

Meyer And Tillie Kramer Family History
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Grandson of Meyer and Tillie Kramer



My grandfather Meyer Kramer, my Uncle William, "Willy," Kramer" and my grandmother, Tillie Kramer in 1943.

Introduction:

I began exploring my family history over ten years ago. When I began, I did not know where my branch of the Kramer family lived in Eastern Europe or how or why they arrived in Waterbury Connecticut. I knew that some Kramer family members originally lived in Plymouth, Connecticut and that I was somehow related to many people named Kramer who lived in the Waterbury Connecticut area.

During these last ten years, I have learned a great deal about my family history, mostly through conversations with relatives and many Internet research sites. It seems that I am not the only person interested in family history! This document is a brief history of the ancestors of my grandfather, Meyer Kramer. I did not know my grandfather Meyer since he passed away when I was three years old. I do know many of the other Kramer family relatives referenced in this document who were his relatives and descendants in the Kramer family.

Dalhinev

Our branch of the Kramer family came from the town of in Dalhinev or Dahlinof then in Poland and now in modern Day Belarus. Today it is called Dalginovo on modern maps. I have created and researched much additional information about Dalhinev that is referenced on my web site.

My cousins, Sophie Kramer Cantor, Joe Rubin, and Cy Levine, told me that the original Kramers were from Dalhinev. A manuscript from another cousin on the Kramer side, Donald Levine (who now lives in Israel), indicates that the family was from Dalhinev. Sophie also remembers the family being from Vilna Gebrena (The Province of Vilna). Dalhinev was located near Vilna which was the capital of Lithuania. This location is confirmed by our cousin's manuscript where he mentions that after grade 8, he went to school in Vilna which was about 180km away from Dalhinev. At this school he learned Hebrew, Yiddish, and Polish. He says "many from our town went to Vilna because of the teachers for Hebrew."



Map of Dalhinev/Dolginovo circa 1940

First Group to America

The first group of Kramers in my branch of the family emigrated to America from Eastern Europe were the children of Lazer Ruven Kramer and Chayah- Soske Lurier Kramer. We were the branch that settled in Greystone Farm in Plymouth, Connecticut probably sometime around the turn of the century, but I am not certain.. My grandfather, Meyer Kramer, was their first cousin. It is still not clear why they came to the Waterbury area, but some people have told me that they came to Waterbury to visit relatives on the Levine or Lurier side of the family who were already there.

The common progenitors of this branch of the Kramer family were Yosef Kramer and his wife, whose name I do not know but it may have been Zlotke according to Cy Levine. They were probably born around 1830 and most likely lived in Dalhinev. They were the parents of Lazar Ruven, Gabriel, and Gruna Kramer.

My direct branch of the family is descended from their son, Gabriel and his wife Hannah. Our branch includes their children:

- Meyer Kramer, m. Tillie Schaev
- Barnet (Barney) m Thelma
- Esther Kramer Kravitz. m. David Kravitz --My cousin, and good friend, Larry Rifkin, is Esther's grandson.

Lazar Ruven descendants are the Greystone" branch of Kramers. They include the descendants of Abraham Kramer, Samuel Kramer, and the Kramer sisters who married the Shapiros. I was told that Lazar's father, Yosef, was a prominent farmer, but he prohibited his own sons from farming. His father let Lazar visit America. Although he did well, he did not like it and returned Dalhinev and "gave money to all communities [there]."

The third branch of the family in this country is descended from Gruna Kramer Rubin, the daughter of Yosef Kramer and the sister of Gabriel and Lazar Ruven. Joe Rubin and his family are descended from their Gruna.

Aunt Muna Gruna Rubin



Aunt "Muna" Gruna Kramer Rubin.

Gruna Kramer Rubin was the only child of Yosef Kramer who permanently stayed in America. She was here ten years earlier than her nephew, Meyer. The other children remained in Europe. .

