

The Bregstein Story¹

Jessie Bregstein Trattner (1906-1985)

Around 1844, Nisan Bregstein married Sorah

Mariapolsky(ca.1825-1890).² They had three sons: Yudl (Shlomo Yehuda)³(1845-1917)⁴; Lippa (Chananel Lipman)(ca.1846 -1911)⁵ and Berman(1846-1930).⁶

When Yudl came of age, a "shidduch" (parent-arranged marriage) was made in 1861/62 in Panemune⁷, between him and a young woman by the name of Raisa Tamara(1844-1925).⁸ [Raisa was the daughter of Jacob Savadi(?) Savadski(?)(1826-ca.1890)⁹ and Freida Rosenbaum(ca.1826-1890) and came from Augustow.¹⁰ Around 1869, Yudl and Raisa left Lithuania and immigrated to Sweden.¹¹ Whether it was to escape induction into the army or whether the severe famine of 1868/1869 made it difficult to stay in Panemune, is unknown.¹²] Hidden under the canvas covering produce in a wagon, the young couple was spirited away across Lithuania¹³, past military guards, by a "balagollah" (wagon driver) to a point on the Baltic Sea.¹⁴ From there, Yehuda and Raisa sailed to Gotland, Sweden and then made their way to Malmo.¹⁵ [There, by 1870, they were settled in the parish of Caroli.¹⁶ Living in Malmo by that time, was Raisa's cousin, Jacob Marienpolsky.¹⁷ By 1870, Yudl's brother, Berman Breckstein, was also living in Malmo, in the parish of St. Petri.]¹⁸ They were now known to their neighbors as Julius and Rosalia.¹⁹

Soon after arriving in Malmo, a son was born to them, Berman (Chaim Beryl)(1870-1946).²⁰ Julius found work in the fields and Rosalia joined him as soon as the infant could be left with a neighbor. Times were hard and so much the more difficult for Julius who had neither education nor any trade. He helped, clumsily, with hauling boulders of rocks to clear the land for farming. Physically he was not adapted to such strenuous labor and his frustrations were great. He only learned a smattering of the Swedish language, could not converse with this fellow workers, and so remained a loner. [In 1873, a daughter, Anna, (Chaya)(1873-1948) was born.²¹ By November, 1874, they had left Malmo and settled in Stockholm.²² In Stockholm, Julius worked first as a shop assistant and then as a tradesman.²³] Over the next few years, additional children were born to them: Yitzchak (1876-1951)²⁴, and Avram(1878-1916).²⁵

By the time Berman was six, [? Perhaps eight or nine?] he was working in the fields with his father and earning a pittance to add to the family's upkeep.²⁶ The hours of his days were long and strenuous. He arose when the first rays of light heralded in the new day, ate his breakfast of bread and thin gruel after saying his morning prayers, and was hurried off to the fields by his father. They would trudge four miles to a farm where they would haul rocks and dig all morning. At noon, father and son would rest together to eat their mid-day meal. This consisted of a slab of black bread and cheese, sometimes smeared with an onion for flavor. They would wash this down with clear water from a nearby spring.

At half-past noon, Berman would go off to school and would become absorbed in the books that were in a strange, new, different language. While at

home he spoke Yiddish with his parents, at school, he learned to read and write in Swedish for three hours a day, five days a week.

After school, Berman would run across the woods to a little dark room in the hovel of a building called the "schul" (synagogue). From three till six, each day, he diligently learned, a third, totally different language. By six-thirty, he would be back home, after having run all the distance of a mile. Sometimes his mother would have a treat for him, for he would be ravenously hungry. She would give him bread with sweet treacle (molasses) on it. Then, off again he would trudge in the gathering dark, with the covered pail to fetch milk in from a farm two miles away. It was a round trip of four miles, running all the way there and returning at a fast trot so as not to spill a drop of the precious milk. Exercise he did not lack, you can believe that! Supper consisted of a hot soup made with a koshered steer bone. Sometimes on Friday night, in honor of "shabbos" (sabbath) there might be a few ounces of meat cut up in the soup. On rare holiday occasions they even had chicken.

Though Sweden offered the Jews unparalleled freedoms and privileges, especially when compared with life in E. Europe, none-the-less, life was hard for the Bregsteins.²⁷ News was heard of a country across the vast Atlantic ocean; a magical country: America. From everywhere there seemed to be a mass exodus of people leaving the old world to find a new world where the streets were "paved with gold". [Julius' brother, Lipka, had left Panemune for America in 1870 and his other brother, Berman, had left Malmo for America in 1875.²⁸]

Julius looked over his household which now had grown to seven with the birth of Oskar (Calif) (1879-1952).²⁹ He realized that there would probably be more children to come.³⁰ His head swam when he thought of having to feed additional mouths. [As a "kringsresande handlande" (travelling tradesman), he was making 500 kronor a year, just a bit better than a factory worker or seaman. Nearly three-quarters of that was going to rent.]³¹ In America they would have a better life. There everyone had enough to eat and there was shelter for all. At least, that's what everyone was saying. [In 1880, Julius left the family and set off, by himself, for America, to join his brothers who were living in Texas, Pennsylvania.³²

In 1881, the rest of the family got ready to join him in America.] Rosa refused to part with what she said had been her dowry: two feather pillows, two feather "perenies" (quilts) and two copper cooking pots. The name of the family was scratched on these pots for identification, and together with their meager belongings, the family left Sweden.³³

