hope in America.

It was a hard life in mein shtetle Pushalot, in a country then called Litta or Lithuania to you. The winters were nine months long and unendurably cold. The summers were extremely hot and rainy. The goyim barely tolerated us and there were occasional pogroms, or russian cossaks rampaging through the streets terrorizing the countryside or tzygainer, gypsies stealing everything in sight including sometimes even children, and always there was the threat of Siberia...Pushalot...(Howard Schemer's song)

Like most Jews, we were very poor, hard working and suffering. My business, I bought eggs from the chicken farmers and packed them carefully in my wagon, covered them with straw to keep them cool and fresh and rode many viorts, miles to you, to Kovna Vilna, Ponivis, and once in a while to Riga, to sell eggs in the big city markets. I hated the long horse drawn wagon ride and hated being away from my Fagala and kinderlach all week from Monday to Friday and often daydreamed what life would be like, if I were a rich man. (Raymond Cohen sings)

But we had good times too in Pushalot. We went to shul a lot, the kinder went to cheder a lot, our wives benched a lot, we blessed after each meal, we sang songs a lot, we had bar mitzvahs-and we had weddings. I'll never forget the chasinah of our first daughter Michla. What a wedding! (Raymond and wedding scene - is this the little girl)

After that wedding did we have trouble with our next two daughters, Etta and Rossa. They were so jealous that Michla had a husband, they nagged us to consult the shotchun to negotiate a shiddach for them. I immediately had to set aside the nadan, the dowery for those two and consult with the yenta, the matchmaker...(song-Peggy and Karen Cohen...matchmaker)

But my children were restless...they had heard geshichtes about in America. The land of milk and honey with streets paved with gold. No risks seemed too great to escape the agony of serving in the army of the Russian tzar or the pogroms of the Cossaks. They would not be denied. No obstacles were too great to stop them...not even the forged visas, not leaving home in the night stealing across unpatrolled borders, enduring the forty five days rough ocean voyage in steerage class, subsisting on salted herring and black bread to arrive in America. Here in the land of milk and honey

This is the land-of-milk--and-honey  
This is the land of sun and song,  
And this is a world of good and plenty,  
Humble and proud and young and strong,  
And, this is the place where the hopes of the homeless,  
And the dreams of the lost combine.  
And, this lovely land is yours and mine.

So my children and their children came to America, destitute but determined. They tasted and endured the bitterness of poverty, desperation and disappointment with dignity, spirit, hopefulness and perseverance to seize the opportunities and glory in the freedom of Columbus' medina...our America! Not all of my children could have biographical histories of their lives published in the archives of records, but every one of them, Michla, Etta, Rossa, Itzic, Miriam, Harry, Lippa, and Shopsal have their accomplishments and noble characteristics indelibly inscribed in the hearts of the families and friends whose lives they touched.

I am going to fade out of your sight...and leave you with just your memories.

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<sup>i</sup> This was a script for a family reunion in 1975, most likely written by Raymond Cohen and family. The reunion was held in Jacksonville, Florida, probably hosted by Mitchell and Lois Peltz