

# Shear Family History



**Barnett**  
(Dov Ber ben  
Eliezer)  
Shear  
1877-1945



**Kate**  
(Kayla bat  
Moshe Dov)  
Wintz  
??-1929

**Louis**  
(Lazar)  
Shear  
1903 - ??



-Born in Russia  
-Worked eventually  
as stockbroker  
-Lived in Brooklyn

**Joe**  
(Kopel)  
Shears  
1906 - ??



-Born in Russia or in  
transit to England  
-Worked as driver for  
Greta's father's  
bakery business

**Mary**  
(Miriam)  
Shear  
1907 - ??



-Born in Manchester  
-Lived in Brooklyn,  
then the Bronx, NY

**Lawrence**  
(Morris)  
Shear  
1910 - ??



-Born in Manchester  
but left for Canada  
when a few months  
-Trained as a doctor  
in Switzerland  
-Lived in Trenton, NJ

**Fannie**  
(Michla Fruma)  
Shear  
1911 - 1997



-Born in Montreal  
and moved to USA  
when 10 yrs old  
-Lived in Brooklyn,  
then the Bronx, NY



**MARRIED**  
Helen Cohen



**Judy**  
Shear

**MARRIED**  
Al Rosenberg  
-They had 2 children  
-Lived in NY



**MARRIED**  
Lola Leibman



**Alan**  
Shears

**MARRIED**  
Doris  
-They had 2 children,  
Jay and Jody  
-Lived in Staten  
Island, NY then  
moved to Florida



**MARRIED**  
Irving Gersfeld



**Mal**  
Gersfeld

**MARRIED**  
Nancy Tourville  
-They had 2 children,  
David and Paul  
-Lived in Ardsley, NY



**MARRIED**  
Greta Wisotsky



**Bobby**  
Shear

-Passed away as a  
young adult



**MARRIED**  
Sam Tapper



**Kay**  
Tapper

**MARRIED**  
Frank Gatell  
-They had 2 children,  
Susan and Lisa  
-Lived in California

**Connie**  
Shears

**MARRIED**  
Stanley Odze  
-They had 5 children,  
Arlene, Bruce, Lorrie,  
Rickey & Joanne  
-Lived in NY then  
moved to Arizona

**Carole**  
Shear

-Is an dermatologist  
-Lives in Manhattan

**Michael**  
Tapper

**MARRIED**  
Fran  
-They had 2 children,  
Phillip and Richard  
-They lived in  
Georgia and then  
Pennsylvania

# 20<sup>th</sup> Century Shear Timeline

1870's - Barnett and Kayla are born in nearby shtetls in Mogilev province of Belarus in the Pale of Settlement

1880's - Barnett is forcibly taken into the czar's army at age 14, and not released until age 21

1900

1890's - Barnett marries Kayla after release from the army

1903 – Son Louis (Lazar/Eliezar) Shear is born in Russia

1904 – Barnett is warned by an aunt running through the woods from one village to another that the army is press-ganging men again, gives him some money, and tells him to leave immediately

1904/06 – Barnett, Kayla and Louis travel to England to join Barnett's brother Hyman in Manchester. Joe is born either just before or during the journey.

1907-1909 –Family struggles in the garment trade in the famous Red Bank slums of Manchester, and first daughter, Mary, is born in 1907. They live near Hyman and Mary Sherr, with 5 of their eventual 11 children.

1909 – With strikes making work impossible in Manchester, Barnett leaves for Montreal to join relatives

1910

1910 – Larry Shear is born after Barnett has left. Kayla manages for many months alone with the children, and then finally takes steamer from Liverpool to Halifax and a train to Montreal.

1911 – Fanny Shear – the youngest – is born in Montreal

1911-16 – Family takes in cousins Becky (age 18) and Kopel (age 20) as boarders (children of Kayla's sister Chaya Mushka Chawkin who remains in Russia)

1912? - Cousin Becky Chawkin marries Harris Caplan in Montreal

1916 – Cousin Kopel Chawkin marries Sarah Wiseman in Montreal

1920

1921 – Family moves from Montreal to New York on the suggestion of Barnett's other brother Sam who is in Coney Island. The 5 children are then between the ages of 10 and 18. Economic reasons forced the move, but Kayla and the children were very sad to leave Montreal where they had family and were settled.

1921 – Barnett starts work in Sam Shear (Shaer?)'s cleaning/tailoring store on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in Coney Island. After working for low wages, he is convinced by Sam to buy him out. Sam then opens a rival shop 2 streets away in a better location, and takes away all the customers. Barnett is ruined.

1920's – Barnett recovered and rented a tailor's/dry cleaners on Avenue U in Brooklyn. They lived behind the shop and started to make ends meet. The older children start meeting their spouses and the married couples (Louis and Helen, Mary and Irving) live in buildings close to their parents and other siblings.