After a harrowing trip across the ocean, traveling on the deck of the engine level, sleeping on the deck floor and partaking only of the kosher food they had brought on board with them, [Rosa and the children] arrived in New York and immediately settled in Honesdale, PA.³⁴ [where Yehuda's brother, Lewis (Lippa) now lived with his wife and children over the men's furnishing store in the so-called commercial area.³⁵ Berman was now called Herman and Oscar was called Charlie.] In 1885, their last child, Nathan (Niske)(1885-1974) was born.³⁶

Honesdale was in farm territory resembling their former home in Malmo [or Stockholm]. Julius and Rose found a small two-room house with an outhouse. Water was drawn from a well ("down the road a piece"). Honesdale was in an area where potatoes were harvested in abundance. Soon Julius became the scout to find work for Herman and Ike. He would arrange with the potato farmers to permit Herman and Ike to load sacks of potatoes on their backs-taken on consignment. Julius, the entrepreneur! So the boys went to work, trudging to neighboring families to whom they sold their produce, receiving enough money to pay cash for their consignments, with enough to spare for re-purchases the next day. Sales were good, since people were poor and potatoes were a cheap, starchy, filling food. Reorders were steady and the family now was able to buy ample food for their sustenance, with an occasional chicken, even between holidays! Rose was busy from early morning to late night cooking gefilte fish and "cholent" (beans with chunks of meat cooked over-night on a low flame on top of the stove and served for lunch on Shabbat morning), and baking challahs and cakes. It took a heap of cooking and housework to care for her husband and five children with healthy appetites.

Although public schools were free, there was no time for the children to attend classes. Herman (who knew Yiddish, Swedish and Hebrew) seemed to have an aptitude for languages. He taught himself to read and write English and even helped Ike to keep up with him. He also taught Annie to read and write and he learned from her when she went to school and brought home her homework. Both Herman and Ike attended "cheder" (hebrew school). Rose and Julius

continued to converse only in Yiddish at home, which made it so much more difficult for the boys to pronounce English words.

There were other Swedish immigrants in the Honesdale area with whom the boys were able to converse in Swedish. Then, the English-speaking, potato-buying customers they encountered in their peddling, steered them into speaking and thinking in English. Herman's education may not have been orthodox, but it certainly proved adequate! (By the time he was forty, he had added yet another language to his repertoire-Italian-because of the customers he came in contact with as a result of his business).

Julius and Rose were not happy living in Honesdale. There was a very sparse Jewish population and they were like "ducks out of water", as Rose put it. They heard from N.Y. relatives who had recently come over from "the old country", and they now felt that they would feel much more secure if they would be living in close contact with "unzer menschen" ("our people"). They decided to move to the Lower East Side of New York City.

With all the boys busy selling potatoes and cabbages, as well as any other vegetables that they could pick up, their income was growing. With New York as an objective, they began to put money aside in preparation for the big move. Herman was sent on ahead to secure living quarters for the family. He was able to procure a three-room basement apartment, four steps down below a vacant store on Avenue B on the Lower East Side of N.Y.³⁷ In a second-hand store he purchased a table, five chairs (two with broken legs but still usable), two mattresses and two kerosene lamps, for the total sum of \$8.75. There was a water

pump in the rear of the property and an enclosed out-house. Pleased with his arrangements, Herman returned to Honesdale to help with the packing and to organize their caravan.³⁸

A horse and wagon were purchased and in 1896/1897, the Bregsteins were on their way.³⁹ Under Rose's watchful eyes, her dowry (feather pillows, quilts and copper pots) was loaded on the truck.⁴⁰ Their other meager belongings consisted of crockery of all descriptions which they ate upon, and flatware, all of which had survived the sea crossing from Sweden. Everyone piled on top of the family's wares and with Herman holding the reins, they started on the long road to New York City.

An empty store was rented "on credit" by Julius, and Herman became the shopkeeper of a men's clothing store. Ike would load some merchandise on a pushcart and early in the morning joined other pushcart peddlers in the streets. Abe helped in the store and Charlie earned pennies minding pushcarts for the peddlers when they had to take time out for "necessary functions." On busy days he might earn as much as fifteen cents!⁴¹

In 1896, Herman became engaged⁴² to Annie Mabel Schaeffer(ca. 1874-1962).⁴³ Since Annie lived in Brooklyn, (730 Fourth St.), Herman, when courting her, had to travel across the Manhattan-Brooklyn Bridge by streetcar and then change to another horse-drawn street car to get to Annie's neighborhood. The trip took almost two hours each way! But they were in love and had no sense of the time.

[In 1897, Herman was arrested, together with his brother, Ike, for bilking a dry goods store. Apparently, Herman was the bill clerk of the store. When Ike would enter the store as a customer, he would leave with one item, though his bill had on it a different item for a far smaller amount.]⁴⁴

Herman rented a store near the docks in Bush Terminal, Brooklyn (1055 Third Ave.). His store featured work clothes for the dock workers and butcher aprons for the working men. Annie bought a sewing machine, they purchased materials and were in business! They were married on Sunday, Sept. 12th, 1897, at synagogue B'nai Jacob.⁴⁵ They spent their honeymoon in the back room of their store, which became their first home.⁴⁶

In the meantime, the rest of the family soon moved to larger quarters, with inside running water coming from the faucets, a luxury they soon learned to enjoy. The outhouse, however, still remained. Only the well-to-do could afford the luxury of indoor toilets.⁴⁷ [By 1899, Abe, Charlie and Ike had opened up a bicycle store, "Bregstein Brothers", on 7th St.⁴⁸ In 1900, Annie married David Baltimore.⁴⁹

Just two years after Herman and Annie were wed, Annie gave birth to a son, Samuel Joseph(1899-1972). Soon followed Ada (1902-1988)⁵⁰ and Jessie(1906-1985).⁵¹ Julius died in 1917, Rose, in 1925.⁵²]

¹ Taken from Jessie Bregstein Trattner, The Bregstein Story, Unpublished MS., circa 1965. The information about life in Malmo and Honesdale, was told to her by her father, Herman Benjamin Bregstein. Text in []s and ()s contains the editor's, (Rabbi Jeff Marx) additions and comments. Research as of Dec., 2007.

