

Genealogical Summary for  
Lazarus Philip Corfan and Dora Makoufka



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## Genealogical Summary for Lazarus Philip Corfan and Dora (Yetta) Makoufka

Lazarus and Dora were born and married in Miedzyrzec Podlaski in Russian-Poland and emigrated to the UK in September 1905. The genealogical information which follows has been obtained from conversations with family members and from various official sources:

1. Naturalisation papers for Lazarus Corfan from the National Archives; HO144/1362/262590; granted 5 May 1916; [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)
2. Civil Registration documents from The Office for National Statistics; [www.1837.online.co.uk](http://www.1837.online.co.uk)
3. Indexes to Jewish civil records for Miedzyrec 1826-1900 from the JRI-Poland project. [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org) By checking the surname list for Miedzyrzec it was revealed that the most likely original spelling for Corfan was Korfen.
4. Documents obtained from the State Archives of Lublin.
5. 1911 Census for England and Wales

Lazarus Philip Corfan was born *Lejzor Fejwel Korfen* on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1883 in the town of Miedzyrzec (*Mesrich*) in the province of Siedlitz in Russian-Poland <sup>1</sup>; his parents were Morris and Rachel. <sup>1</sup> He died on 6th October 1960 at St David's hospital, Cardiff of carcinoma of the oesophagus aged 77 years. <sup>2</sup>.

Lazarus married Dora Makoufka (daughter of Mochka Makoufka, shoe repairer and Bejla Hudes Zunszajn) <sup>3</sup> on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1905 in the Mesrich Synagogue. <sup>4</sup>

Dora was born in 1885; she died on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1964 at St David's Hospital, Cardiff of gangrene caused by diabetes, aged 79 years. <sup>5</sup>

Lazarus was a tailor. The couple had 7 children all born in Cardiff from 1906 to 1923.

### Chronology

Lazarus and Dora left Poland on or about 16 September 1905 and came direct to Cardiff. <sup>4</sup> It is thought by the family that they were on route to France to join Lazarus's brother, but first visited Dora's brother Philip Marks who was a tailor in

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<sup>1</sup> Naturalisation papers

<sup>2</sup> Death Certificate for Lazarus

<sup>3</sup> Death Certificate for Bejla and JRI-Poland

<sup>4</sup> Naturalisation papers

<sup>5</sup> Death certificate for Dora

Cardiff. Once they discovered that Dora was pregnant they decided to stay in Cardiff.

From October 1905 to March 1906, Lazarus worked for and lived with Harris Sunshine, (*believed to be Dora's cousin, Tsvi Zunszajn*), Master Tailor at 6 Despenser St, Cardiff.<sup>5</sup> From March 1906 – Sept 1906 he worked for his brother-in-law Philip Marks at 5 Radnor Rd, Newport, He returned to work for Harris Sunshine until August 1909 and then set up his own business as a master tailor, first at 123 Tudor Street, Cardiff (1909-1913) and then 57 Plantagenet Street (1913- 1960).<sup>5</sup>

Dora and Lazarus's first child Rachel was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1906 at 6 Despenser Street.<sup>6</sup> Her birth certificate shows that Lazarus was a journeyman tailor, unable to sign his name and the registrar records the family surname as *Korfan* and her parents' names as Lewis and Yeta (formerly Marks).

Their second child, Clara, was born on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1908 at 20 Clare Rd, Cardiff.<sup>7</sup> Lazarus was able to sign his name and the surname was recorded as *Corfan* and the parents' names as Lazarus and Dora (formerly McKoufka). Clara died on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1910 at Cardiff Sanatorium of diphtheria aged 2 years.<sup>8</sup> Bella Corfan was born on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1910 and Maurice Corfan was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1912, both at 123 Tudor Street.<sup>5</sup>

The 1911 census shows the family at 123 Tudor St. Lazerus (sic) aged 26 is a tailor (employer, at home) and lives with his wife Dora, daughters Rachael 4 and Bella (under 1 yr) plus Matilda Green a general domestic servant. The record also shows that the couple have been married 5 years and have had 3 children of whom 2 are still living. The family are English speakers only ( i.e they cannot speak Welsh) and the form was completed and signed by Lazarus. -

At the outbreak of the First World War, Lazarus was registered as an alien at the Cardiff Law Courts and this may have prompted his application for naturalization in August 1914. Unfortunately, there were administrative delays and the Certificate of Naturalization was not granted until 5<sup>th</sup> May 1916.

It is believed by the family that Lazarus joined the army in 1916 and served in Ireland for 2 years. However, Medal Rolls at the National Archives suggest that he enlisted in the Worcestershire Regiment on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1918 and was discharged on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1918.<sup>9</sup> He probably joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Reserve Garrison Battalion who remained in the UK and Ireland throughout the war.<sup>10</sup> He was awarded the Silver War Badge which was given to soldiers who had not served overseas.

