

**1900<sup>1</sup>**  
**My voyage towards The United States**  
**from**  
**Iași,<sup>2</sup> Romania<sup>3</sup> - First of June 1900**  
**Heinrich Yeşianu<sup>4</sup>**

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**Heinrich's Diary**

Retranslated and Edited into Modern English  
September 1996

by

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<sup>1</sup> The original English translation was completed in 1974 by Ted Redmont, and his sister Malvina Rotenberg Solomon. Their parents were Chana Rachel (Goldenberg) Iaşianu and Joina Rotenberg.

<sup>2</sup> Iași (yăsh), modern spelling of Jassy (yă'sê), city (1989 est. pop. 330,000), E. Romania, in Moldavia, near the Moldova border. In 1565–1859 Iași was the capital of Moldavia. In World War II its large Jewish population was massacred by the Nazis. Eds.

Other spelling are *Jassi*, *Jasi*, and *Yassi*. The *cedilla* (sî-dîl'a) is a mark (,) placed beneath the letter s as in Iași or Iaşianu. The cedilla changes the pronunciation from s to sh, a Turkish pronunciation from the Ottoman Empire. Eds.

<sup>3</sup> Romania is also spelled Roumania.

<sup>4</sup> Heinrich signed *Yeşianu* and not *Goldenberg*. Although they were *Goldenbergs*, the reason they used *Yeşianu* remains unknown to us. Eds.

## Foreword

Robert S. Sherins, M.D.  
18 October 2004

Could any of us imagine traveling at the age of 16, leaving our parents, siblings, and extended family, and then journeying alone for 6,000 miles to a new nation and culture, yet unable to speak the new language? Heinrich Yesianu<sup>5</sup> did! In fact, he left us his diary of those events.



Several characteristics about this young man become evident as one reads his account. There is youthfulness in his language and thoughts, yet at the same time I noted rather sophisticated words and observations. While as a teenager he reported taking his comforting evening snack of sugared strawberries and milk. At other times he was more daring and enjoyed an evening coffee with his relatives. When he finally arrived in Vienna, he preferred a good stiff beer in the beer garden.

Jewish life in Romania<sup>6</sup> was becoming increasingly stressful by 1900. Economic security was waning. Political and governmental support was eroding and many Jews were

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<sup>5</sup> Heinrich Goldenberg referred to himself as YeSianu after the family moved from Hirlău, also spelled Hărlău, Romania, to the nearby town of Bivolari near Iasi. *Yesianu* means from Iasi. The “s” is pronounced “sh.” Iasi (yăsh) or Jassy (yă’sê), city (1989 est. pop. 330,000), E. Romania, in Moldavia, near the Moldova border. Other spellings are Jassi, Jasi, and Yassi.

<sup>6</sup> Romania is also spelled Roumania.

considered *Sudits* or guest workers of Romania and had never been granted full citizenship.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, at age 16, all male children were subject to military service, sometimes up to 25 years.

Romania was no longer the country to provide prosperity or religious freedom for Jews. Therefore, among many, Heinrich Yesianu, with the blessing of his parents, at the age of 16, left for America. Fortunately, sufficient funds for the journey were available and Heinrich was able to proceed by coach, train and steamer. Less fortunate and desperate Jews had to walk out of Romania.<sup>8</sup> Hundreds of thousands of refugees walked across Romania and Europe on their way to America.

I found several factors about Heinrich's travels to be fascinating. There were no express routes of travel and certainly no airplanes prior to the inventions of the Wright brothers. Trips between villages were by horse drawn coaches called *birjă*. Main routes were traveled by trains. However, they rarely extended long distances. Therefore, Heinrich often changed trains on his route.<sup>9</sup> It is apparent that there was a network of sympathetic relatives to offer aid, food, lodging, and encouragement. He was made part of each family. They ate and prayed in the synagogues together. Some helped to pack his valise; others ironed his handkerchiefs. Even in distant villages, strangers walked him to the correct address of his relatives. When possible an aunt or uncle would also buy a ticket on the *birjă* so that they could accompany Heinrich as far as possible. They were obviously sensitive to his anxiety about leaving his family and were concerned about his uncertain future.

Many tears were shed by all when at Mihaileni, where he boarded the train for Siret, the village where he would walk across the frontier into Austria, on his way to Czernowitz.<sup>10</sup> Now he was truly alone, without relatives as companions. He waited alone and frightened in the night, as an agent appeared to walk him across the border. He relied upon strangers to bring him to the next connecting transport, exchange money or to sneak around the Armory or Police Station. Heinrich did this fearfully but trustingly.

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<sup>7</sup> The articles in *ROM-SIG News* have been an extremely valuable resource in understanding the political and economic background of our family in Romania. It is necessary and proper to thank the staff of this international quarterly publication for allowing us to photocopy and distribute several of the articles.