² It is not known where Nisan was born. The 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok/Congregational Book of the Jewish Synagogue of Stockholm (p. 356, "Brukstein, Julius"), gives Julius' father's name as Nisan as does Julius Bregstein 1917 gravestone, (Old Mt. Carmel cemetery, N.Y., Section 1, D, 30, 2). 1917 death certificate (4/25/1917, Bronx, NY, #3098, "Julius Bregstein") gives his father's name as Nathan and mother's name as Sorah Mariapolsky. Sorah's last name indicates that her family came originally from Marijampole, a small town 60 miles southwest of Panemune. Approximately 3,000 Jews lived there in the 1850's. (Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit., "Mariampole").

³ 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit., "Brukstein, Julius"), gives Julius' Hebrew name as Judl (ben Nisan); 1917 Julius Bregstein gravestone, (Op. Cit.), gives his Hebrew name as Shlomo Yehuda (ben Nisan).

⁴ There are 5 different birth dates for Julius, ranging from 1840-1847. 1845 seems the most likely. 1870 Parish of Malmo Caroli, Husforhorslangd ("Julius Breckstein") gives his birth as 3/10/1845 in Poland. The 1875 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter/Personal Declaration of Household (Katarina norra, #2028, "Julius Brecksten") gives Yudl's birth date as 4/10/1844; 1876 Mantalsuppgifter (Katarina ostra och inre, #1701, "Julius Breckstein") states 3/17/1840; 1877 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Katarina ostra och inre, #1715, "Julius Brechstein") states 5/20/1846; 1878 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Maria norra, #2566, "Julius Brechstein") states 3/10/1845; 1879 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Maria norra, #4754, "Julius Brechstein") states 3/10/1845; 1880 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Katarina, "Julius Brechstein") states 3/10/1845. Stockholm birth records for Yudl's sons, Isak (1876), Abraham (1878), and Oskar (1879) gives Yudl's birth date as 1845 (See Birth Records of Jewish Community of Stockholm, National Archives, Stockholm); 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok, (Op. Cit., p. 356), lists "Julius Brukstein, born in Panimon, 3/10/1845"; 1878-1880 Stockholm Rotemansarkiv/Stockholm District Records ("Julius Brechstein/Breckstein") states birth was 3/10/1845 in Paninon, Poland; 1880 ships' manifests for the Portia, (Hamburg Indirect Passenger List, 7/8/1880, Hamburg to London, "Julius Brechstein", line 8) and the Utopia (London to New York, 7/28/1880, line 227, "Julus Breckstein"), give his age as 35 (b.1844/45); 1900 U.S. census: b. 1847(NY, Manhattan, ED 388, sheet 15, line 86, "Julius Bregstein:"); 1910 US Census (NY, Bronx, ED 1599, Sheet 7A, line 19, "Julius Bregstein") states age 69 (1840/41). 1917 NY death certificate (Op. Cit., "Julius Bregstein) gives his age as 72 years, 1 month (b. 1845); Julius Bregstein 1917 gravestone, (Op. Cit.), gives his date of birth as 1840.

⁵ 1870 Ship's Manifest (4/20/1870, Prince Albert, Hamburg to NY, Lippa Brockstein) gave his age as 24 and 8 months (b.1846); 1880 US census (Texas, PA, "Lewis Brackstine") gives his birth as 1842; 1910 US Census, (Texas, PA, "Lewis Breikstein") gives his birth as 1845? 1855?;

1911 gravestone (Dyberry Cemetery, Honesdale, PA) gives birth as 7/25/1846 and death as 7/2/1911.

⁶ 1870 Malmo Church records of St. Petri parish, (AI:86, Vaveriet II, P. 241), give Berman's birth as 4/20/1846 and his birthplace is listed as Pagirmunos, which is near Panemune; 1880 PA census gives age as 30 (b.1849/1850); 1910 US Census states age 62 (born 1847/48); 1920 census states born in 1852. NY death certificate #23695 give death date as 10/17/1930.

⁷ 1876 Stockholm Birth Record (Op. Cit., "Isak Breckstein") states that his parents had been married for 13 years (1862/63); 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit.) gives their marriage date as 1/17/1862 in Panimon; 1900 US Cenus (Op. Cit.): married 35 years (1864/65); 1910 US Census (Op. Cit.): married 49 years (1860/61).