Aunt "Muna Gruna" Rubin was evidently quite a woman since she is still remembered by many members on all sides of the Kramer family. Her husband was Feter Beir Meishe Rubin

I spoke with her grandson, Joe Rubin about his grandmother. Joe ran the record store in downtown Waterbury for at least 30 years. According to Joe, his grandmother, Gruna Kramer Rubin, was born in 1850 in Dalhinev. She died in 1938 when she was 88 years old and she is buried in Washington Cemetery in Brooklyn. Her father, my great-great grandfather, was Yosef Kramer. Joe Rubin was named after him and my father was as well.

Aunt Gruna arrived this country at Ellis Island sometime around 1905 - 1906 when she was in her early 50s. At that time, her children would have been grown, and they evidently came to this country and brought their mother with them. She had at least five children. In order of birth they were: Joseph, Ida, Nathan, Abraham, and Harry. Joe Rubin's father was her son, Nathan, and his mother was Jenny Chidekel.

The family lived in Brooklyn all of their life and Joe said that his grandmother used to drive up from New York and always visit the family in Waterbury. The Rubins came to visit their Shapiro Aunts (Tzeva and Dora).

Aunt Gruna must have made an impression on my father since he named my brother, Jeff, after her. Aunt Marilyn and Aunt Rose said that she was a lovely, beautiful woman who was one of the mainstays of the Kramer family.

Meyer Kramer and his Descendants

My grandfather's parents were Gabriel and Hannah Kramer. His grandfather was Yosef Kramer. They all resided in Dalhinev. Meyer came to this country with his brother, Barnet (Barney) and his sister, Esther. Meyer was the youngest child in his family. He had two other sisters who remained in Russia who were reported as killed during World War II. That may be their picture below.

PASSENGER RECORD

Here is the record for the passenger. Click the links on the left to see more information about this passenger.

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<i>Name:</i>	Kramer, Maier
<i>Ethnicity:</i>	Russia Hebrew
<i>Place of Residence:</i>	Dalhynew, Russia
<i>Date of Arrival:</i>	December 02, 1913
<i>Age on Arrival:</i>	21y
<i>Gender:</i>	M
<i>Marital Status:</i>	S
<i>Ship of Travel:</i>	Nieuw Amsterdam
<i>Port of Departure:</i>	Rotterdam, South Holland, The Netherlands

Meyer Kramer's Ellis Island Passenger Record.



Kramer Women from Dalhinev – Possibly Meyer's two sisters, mother and grandmother. From Edith Rifkin, daughter of Esther Kramer Kravitz.

Meyer Kramer was born, as near as I can tell, on February 15, 1893. He died in Waterbury, Connecticut July 4, 1951. According to his Ellis Island Passenger Record (above), he arrived in America on December 02, 1913, that made him 20 years old when he arrived.

While he was still in Europe, Meyer's father, Gabriel, committed suicide. It was Meyer who discovered his father who had hung himself. Perhaps that's why the younger children left Europe -- to get away from this death. According to family members, his father's death had to have a very deep psychological effect on him, particularly in a religion which condemns suicide.

Meyer and his siblings were probably the third group of Kramers to arrive in this country from Eastern Europe after Gruna and Abraham. Meyer, his brother, and sister probably stayed with his cousins who lived at Graystone Farm in Plymouth Connecticut. By this time, the earlier Kramers had extensive land holdings in the Graystone area of Plymouth. Evidently the Kramer family also had some Lurier relatives who were already in this county and living in Waterbury

Within only a few years of his arrival in this country, and at the age of 21, Meyer married my grandmother, Tillie (Tevel in Yiddish) Teitel Schaev on June 25, 1916. All of us grandchildren called Tillie "Bubby." Meyer and Tillie were "fixed up." I have heard from some members of the family that the marriage was more arranged than fixed up. I was probably the custom of the day, but I don't really know.

I was told repeatedly that Meyer was multi-lingual and scholarly man, a Yeshiva Bucher (student) in Eastern Europe. He could read and write Yiddish, Russian and English. He may have wanted to become a Rabbi when he lived in Poland. There were a few Rabbis in the family. However, after he arrived in Waterbury, he was taken into the junk business by his older brother Barney. He was not happy about this and was ashamed to be a junkman. His daughter, my late Aunt Marilyn, told me that when the kids in school had to announce their father's profession, they were always embarrassed to admit they he was a junkman.