There were two categories of Jews in Romania: resident or native families of long standing and *Sudits*, who were of non-Romanian origin, without citizenship. These *Sudits* were middle-class merchants who enjoyed a privileged tax-exempt status. Only 15% of the Jews were *Sudits*. However, Jews comprised 31% of the total *Sudit* class. The remainder was from other European ethnic origin. Refer to: "The *Sudits* of Romania: Invited And Privileged Guests?" *ROM-SIG NEWS*, Volume 4, Number 3, Spring 1996, pp.11-12 and Volume 4, Number 4, Summer 1996, pp.10-12.

<sup>8</sup> Ronald Sanders, *Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Migration* (New York: Schocken Books, 1988, Ch. 22, "Rumania, Rumania," pp.173-180, Reprinted in "The Fusgeyer Story" (Pedestrian Refugees from Romania) *ROM-SIG NEWS*, Volume 2, Number 4, Summer 1994, pp 5-8.

<sup>9</sup> See appended route map of Heinrich's journey.

<sup>10</sup> Former Capital of Bucovina, near Galicia.

Thereupon, he was met by other agents. All along the route, Jews and sympathetic strangers aided him. Only once did he report an incident when his cane was stolen. Even after a drenching rain when he was soaked thoroughly and muddy, Heinrich retained his dignity by talking about being washed by the rain rather than the river. He stumbled in the muddy roadside ditch while crossing the border.

Lastly, as Heinrich left Romania, he wrote, "Thanks to G-d and *Adio*<sup>11</sup> Miserable Romania." Now he was on his own. Yet, he never forgot to say his prayers, writing "Amen" each evening. Often he wished himself, "*Doma Dulce*."<sup>12</sup> Yes, Heinrich Yesianu, you were remarkable, mature, daring, and desperate to leave Romania and its anti-Semitic evils. Your family of the future enjoyed the freedoms and opportunities of America because of your capabilities and willingness to take risks to leave your Romanian family and seek a new life in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

Heinrich arrived at Castle Gardens, New York, in July or August 1900 as Heinrich Yesianu.<sup>14</sup> He apparently stayed with Goldenberg relatives. He adopted the Americanized name of Henry Goldberg, preferring Goldberg to Goldenberg.<sup>15</sup> He changed his name legally for which he was required to pay a \$25.00 fee to the Civil Court in Brooklyn, New York.

Heinrich married Leonore (Leah) Storch. Their daughters are Rhoda and Hilda. In 1929, he suffered vague symptoms, which baffled his Brooklyn physicians for a few days. Leonore called Dr. Abe Korzweig<sup>16</sup> to request urgent assistance. Abe trained 1½ hours to Brooklyn. He immediately recognized Heinrich's dire condition. After prompt ambulance transport to Mt. Sinai Hospital in Manhattan, the diagnosis was established, a ruptured retro-cecal appendicitis with peritonitis. His appendix was located behind the bowel and, therefore, much more difficult to diagnose. In that pre-antibiotic era, he was operated and surgical drains placed to permit constant irrigation of the infection. However, it was too late and inadequate. He perished of the sepsis five days later.

His widow survived until January 11, 1974. Her devotion to Heinrich was so great that she saved every fragment of his documents and memorabilia. Those treasures have been passed to their daughter, Hilda Goldberg Weiser. Thank you, Heinrich and Leonore, *Dome Dolce!*

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<sup>11</sup> Goodbye or farewell.

<sup>12</sup> Sweet dreams.

<sup>13</sup> Heinrich's mother, Rachel, died shortly after he exited Romania and while he was still enroute to New York. Eds.

<sup>14</sup> See article of explanation about Castle Gardens and Ellis Island.

<sup>15</sup> From personal conversation with his daughter, Hilda Goldberg Weiser on August 3, 1996, when she and her husband Ted visited Robert and Marlene Sherins in California.

<sup>16</sup> He was the husband of Chifra Goldberg and the father of cousin Francine Kornzweig Margulies. Dr. Kornzweig was a general practitioner, who later specialized in ophthalmology and was renowned for his expertise in retinal diseases.

## Diary

### Daily Notes

On the first of June 1900<sup>17</sup>, I rose at 5 o'clock with the intention of leaving for America. I immediately packed everything necessary and went to the railroad station.<sup>18</sup> After I arrived, I caught the local train for Burdujeni. At 6:05 the train departed, and I took my leave of Romania. We reached the station of Cucuteni at 6:22. There were four families who were also leaving for America in the coach with me.

