

*Your Newman and Stein Roots*

# OUR ANCESTORS



BY DAVE FORREST





DAVE FORREST

Our Ancestors

*Your Newman and Stein Roots*

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*For my precious grandchildren.  
May you enjoy exploring all the stories from your varied heritage  
and write your own happy adventures on life, too.*



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# Preface

When I was in college I wanted to learn more about my family roots. My mom suggested I speak with my grandfather, Frank Z. Newman (1894-1978). He knew the stories of our ancestors in the Old World and their immigration to the new one. So, I headed over to San Francisco with a small cassette tape recorder to interview my Baba.

My grandfather was in his early 80s, but he had a wonderful memory for family facts. He regaled me with tales of Jewish relatives from the Russian Pale of Settlement. His father, Samuel Newman (1859-1918), was born in Mariampol. Sadly, Sam's father died two years after his birth. His mother, unable to provide for her two sons, sent Samuel to Chicago to live with an aunt.

What followed was an incredible tale of grit and determination. Young Samuel went to work at 14, traveling as a peddler in towns near Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. By the time he was 20 he struck out on his own, setting up a small shoe store in Indiana. When it failed, he started a small department store in Devil's Lake, North Dakota. The store burned to the ground in a prairie fire along with the rest of the town. And, so it went.

Sam's odyssey landed him in California selling insurance in Long Beach. He opened a small department store in Hanford, in California's Central Valley. On a business trip to San Francisco Sam met his sweetheart Julia Caro. They married in 1891 and

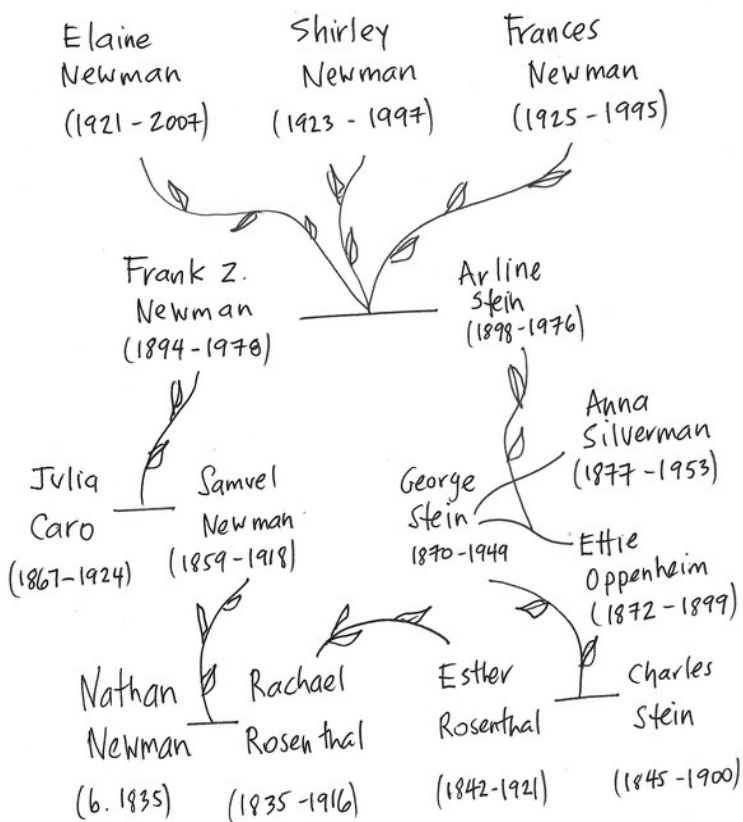
had four children, including my grandfather.

Samuel Newman's business burned down once again, this time in the Great 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. The family home was destroyed, too. In the interview my grandfather recalled camping in Golden Gate Park after the earthquake, as many San Franciscans did.

When the city rebuilt so did Sam Newman. His Redlick-Newman Company became a lucrative business, providing furniture for San Francisco homes and businesses.

Samuel Newman failed many times before he succeeded. His was a rags to riches immigrant story. Along with his saga, I've included many more Newman and Stein tales. So, read on ....

Dave Forrest



*Your Newman and Stein Roots*

## 3621 Washington St.

**S**amuel Newman's perseverance made his family well-to-do in the twentieth century. After Sam died, Frank Z. Newman managed the Redlick-Newman Company. In the 1930s our grandfather formed his own, successful, Frank Newman Furniture Co. He retired in the 1950s when I was I was a little boy.

We would visit my grandparent's beautiful three story San Francisco home at 3621 Washington Street in Presidio Heights. My grandmother, Arline Newman (1898-1976), greeted us when we arrived. Our Mimi knew how to win our affections by handing out hard candy from a drawer near the door.

It was up the elegant circular staircase to the second floor. At one end was my grandparents' bedroom. Here I'd view family photos underneath their glass-topped chest of drawers. We usually found Baba on the other end of the second floor. He'd be seated in a big chair listening to a Giants game or reading the sports section of the newspaper. Adorning the Sun Room's walls were photos of baseball teams sponsored by his Frank Newman Furniture Company.

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After we said our hellos, we headed to the third floor. It was a game room, complete with a slot machine and card table, a perfect haven for kids. However, my favorite spot at 3621 Washington St. was the basement. It had artifacts from decades gone by including an old ice box and wash tub with a hand crank clothes wringer. It was there that my cousins, Skip and Alan, and I played an elaborate game of wiffle ball baseball for hours on end.



*Frank and Arline Newman visiting Venice - 1954*

## A Tale of Two Sisters

**M**y grandparents had a secret. Frank and Arline Newman were cousins. That's right. My grandfather fell in love with my grandmother on a visit to his relatives in Pennsylvania.

My grandmother's maiden name was Stein. As a young woman she lived in McDonald, PA near Pittsburgh. Her grandmother was Esther Minnie Stein (1842-1921). My grandfather was raised in California. His grandmother was Rachael Newman (1835-1916). Esther and Rachael were sisters born and raised in the old world of the Russian Empire. A half a century after their immigration to the US, Esther's granddaughter fell in love and married Rachel's grandson.

It wasn't really a secret. My siblings and cousins knew my grandparents were cousins. I shouldn't have been shocked when I found out; it was common for cousins to marry in previous centuries. No laws or norms were broken. The real revelation was that the origins of our Newman and Steins in the US was a tale of two sisters.

Rachael and Esther were the founding matriarchs of the two

branches of our family, the Steins in the east and the Newmans in the west. The two sisters were born Rachael and Esther Rosenthal. You can see both of their names at the bottom of the family tree I made on page iv.

The Jewish girls grew up over a century and a half ago in the city of Bialystok in the Russian Empire. Their parents were ScharyaRosenthal and FrejdaKalwaryski. Rachael (Rocha) was born in 1835, the first of nine children. Esther arrived several years later in 1842.

