



Shattil Schattil Schattil

Family Newsletter

August/September, 2000

The Quest for Isadore Shattil

By Dan Shattil

Armed with the knowledge that **Isadore Shattil**, one of the many children of **Mordecai and Miriam Schattil**, sold his Chicago grocery store to his brother **Julius** and moved to Decatur, Illinois, I was determined to find him in the local records.

I wanted to locate his descendants to invite them to the October family reunion. Julius' son, **Siegfried**, remembered that Isadore had two daughters. The difficult task was to determine what their names were now, if they were still alive.

One stormy morning while we were visiting my parents Arlene and Sig in Chicago, my wife Emily and I drove the four hours to Decatur. Without a map of the city we found the main library downtown. Our first check was the city directories.

Israel Shattil was listed in 1914 as a grocer and as having a milk depot. By 1938 he was listed as a huckster and in 1944 a poultry dealer. He lived in several boarding houses including rooms in the Illinois Hotel.

The librarian was able to find an obituary for him. It said he died at the age of 52 on Friday, Nov. 24, 1944 in Macon County Hospital in Decatur, following an illness of six months.

We searched for Israel's children in yearbooks of Decatur High School but found none.

We did find his burial plot recorded in Fairlawn Cemetery.

We drove to the court house and obtained a copy of Israel's

death certificate. It turns out that the information in it was obtained from my grandfather, **Julius. Israel** was born in Russia on December 17, 1885, making him 58 years old when he died. It's probably too late for the newspaper to print a correction.

Israel was a widower. His wife was Birdie Shattil. His occupation was listed as truck & poultry. His parents were listed as **Markus** (instead of Mordecai) and **Mary Cohn**. Israel died from lymphatic leukemia, which he had for six-eight months.

With that, we checked to see if there was any probate on the will. None was recorded.

We drove to the cemetery and noticed it was two blocks from the temple. There was no one at either place. We drove to a funeral home that operated the cemetery. There they discovered that the cemetery plot was purchased by the temple. They had no record of Birdie or any other Shattils.

We then went back to the library to search the 1920 census records for Decatur. Since the library did not have an index, we had to search name-by-name. After an hour, we gave up.

We drove back to Chicago knowing that we found more about **Israel** but still had many questions. We didn't know anything about Birdie and didn't find any descen-



In Springfield, Illinois in 1923, from left, Izzie, Birdie and Morris (Birdie's father).

dents.

Later that week, we drove to Michigan. That was where Julius had a fruit farm in 1911-12. We found the county seat, Paw Paw, and looked up the deed. The 1911 deed not only had Julius' name on it but also had **Solly Shattil's** on it. Who was Solly? Could it have been Isadore or is there another brother we don't know about?

In 1912 Solly sold his interest in the farm to Julius and a few months later a deed was registered under both their names selling the land for a \$500 profit.

We drove to Covert, Michigan, to the address on the deed to see the farm. Some of the land appears to be still growing fruit. We knocked on the door of the farm house but no one answered.

When we arrived in Chicago, I called the temple in Decatur to see if they had any records of Isadore. I had to leave a message on the answering machine.

A month later I had a message on my office answering machine

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The Ichkowsky family taken in 1926. Back row (from left) Birdie's brother Marcus; Izzie; Birdie's mother, Anna; Betty's father, Lewie; Birdie's sister, Sadie; Birdie's brother, Harry. Middle row, (from left) Birdie's sister, Rose; Birdie; Birdie's father, Morris; Betty's mother, Sara; Birdie's sister, Ida; Birdie's sister, Bernice. Front row (from left) Birdie's sister, Ethel; Birdie's brother, Isadore; The baby is Betty.

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from Betty Leader from Decatur who said Izzie was her uncle. I called her back that evening. Evidently the temple had put in its newsletter that I was looking for relatives of Israel and Birdie Shattil.

Her mother's eldest sister was Birdie. **Birdie Ichkowsky** was born January 3, 1900 and died September 26, 1935 of what was probably lung cancer. That was nine years before Izzie died.

Birdie came from an Orthodox family in Springfield, Ill. Her mother ran a grocery store and her father, Morris, bartered with farmers between Springfield and Decatur. He would give them finished products from the grocery store in exchange for poultry and other produce that were then sold in the grocery store.

Betty said she did not know how Izzie and Birdie met but her own parents met through them. The temple had turned from Orthodox to Reform. Her father, who had immigrated from Lithuania, was uncomfortable attending reform High Holy Day services so Izzie and Birdie invited him to spend the holidays with them, where he met Birdie's sister.

She said Izzie was a wonderful man and she had fond memories of him. Izzie and Birdie lived several years in the house of Betty's parents. They also lived in back of Izzie's grocery store. Betty said Izzie was not a good business man and did not have much money. They had no children.

After Birdie died, her family lost touch with Izzie. They thought he had moved in with his sister, **Anne**. It was **Anne** that called Birdie's family to inform them of his death. But the Decatur city directories have Izzie living at several addresses in Decatur each year until

his death in 1944. There was even a burial plot for him next to Birdie's in Springfield. Betty said she wasn't aware Izzie was buried in Decatur until she came across his grave marker. He's buried behind her mom.

Apparently, this branch reached an end. I will continue researching Izzie but perhaps more research will lead to more questions.



On July 13, 2000, eight members of the Shattil family stood on the farm that Julius and "Solly" Shattil owned in 1911-12 in Covert, Michigan. These were, from left, Julius' granddaughter-in-law and grandson, Emily and Dan; grandson Ron; daughter-in-law and son Arlene and Siegfried; grandson Steve; granddaughter Wendy. Front: great-grandson Matthew.

Family News

Wendy Shattil will be given the Outstanding Service Award at the January, 2001 NANPA (North American Nature Photography Assn.) conference. She also gets airfare, hotel, and registration fee.

"I think they give me something shiny," Wendy adds.

Deb Shattil's line of handmade doll pins, called "Extroverts," has been selected for sale by the Renwick gallery gift shop.

The Renwick is one of the Smithsonian branches in Washington D.C. and it displays American crafts. "Extroverts" measure about 1" in length and are made of colorful fabric stuffed with fiberfill and are embellished with beads.

For the latest information on the October Family Reunion, contact **Ron Shattil**, 9200 Skyline Blvd., Oakland, CA 94611. Phone: (510) 482-0340. E-mail: ron@shattil.com

Check the family web site at: www.Shattil.com.