I arrived at Podul Iloaiei at 6:30 a.m. Yudel<sup>19</sup> was on the platform at the station. I called to him and told him that I was leaving. He told me that the mail had already arrived and he received a post card from Aron.<sup>20</sup>

We reached Sirca<sup>21</sup> at 7:55. On the way I decided to stop off at Tirgu Frumos to greet Esther Leah,<sup>22</sup> Betty's mother. We reached Tirgu Frumos at 8:15, and I got off and took a *birjă*<sup>23</sup> and went into town to the house of Joseph Goodman. When I arrived there, Esther Leah was outside with the children. As soon as she noticed me, she recognized me immediately. She led me into the living room and asked me where I was going. I answered that I was going where all Jews go. I gave regards from everyone and told all the news. Then we had coffee. I asked when there would be a

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<sup>17</sup> June 1, 1900, was on a Thursday.

<sup>18</sup> Iași, Romania.

<sup>19</sup> *Yudel*, a variant form of *Yehuda* or *Yidel*, was possibly an uncle or cousin. Eds.

<sup>20</sup> Aron was the son of Esther Leah (spelled Ester Lee in the diary) Goldenberg and her first husband, whose last name was Goldberg. Aron's siblings were Jack and Betty Goldenberg Mindlin. *Aaron* is the Anglicized spelling. Eds.

<sup>21</sup> We do not know where this train stop was. However, we think that he stopped at *Sirca*, also spelled *Cirie*, a suburb of Iași, and backtracked to Tirgu Frumos. Eds.

<sup>22</sup> Esther Leah was the daughter of Samuel Goldenberg and his second wife, Rachel Taglor. She was Nathan (Nuta) Goldenberg's niece and Heinrich's first cousin once removed. Betty Mindlin, her daughter from her first husband, lived in Iași with an aunt. When the diary was written, Esther Leah was married to her second husband, Joseph Goodman (spelled *Guttman* in the diary). After Mr. Goodman died, she married Chaim (Haim) Itzkowitz. Eds.

<sup>23</sup> A *birjă* is a two horse drawn carriage with a folding leather top. The *birjă* accommodated 6-7 passengers. The driver sat on an elevated bench on top-front.

train for Burdujeni. She told me at 6 o'clock in the evening and the same hour in the morning. I said that I wanted to leave this evening. Esther Leah suggested that I go to Hirlău<sup>24</sup> to say goodbye to the family. I agreed at once, and at 2:00 p.m. I left by *birjă*, which cost me two Lei.<sup>25</sup>

At 3:30 p.m. I reached Hirlău. When I entered Uncle Strul's<sup>26</sup> home, I found Aunt Male<sup>27</sup> cooking. It gave her a terrible fright to see me. She became very pale and didn't know what to say to me. After a few moments, she regained her composure, and I told her all the news. Meanwhile I drank black coffee and ate wild strawberries with bread, as there was nothing else I could eat. We discussed various things.

At 4 o'clock I went to Uncle Yoina's home but found only Aunt Baba<sup>28</sup> with the children. We talked about this and that, and they laughed at me for being late to Sura's<sup>29</sup> wedding. At 6 o'clock, I returned to Uncle Strul to say that I was leaving in order to make the morning train at 6:00, but they wouldn't let me go. They advised me to stay here<sup>30</sup> until Sunday. Then Grandfather Nuta would go with me to cross the border at Mihăileni because it was easier there than through Burdujeni.

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<sup>24</sup> Hirlău , Romania, is the modern spelling for Hărlău, the town in which the family lived.

<sup>25</sup> The monetary unit of Romania is Leu, meaning *lion*. The plural is *Lei*. In commerce they were often referred to as *Franks* by reason of the French influence. Before World War I, they had the same value as the French Francs i.e. 5 Lei = \$1.00.

<sup>26</sup> Strul (Israel) Barat, who was about 31 years old at this time, was married to Male (Molly) Goldenberg. They had no children. Later they immigrated to Israel, where they had a farm. Eds.

<sup>27</sup> Nathan Goldenberg's daughters were Male (Molly), Esther Leah, and Fanny Sophie. Eds.

<sup>28</sup> Yoină Rotenberg married Chana Rachel Goldenberg. She was called *Baba*, which is the Yiddish word for grandmother. She was the first child that survived infancy. Being a frail child, they renamed her *Baba* hopeful that she would live to become a grandmother. She did! She bore fourteen children, including two sets of twins, and became a grandmother about 1901. Her nieces and nephews called her *Aunt Baba*. At the time that Heinrich visited in June, Chana Rachel was pregnant and gave birth to Ted Redmont a few weeks later on June 22, 1900. Seventy-four years later Ted Redmont and his sister, Malvina, translated this diary. Eds.

<sup>29</sup> Sura or Surah are Yiddish for Sara or Sarah. Daughter of Joina Rotenberg and Chana Rachel Goldenberg Rotenberg. She was Heinrich's first cousin. Eds.

<sup>30</sup> Hirlău, Romania.

