



**A BRIEF HISTORY OF A LORAIN FURNITURE DYNASTY (haha)
by Dan Goldberg**

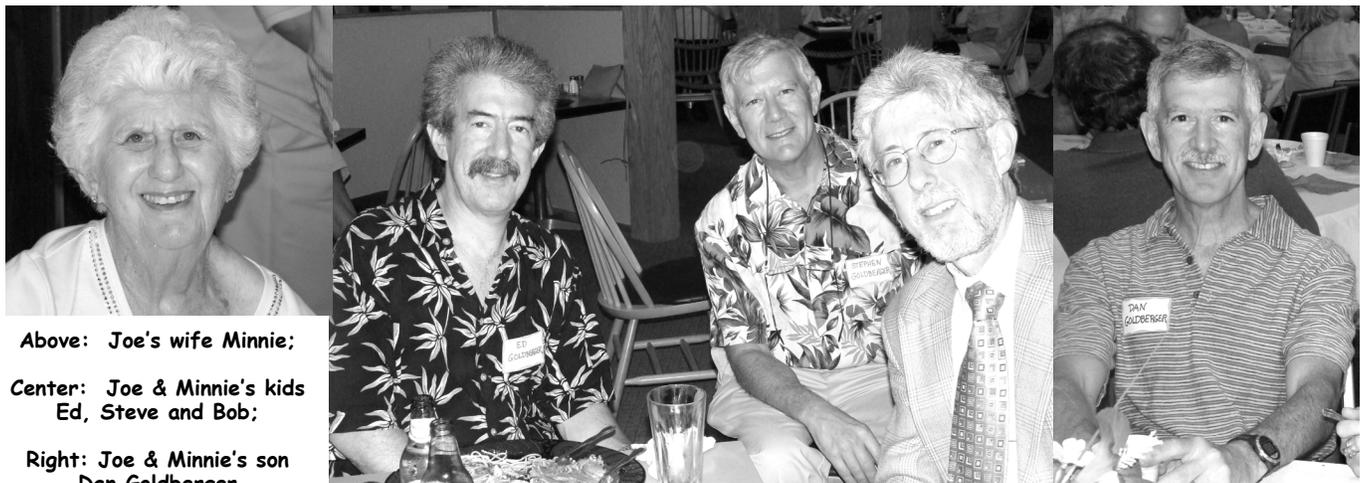
In 1887, Morris and Eva Goldberger emigrated from Hungary and arrived in the United States with their 3 children, Joseph (20), Fannie (16), and Edward (2). They were registered as being residents of Youngstown, Ohio, in the 1900 census.

In 1912, Edward, then residing in Farrell, PA, became engaged to Blanche Ackerman, age 19, who was living in Lorain, Ohio. She was born in 1893 to Louis Ackerman and his wife, Lena (Farkas) in McKeesport, PA. At some point, the Ackerman's moved to Lorain where Louis had a business delivering coal. Edward and Blanche had 3 children, Morris (Mort) born in 1912, Joseph born in 1915, both in Farrell, and Perlee, born in 1919 in Chicago. Later, the family moved to Youngstown, where they were recorded in the 1930 US census. In the late 1930's, Mort and Joe opened a furniture business in Youngstown which they sold in 1941 when they entered the army.

Edward's brother, Joseph, was living in Lorain in 1905, where he had a clothing and grocery business. He and his wife Mildred had 2 children, Audrey, born in Youngstown in 1918, and Marvin, born in Chicago in 1922. In 1942, Audrey Goldberger married Willard Bear of Akron, Ohio. Willard was the son of Simon and Rose, who were married in 1901. Simon and his brother, Max, had been involved in the furniture business in Akron for some time. The brothers emigrated from eastern Europe, one record states Simon came from Lithuania, another states Max came from Russia. Simon was the owner of Bear Furniture, while his brother, Max, owned the Akron Furniture Company which he opened in 1902. Max moved his business into an 8 story building down South Main Street from Bear Furniture. At the time Audrey and Willard married, Willard was vice president of Bear Furniture and his brother Sidney, also worked in the business.

When Mort and Joe returned from the war they were interested in getting back into the furniture business. I don't know many particulars, but a marketing study indicated that the Lorain – Elyria area would be a good location. The Bear family had several stores in the Akron region at that point, and they allowed the Goldberger brothers to use the Bear brand name though they were not partners in the Bear's businesses. Mort and Joe opened 2 stores, one on Broadway in Lorain and another on Broad Street in Elyria. For a few years they had a third store at the O'Neill shopping center in Sheffield Lake. There were several members of ABI who also owned furniture stores in downtown Lorain, and they maintained friendly and cooperative relationships both socially and professionally. Goldberger's and Deutsch's were long time golf and bridge partners, and the owners would direct customers to each other's stores if they did not carry what the customers wanted. Mort and Joe helped advise Bob Deutsch and Ralph Stillman and also Sy Statman when they opened their stores.

In the 1970's, the Lorain store was purchased as part of the urban renewal plan and was subsequently demolished. The Elyria store closed when Mort retired. Joe worked for a few years with a Jewish gentleman from Milwaukee who had a business consulting with stores for their going out of business sales. Joe made use of his office skills in retirement by organizing the ABI community calendar. Ultimately, both brothers and their wives, Minnie and Jeanne, retired to Largo, Florida, where they lived across the street from each other. Joe and Minnie's sons remained in the north. Three of Mort and Jeanne's children also moved to the Tampa area, one daughter lived in Florida for periods of time, and one son settled in Prescott, AZ.



Above: Joe's wife Minnie;

Center: Joe & Minnie's kids Ed, Steve and Bob;

Right: Joe & Minnie's son Dan Goldberger