What was life like for the Rosenthal sisters as little girls? Bialystok was a bustling city famous for its textile industry in the 19th century. Seventy five percent of its inhabitants were Jewish. While many Jews lived in small villages within the Pale called shtetls, the Rosenthal girls benefited from schools in this urban Jewish center. When I interviewed Frank Z. Newman, he explained that the two sisters, “while in Europe were fairly well educated. They were taught French and English, which was helpful to them when they came to America.”



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*The Rosenthal Sisters. (Left) Rachael Newman and (right) Esther Stein. The sisters became the matriarchs of the Newmans and the Steins after their immigration to the US.*

## The Russian Pale of Settlement

**M**any of your ancestors were from the Russian Pale of Settlement. The Rosenthal sisters lived in Bialystok, the Newman's were from Mariampol, and the Steins hailed from Amdur, all in the Russian Pale. In 1791, Czar Catherine II designated this region for Jews, and they were not allowed to live elsewhere in Russia. The geographic area covered parts of the modern nations of Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, and Moldova.

As a college student interested in my roots, I read Irving Howe's book, *World of Our Fathers, the Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made*.<sup>1</sup> In the opening chapters Howe describes Jewish life in the Pale and the forces that led to immigration to the US. He wrote, "The Pale of Settlement comprised that area of czarist Russia in which the Jews were legally authorized to settle. The Pale

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<sup>1</sup> Howe, Irving, *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the Eastern European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made*, New York University Press, 1976.

covered an area of about 386,000 square miles, from the Baltic to the Black Sea. By 1897, slightly less than 4,900,000 Jews lived there, forming 94% of the total Jewish population of Russia and about 12 percent of the population of the area” (Howe 5).

If you were to look on a map of Europe today, you’d see that Bialystok is in Poland, Mariampol in Lithuania, and Amdur or Indura in Belarus. However, in the 19th century these lands were part of the Russian Empire, ruled by its czar. Howe explains that the Jews of the Pale were “Bound together by firm spiritual ties, by a common language...” Their common religion was Judaism and their holy language Hebrew. They also spoke Yiddish, “based originally on a mixture of Middle High German dialects ... Yiddish was a language intimately reflecting the travail of wandering, exile, dispersion; it came, in long history of the Jews, like a late and beloved, if not fully honored son” (Howe 12).

Howe describes the Jews of the Pale as a, “kind of nation yet without recognized nationhood. Theirs was both a community and a society: internally a community, a ragged kingdom of spirit, and externally a society, impoverished and imperiled” (Howe 7-8).

Most Jews in the Pale lived in shtetls. Howe explains, “The shtetl was a town, usually a small one; it sometimes had cobbled streets; it occasionally had imposing structures; and it rarely was picturesque” (Howe 10). Other Jews within the Pale, like the Rosenthal sisters, lived in cities such as Bialystok, Warsaw, and Lodz.

In 1881, Russian government troops carried out violent pogroms against Jews in the Pale. In response, over two million Russian Jews immigrated to the US in the 1880’s and 1890’s many settling in New York. Our Newman and Steins came

earlier, part of a smaller Jewish immigration to America. They arrived in the US in the 1860's and 1870's, fully a decade before the huge wave of Russian Jews set sail for America. What pushed them to leave and what attracted them to the US?

Howe points out that even before the violence of the pogroms, "At no time could the life of the Jews been described as comfortable. With the caprice of absolutism, the monarchs had alternated between prolonged repression and intervals of relaxation. They had frequently believed that toleration of other religions might bring a risk of disloyalty to the supreme truth of Christianity, and more fanatical among them had tried to "convert" the Jews through coercion and force" (Howe 6).

Our ancestors lived during the reign of Nicholas I from 1825-1855. Howe describes his rule as a nightmare, "Over six hundred anti-Jewish decrees were enacted, ranging from expulsions from villages in which Jews had traditionally resided to a heavy censorship of Yiddish and Hebrew books, from meddling with curriculum of Jewish schools to a conscription that tore Jewish children away from parents, often at ages between twelve and eighteen, for periods of up to twenty-five years" (Howe 6).

In addition to religious persecution, the world of the eastern European Jews in the Pale was a poor one. Howe writes, "Often the relations between the social strata of the shtetl came to little more than the difference between the poor and the hopelessly poor...nestled in the crevices of a backward agricultural economy where Jews, often prohibited from ownership of land, had to live by trading, artisanship, and their wits" (Howe 10).

This was the Pale of your ancestors, a poor, Jewish world within, a hostile world from without. Whether they lived in the city or the shtetl, your relatives chose to come to America.

Howe explains why so many Jews chose to immigrate to the United States, "...what now uniquely characterized the east European Jews was the explosive mixture of mounting wretchedness and increasing hope, physical suffering and spiritual exaltation. And what was new in their experience was what for the first time they could suppose there was some place to go, a new world perceived as radically different from the one in which they lived. The spiraling energy, strength, hope, dream of the European Jews enabled many of their sons and daughters to make their escape to America ..." (Howe 24).

## THE RUSSIAN PALE OF SETTLEMENT



*Russian Pale of Settlement - circa 1855 - YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*

## The Newmans of Mariampol

**M**y grandfather's family were the Newmans, originally from Mariampol in Russia's Pale of Settlement. Nathan Newman (1835-1859), known as Nachum Naman in his village, was born in 1835. He married Rachael Rosenthal but died a young man.

Nathan's father was Ezra Naman (1808-1850) and his mother was Bashe Naman. Naman or Newman means "faithful" in Hebrew. The Naman family had a long history in the region, dating back to the eighteenth century, when Mariampol was part of the Kingdom of Lithuania and Poland. Today, Mariampol is once again in Lithuania.

Mariampol was not a city like Bialystok but a town of 3,000 people, three quarters of whom were Jewish. Many in the town made their living in business and the trades. On the outskirts of town were farmers. Most children attended traditional Jewish elementary school called a Cheder. These schools taught basic Judaism and Hebrew along with some instruction in Russian.

Nathan and Rachael had two sons: Philip (1856-1919) and Samuel (1859-1918). In Mariampol, Philip's name was Ezra

Naman, and Samuel was called ShmuelNaman.

Sadly, Nathan Newman died in his mid 20s, leaving Rachael a widow. In the interview, I did with my grandfather, he explained, “My father’s father had been married at age of twenty or twenty-one. About two years after my father’s birth, he passed away suddenly. His wife was a widow and was unable to properly provide for her two sons — Philip Newman and my father Samuel Newman.”

Rachael sent her youngest son Samuel to live with his aunt Itte in Chicago. Itte (Yette) Newman (1848-1931) was Nathan Newman’s youngest sister. She had immigrated to the US, marrying Hyman Kaplan. Frank Z. Newman explained, “At that time his aunt, his father’s sister, Mrs. Kaplan, went to Chicago to live. My father was several years of age. She took my father with her and raised him for six or seven years in her home.”