I sent a telegram to Tirgu Frumos to Esther Leah asking her to send my *valise*<sup>31</sup> with Uncle Yoina since he would be passing by there. At 7 o'clock I wrote letters to everyone, and then we ate dinner. After dinner I went to the park<sup>32</sup> with Aunt Baba and had some ice cream. As we strolled in the park, we met Mr. Schmeril<sup>33</sup> and his wife. After walking together and discussing various matters until 9 o'clock, we parted and went back to the house. As it was very late and I was worn out from traveling, I was forced to go to bed. Sweet sleep!

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<sup>31</sup> A *valise* (ve-lês!) is a small piece of hand luggage.

<sup>32</sup> Public garden.

<sup>33</sup> We are not certain of the spelling of his name or who he was. Eds.

## 2 June 1900<sup>34</sup>

I rose at 9 o'clock. Aunt Male gave me a glass of milk. After saying prayers, I had some wild strawberries with sugar. Then I went to Uncle Yoina's home. He was already there, but had not brought my *valise* because he returned late at night. I did not know what to do. I decided to go to Tirgu Frumos to get it. But Grandfather said that he wanted to go because he had to talk to Esther Leah about something. He went to the inn to look for a *birjă*, but meanwhile a delivery man brought the *valise*, so that there was no longer any need to go to Tirgu Frumos. I became very sleepy and lay down for a little while. I got up an hour later. I had a meal and read the newspaper *Adevărul*.

I went to Uncle Yoina's home. As evening was setting in, I said prayers, and we ate. We went for a walk. Then we went to bed, but we were unable to sleep because Uncle Strul had a toothache from molars.

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<sup>34</sup> June 2, 1900, was on a Friday.



### 3 June 1900<sup>35</sup>

I rose at 10 o'clock, drank some milk, and said prayers while I waited for Grandfather to return from the synagogue.<sup>36</sup> When he arrived, we ate. After the meal I took out the book I had brought along to read on the journey and read until I fell asleep. When I woke up, I went to Uncle Yoina's home.

While I was returning to Uncle Strul's home, I stopped at Agent Redler to buy a steamship ticket. He offered me a ticket from Vienna to New York for 190 Lei.<sup>37</sup> I promised to tell him my decision the next day.

Mr. Schmeril came to Uncle Strul's home to invite me to his home for a visit. At 9 o'clock I returned and sat outside with Uncle Strul, Aunt Male, and some acquaintances. There was a coffee house near Uncle Strul's home called *Café Bursa*, where musicians from Iași were playing. We remained outside until 2 o'clock and then went to bed.

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<sup>35</sup> June 3, 1900, was on a Saturday.

<sup>36</sup> Possibly Synagoga, Str 30 Decembrie 5 (30 December 5<sup>th</sup> Street) in Hirlău. See article in *ROM-SIG News*, Volume 4, Number 4, Summer 1996, p. 25.

<sup>37</sup> At that time 190 Lei were worth about \$38.00.

## 4 June 1900<sup>38</sup>

I woke up late and was concerned because Uncle Strul felt very bad and wanted to go to the barber<sup>39</sup> to have a molar extracted. Grandfather and I accompanied him and waited until the operation was over. We arrived at Uncle Strul's home about noon. I drank some milk, said prayers, and had a meal. After lunch I went to Uncle Yoina's home and talked about various things with Aunt Baba<sup>40</sup> and the children. At about 4 o'clock I went to Uncle Strul's home and told Grandfather that I was going to Mr. Redler, the steamship ticket agent. I left immediately and spoke with the agent. He agreed to let me have a steamship ticket for 190 Lei including all the expenses from Vienna through Antwerp<sup>41</sup>.

I went to Uncle Strul's home and told all about it. Grandfather told me he had just found out that Mr. Blum's<sup>42</sup> son was leaving for America this week and that he would be coming there to inquire when and how to go. At 6 o'clock I drank tea with Uncle Strul and Aunt Male. While I was sitting outside, the mail carrier brought me a post card from my brother Victor. Then Grandfather arrived with Mr. Blum and the son who is leaving. We introduced ourselves and were very pleased to have a companion on the journey. We decided that we would cross the border at Mihăileni on Wednesday. Then we went for a walk, discussing various matters related to the voyage. After I arrived at Uncle Strul's home, we sat outside listening to the music from *Café Bursa* until midnight. Then we went to bed.

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<sup>38</sup> June 4, 1900, was on a Sunday.

<sup>39</sup> In the past barber surgeons performed many operations. The diagonal red striped pole in the storefront became the symbol. Eds.

<sup>40</sup> Chana Rachel Goldenberg Rotenberg.

<sup>41</sup> Also spelled Antwerpen , a major seaport in Belgium.

<sup>42</sup> Mr. Pinchas Blum was a building entrepreneur whose three sons came to the United States. The one mentioned was possibly Morris.