⁸ There are twelve different dates for Raisa's birth, ranging from 1836-1848. 1844, seems to be the most likely. 1870 Malmo Husforhorslangd Malmo states 10/16/1846; 1875 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter: 1/2/1844; 1876 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Op. Cit.): 4/15/1840; 1876 Stockholm Birth Record (Op. Cit., "Isak Breckstein"): age 32 (b. 1843/44); 1877 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Op. Cit.): 3/24/1846; 1878-1880 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Op. Cit.): 4/10/1844; 1878-79 Stockholm Birth Records (Op. Cit., "Abraham Breckstein" and "Oskar Breckstein"): born in 1843/44; 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit.): born 4/10/1844 in Augustow; 1880 Stockholm Rotemansarkiv (Op. Cit.): 4/10/1844; 1881 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Katarina, "Rosalie Breckstein"): born 4/10/1844. 1881 Ship's Manifest, (SS Ethiopia, Glasgow to NY, 4/19/1881, Rosalie Brackston) states age 40 (b.1840/41). 1900 U.S. census: b. 2/1840 (NY, Manhattan, ED 388, sheet 15, line 86, "Julius Bregstein:"); 1910 U.S. census ("Julius Bregstein", Op. Cit.): age 71 (1838/39; 1920 US census (NY, "Rose Brackstien", ED 1209, Sheet 15A, line 25 1925) states age 82 (b. 1837/38); 1925 Death Certificate (Bronx, NY, #6547, 10/10/1925, "Rose Bregstein"): age 87 (1837/38); 1925 Grave Stone (Old Mt. Carmel, NY): age 89 (1836); Circa 1965 Jessie Trattnor's History of the Bregstein Family: born 2/1848.

⁹ 1870 Malmo Husforhorslangd gives her name as Rosalia; 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit.) gives her name as Rosalie Savadi and states that her Hebrew name was Roza bat Jacob. 1926 Rose Bregstein's gravestone (Op. Cit.) states: "Tamara Raizl bat Yakov" (Jacob). Herman's 1897 NY marriage certificate (9/12/1897, Brooklyn, #4553, "Hayman B. Bregstein") gives her name as Rose Zawatzky. Annie Bregstein's 1900 marriage license (8/29/1900, Brooklyn, "Annie Bregstein") gives her mother's maiden name as "Rosa Zawatsky"; Charles Bregstein's N.Y. 1901 marriage certificate states that his mother's maiden name was Zawada; Isaac Bregstein's 1923 N.Y. Marriage Certificate states "Bronsky" (which does not seem correct); Rosa's 1925 N.Y. Death Certificate (Op. Cit.) states, "Sevatsky." (Could it be Savitsky from

Sawicze, Poland?) (Yehuda's brother's son, Nathan, married an Eva Savada, ca. 1896 in New York. Could there be a connection?)

¹⁰ Rosa's mother's name, Freida Rosenbaum, found in Rosa's 1925 N.Y. Death Certificate (Op. Cit.). Her Augustow birthplace is recorded in the 1878-1880 Stockholm Rotemansarkivet (Op. Cit.); and in the 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit.) Augustow was to the south of Panemune, just west of the Russian border. There were 3,764 Jews living there in 1860. Many were involved in the local lumber industry, rafting logs to Danzig. (See Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit., vol. 3, "Augustow", pg. 852.)

¹¹ Though Sweden was open to Jews in 1782, restrictions on immigration and settlement were imposed during the early decades of the 19th century. It was not until 1860, that Jews were allowed to settle freely within Sweden. (Thomas Selling, "Resources for Jewish Genealogy in Sweden", Avotaynu, vol. xi, number 2, summer 1995, p. 39.)

¹² From 1827 to 1855, Jewish males from the ages of 12-25 were conscripted into the Russian army for 25 year periods. The Russian rulers hoped that this would provide a way of forcibly assimilating the Jews into Russian culture and religion. In 1855, under Alexander II, the situation improved slightly. The period of service was reduced to 15 years (!). Military recruitment was definitely taking place in Panemune in 1867. (See 1875 Judel Bragsten application to Vistas i Riket). It was not until 1874, that a universal military service law was enacted, which treated all Russian citizens equally. (This meant six years of service, which, in 1888, was reduced to five years). even then, given their nearly 50 years of harassment and oppression in connection with the Russian army, many Jews were reluctant to serve. (Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit., "Cantonists"; Independent Suwalk & Vicinity Benevolent Association and Relief Committee, op. cit.; "Russian Military Records from the Kingdom of Poland as a Source for Genealogical Research", Michal Kopczynski, in Rodziny: The Journal of the Polish Genealogical Society of America, Winter 2002, p.7).

¹³ They would have had to cross over the Lithuanian/East Prussian border.

¹⁴ Which city was the point of embarkation has not yet been determined. Perhaps Konigsberg, which is where his brother, Lipa had left from in 1870. (See Yivo Bleter, #40, 1956). The port of embarkation might also have been Libau (Liepaja), which was close to the West Prussian border in Courland, though the port did not gain major usage until the construction of the Libau-Romny railroad in the late 1890s. (See "Libau: A Gateway for Emigration" in Avotaynu, Vol. XV, Nu. 1, Spring, 1999, p.20.)

¹⁵ Gotland is a large island just to the east of Sweden, almost midway between Sweden and the Lithuanian coast. It is approximately 225 kilometers from

Memel, on the Lithuanian coast. Malmo is the third largest city in Sweden, located in the southern part of Scania. In the 1860s, Polish Jews began to settle there. A Jewish congregation consisting of 62 families, was established there in 1871. In 1872, cemetery land was purchased and a synagogue was constructed. Today, Malmo is the second or third largest Jewish community in Sweden (about 2,000 families). Though Jews born in foreign countries were not allowed to live outside the cities of Stockholm, Goteborg, Norrkoping, Karlskrona and Marstrand, many, like Yudl, defied the prohibition and settled elsewhere. It was not until 1873 that Jews were permitted to live anywhere in the country. (See L. Herz, "Malmo", in JJSO,11, (Dec. 1969), pp. 165-173; Carl Carlsson, "The Jews in the Nordic countries", Landsmen, vol 2, Nu. 4, Spring, 1992, p.45.)