Philip stayed in Russia to finish his schooling. A widowed Rachael remarried Moses Margolis. The family joined Samuel in the United States in the 1870s. They lived briefly lived in Youngstown, Ohio before moving to Pittsburgh, so Rachael could live near her sister, Esther Minnie Stein.



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*Rachael Rosenthal and Nathan Newman had two sons, Philip and Samuel. After Nathan's death, Rachael and her sons immigrated to the US.*

## The Steins of Amdur

**R**achael's younger sister, Esther Minnie Rosenthal, married Charles Stein (1845-1900) from Amdur. Charles parents were Sender Stein (1825-1901) and Zlata Struchinski. The name Stein means stone in both Hebrew and Yiddish.

The Steins were a large family from a small town. Amdur was even smaller than Mariampol with only 1200 people. Formerly in the Russian Pale, Amdur is now named Indura and located in Belarus.

The Steins had a long history in Amdur. Our cousin, Susan Berkson, wrote, "You will be amazed at the size of the Stein family. Charles' father, Sender Stein, married twice and had two large families, so prepare yourself." The family tree she shared showed Sender Stein with ten children from two marriages. Our Stein name can be traced back to Sholom Stein, born in 1780, when Amdur was still under Polish rule.

Charles Stein married Esther Rosenthal in 1860. The couple immigrated to the US in 1867, settling in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Esther and Charles had ten children, including George

Stein (1868-1949).

As a young man in the 1890's, George and several of his siblings moved to Indiana towns to start retail businesses. George left his family home in Pittsburgh to travel to Goshen, Indiana. His sister Mattie Stein went to Bluffton to start a dry goods store with her husband Ezra. His brother Sol Stein moved to Columbia.

One of the Stein nieces who was interviewed in the 1970's described daily life in these small Indiana towns, several hours from Chicago. Helen explained, "It was a very serene existence ... we used to sing... skip rope and we played hopscotch... and we used to shoot marbles...When we'd come home from school, we lived on a street where there were stores, my mother used to send us across the street for 25 cents worth of round steak and that was enough for the whole family."

Another Stein niece, Pauline, during an interview said, "There were 13 Jewish families in a town of about 3000. All the Jewish families had stores. Strauss' had a men's clothing store .... The Daniels had a shoe store. Meyers had a butcher shop."

George Stein and his siblings traveled back and forth between the Indiana towns and Pittsburgh. Sometimes the trips were business related because Pittsburgh had a larger market for dry goods. In addition, it appears that Stein parents were looking for a larger pool of eligible Jewish bachelors for their daughters in the big city.

George Stein of Goshen, Indiana would become Arline Stein's father.

THE STEINS OF AMDUR



*Charles Stein was born in Amdur, Russia. He married Esther Minnie Rosenthal, immigrating to Pittsburgh. The couple's son was George Stein, our grandmother's father.*

## Sam Newman's Odyssey

**N**athan and Rachael Newman's son, Sam, set out to make his way in the world. He was without money or a high school education. Frank Z. Newman described his father's difficult teenage years during the 1870s, "At 14 years of age, my father was forced to go to work to help contribute to the family's keepings... He and an elderly man went out peddling merchandise in the surrounding towns of Cincinnati and later Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He would be away from home as much as two weeks at a time."

Although Sam could not afford to go to high school, he was self-taught. Frank Z. Newman lauded his dad's gritty intelligence, "During this period that he was away, he studied as best as he could. When he returned to the big cities, he would go to the local YMCA and get the daily newspapers dating back to the date of his departure. He was well posted on all current events and had a particular desire to know all about politics. He was really conversant about election trends and how they would go."

In the 1880s Sam Newman built and failed at a number of

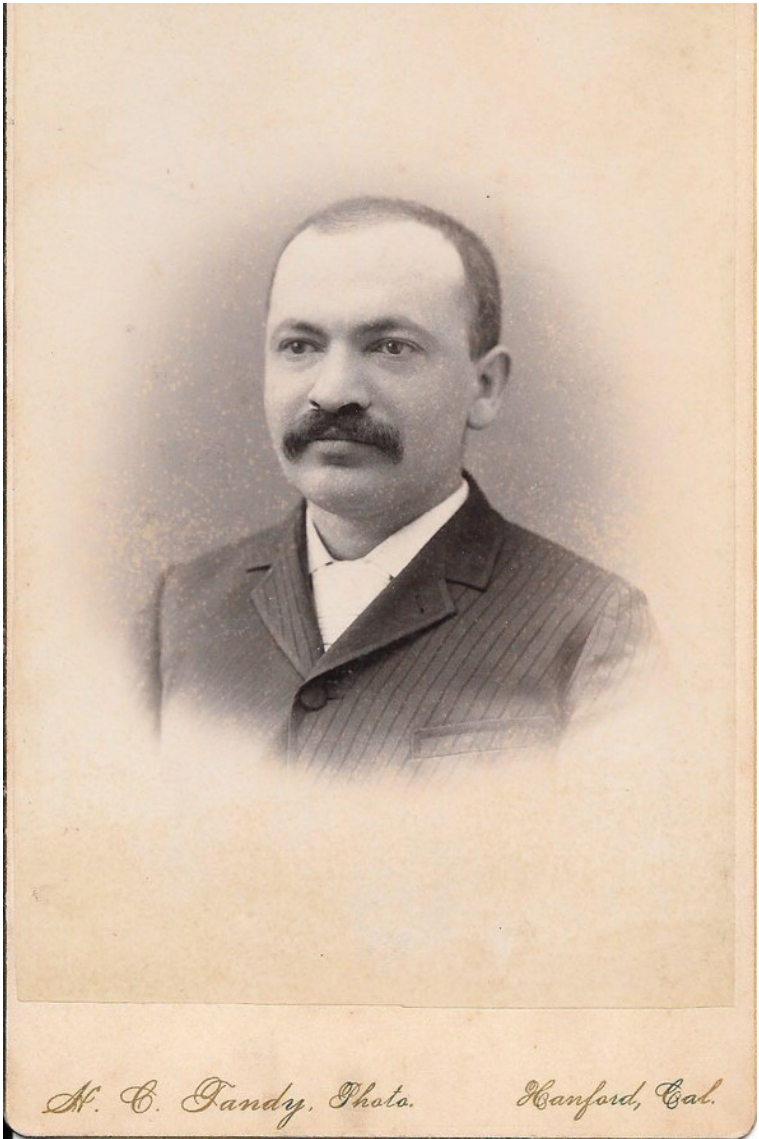
businesses. Frank Z. Newman described his dad's various ill-fated attempts, "At the age of 20 or 21, he left his home and went to Fort Wayne, Indiana. With a very small amount of money, he opened a shoe store. It didn't work out too well. He later joined his brother Philip, who was then married to a Redlick girl. They went to Grand Rapids, Michigan."