Times were tough for Meyer, Tillie and six children during the depression but the family never went hungry and never wanted. I believe that the family lived on Elizabeth Street in Waterbury during that time. I remember visiting the apartment when I was very young.

My father did not like to talk about his childhood very much. I have heard a lot of family stories about Meyer throwing junk back over the junkyard fence and Barney bringing it reselling it back to the junkyard. At least it was a legal profession, unlike bootlegging, which various members of the family were engaged in.

My Uncle Willy, Meyer's son, summed up the relationship between the two brothers - Barney had a truck, Meyer had a horse. The horse, at least the one that David Katrosar was familiar with, was called Nellie and she was kept in a barn on Division St. and Robinson St in Waterbury. All the brothers and sisters and even Bubby (Tillie) had to clean the stables on occasion. My father and his brother Willy sometimes rode with their father on the wagon. The horse made headlines in Waterbury went it bolted and was later found in a pit at a gas station. The horse survived.

My first cousin, David Katrosar, son of Meyer's daughter my Aunt Sallye Katrosar, tells me that he remembers our grandfather having a milk route as well. David remembers that he used to ride on the wagon with him and help him deliver the milk. He also said that sometimes Meyer drank so much that he became confused and couldn't remember which milk needed to be delivered. Along with the milk spoiling, David also remembers my father, Joseph Kramer, yelling at his father to put down the bottle.

Meyer did have a problem with alcohol. I asked his daughters about this and Aunt Marilyn told me that she finally took her father to a rehab facility called Easy Acres in Newtown where he was cured. She said that during the last five years of his life, he never touched a drop. In fact, he became a lecturer and helped other people overcome their problem.

Tillie Kramer

I knew my paternal grandmother, Tillie (Tevel) Kramer very well since she lived up the street from us in Waterbury. She was always called "Bubby" the Yiddish word for grandmother. I asked her many times about her family history but she told me that she did not remember much about her youth but she lived in a place with "beautiful rolling hills." Her daughter, my Aunt Harriet Meisel, told me that Bubby was from Minsk, today the Capital of Belarus. Bubby once told me that she was born near Kiev, so who knows?

Bubby was born June 15, 1895. She passed away in December of 1985. Her father was Joseph Schaev and her mother was Sara Schaev. Her mother's family was the Teitel family. She also said that she came over as a very young girl with first class passage. Sallye always said that her mother came over "like a lady."

We know that she had two brothers, Louis (Laben) and Max (Mottl). I remember meeting Uncle Willy Teitel who lived somewhere in New Jersey. The Teitel family sponsored Bubby's passage here. They were in the jewelry business. Bubby had an older sister, Rose who was trampled to death in a synagogue fire in Europe.

Bubby was 24 years old when she married Meyer. Some members of the family told me that she was slightly older than Meyer and, according to the dates that I have been given, she was about four years older. She was evidently very pretty and youthful looking. She was a petite woman, no taller than four feet eight. I remember her telling me that when she walked her children people used to stop her on the street and ask if she was their sister or baby-sitter! They did not believe that such a young girl could have children.

I remember that Bubby also made terrific poppy seed cookies. Everyone in the family received some at different times of the year. She also kept track of Yahrzeits and was the family authority on Jewish ritual. After Meyer died, she lived in an apartment on the second floor of Syd and Marcia Katrosar's house on Hill Street in Waterbury.

My grandmother and grandfather had seven children. In order of birth they were:

1. Sallye (Sondra) b. 1917
2. Son (David?) died in infancy
3. Joseph Phillip (My father) 1921-1986
4. William b.1927
5. Rose
6. Marilyn d. 2006
7. Harriet

I compiled this chart and information given to me by other family members. I am not sure if it is totally accurate but it is close to being correct. Thanks to everyone for all of their help with this project.

Harold

Descendants of Joseph (Yosef) Kramer