¹⁶ 1870 Parish of Malmo Caroli, Husforhorslangd/Household Roll, states that Julius Breckstein arrived in 1870. While it is possible that they emigrated to Sweden before this date, since it was not until 1870 that the parishes began to register the Jews living in their midst, Jessie Trattner's account states that Herman was born almost immediately after Yudl and Rose arrived in Sweden, and all records corroborate that Berman was born in Sweden in 1870. (See correspondence with Stadsarkivet i Malmo, 9/15/1986- #292/86-551 and 11/19/1986- #327/86-551). The 1871 and 1872 Malmo Mantalslangd/Taxation List lists Julius Breckstein, his wife and child. (See Siegel, Walter, Mosaiska Forsamlingen i Malmo 75 Ar/The Jewish Congregation in Malmo, 75 Years, Malmo, 1946, pp. 19-20 and 107-109).

¹⁷ In 1866, Jacob Marionpolsky (1845 - 1903), in all probability a first cousin of Yudl's, settled in Malmo. He and his family also lived in the same dwelling as Yudl and Raisa in Stockholm, in 1879. (See 1879 Stockholm Rotemansarkiv, "Marienpolski, Jacob"; Konseljakt, Justitiedepartementet/Cabinet Act in Justice Dept., 12/30/1880, Riksarkivet/National Archives, Stockholm; death record, Sodertalje Parish, Stockholm, 1903; Judiska Forsamlingen i Stockholm (Jewish congregation in Stockholm), p. 359 in 1782-1890 record book and p. 158 in 1890-1900s record book, "Marienpolski, Jacob"). A Chone Marienpolsky is found in the Malmo 1871 Mantalslangder (See Siegel, Walter, (Op. Cit, pp. 107-109). A Levin Marienpolsky was also living in Malmo in 1872, who was born 5/7/1848 in Wladislawow, Russian Poland and a Lina Marianpolsky was born in 3/4/1877 in Lund and in 1899 was working as a tailor.

¹⁸ (See 1870 S:T Petri AI:86, Vaveriet II, page 241; 1872 Malmo Mantalslangd (Op. Cit.) lists Berman Breckstein with one child. (See Siegel Op. Cit.); Berman, together with his wife and children, left Sweden in 1875. (See Emigrantregistret 1875; Malmo Caroli Husforhorslangd; and see correspondence # 292/86-551 and 11/19/1986 coorespondence (#327/86-551) with Stadsarkivet i Malmo/State Archives of Malmo.

Other Bregstein family members (relationship to Yudl, not known) also immigrated to Sweden around this time. In 1874, Yudel Laib Bregsten was

peddling in the district of Gamleby, near Vastervik. (See Civildepartementets Konseljakt/Cabinet Act in the Ministry of Public Administration, 12/12/1875, "Vistas I Riket/Permission to Dwell", "Judel Lejba Bragsten", Riksarkivet, Stockholm.) By 1876, Klara (Chaya) Bregstein Frankel and her family were living in Gamleby. (See letter from Fredrick Frankel, 2/2/1996; Hersson-Ringskog, Paula, Oskarshamns Mosaiska Formsamling, [Oskarshamn's Jewish Community]1888-1938, p. 5; 1880 Oskarshamn Husforhorslangd, "Klara Bregstein").

¹⁹ See 1870 Malmo Husforhorslangd; 1871 and 1872 Malmo Mantalslangder (Siegel, Walter, Op. Cit., pp. 107-109); Stockholm Birth Records of the Jewish Community of their sons (Breckstein: Isak, 1876; Abraham 1878; Oskar 1879); and 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit.)

²⁰ 1870 Malmo Husforhorslangd gives his name as Hejman Beerman and states that he was born in 1870; 1871 Malmo Mantalslangd lists Julius Breckstein with a wife and one child. (See Sigel, Walter, Op. Cit.). The Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter state that from 1875-1878 he was known as Berman, and from 1879-1881 as Bernhard. 1875 and 1877 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter state that he was born 4/1/1870, 1876 Mantalsuppgifter states 4/1/1869, 1878-1881 state 4/5/1870. 1878-1880 Stockholm Rotemansarkivet (Op. Cit.) give his birth as 4/5/1870 in Malmo; 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok, (Op. Cit., p. 356) gives his name as Bernard (Berl ben Judl), born 4/5/1870, in Malmo. 1881 Ship's Manifest, (SS Ethiopia, Glasgow to NY, 4/19/1881, Ber. Brackston) state that he was 10 (b.1870/71). 1899 US naturalization papers (Eastern District Court, Vol. 16, p. 189, 7/14/1899, "Hyman Bregstein") state that he was born on 4/6/1870. 1900 US census (Kings, ED 95, Sheet 6B, line 53, "Herman Bregstein") states that he was born 5/1870. 1910 US Census (Kings, ED 935, sheet 6A, "Herman Bregstein") states that he was 40 (b. 1869/1870). 1920 US Census (1/3/1920, Kings, ED 507, Sheet 3A/3B, line 49) states that he was 49 (b. 1870/71). 1930 US Census (Kings, ED 24-1152, Sheet 1B, Line 66, "Herman Bregstein") gives age as 60 (b. 1869/1870). See also correspondence with Stadsarkivet i Malmo, 9/15/1986. Herman is buried in Mt. Lebanon cemetery, NY.