"Later, he alone went to a small town called Devils Lake, North Dakota. It took a hearty type of person to stand up to the various seasons of the year in that area. But while in a small department store of his own in this town, a prairie fire—it was great wheat country—enveloped the whole town and burned everything in the town to the ground."

"He left the town and followed his brother, who had previously gone to Long Beach, California. He again joined his brother, and his wife and her family, there in Long Beach. He started selling life insurance with the New York Life Insurance Co. A little later, he bought out a small department store in Hanford, California, and continued his life insurance work at night."

Sam Newman's Hanford enterprise led him to visit San Francisco. It was in the city that his luck would change.

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*Samuel Newman came to the US as a little boy. After many attempts, he established a successful furniture business in San Francisco.*

## The Caros of Posen

**S**am Newman's small Central Valley department store brought him to San Francisco on business trips. Frank Z. Newman explained, "It was customary for him to get merchandise from the wholesalers in San Francisco. Periodically, he would come to the city and visit the wholesalers." On one fortuitous foray to the city, Samuel would meet his future bride, Julia Caro (1867-1924).

Julia Caro lived with her sister and brother-in-law, businessman Salluc Scheyer. My grandfather reported how his parents first met, "In about 1889 or 1890, one of the department store owners, Mr. Scheyer, on 16 Sansome Street, invited my father to come to his home, where two of his wife's single sisters were living. My father met my mother, Julia Caro."

Julia was a Jewish immigrant, born in 1867 in the German Kingdom of Prussia. She was from the town of Kolmar in the region of Posen. Kolmar is now called Chodziesen, located in Northwestern Poland. It was an area that went back and forth between Polish and German rule. Posen was in Poland before the Napoleonic Wars but was annexed by Prussia in 1815. After



World War 1 Posen was returned to Poland. The town's Polish name is Poznan.

Julia's father was Isaac Caro (b. 1843) He and his wife, Jeanette, had four daughters: Regina (1861-1937), Julia (1867-1924), Jennie (1870-1956), and Olga (1874-1952).

What was life like in Prussian Posen for the Caro family? According to the Jewish Virtual Library, "two fifths of Prussian Jewry were concentrated in Posen (where they formed 6% of the population) ...The majority of Prussian Jewry lived in rural and semi-rural conditions, peddling, shop- and inn keeping, commerce, and livestock trade were the main occupations."<sup>2</sup>

Prussia had a mixed record in the treatment of its Jewish citizens. The Jewish Virtual Library writes, "In spite of the noteworthy cultural, economic, and social achievement of Prussian Jews within the new German Empire, Prussia retained a specific conservative, anti-Jewish, social and political attitudes..." (*The Jewish Virtual Library*).

We don't know the specific circumstances of the Caros in Posen, whether they wanted to escape discrimination or improve their economic prospects. Perhaps both were motivating factors. Caro family members immigrated to the US in the 1880s and early 1890s.

Julia Caro set sail aboard the *Rugia* from Hamburg, Germany in 1883. The ship's manifest shows she traveled alone, without family members. Julia was only 16. Her journey coincided with the height of Jewish immigration to the US after the Russian pogroms sent thousands of Russian Jews into Germany and to the northern ports, like Hamburg. Irving Howe, in *World of*

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<sup>2</sup> "Jewish Virtual Library." *Jewish Virtual Library*, [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/).

*Our Fathers*, describes the difficult and dangerous voyage for many Jews emigrating through Germany. He writes, “even legal travelers stumbled upon other hurdles. The German authorities, fearful of plague during the 1880’s and 1890’s, conducted inspections — rigorous, impersonal...In Hamburg, more questioning, disinfecting, labeling, pushing, money taken, money stolen, and a strange imprisonment called quarantine ...” (Howe 37).

Many Jewish immigrants traveling in the 1880’s described the unsanitary and difficult conditions of their Atlantic journey. Howe quotes Morris Raphael Cohen’s description of his voyage, “We huddled together in steerage like cattle — my mother, my sister and I sleeping in the middle tier — people being above and below us.” Another immigrant complained, “Seasickness broke out among us. Hundreds of people had vomiting fits, throwing up even their mother’s milk .... As all were crossing the ocean for the first time, they thought their end had come” (Howe 40-41).

Julia arrived in New York before Ellis Island existed. Most likely she entered the US through the Castle Garden immigration station in Manhattan. She traveled to San Francisco to join her sister, Regina Scheyer. It was in the Scheyer home where she met Samuel Newman during one of his forays to San Francisco from the Central Valley.

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*Julia Caro immigrated from Posen, Prussia at 16 years old. She met and married Samuel Newman in San Francisco in 1891.*

## San Francisco - “American Jerusalem”

**S**amuel and Julia Newman married in 1891. The couple had four children, including: Frank (1894 -1978), Violet (1896-1971), Genevieve (1901-1991), and Leslie (1904-1989). Frank Z. Newman was the oldest of the four Newman children. He explained, “my sister, Violet, and I were born in Hanford, California. My sister Genevieve was born in Stockton, California. And my brother Leslie in San Francisco.”

Sam tried several unsuccessful attempts to establish businesses. My grandfather explained, “My mother moved to Hanford to be with my father. But the unusual and extreme heat in the summertime in the Valley became unbearable to her. My father sold his business, moved to San Francisco, and couldn’t find anything worthwhile in the business world there. Again, he moved and opened a store in Stockton, California, and lived there for three or four years. The same thing occurred—the extreme heat of the summertime was unbearable to my mother and so he had to give up the store. My mother, again, wanted to be with her two sisters in San Francisco, and he agreed. Again, he couldn’t locate a business that was worthwhile. He opened a

store in Napa, California, in about the year 1900.”

It was in San Francisco that Sam Newman finally realized his successful furniture business. San Francisco was a special place, with freedoms and opportunities for Jewish immigrants unlike other parts of the country. According to the summary of the film, *American Jerusalem: Jews and the Making of San Francisco*, “In San Francisco they [Jewish immigrants] found their Promised Land. In the middle of the 19th century, San Francisco’s infrastructure and institution were not yet built. Therefore, in stark contrast to cities elsewhere in America, where Jews had to fit into an existing power structure, many Jewish pioneers built those institutions, becoming prominent merchants, politicians, and civic leaders.”<sup>3</sup>

In the late 19th century, New York became the center of American Jewish life. Many Russian immigrants were employed in the garment district. The Lower East Side of Manhattan hosted a vibrant Jewish neighborhood with Yiddish restaurants, newspapers, and theater.