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<sup>5</sup> Naturalisation papers

<sup>6</sup> Birth certificate for Rachel

<sup>7</sup> Birth certificate for Clara

<sup>8</sup> Death certificate

- 1911 census

<sup>9</sup> WW1 Medal rolls – documents online from the National Archives WO/372/5

<sup>10</sup> [www.1914-1918.net/worcester.htm](http://www.1914-1918.net/worcester.htm)

It has not been possible to trace his complete army records at the National Archives because only 50% of WW1 records are accessible due to damage sustained in WW2.

Lazarus and Dora had three more children: Matthew born 1917, Freda born 20<sup>th</sup> January 1921 and Arthur Leonard born 30<sup>th</sup> November 1923.

### The parents of Lazarus and Dora

Lazarus's parents are named as Morris and Rachel (deceased) on the 1915 application for naturalization. There are no likely marriage entries in the Jewish Records Index for Miedzyrzec from 1869 through to the record of Lazarus's birth in 1883.<sup>11</sup> A birth certificate, believed to be that of Lazarus, has been obtained from the Polish State Archives and translated from the Russian. It shows that his parents were *Rukli Conchari* (b. 1849) and *Moshco Corfen* (b. 1841). There is an unexplained discrepancy between the date of birth given on the naturalization papers (August 1883) and the certificate (November 1883).

JRI-Poland has an entry for the death of *Ruchla Korfen* in 1894 which may be Lazarus' mother. It may be that both parents were dead by the time Lazarus and Dora left for the UK in 1905. The early death of his mother when he was aged 11 also agrees with the family story that Lazarus had a stepmother and two half brothers (who later settled in France).

(Maurice Corfan told us that when he was a child his father Lazarus would write letters in Yiddish to his parents-in-law and send money. He used to receive letters back from them thanking him and praising him as a mensch. He did not recall him writing to his own parents.)

Dora's parents are named on her mother's death certificate. Her widowed mother Bella (*Bejla Hudes Makoufka*) came to live with Dora and Lazarus in Cardiff in 1938. Bella died in Cardiff on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1949 from myocardial failure aged 90 years.<sup>13</sup> Her death certificate shows that she was the widow of *Mochka Makuuka*, a shoe repairer. Searching the JRI-Poland surname index for Miedzyrzec shows the most likely spellings of the surname to be *Makowka* or *Makuwka* and the index shows two possible entries for Bella's family.

- 1879 marriage between *Bejla Gudesia Zunszajn* and *Moszko Makuwka* (Bella aged approximately 20yrs with maiden name of *Zunszajn* ? - this would explain the unusual surname of Dora's relative Harris Sunshine)
- 1879 death of *Fajwel Zunszajn* (Bella's father?)

The Russian language certificates have been obtained<sup>14</sup> and the former has been translated to reveal that the marriage took place on 19-21<sup>st</sup> August in the Misrich town synagogue. The groom's father was deceased but his mother *Zera* was still living. The bride was aged 19; her father *Fayrilaya* (*Fajwel*?) was dead but her mother *Jenenayali* (*Genendla*?) was still living.

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<sup>11</sup> JRI-Poland list for surnames beginning with Korf in Miedzyrzec 1869-1900

<sup>12</sup> Family papers –obtained by Hilary Tammer

<sup>13</sup> Death certificate for Bella Makkuka

<sup>14</sup> Documents obtained from the State Archives of Lublin

An English translation of a Polish document issued as proof of citizenship for Bella's entry in to the UK in 1938<sup>12</sup> shows that Bella was born in Miedzyrzec in 1859. Her mother's name was *Genendla* and her father's name was *Fajwel*. Bella's maiden name was not recorded on this document.

### Phillip Marks

Lazarus's naturalization papers show that from March 1906 – Sept 1906 he worked for his brother-in-law Phillip Marks, Master Tailor, at 5 Radnor Rd, Newport. Dora also had a younger brother Maurice.

No naturalization papers have been found for Phillip. However there is an entry in the 1911 census for Phillip Marks aged 28, (b 1883) a tailor and his wife Tilly aged 19 living at 113 Albany Road, Cardiff. They have been married less than one year. Their nationality is stated as Jewish; Phillip was born in Russia and Tilly in Aberdare. (No 1911 census entry for Maurice has been found.)

There is an entry in the 1914 Cardiff Directory for Phillip Marks, tailor at 111 Donald St, Roath.

The wedding guest list for the marriage of Leonard Corfan and Lynette Woolfson in 1951 shows invitations for:

Mr and Mrs L Felman of 40 De Burgh Street, Cardiff ( Phillip's married daughter, Freda)

Mr and Mrs B Marks of 21 Morlais Street, Cardiff (Phillip's son Bernie)

## Harris Sunshine

From their 1915 naturalisation papers we learn that Lazarus and Dora arrived in the UK in September 1905 and until March 1906 and then again from Sept 1906 to August 1909 Lazarus was employed by *Harris Sunshine*, master tailor and lived with him at 6 Despenser St, Cardiff.

