

# **What is the relationship between the Meidenberg family of Philadelphia and New York and the Maidenberg family of Philadelphia and Marion, Indiana?**

It seems certain that Joseph Meidenberg and Solomon Maidenberg were brothers.

[The different spellings of the name are inconsequential. Both are transliterations from the Russian. Plus there are documents which show Solomon's last name spelled as Meidenberg.]

Joseph Meidenberg emigrated directly to Philadelphia in 1900. See arrival record. Solomon remained in Russia. His son David emigrated to Ellis Island and then Philadelphia in 1906.

Both Joseph and David were linked to Ida Cohen (Ida Feldman after her second marriage), known to the Indiana Maidenbergs as Tante Haika. She was the sister of Perel, Solomon's wife. Hence she would have been David's maternal aunt, and Joseph's sister-in-law.

Joseph Meidenberg's granddaughter, Sylvia Meidenberg Rosenberg (1924-2013), was deeply interested in her family's history. She and Milt Maidenberg had an exchange of correspondence in 1978 (see her letter). Later she and Mike became close, jointly conducting genealogy inquiries, visiting cemeteries and attending a Jewish genealogy conference.

Sylvia wrote Milt in 1978: "My grandfather Joseph was a rabbi who was your father's uncle."

There is additional detail of the history of the two families in the entry Did Solomon have siblings?

Over the years, when Sylvia and Mike talked he would make notes of her memories and reflections. For example:

- Her Grandfather Joseph came over to serve a congregation which was tied to an "Otek-Malov" congregation, which in today's geography would be Otaci-Mogilev, two towns on either side of the Dniester River. They are now in different countries, Moldova and Ukraine, but once were both part of the Russian Empire.
- Joseph would use a Yiddish term meaning "knotted and tied" to describe the closeness of the Jewish shtetls in the region. He was born in Mogilev, which is 30 miles from Dzygivka, where Solomon settled. We have assumed Solomon was born in Dzygivka, but he too may have been born in Mogilev.
- Sylvia had assumed that Tante Haika brought over her grandfather because Haika was known to have brought over many relatives, including David Maidenberg. But when it was discovered that Joseph arrived in 1900, she wondered if in fact Joseph preceded Haika. We still do not have an arrival document for Haika. We do have a 1910 census record which gives her year of immigration as 1901.
- Abe Meidenberg, a grandson of Joseph, ran a shoe store in Philadelphia for a while. A business card has been preserved.
- Sylvia could not recall who "D. Oxenfoldt" was. He was listed on the 1900 ship arrival record as the "uncle" to whose address the family was going. She gave his name as David.
- Sylvia liked to recall that she had a photo of her infant father wearing a "McKinley for President" button. McKinley was elected in 1900. Her father would have been four years old.
- Sylvia described Mordechai or Morris as a "little roly-poly fellow." His second wife was Gittel (became Kate) Balaban, who likely was related to other Balabans in Dzygivka, including David, husband of Malkeh and father (by first wife) of Shimon. Kate was a "red-headed activist," Sylvia recalled, who had been a "revolutionary in Russia."
- Most intriguing is Sylvia's memory that Morris went out to Portsmouth, Ohio, around the time of a big flood there. That would have been 1913. Her

father Harry joined him. Sylvia recalled that he was 26 at the time. That would square with the flood date because Harry was born in 1896. There is a Maidenberg family memory that David headed west from Philadelphia to meet with a relative in Ohio. Ben Maidenburg thought the name of the place was Piqua, Ohio (there is such a place). But perhaps it was Portsmouth, which would reinforce the story of staying with a relative.

- Joseph's tombstone gives his father's name as "Yitzhak Isaac", with "Yitzhak" written in Hebrew, and "Isaac" as in the English pronunciation also written in Hebrew. Solomon's stone says his father was "Meir Isaac", thus there is a discrepancy. But the preponderance of evidence, along with the fact that the name Isaac is cited, still argues for the conclusion that Joseph and Solomon were brothers.