## 5 June 1900<sup>43</sup>

I rose at 9 o'clock because I had gone to bed late. I drank some coffee and went with Grandfather to the agent and bought a steamship ticket for 190 *Lei*, including the all expenses from Vienna to New York. When we returned home, I said prayers, and we had a meal. At 10 o'clock my companion came over to visit and remained for a while. Then he asked me to go with him to their house to show me his luggage and steamship ticket. I went; he showed it all to me. His parents were very glad that he has me for a traveling companion.

At half past twelve I returned to Uncle Strul's home and had a meal. After we ate lunch, I went to Uncle Yoina's home and promised Aunt Baba<sup>44</sup> that I would make her a greeting card as a keepsake. When I arrived home, I started to make a frame for my school diploma. As I was working on the frame, the mail carrier brought me a letter from my brother Victor. After I read the letter, I finished the frame. Uncle Strul and Grandfather told me that it was very good and that I had a real talent.

I went into town for a while. As I was passing Mr. Pucel's shop, I saw his daughter standing outside. She called out to me and asked if I were Mr. Nuta's grandson and what news I had from Iași. She asked me for all kinds of information about her former sweetheart.<sup>45</sup> Finally, much later, I said goodbye and strolled about a little. Then I returned to Uncle Strul's home, had supper, and sat outside where it was cool. At 10 o'clock I went to bed. Sweet sleep and pleasant dreams! Amen.

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<sup>43</sup> June 5, 1900, was on a Monday.

<sup>44</sup> Chana Rachel Goldenberg Rotenberg.

<sup>45</sup> Mr. Pucel's daughter was possibly a former fiancée of a Goldenberg relative. Eds.

## **6 June 1900<sup>46</sup>**

I rose and drank milk. Then I applied myself to make two greeting cards as a memento for Uncle Yoina and Uncle Strul before my departure to New York. After writing until 11 o'clock, I said prayers, ate, and applied myself again to write. Finishing one card, I took it to Uncle Yoina, who was ready to go to laşi. I gave him the card and said goodbye to him. Then I went back to Uncle Strul's home and applied myself to make a card for Uncle Strul, writing until 11 o'clock. Realizing that I could not finish it and being very sleepy, I left it for a second day and went to bed.

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<sup>46</sup> June 6, 1900, was on a Tuesday.

## 7 June 1900<sup>47</sup>

After rising in the morning, I drank milk and applied myself to the writing again. I had to complete it by 11 a.m. because I was supposed to leave at 3 o'clock. At 10 that morning I said prayers and had a meal. As I started to finish the card, my companion came and told me that he had engaged a *birjă* and that we were leaving at 3 o'clock. Uncle Strul started to pack my things while I finished the card. Uncle Strul packed a variety of sweets in the *valise*. Aunt Male laundered my handkerchiefs.

As the hour was coming closer, I went to Aunt Baba<sup>48</sup> and Grandfather to say goodbye to them. When I arrived there, all the children said goodbye to me, and Aunt Male went with us. After we arrived, I was told that the *birjă* was there. The *birjăr*<sup>49</sup> took the *valise* and told us that we should meet the *birjă* at the post office where he would wait for us. Aunt Male gave me something to eat, but I couldn't eat at all. I bought bagels for 15 *bani*<sup>50</sup> to have on the road.

They came to tell me that the *birjăr* was ready to leave. Then I said goodbye to Uncle Strul because he had to remain in the store, and I left. Aunts Baba and Male and Grandfather Nuta accompanied me to the *birjă*. **Here was something terrible—saying farewell to my family and the family of my companion.** I got into the *birjă* together with Aunt Male because she had cause to accompany me until Frumușica.<sup>51</sup> As the *birjă* left, I threw kisses as far as I could see. In the *birjă* were Aunt Male, a photographer from Botoșani,<sup>52</sup> a young lady from Botoșani, a woman with two children and my companion. Traveling on the road, Aunt Male was discussing so much that I got dizzy from the many things she told me. Finally, at 6 o'clock we arrived at Frumușica. Here we remained 25

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<sup>47</sup> June 7, 1900, was on a Wednesday.

<sup>48</sup> Chana Rachel Goldenberg Rotenberg.

<sup>49</sup> The driver of a *birjă*.

<sup>50</sup> *Bani*. Each *Leu* has 100 *bani*. At that time 5 *bani* were equal to 1 ¢ U.S. currency. His bagels cost three cents. Such a bargain! Eds.

<sup>51</sup> Dr. Marcel Bratu, "Memories of Frumușica" in *ROM-SIG News*, Volume 4, Number 2, Winter 1995-96, page 12.