²¹ 1875 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Anna) lists gives her birth as 12/10/1872; 1876 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Anna) gives her birth as 1872; 1877 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Hanna) gives her birth as 1/22/1872; 1878-1881 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Anna) gives her birth as 1/6/1873. The Stockholm Rotemansarkiv (Op. Cit.) lists Anna (Chava) as born in Malmo on 1/6/1873. 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit., p. 356) gives her birth as 1/6/1873 and name as Anna (Chaya bat Judl); 1881 Ship's Manifest, (SS Ethiopia, Glasgow to NY, 4/19/1881, Anna Brackston) states that she was 7 (b. 1876/77). Her 8/1900 Brooklyn marriage license ("Annie Bregstein", Op. Cit.) gives her age as 23 (b.1876/77); 1910 US Census (N.Y., NY, ED 464, Sheet 11A,

line 43, “David Baltimore”) lists her age as 36 (born 1873/74); 1920 US census (NY, NY, ED 1210, Sheet 13A, Line 44, “Anna Baltimore”) lists her age as 47 (b. 1872/73).

²² The family may have settled in one of the nearby towns in which some Jews also lived: Lund, Landskrona, Helsingbor, or Kirstianstad before moving to Stockholm. (Correspondence #1284/86, Landsarkivet i Lund and 9/15/86, Stadsarkivet i Malmo; Carlsson, *op. cit.*). The Breckstein family is also found in the Framlingsbok/Book of Strangers, of the Judiska Forsamlingen i Stockholm, on p. 50, but it is not known what year they were recorded, there. Could it be in late 1873? early 1874? before they were recorded in the synagogue records? Yudl appears in the 1873 Malmo tax list. On November 16th, 1874, Julius signed the Stockholm Mantalsuppgift for 1875. (see Siegel, *op. cit.*).

²³ They lived in the Sodermalm, the southern part of the city, where most European Jews lived at that time.

²⁴ Itzchak appears in the Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter 1877-1881 (Op. Cit.) as Isac. 1877 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Op. Cit.) states he was born 5/30/1873; 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit., p. 356) gives his birth as 5/12/1876 in Stockholm and name as Isaac (Yitzach ben Judl); 1876 Stockholm Birth Records for the Jewish Community (Op. Cit.) state 5/14/1876. 1881 Ship’s Manifest, (SS Ethiopia, Glasgow to NY, 4/19/1881, Isaac Brackston) states age 4 (b. 1876/77). 1910 US census (Op. Cit., “Julius Bregstein”) states age 33 (1877). 1918 WWI Draft Registration (NY, NY, 10/24/1918) gives his birth as 5/5/1875; Isaac’s 1930 US census (NY, Bronx, ED 3-317, Sheet 12B, Line 72), which states that he was born in 1879/1880 in Pennsylvania, is clearly not correct; WWII draft registration gives his birth as 5/22/1878 in Stockholm.

²⁵ The 1879 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Op. Cit.) lists Abraham as born 3/12/1878. 1880-1881 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (Op. Cit.) state 2/24/1878, as does the records of Judiska Forsamlingen i Stockholm and Stockholm birth records for the Jewish community; 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit., p. 356) gives his birth as 2/24/1878 and his name as Abraham (Abram ben Judl; The Stockholm Rotemansarkiv states: 3/24/1878. 1881 Ship’s Manifest, (SS Ethiopia, Glasgow to NY, 4/19/1881, Abraham Brackston) states age 2 (b. 1878/79).

²⁶ This description of work seems too strenuous for a six year old. It might be possible for an 8 or 9 year old. Could Stockholm have been that rural? Carl Carlsson, stated in a 2/16/94 letter that there would have been farm land nearby as well as further south. Did Julius do manual work as well as peddling? Could this description be a conflation of life in Stockholm and, when Herman was 11, in Honesdale, PA?

²⁷ Jews in Sweden, since 1779, had enjoyed certain freedoms. They could buy land, and were allowed autonomy in their own affairs. During the 1840s, almost

all restrictions were lifted against the Jews. In 1870, they became fully politically emancipated. (*Encyclopedia Judaica*, *op. cit.*, "Sweden"). None-the less, Julius' application to "be licensed" as a tradesman was rejected by Stockholm city officials in 1877. This was due to a note, sent by the directors of the Jewish community of Stockholm, which stated that they saw no reason to support his application. (This may have been due to their nervousness of increased economic competition in their city, as well as great social and cultural differences between the old, established Jews of Stockholm and the newly arrived eastern European Jews). This apparently, did not stop Julius, for the 1878-1880 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter (*Op. Cit.*) lists his occupation as tradesman. (See 3/5/1877 note in *Civildepartementes Konseljakt, Vistas i Riket*, 3/16/1877, Riksarkivet, Stockholm).