On the other side of the country a smaller group of German speaking Jewish immigrants played an important role in the early days of California. Their story begins with the Gold Rush. When people scrambled from around the world to strike it rich in California, Jews from Europe came to our Golden State too. They were escaping all the old restrictions and antisemitism of European society. In the brand new, growing, city of San Francisco Jewish immigrants found freedom and opportunity.

The names of these San Francisco Jewish pioneers are well

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<sup>3</sup> “American Jerusalem: Jews and the Making of San Francisco.” *American Jerusalem: Jews and the Making of San Francisco*, [www.american-jerusalem.com/](http://www.american-jerusalem.com/)

known today. Levi Strauss sold dry goods to gold miners, eventually establishing a worldwide clothing empire. The Haas family built grocery stores, the Walters sold carpet and furniture, and Joseph Sutro bought real estate. He created the Sutro baths and was elected the first Jewish mayor of a major American city in 1894. And there were the less famous names, too, including the Newmans and the Friedmans, our very own San Francisco furniture magnates.



Julia Newman, 27, with Frank Zacharias Newman, 6 months

## “The City That Knows How”

**I**ronically, it was the destruction of the Great San Francisco Earthquake which propelled Sam Newman’s lucrative furniture business. When the decimated city rebuilt, new homes and businesses needed furniture.

Frank Z. Newman explained, “In 1906, the big earthquake and fire took place. My father’s business was burned to the ground. He was able to save \$300 or \$400 that was in the safe and ultimately got about ten percent of the value of the store from German insurance companies. Then the thought came to him and others within the Redlick family that with the city destroyed, homes needed to be furnished. They went into the furniture business at 18th and Mission Streets. They stayed in that location from 1906 to 1917, and later moved to the larger quarters at 17th and Mission Streets.”

Samuel’s brother, Philip Newman, married Pauline Redlick (1858-1929) in 1879. The Newman and Redlick families went into business together, founding the Redlick-Newman furniture company in 1906 until they parted ways in 1935.

My grandfather was a boy during the earthquake. Frank Z.



Newman shared his vivid recollections of the earthquake and its aftermath. “I saw and heard everything. I was then about 12 years of age. I recall being awakened on April the 18th, 1906 at 5:15 a.m. The house shook laterally, and in an up-and-down motion as well, for approximately a minute and thirty seconds—and that’s a long, long time with a severe earthquake. I saw my father, who had an adjoining room to the children’s room, walk through a hallway staggering, like being drunk, and could hardly navigate to hold his feet on the ground.”

“We were then living at Scott and Fulton Streets, near Alamo Square Park. From that hill in the park was quite a vantage point overlooking the city. You could see the downtown area in flames and smoke both to the north, to the south, and on the eastern end of the city.”

“I personally didn’t comprehend the seriousness of the thing at the time. I set out on foot to see my father later in the morning, at his place of business on Stockton Street. He in the meantime had left the business to go home, because the fire was approaching his business district. I walked both ways, a matter of several miles each way. We crossed each other undoubtedly. Later, my folks were terribly concerned about my welfare. But I again showed up at the home. Shortly afterwards, that night or the following morning, that entire business was burned to the ground.”

“The actual losses from the earthquake itself, both deaths and the values, were not too great, as I recall and subsequently read. But the great fire was the main thing that destroyed the city, from the Embarcadero clear out to Polk Street, from the North Beach district to the South of Market district. It was all destroyed. Because of the lack of water, the only way that the firemen could combat the spread of the fire, the flames, was by

the use of dynamite. They dynamited blocks in advance of the oncoming fire and were able to block the spread of the fire at Van Ness Avenue.”

“With the termination of the fire, the devastation was terrible to see. All buildings in the eastern part of the city, from Polk Street east, were destroyed. The fire department and the civil authorities warned us not to cook anything in the homes. We took our cold stove and, like everybody else, had put the stove out on the sidewalk and cooked our meals from there. “

My grandfather and his family finally had to leave their home to escape the oncoming fire. He explained, “we went out to Golden Gate Park and pitched a tent out of sheets and slept there for two or three nights until the fire had subsided in the downtown area.” Many San Franciscans did the same.

Frank Newman also remembered how citizens banded together in the crisis, “Everybody was very helpful to each other. It was really an all-out community interest project. All the neighbors and friends tried to be helpful to each other. They had a slogan later in San Francisco: *The city that knows how*. It is still used occasionally in print. After all, this was a beautiful community to live in. Everybody had faith in the city, from a commercial standpoint and from a living standpoint. Soon progress in rebuilding the city was quickly noticeable.”



*The Redlick-Newman Furniture Company on 17th and Mission Streets in San Francisco - 1935*

## Arline Stein - Goshen Girl

**O**ur grandmother Arline Stein was born in Goshen, Indiana. We all remember she loved peonies, the flower of her Goshen childhood. Sadly, her mother Ettie died only a few months after her birth.

George Stein married Ettie Oppenheim (1872-1899) in 1896 in Bangor, Michigan. Ettie was born in Detroit, Michigan. She was the daughter of two Lithuanian immigrants: Joseph G. Oppenheim (1844-1918) and Bessie Fanny Arnsdorff (1843-1915). Ettie had two older brothers, Mark (1864-1888) and Harris (1865-1931). The family lived in Vistytis before immigrating to the US in the late 1860s.

The Oppenheims first moved to Detroit and later to Bangor, Michigan where they lived for 23 years. In Bangor, the Oppenheims had a dry goods store called the J.G. Oppenheim and Son. A history of the Oppenheims in the America explains, "In 1895, J.G. Oppenheim and his son Harris moved back to Goshen to join Ettie's husband, George Stein, in a new business venture, a store called the Chicago Fair."

Ettie and George Stein's child, Arline, was born on November

1<sup>st</sup>, 1898. Shockingly, Ettie, died in April of 1899 at only 28 years of age. Her obituary reported, "... the physicians think that death was caused by a perforation of the bowels..." It also contained a tribute to Ettie, "Her beautiful womanhood had given her a conspicuous place among the people and the people of Goshen will mourn much for the death of such an excellent woman."

Ettie Oppenheim was buried in the Oakridge Cemetery of Goshen, Indiana. Her father Joseph G. Oppenheim joined her there in 1918. His Last Will and Testament left \$10,000 for Arline Stein – his grand-daughter in McDonald, Pa. — the largest legacy allotted to a grandchild.

Despite this tragedy, George Stein found love again with Anna Silverman (1877-1953). Anna was an immigrant from Russia, arriving in the US in 1894. The couple married in Indiana in 1906. Anna Stein would become the only mother Arline had ever known. She was by all accounts a loving, devoted mother to our grandmother.