<sup>52</sup> Botoșani, Romania, is the capital of the state or *Județ* (pronounced *Judetz*). The *cedilla* placed beneath the letter *s* in Botoșani changes the sound from *s* to *sh*.

minutes. I said farewell to Aunt Male and the relatives there. **This scene was moving.**

Finally the *birjă* left. I remained alone in the *birjă*. I didn't see anyone, only the *birjă*, the horses, and the companions.<sup>53</sup> Sitting in the *birjă*, very irritated, I was so preoccupied with thinking that I didn't notice that evening set in. Lifting my eyes once, I didn't know for the moment where I happened to be. After a few minutes, I woke up and asked where we were. I was told that we had another hour until Botoșani. At 10 o'clock we arrived. I was taken to a hotel, but my partner went to a relative. At the hotel, I ate bread and butter with milk. Then being very tired, I went to bed.

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<sup>53</sup> The companions were not related.

## 8 June 1900<sup>54</sup>

Not being able to sleep because we had to leave by train in the morning for Dorohoi,<sup>55</sup> I stayed in bed until 4 o'clock. Then I got up and put my *valise* in order, and at 5 o'clock I went to my partner. When I arrived, I found him ready for departure and also found his father, who accompanied us to Mihăileni.<sup>56</sup> We went into town and engaged a *birjă*. Then we went to pick up our *valises* and set out for the railroad station. When we passed by a synagogue,<sup>57</sup> a multitude was gathered. When we asked the reason for it, we were told that pedestrian emigrants,<sup>58</sup> who were to leave for America on Sunday, would take an oath today at the synagogue.

Finally, we arrived at the railroad station. Here were other people, girls and boys, and other emigrants. They were leaving for America. The platform of the station was full of conductors. **One could hear crying from every direction**, especially at 8 o'clock. **There was such an increase in crying that it was very terrible.** Soon after I boarded the train, it departed. On the train I made the acquaintance of many who left for America. At 8:30 a.m. we arrived at Station Leorda.<sup>59</sup> Here we changed to the train for Dorohoi. At 9:20 we arrived at Station Văculești,<sup>60</sup> and at 9:45 we arrived at Dorohoi. Here, we took a *birjă* for two *Lei* to Mihăileni. We went with the *birjă* to a *kretchma*.<sup>61</sup> Here, all of us said a prayer. Then we ate and also drank the best wine.

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<sup>54</sup> June 8, 1900, was on a Thursday.

<sup>55</sup> Dorohoi, Romania. See map on previous page.

<sup>56</sup> Mihăileni, Romania. See map on previous page.

<sup>57</sup> Collected by Camelia Jimale, "Romanian Synagogues....Addresses" in *ROM-SIG News*, Volume 4, Number 4, Summer 1996, p. 24.

<sup>58</sup> Pedestrian emigrants, or *fusgeyers*, were young men from several Eastern European countries, who walked from their homes to Antwerp. There they would board transatlantic steamers for the United States, usually in steerage accommodations. The obvious reason was lack of money and strong determination to seek a better life. See article from *ROM-SIG NEWS*, Volume 2, Number 4, Summer 1994, pp. 5-8.)

<sup>59</sup> Leorda, Romania. See map on previous page.

<sup>60</sup> Văculești, Romania. See map on previous page.

<sup>61</sup> Liquor shop.

Then we left for Mihăileni. We passed through the village of Buhai at 11:30 a.m. At the end of it, there began a hill named Buhai. It was so steep that we were forced to go on foot. As we were climbing it, we were caught by a very good rain that washed us thoroughly, no longer needing to go to the lake. Around 3 o'clock we arrived in Mihăileni. In the little town, as soon as they spotted a *birjă* with people, everyone knew that they were emigrants.

We got off at a *kretchma*. After taking down the *valises*, we dried up somewhat. Jews kept on coming up to us asking whether we have passports. If not, they could take us across the frontier. There also came moneychangers. All of us changed the moneys. Each retained 5 *Lei* and 10 *bani*, 5 *Lei* for crossing the frontier and 10 *bani* as a souvenir. Mr. Blum went to an acquaintance in town and engaged him for 15 *Lei* to take us across at once. They came with a *birjă* and took us with our *valises* to the end of the town. Here they took us to the house of an elderly Jewess. Three men took our *valises* inside, and they began to tie them up so that they could carry them on their backs. When all the arrangements were completed, we said goodbye to Mr. Blum and gave 50 *bani* to the woman of the house.

The men took our *valises* on their backs, and the *changers* told us to walk after them to the other side of the frontier where a *birjă* would be waiting for us to take us to the railroad station of Siret. They gave us a business card to be signed when we arrive at Siret in order to obtain the money arranged by Mr. Blum. After leaving the house, we followed the men, but a terrible rain washed us for more than 10 minutes. We went down a hill. Arriving at the bottom, we found ourselves in a narrow ditch into which water flowed like a rivulet. Thus, we walked stumbling over stones along the way until the good G-d helped us, and we arrived at the Austrian side of the hill. When we reached the middle of the hill, we stopped. The men took a *valise* each, but one of them went without taking a *valise*. He left it and said that if Blum and I would remain here, they and the other boy would go to the *birjă*. Then they would return for us.