²⁸ The records of the Koenigsburg relief committee state that Lipa left Hamburg for America in March, 1870. (See Szajkowski, Zosa, "The First Organized Emigration From Eastern Europe to the U.S.:1869-1870", *YIVO Bleter*, *YIVO*, #40, 1956; and Dov Levin, *The Litvaks*, p.73). 1875 Emigrant Register, Polish Chamber of Malmo (1875:68:1057), lists Bernard Brechstein and his family, leaving Sweden for New York in October of 1875. The 1880 US census lists both Berman and Lewis (Lippa) living in Texas, PA. Some members of the Bregstein family remained in Sweden, such as the family of Klara Bregstein (relationship to Yudl/Julius unknown) who had arrived in Oskarsham, Sweden around

²⁹ Oskar was, in all probability, named after the king of Sweden. The 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (*Op. Cit.*, p. 356) gives his birth 8/4/1879, his name as Oscar and his Hebrew name as Belal ben Judl. 1880 Mantalsuppgifter states 8/21/1879; 1881 states 8/04/1879 as does Stockholm Rotemansarkiv (*Op. Cit.*) and Stockholm Birth Records of the Jewish community (*Op. Cit.*). 1881 Ship's Manifest, (SS Ethiopia, Glasgow to NY, 4/19/1881, Oskar Brackston) stated that he was an infant. The 1900 U.S. census (*Op. Cit.*, "Julius Bregstein") states 1/1880, which is clearly incorrect, as is Charles (Oscar) Bregstein's 1920 US census (NY, NY, ED 1223, Sheet 20A, Line 30, "Charles Bregstein") and his 1930 US census (NY, NY, ED 31-513, Sheet 6A, Line 5) which state that he was born in Honesdale, PA. 1918 WWI Draft Registration (11/1918, "Charles Bregstein") gives his birth as 5/25/1879;p 1942 WWII draft registration gives his birth as 6/28/1879 in Sweden.

³⁰ Raisa, in addition to bearing five children also had two miscarriages and a stillborn.

³¹ 1876 and 1880 Stockholm Mantalslangd. He was paying 325 kronor for rent.

³² He arrived on 7/28/1880, having traveled from Stockholm to Hamburg, to London to New York. (See Hamburg Indirect Passenger list, 7/8/1880, Ship Portia, line 8: "Julius Brechstein, New York via London"; Ship's Manifest,

Utopia, London to New York, 7/28/1880, line 227, "Julius Breckstein"). 1881 Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter lists Rosalie Breckstein as head of household and states: "her husband resides in America". The 1880 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit., p. 356) states, concerning Julius: "resides in America." The 1900 US census (Op. Cit. "Julius Bregstein") states that Julius arrived in the U.S. in 1880. The 1910 census (Op. Cit. "Julius Bregstein") states he arrived in 1883 but most of the information given in the 1910 census is not correct: both Julius and Rosa are stated to have been born in Sweden, as were their parents! Julius' 1917 NY death certificate (Op. Cit.) gives 1880 as the year of his arrival.

³³ The 1881 Stockholms Mosaiska Foersamlings Kyrkobok (Op. Cit., p. 169) states about the family: "vistas i Amerkika": Living in America. (Though the Bilaga/Index to the Stockholm Mantalsuppgifter for 1882-1947, will continue to list the Brechstein family, this is because they were simply listed as obefintliga/missing persons. (Correspondence with Carol Carlsson, 9/9/1993). Herman Bregstein's 1899 US naturalization certificate (Op. Cit.) stated that he arrived at the port of New York on May 15th, 1881. The 1900 US census (Op. Cit., "Herman Bregstein" and "Julius Bregstein") states that Rosa and family arrived in the U.S. in 1880. The 1910 census (Op. Cit., "Herman Bregstein", "Julius Bregstein", "David Baltimore") states 1880 for Herman and Annie and 1883 for Rose. The 1920 census (Op. Cit. "Herman Bregstein" and "Anna Baltimore") states 1880 for Herman and 18?9 (1879?) for Annie. Rose's 1925 NY death certificate (Op. Cit.) stated that she arrived in America in 1881. 1930 US Census (Kings, ED 24-1152, Sheet 1B, line 66, "Herman Bregstein") stated that he arrived in 1880. Swedish emigration records show that "Rosalie, Bernhard, Anna, Isac, Abraham and Oskar Brackstein" all left Sweden, together.

³⁴ Though Aaron Kaplan, Herman's witness to his 1899 US naturalization (Op. Cit.) claimed that Herman had resided continuously in New York City since 1881, the family story clearly puts the family in Honesdale, first. Julius Bregstein's death certificate (Op. Cit.) states that he arrived in the U.S. in 1880 and lived in New York since 1895. Rose Bregstein's NY death certificate (Op. Cit.) stated that while she had arrived to the U.S. in 1881, she had only been living in N.Y. since 1899. Aaron Kaplan, in all probability, had not met Herman until 1896. (Kaplan had been the immigration sponsor of Herman's wife and her family. It was probably through Annie Schaeffer that Herman and he met.) Honesdale was the next town east from Texas, PA.

³⁵ Lippa, his wife, Brina and his son, Nissen, had immigrated to the US in 1870. (See above). In subsequent years he had two other sons and a daughter. Lippa, in his occupation as tin peddler, traveled back and forth between PA and N.Y. Lippa's birth dates (including his death certificate) include: 1842, 1845, 7/25/1846, 4/1850, and 4/17/1853. His name appears as Brackstin, Brackstine, Bregstein and Breikstein. (See Jewish cemetery, Honesdale, PA; 1880 US census

(PA, Texas township, ED 19, p. 8, line 37, "Lewis Brackstine") and 1900 US censuses (N.Y. and PA).