1920's – Kayla is in ill health throughout the 1920's, suffering from congestive heart failure. She is nursed by Fanny who gives up her schooling and potential work opportunities to look after her mother.

1929 – Kayla dies during a critical heart operation at Israel Zion Hospital in Brooklyn, age XX.

1930

1930's – Larry goes to medical school in Switzerland.

1933 – Fannie marries Sam Tapper. They live with Barnett in Brooklyn behind his shop for the next 5-6 years and granddaughter Kay Tapper (named for Kayla) is born there.

1930's – Larry marries Greta Wisotsky. The 5 married siblings start having children of their own – 8 grandchildren are born between 1923 and 1943.

1940

1940's – Barnett's landlord in Brooklyn wants the shop for his own use, so Barnett gives up business and moves in with Fannie and Sam Tapper who now live in the Bronx.

1940's – Larry opens medical practice in Trenton, NJ.

1940's – Barnett keeps busy by working in Sam Tapper's men's clothing store in the Bowery.

1945 – Barnett dies from a respiratory condition that came on suddenly, age 68.

1960

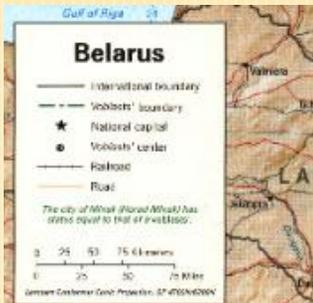
1960/70's – 15 great-grandchildren are born, with the families dispersed between New York, Georgia, Florida and California.

2000

1980/2000's – As the 15 great-grandchildren become adults and parents, they largely lose touch with the family and each other. They now spread across New York, Pennsylvania, Florida, Arizona, California and the UK.

# Geography of the Old Country – Location in Europe

The shtetls that Barnett and Kayla were from were Romanovo<sup>1</sup> and Dubrovno<sup>2</sup>, which were in the Mogilev province in the area known in Russia as the Pale of Settlement.



After the First World War, the area was considered part of the Russian Vitebsk province. After the fall of the USSR, the shtetls are now found in current-day Belarus. They are located approximately here, in Northeastern Belarus

<sup>1</sup> Barnett's birthplace was found on his US WW2 registration card (written as "Romanoff") and his brother Hyman's 1911 England census record which lists his birthplace as "Romanove, Russia". There are several towns and shtetls in Eastern Europe called Romanov – and even two in Belarus - but this is the likely location as it is only a few miles from Dubrovno.

<sup>2</sup> Kayla's shtetl name came from a 1923 passenger record of Chasie (Chaya Mushka – Kayla's sister) Chawkin's arrival to Montreal from Europe. She names her brother, Aizik Wintz, and gives his address in Dubrovno, Vitebsk Gubernia, Russia.

# Geography of the Old Country – The Shtetls

## 1834 Mogilev Gubernia Map

Related sites: [Map of Belarus](#) [A 1845 map of Grodno](#) [A 1845 map of Minsk](#) [A 1845 map of Vitebsk](#) [Gubernia](#)  
[Belarus at the end of the 19th Century \(in Russian\)](#) [Map showing Gubernii \(191](#)



### Shtetl - Dubrovno

Map ref: 54°34' N 30°41' E  
134 miles ENE of Minsk

*Shtetl known for the manufacture of woolen tallises from 1750 to 1890's*



### Shtetl - Romanov

Map ref: 54°25' N 31°08' E  
149 miles ENE of Minsk

*The town has also been known as Lenino after the war, although it is now changed back to Romanovo.*

### From The Jewish population of Mogilev gubernia in uyezds, towns, and shtetls (1777-1926) Data compiled by L. Plotkin, Mogilev, Belarus (Found on JewishGen website)

The first known mention of Jews in the Mogilev gubernia is from 1536. The mentioned Jews from Brest collected custom taxes in Mogilev. In Gomel there were 1500 Jews in 1648, 300 Jews in Byhov in 1659, 200 Jews in Belynychy in 1618, and 70 Jews in Mogilev in 1588. The Mogilev gubernia was formed in 1772. In 1777, there was 11,455 Jews in the gubernia: 5494 in towns and 5961 in shtetls and villages. In 1850 there was 85 Jewish communities in the gubernia with a total population of 110,000. The greatest Jewish shtetl in the gubernia was Shklov, followed by Mogilev, Dubrovno, Gomel, Tolochin, and Smoliany. In 1850-1889 Jews moved actively from shtetls to the towns of Mogilev, Orsha, Gomel. Since 1880 Jews began actively to emigrate abroad.

Jewish population numbers: Dubrovno: 3440 (in 1847), 4559 (in 1898) out of total population of 8687; Romanovo: 208 (in 1865), 800 (in 1897)