After they left, we remained there **shivering from fright**. As we stood without saying a word, we noticed a man approaching. We felt like falling to the ground out of fright when he asked us in the Romanian language<sup>62</sup> how come we were standing here. We could not answer out of fright. When he asked us once more what we were doing there, we told him

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<sup>62</sup> This man was not Jewish. *Yiddish* was the language used by Jews among themselves. Eds.



that we were waiting for someone. He began to shout that we should take our *valises* and go with him to the warehouse. I then took out my billfold and gave him a few cents. With great difficulty, he left when he saw the men coming towards us. The men took the *valises*, and we followed them until we arrived at the village. As we were walking, one of them shouted, "There comes the *Gendarme!*"<sup>63</sup>

Then we immediately entered a peasant house where I almost fainted because of the **foul odor**. There we remained shivering 20 minutes. We got out and went forward until we arrived at the appointed place. Entering the house we found the boy who had been traveling with us and also a merchant from Hirlău. The *birjă* had been prepared already, but we wanted to rest up a bit. When we looked at each other, we observed mud on our clothes from top to bottom and wet from the rain. After a half hour the driver told us to walk ahead a little so that we could not be seen from the armory, which was 30 meters<sup>64</sup> away. We walked a little on foot with "heart in hand" without talking until the *birjă* reached us. We got into the *birjă*, and as it was leaving we said, "Thanks to G-d and farewell miserable Romania."

We arrived at Siret five minutes before the train left for Czernowitz.<sup>65</sup> We immediately bought tickets direct to Czernowitz. We signed the business card for the driver of the *birjă* and boarded the train. It whistled and left. Here, at last, we breathed freely and dried up a bit. In the car, in which we traveled, was a man from Lemberg,<sup>66</sup> but he was from Iași of a family not known to me. I spoke with that man considerably about current events. At 7 p.m. we arrived at Station Hlyboka.<sup>67</sup> Here we had to wait two hours for the arrival of the train that was to take us direct to Czernowitz. At the office, I took two post cards to write home. I started to write on the

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<sup>63</sup>*Gendarme* (zhän'därm') is a member of the French national police organization constituting a branch of the armed forces with responsibility for general law enforcement.

<sup>64</sup> About 33 yards.

<sup>65</sup> Czernowitz, also spelled Czernovitz or Chervovtsy, was the capital of Bucovina. At that time it was in Austria. After World War I it was in Romania, and now it is in Russia.

<sup>66</sup> Lemberg or Lvov (Polish phonetic spelling is Levoov.) is a city of western European U.S.S.R. in the western Ukraine near the Polish border. Founded in 1256, it was captured by Poland in 1340. In 1772 it was passed to Austria and became the capital of Austrian Galicia. It was retaken by Poland in 1918. The city was formally ceded to the U.S.S.R. in 1945. Population, 742,000.

<sup>67</sup> Hlyboka, Austria. See map on previous page.

mailbox, having placed my cane against the wall. When I finished writing, I dropped the cards into the mailbox. I wanted to take my cane when I went to pick up my baggage, but to no avail. Someone already stole the cane. I could not relocate it because there was a large multitude of people.

At 8:30 p.m. the train arrived. We boarded and departed. On the train I became acquainted with many merchants from Czernowitz, Lemberg, and Vienna. At 11 p.m. we arrived in Czernowitz. Here we got off and walked down the street. We engaged a *birjă* to take us to the address that I had been given in Feldgasse.<sup>68</sup> However, instead of taking us to our address, the driver took us to someone else. When a lady<sup>69</sup> heard that a *birjă* stopped, she came out and asked us who we were looking for. I showed her the address. She said that they did not live far from here and that she would go with us. When we arrived there, they were already asleep. We said that we did not want to disturb them. Then the woman said we should go to sleep this night at her house. Thanking her, we went back, took the baggage inside her house, and paid the driver who left. After entering her house, we begged her not to visit saying that we could manage alone.

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<sup>68</sup> Feldgasse is possibly a suburb of Iași, Romania. Eds.

<sup>69</sup> One of the most significant messages in the diary was that *strangers* befriended the young travelers. Eds.

## 9 June 1900<sup>70</sup>

After getting dressed and groomed and putting the *valises* in order, we went to the relatives. When we arrived there, we were introduced to two young ladies. They had two daughters and a son. The husband was in the store, which was on another street. They lived in a rented apartment. After a short conversation, we said a prayer. After that we were given milk, butter and rolls, and we ate well. After some conversation, we went into the city. While walking through the city, I bought several things for myself for the journey: post cards, two neckties, two pairs of colored shirt cuffs, and two kilograms<sup>71</sup> of pastrami.

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<sup>70</sup> June 9, 1900, was on a Friday.

<sup>71</sup> *Kilogram* (kîl'e-gràm´) is a metric unit of weight. The abbreviation is *kg*. One *kilogram* equals 1,000 grams or 2.2046 pounds. Heinrich purchased about 5 pounds of pastrami. Eds.