³⁶ Jessie Trattner's narrative stated that, upon their arrival, (1881), "Rose was already five months pregnant and a few months later, Nathan (Niskeh) was born". It may be, though Rose was pregnant upon their arrival, it was not with Nathan. (The 1900 US census (Op. Cit. "Julius Bregstein") stated that Rose had given birth to 7 children of whom only 6 were living). The US 1900 and 1910 census (Op. Cit. "Julius Bregstein"), gives Nathan's birth date as 1885. The 1930 US census (NY, Bronx, ED 3-517, Sheet 15B, line 67, "Nathan Bregstein") gives his age as 45 (b. 1884/85). The 1900 and 1930 census states born in PA, while the 1910 census states, incorrectly, that he was born in New York; 1917-1918 WWI draft registration gives his birth as 2/21/1885; 1942 WWII draft registration lists his birth as 2/21/1885 in Honesdale, PA.

³⁷ No such listing for the family has yet been found in the Manhattan City Directories.

³⁸ According to Richard Bregstein, Herman left Honesdale at age 16, (1886) went to the Lower East Side, rented a room, found a job and saved some money. Then, after some time, he returned to Honesdale for the rest of the family. Herman was engaged to Annie Mabel Schaeffer of Brooklyn in Dec., 1896, which also means he had lived in New York for some time previous to that date. However, there is no record of Herman in the Manhattan and Brooklyn City Directories from 1883-1896.

³⁹ Julius' 1917 NY death certificate (Op. Cit.) stated he had lived in N.Y. since 1895. Rose's 1925 NY death certificate (Op. Cit.) stated that she had lived in New York since 1899, (which cannot be correct, since the N.Y. city directory shows an address for Julius in 1897 on 507 5th St.)

⁴⁰ Copper pots currently in possession of Joanne Levine.

⁴¹ Charlie in 1897, would have been 17, which seems a little old for watching pushcarts.

⁴² They were engaged on 12/27/1896. See Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 12/29/1896 and wedding invitation.

⁴³ Annie's 1897 marriage certificate (Op. Cit.) gives her age as 23 (b. 1873/74); The 1900 NY census (Herman Bregstein, Op. Cit.) states that Annie was born 4/1874; 1910 census NY ("Herman Bregstein", Op. Cit.) says age 33 (b.1876/77); 1920 CENSUS (Herman Bregstein, Op. Cit.) SAYS age 44 (b.1875/76); 1930 NY census ("Herman Bregstein", Op. Cit.) gives birth as 1873/74 in Neidenburg; Jesse Tratnor, in a 10/30/1962 letter to her sister, Ada Bregstein Marx, stated that

she had a letter from her mother, “soon after Pop had died” [1946]. In that letter, her mother had stated: “I was 4 years old when my father died [1875]...” which suggests that her birth was 1871. Annie is buried at Mt. Lebanon cemetery, N.Y., Tabor Benevolent Society, plot 13.

⁴⁴ N.Y. times, 2/14/1897, p. 4. The firm was Spregel and Prehys, 214 Grand St. Herman is listed in the article as “Hyman” and he and Isaac are listed as living at 705 E. Fifth St.

⁴⁵ B'nai Jacob was located in S. Brooklyn at 161 22nd St. between Third and Fourth Ave. (Brooklyn marriage certificate #4553).

⁴⁶ In 1899, they were living at 751 Third Ave, Brooklyn. (Herman Bregstein 1899 naturalization, op. cit.). In 1900 they were at 151 25th St., Brooklyn. (1900 U.S. census, Op. Cit., “Herman Bregstein”).

⁴⁷ The 1899 New York city directory states that they were living at 282 E. Houston St. The 1900 N.Y. census gives their address as 265 Fifth St. The 1900 N.Y. city directory shows them living in at 751 5th St. the 1910 census shows them living at 806 Rogers Ave. in Brooklyn. The 1910 N.Y. census shows Julius, Rose, Isaac and Nathan, living in the Bronx, at 201 Washington Ave. Abe and his family lived a few blocks away, at 46 Washington Ave.

⁴⁸ N.Y. city directory, 1899.

⁴⁹ 8/29/1900, Kings County Certificate #5109.

⁵⁰ 1926 marriage license (Brooklyn, 8/6/1926, “Ada Bregstein”) gives her age as 23 (b.1902/1903) and her birthplace as Brooklyn.

⁵¹ Ada was born 10/23. Ada was 4’11” with brown eyes and black hair (WWII Ration Book, 5/6/1942). Business must have been good for Herman and Annie, for the 1900 census shows that they were no longer living in the back of the store and had a live-in servant girl. (See 1910 N.Y. census, lines 43-45; Interviews with Ada Marx and Jessie Trattnor, circa 1976).

⁵² They are buried in Old Mt. Carmel cemetery, N.Y. Double gravestone, erected 1925/1926: letter "B" at top. Left side: (Hebrew): "Here is buried Tamara Raizl bat Yakov, departed 22 Tishri, 568_ (5686) (1925)(English): In memory of Rosie Bregstein, beloved wife and devoted mother, died Oct 10, 1925, age 89 years, rest in peace" right side: (Hebrew): "Here is buried Shlomo Yehuda bar Nisan, departed the 3d of Iyar, 5677 (1917), may his soul be bound up in the bound of eternal life.(English): In memory of Julius Bregstein, beloved husband and devoted father, died April 25, 1917, age 77 years, rest in peace." In 1920, Rose was living as a boarder with Barney Allentock, at 46 W. 117th St. (See 1920 US

census, Op. Cit., "Rose Brackstien"). She died in 1925 at the Daughters of Jacob Home in the Bronx. (See Rose Bregstein 1925 death certificate, Op. Cit.)