The newly married couple moved back to McDonald, Pennsylvania, to be near George's family in Pittsburgh. George owned a dry goods store in town. Arline went to high school in McDonald, graduating in 1916. She was an excellent student. After high school, she attended Pitt University, where she majored in English.

As a young man, Frank Z. Newman visited his relatives in Pittsburgh. These included his paternal grandmother, Rachael, and aunt Esther Minnie Stein. On one of his trips, he fell in love with his cousin from McDonald, Arline Stein. The two wed in Pittsburgh in 1920.

My niece, Caity, located the newspaper announcement of our grandparent's marriage in the McDonald, PA Outlook

paper, "On Tuesday evening, January 20<sup>th</sup> at the Tree of Life Temple in Pittsburgh occurred the marriage of Miss Arline Stein, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Stein of Third Street, to Mr. Frank Newman of San Francisco, Cal." The article included a little of our grandmother's early biography and noted that the couple, "will make their home in San Francisco where Mr. Newman is employed in the furniture business." Frank and Arline honeymooned in Santa Barbara, before settling in San Francisco.

OUR ANCESTORS



*Frank and Arline Newman on their honeymoon in Santa Barbara -  
1920.*

## The End of an Era and New Beginnings

**R**achael (Rosenthal/Newman/Margolis) passed away in 1916. She was 81. The first person listed in her Last Will and Testament was her “beloved sister, Esther M. Stein.” She also left part of her legacy to her “beloved grandchildren, Frank Z. Newman, Violet Newman, Genevieve Newman and Leslie Newman.” In addition, she assigned an equal share of her inheritance to her two sons, “Philip E. Newman and Samuel J. Newman, of San Francisco.” She appointed Samuel to be the guardian of her estate.

Samuel Newman would only outlive his mother by two years, dying in 1918 at 59. His brother, Philip, passed away the following year in 1919. Sadly, Frank Z. Newman’s grandmother and father would not be present for the happy occasion of his marriage to Arline Stein in 1920. However, Arline’s grandmother, Esther Minnie Stein, attended her granddaughter’s big day in Pittsburgh.

Esther Stein would live one more year, passing away on December 26, 1921. She was laid to rest at the Beth Hamedrash



Hagadol-Beth Jacob cemetery in McKees Rock, near Pittsburgh. She was buried next to her husband Charles and near her sister Rachael.

It was the end of the era of the two Rosenthal sisters, who traveled half way around the world to start new lives. These two immigrant matriarchs established our Stein and Newman clans in the US.

Their descendants, Frank and Arline Newman, would begin their own family in San Francisco. They were blessed with three daughters: Elaine (1921-2007), Shirley (1923-1997) and Frances (1925-1990).

In 1924, Julia Newman died. She was buried next to her husband Samuel J. Newman in the Salem Memorial Park and Garden cemetery in Colma. The following year Frank Newman honored his mother's memory by naming his youngest child Frances Julia Newman. The end of one era gave way to new beginnings, our Newman family of San Francisco.



*Arline Newman with daughters, left to right, Frances, Elaine, and Shirley - Circa 1926*

## Our Newmans of San Francisco

**F**rank and Arline Newman began their San Francisco married life with their three young girls at 304 Euclid Avenue in Laurel Heights. They soon moved to 909 Anza Street. The 1940 Census shows them living in the beautiful home I remembered at 3621 Washington Street in the Presidio Heights.

The Newmans were congregants of the Temple Emanu-El Synagogue at 2 Lake St. The girls attended local grammar schools. During the 1930s Elaine attended Washington High School, and Shirley and Frances went to Lowell. The Newman girls explored their city on roller skates and street car. Twenty-five cents would pay for a day of San Francisco fun, an excursion to Golden Gate Park, the beach or a movie and meal on Clement Street.

Frank Newman took over as manager of his father's furniture company at 17th and Mission Street. He explained his role in his interview, "Realizing how necessary it was to my mother, my sisters and my young brother, I started to take a real interest in the business. I was given that opportunity by the Redlick

family. I stayed with the Redlick-Newman Co. until 1935. Later, because of business disagreements, I opened up the Frank Newman Co. several doors away from the old firm.”

Many San Franciscans were hurting during the 1930s. However, Frank’s furniture company provided a good income for the Newman family, insulating them from hard times. My grandfather explained, “I recall the Great Depression. After the financial debacle of 1929, a great many people were thrown out of work. Thousands were standing on street corners selling apples and things just to make a livelihood. However, fortunately for us at the Redlick-Newman Co., it didn’t affect our interests too badly. That period was of short duration, although it lasted four or five years—until Franklin Roosevelt was able to cope with the situation and instill confidence again in the public’s mind that everything would work out alright.”

From 1935 until 1956, my grandfather owned the Frank Newman Co. The store advertised and sold modern furniture. It was located at 2441-53 Mission St. near 18th St., only a block away from his former store, then called Redlick’s Furniture. Frank Newman was an avid baseball fan, and his store sponsored the Frank Newman Co. Baseball Club.

In 1940 Elaine married Henry Jaffa (1920-1994). She was 19. The couple’s ceremony was held in the living room of 3621 Washington Street. Henry worked at the Frank Newman Co. Upon his retirement in 1956, Frank Newman sold the store to Henry Jaffa and his brother-in-law, Seth Klinger (1898-1983). They moved the furniture store from its Mission location to Stonestown. Elaine and Henry had two sons, Henry (Skip) born in 1946 and Alan in 1950. Elaine later divorced and remarried Julius Kass (1911-1998) in 1961.

During the 1940s, Shirley attended Mills College in Oakland.

She met Robert Black (1919-1989) at a dinner party in her parent's home. He served as a navigator in the Air Force in World War II. The couple married in 1947. Robert worked as a salesman in his uncle's import firm before creating his own food brokerage company. They settled on the Peninsula with their two daughters. Janet was born in 1950, and Georgianne arrived two years later in 1952. Georgianne's first name is a combination of her grandparent's names, George and Anna Stein.

The Newman's youngest daughter, Frances, went to Stanford in the 1940s. She married Milton Forrest (1914-1991) after the war. They first lived in Sausalito and then settled in Mill Valley. Their first child was Carol (1951-1956) who died in a fire. David was born 1954 and Lisa in 1957. Frances divorced and remarried James H. Leonard (1918-2004) in 1962. She had her fourth child, Jamie Leonard, in 1963.

The Newman's daughters all remained in the Bay Area, raising their families in Marin, the East Bay, and the Peninsula. In the 1970's, Frank and Arline moved out of their three-story home at 3621 Washington St. for a more manageable San Francisco apartment. Arline Newman passed away in 1976, at age 77. Frank Z. Newman followed his bride in 1978. He was 84.