## 10 June 1900<sup>72</sup>

Since it was Saturday, we went to the temple for services. From the temple, we went to other big and beautiful synagogues. We returned to Esther Leah's home and sat down at the table. After dinner, Mr. Goodman<sup>73</sup> lay down for a nap. Blum, the sisters, brother, and I went into the park that was nearby. In the park we read newspapers and books and talked some more about our voyage. At 4 o'clock we dressed and went for a walk. We started on the principal street and were shown large buildings and beautiful things.<sup>74</sup> Then we went to the largest and most beautiful building called the *Rezidenz*.<sup>75</sup> From here we went to the main park, where we walked until 8 o'clock. Then we went home because the young ladies were very tired. When we arrived home, we ate supper. After supper we stayed in the park until 10 o'clock. Then we went to bed. Sweet sleep.

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<sup>72</sup> June 9, 1900, was on a Saturday.

<sup>73</sup> Mr. Goodman is Joseph Goodman, second husband of Esther Leah Goldenberg.

<sup>74</sup> See the city map of Czernowitz on the previous page.

<sup>75</sup> The *Rezidenz* was possibly the palatial residence of the governor or state house.

## 11 June 1990<sup>76</sup>

After rising in the morning, we drank coffee. Mr. Goodman wanted to say goodbye to us because he had to go to the store. We told him that we would be at the store at 9 o'clock. We arranged our *valises* and gathered everything that we needed for the voyage. We went into town and bought lemons and bread for the trip. We went to the store of Mr. Goodman and his son. After saying goodbye, we went to the marketplace. We took a *birjă*, went home, loaded our things into it, and said farewell to everybody. Only Mrs. Goodman<sup>77</sup> accompanied us to the railroad station. After we arrived, we bought tickets direct to Vienna. At 10:35 a.m. we departed passing numerous stations. It was impossible for me to list them.

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<sup>76</sup> June 11, 1900, was on a Monday.

<sup>77</sup> Esther Leah Goldenberg .

## 12 June 1990<sup>78</sup>

At 4 o'clock in the morning we arrived at the station in Cracow.<sup>79</sup> We remained here for 30 minutes, before being transferred to another train that was going to Lemberg. We arrived at 8 o'clock in the evening, remained 20 minutes and departed for Vienna. On the train we ate and fell asleep on top of each other. We made the acquaintanceship of two young ladies, one from Iași and one from Cracow. We kept company until we disembarked from the Iași<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> June 12, 1900, was on a Tuesday.

<sup>79</sup> Cracow also Kraków (kràk'ou, Krä'kou, -kɔf), city (1989 estimated population 743,000), South Poland, on the Vistula River. It is a river port and industrial center producing metals, machinery, textiles, and chemicals. Founded c.700, the city was (1320–1596) the residence of Poland's kings until the fire in 1895. The royal residence was then moved to Warsaw. Its university was founded in 1364. Ruled at various times by Austria, Prussia, and Russia, Kraków reverted to Poland in 1919. On a hill, the Wawel, are the royal castle (rebuilt 16<sup>th</sup> century) and a Gothic cathedral (rebuilt 14<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>80</sup> The ship left Antwerp, Belgium, and arrived at Castle Garden, New York.

### 13 June 1990<sup>81</sup>

We traveled the entire day passing different stations. At 6 o'clock in the evening we arrived in Vienna. Here they controlled our *valises*. However, they did not open them. They only asked us what we have. We went outside of the station platform. Here they waited for us from the steamship company. They took us to the agent who collected the steamship tickets and asked whether we had passports. Then the tickets were returned to us. They brought three expresses, which were coaches of horse-drawn tramways. All of us boarded them to go to the Central Office and arrived at midnight. While we were going through the whole city of Vienna, we saw things that I had never seen before.<sup>82</sup> After we arrived at the office, they collected 16 Heller from everyone. They took us to a hotel. The companions and I sat down to eat and drink beer and remained in the park. As we returned to the hotel, we walked on the street, which was electrically lit. We saw a large multitude of people walking by. We also saw streetcars go by with full coaches.<sup>83</sup>

*The Romanian diary was written in 1900 by Heinrich Goldenberg Yeşianu .*

*Ted Redmont and Malvina Rotenberg Solomon made the first English translation in 1974.*

*Hilda Goldberg Weiser, Robert Saul Sherins, and Beryle Solomon Buchman contacted many cousins, researched, added stories and information, edited, and computerized this document.*

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<sup>81</sup> June 13, 1900, was on a Wednesday.

<sup>82</sup> This is the first experience Heinrich had with mass urban electricity. He commented about the streets being electrically lit. Eds.

<sup>83</sup> Heinrich did arrive in the United States as planned, but this is the last comment in the diary. Eds.