Harris Sunshine applied for naturalization in 1906 and his papers show that he arrived in Cardiff in February 1901 and lived in rented accommodation at 30 Park Street until 1904 when he bought 6 Despenser Street.

The 1901 Census shows Harris and his family ( wife Sarah and 2 yr old Lottie) at Park St under the name *Harris Zunshine*. The 1911 census shows them at 6 Despenser St with the surname Sunshine and two other daughters, Esther and Gertie, born in 1903 and 1905. They have been married 14 years, borne 6 children and 3 are still living.

Harris's naturalisation papers state that he was born in Maserich in 1877 and that his parents were *Zalman Sunshine and Toba Sunshine*.

The JRI-Poland index shows the most likely original spelling to be *Zunszajn*. (Bella Makoufka's maiden name.)

JRI-Poland shows a marriage entry for *Zelman Zunszajn and Touba Goberman* in 1875 who are likely to be Harris's parents. Unfortunately, his birth in 1877 does not appear in the index.

Bella's marriage to Moczko Makuwa is shown in the index for 1879. It seems reasonable to assume that Zalman and Bella were brother and sister; which would mean that their children Dora Corfan (Makoufka) and Harris Sunshine (Zunszajn) were cousins.

Lazarus' s success in gaining employment and settling in Cardiff therefore relied on his wife's relatives already settled there- her brother Philip Marks and her cousin Harris Sunshine.

The wedding guest list for the marriage of Leonard Corfan and Lynette Woolfson in 1951 shows that Mr and Mrs H Sunshine were then living in Glasgow and they were invited with their two married daughters, Dr and Mrs Markson and Mr and Mrs S Abrahams. They did not attend.

## A brief history of Miedzyrzec

Miedzyrzec Podlaski is situated 78 miles East South East of Warsaw close to the Russian border.

The population of approximately 20,000 inhabitants from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to WW2 was predominantly Jewish (65% in 1827 and 90% in 1939). In 1815 this region of Poland was annexed by Russia.

The main synagogue of 3000 seats was built in 1761 and partially destroyed by fire in 1845. Three hundred houses were also destroyed. Fires were quite common in Miedzyrzec and often followed by an outbreak of cholera leading to a high death toll. There were a large number of charitable institutions which provided for the poor including a hostel, a soup kitchen, an orphanage and an old aged home. In 1850 a stone hospital was built to replace the wooden one which burned down.

The first Jewish educational institution opened in 1867 and by the start of the first world war there were two Jewish public boys schools, two girls' schools and a yeshiva.

The cultural life of the city was vibrant and included a large library of Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian and German books, visiting writers and theatrical troupes and local drama groups who performed in the city's theatre. The local Jewish fire brigade (a voluntary organization) established in 1904 had its own brass band.

From the very beginning Jewish economic life was based on merchants and trade. Traders went to the fairs in Germany and brought back textiles and silk for sale in the local market. Tanned skins and furs from Miedzyrzec were also sold throughout the markets of Russia.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the brush making industry began and until the second world war Miedzyrzec was the largest brush making city in the world. In 1845 an Eau de Cologne factory opened and there were other smaller factories producing goods such as matches. A Jewish merchant bank opened in 1906.

During WW1 the economy stagnated and many citizens fled the city or suffered great hunger. The Jewish orphanage expanded and took children from other cities. During the 1920s Jewish factories dwindled and businesses suffered due to the formation of Polish co-operatives and families were dependent on donations from relatives abroad.

The Germans entered the city on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1939 and were replaced by the Russians for two weeks from September 25<sup>th</sup> and then by the Gestapo who expelled Jews from their homes on the main street and confiscated their property. Work camps were set up in 1940 and 2000 Jews worked there in terrible conditions.

In August 1942, 10,000 Jews were deported to Treblinka and the remaining Jews in the city were forced to live in a crowded ghetto with other refugees from Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Further deportations of over 7000 Jews to Treblinka took place in October and November of 1942. The remaining Jews were transported to various camps in May 1943 and the Germans announced that the city was "Judenrein" (free from Jews). However, the Gestapo allowed the ghetto to continue allowing Jewish refugees to assemble in what became a death trap. In July 1943 the remaining 179 members of the Jewish community of Miedzyrzec were rounded up and shot. In 1946 the Poles brought their bodies to a mass grave in the Jewish cemetery.

On June 26<sup>th</sup> 1944 the city was liberated by the Red Army. Less than 1% of the Jewish population had survived the war, none in the town itself. There were some survivors of the concentration camps, some who moved to Russia and those who lived in the forests or who were hidden by local families.

After 500 years of Jewish life and productivity in Miedzyrzec the only thing that remains today is the cemetery.