OUR NEWMANS OF SAN FRANCISCO



*The Newmans (left to right): Frank, Arline, Frances, Shirley, Elaine, Anna and George Stein (Arline's parents) - circa 1940s*

## The Holocaust

Our Newman and Stein ancestors immigrated to the US in the 19th century, long before Hitler took power in Germany in the 20th century. As a teenager, I wondered what happened to our Jewish relatives who had stayed in Eastern Europe. Sadly, many of the descendants of the Rosenthals, Newmans, and Steins did not survive the Holocaust.

In Bialystok, the city of the Rosenthal sisters, 50,000 Jews were confined to a ghetto when the Nazis took over in 1941. The Germans crushed the Bialystok Ghetto Uprising in 1943, and the remaining survivors were taken to the Treblinka death camp.

The Mariampol of the Newmans and Amdur of the Steins suffered similar fates. The Nazis took control of both towns in 1941. In Mariampol the Germans, along with their Lithuanians collaborators, killed over six thousand Jews in open-air murders. The Jewish residents of Amdur were transported to Treblinka, as well.

We have evidence of the Nazi slaughter of our Newmans from

## THE HOLOCAUST

a 1946 letter between two Newman brothers. Ezra and Abbele were descendants of Nathan Newman's family. At the time, Ezra was living in Palestine. He wrote to his brother in the US lamenting the fate of the Newmans/Namans who remained in Eastern Europe during the war. He wrote, "The whole time that I'm here I did not correspond with them and now you know yourself that the murderer (Hitler) destroyed them all."

The Nazis murdered six million Jews, two thirds of all European Jewry. Among their victims were our Newman, Stein and Rosenthal relatives.



Jews assembled in the Market Square in Bialystok- photo from the Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team



## Our Relatives Around the World

**W**hen I interviewed my grandfather in 1976, he graciously said to me, “And David you’re the only one in the family who has any information at all concerning my parents, my grandparents, the antecedents, Arline, and myself...”

As it turns out, long before I interviewed my grandfather, Newmans were working on our family tree. My cousins, Georgianne and Janet, shared genealogical materials from the 1970s, passed down by their mom. They showed branches of Newmans containing six different versions of our family surname including: Naman, Naaman, Ne’eman, Neuman, Neumann, and Newman.

Lest we think that the Newmans restricted themselves to the West Coast, these trees showed relatives from: Miami, Denver, Atlanta, Charleston, Waco, Kansas City, Houston, New Orleans, Burlington (Iowa), New York and Chicago.

The Newmans did not only immigrate to the US. When they left the Russian Pale, our ancestors went to Prussia, Spain, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt, as well.

Among our ranks were rabbis and Talmudic scholars, along with scientists, engineers, doctors, journalists, lawyers, and businessmen. I found several high school teachers. One of our ancestors was the deputy mayor of Tel-Aviv and another was responsible for air conditioning the Houston Astrodome. Irwin Abrams, the grandson of Philip Newman, was a history professor from Antioch College. He was a pioneer in the field of peace research and a global authority on the Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>4</sup>

A number of Newmans settled in the Holy Land. The letters between Ezra and Abbele Newman document an ill-fated trip their great-grandfather took to Palestine in the nineteenth century, “Reb Israel was going from Jaffa to Jerusalem when he fell from a donkey and died right away.” He was buried in the Mount of Olives.

The Newman/Naman family has a long history in Palestine and later Israel. Abbele (Abba) Ne’eman was a member of the Jaffa theatre and orchestra in the 1890s. Abba and his brother, Dr. Nachum Stein, designed the first water pumps placed in the Jewish orange groves at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Abba Ne’eman’s grandson, Dr. Yuval Ne’eman, is our most famous relative from Israel. He was a candidate for the Nobel Prize in physics. Although he didn’t win, he was awarded the American Albert Einstein Prize. In addition, at fifteen Yuval joined the Haganah, a Jewish paramilitary organization. He also served in the Israel Defense Forces during the 1948 Arab Israeli War. Ne’eman became a politician in the late 1970s, founding the right wing Tehiya Party. He opposed the Camp David talks and was elected to the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, in 1981.

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<sup>4</sup> “Irwin Abrams.” *Irwin Abrams*, [www.irwinabrams.com/](http://www.irwinabrams.com/).

He died in 2006.<sup>5</sup>

Our cousin Scott London, a great-great-grandson of Philip Newman, wrote that he had contact with several Naman relatives in Israel, where our family tree has been registered.



*Historian Irwin Abrams (1914-2010) was Philip Newman's grandson*

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<sup>5</sup> EnserinkFeb, Martin, et al. "Yuval Ne'eman Dies at 80." *Science*, 10 Dec. 2017, [www.sciencemag.org/news/2006/04/yuval-neeman-dies-80](http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2006/04/yuval-neeman-dies-80).

## Our Newman Legacy

**A** legacy is a gift handed down by an ancestor. It can be an inheritance of property or money or a tradition passed from one generation to the next. Our Newman legacy is a rich one.

Our family story is one of courage. It took bravery to leave one's home in the Pale or Posen, to start anew in America. Imagine how Julia Caro must have felt, a sixteen-year-old alone, aboard a crowded ship, heading for an unknown future. We owe a debt to our immigrant ancestors. They escaped persecution and poverty in Europe, creating a better life for us.

Samuel Newman worked hard and persevered to create a comfortable life for his family. As we have learned, his success did not come easy. And his son Frank Z. Newman continued in his dad's business footsteps providing a bright financial future for his children.

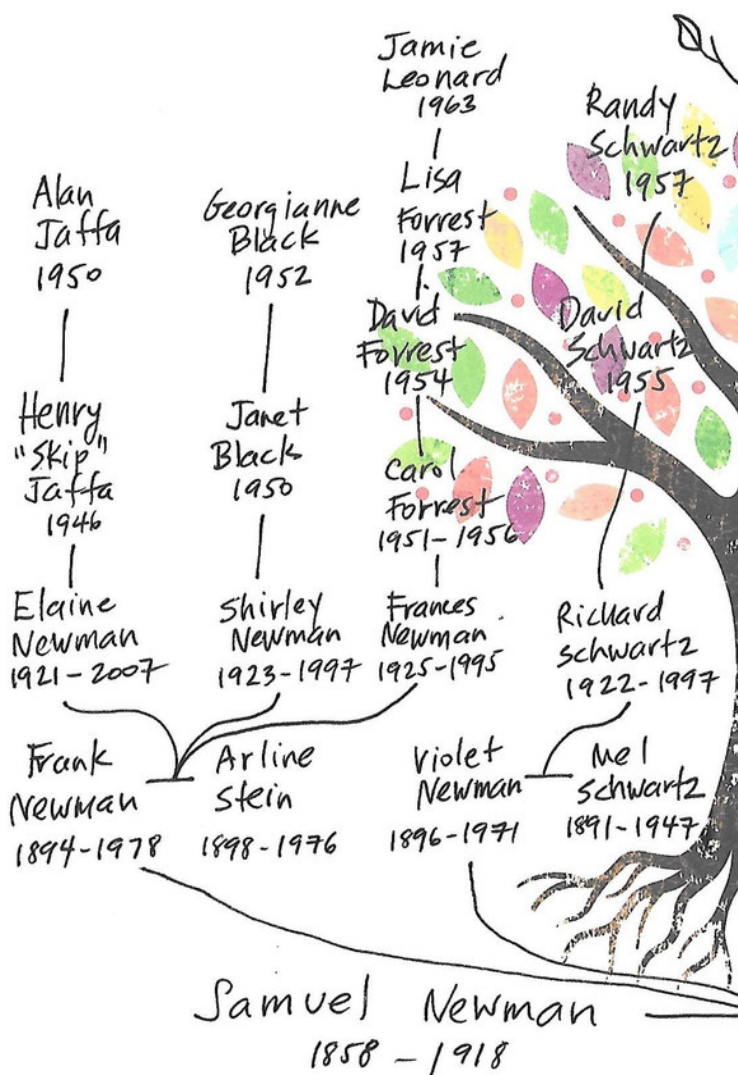
Our Newmans and Steins valued learning. Although Sam Newman could not afford to go to high school or college, he educated himself. The importance of education goes back to our founding matriarchs, Rachael and Esther Rosenthal. Arline

Stein attended the university during a time when many young women did not go to college. And Frank and Arline sent their daughters to Mills and Stanford, too. The love of learning continues to be valued by their descendants.

Of all the gifts our ancestors have given us, the most important is love passed down through the generations. In her final letter, Arline Stein wrote, "I just want you to know how much I love you all, my girls, their husbands, my grandchildren ... No one could have a more devoted family and you have all been wonderful to me over the years."

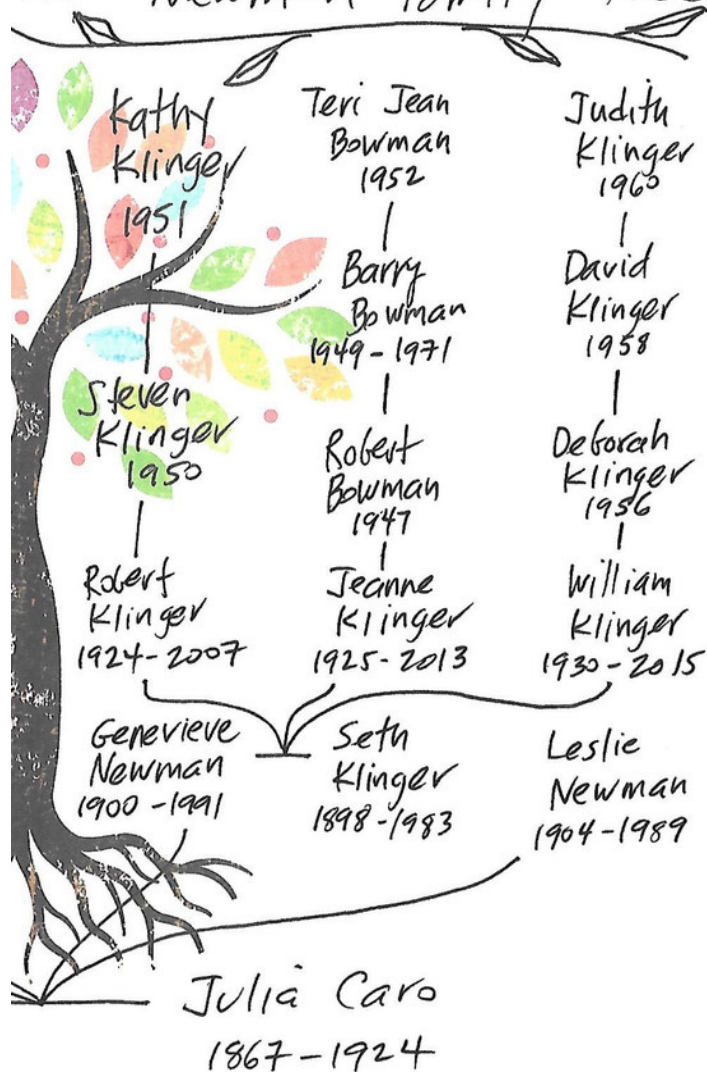
We pass along these grand Newman traditions to our children and grandchildren. The great-great grandchildren of Frank and Arline Newman not only claim ancestors from the Russian Pale, but from Ireland and Italy, Japan and Vietnam, Mexico and Cameroon. Our big, beautiful, American family has world-wide roots. May our descendants enjoy exploring all the stories from their rich and varied heritage and write their own happy adventures on life, too.

OUR NEWMAN LEGACY



Three generations of descendants of Samuel and Julia Newman

# The Newman Family Tree



## Acknowledgements

When my own daughters asked me about our family's origins in Eastern Europe, I rifled through boxes, file cabinets, and the garage trying to locate my grandfather's taped testimony. I couldn't find it. I had lost the cassette and with it many of the details of our ancestors.

Fortunately, I was saved in 2014 by a cousin I had never met. Scott London contacted me and mailed a second copy of my taped interview in the mail. Tears flowed as I listened to my grandfather's voice, telling our family stories. Scott transcribed the tape, providing well-researched footnotes with many more details about our Newmans. Since then, he has been a reliable source of family photos, documents, and information. I am in his debt.

I received lots of help from other cousins, too. Georgianne and Janet Black shared Newman letters, family trees, and genealogy documents from previous decades. Alan Jaffa has been an excellent source of family stories, photos and the poignant final letter from Arline Newman I've quoted. Susan Berkson filled me in on our Stein ancestors from back east and the Midwest. Most recently, Robert Bowman provided a treasure trove of beautiful old photos, including never-seen ones of Sam and Julia Newman. The cover photo of my grandparents in Venice was his, as well.

*Our Ancestors* has been a fun family effort. My niece, Caity



Tremblay, tracked down the newspaper article which reported the wedding of Arline and Frank Newman. I am also lucky to have a sister, Lisa Tremblay, and a brother, Jamie Leonard, who have much better memories than I do. They've shared several family recollections included in this slim volume. And my dear friend, Tim Wharton, helped me edit the draft.

Even with all this help, the errors you find are my own. Enjoy.



*Arline Newman with granddaughter Lisa Forrest - circa 1965*



## About the Author

When he is not writing about family history, Dave Forrest enjoys visiting his grandkids on three continents. He spends his favorite days walking in the trees with his loved ones.







## Also by Dave Forrest



### **Our Ancestors Website**

You can read more essays and books about your family history on the *Our Ancestors* website.

<http://daveforrest.net/ancestors/>