

GIVNER FAMILY

(Muri Givner Corzin - June 2022)

OUR FAMILY

Joseph Givner (Chiel Giwner (12.15.1895 - 03.01.1967) arrived in the United States on December 3, 1913 from Lomza, Poland. His father Chaim and mother Rochla were parents to 9 children. Joseph being second born and first son. He was taught at an early age how to sew shoes and tailoring. He met Becky Greenfield (Pearl Mlodogenitz 02.21.1900 - 08.13.1962 from

Schneidavie, Poland) in Cleveland and they married in 1915. Their four children, Florence (02.14.1917 - 02.21.2003) William "Bill" (06.01.1918 - 01.01.1995) Agnes (05.05.1921-04.08.1999) and Eugene (12.19.1923 - 05.30.1994) all grew up in Lorain having the Jewish Community and religious school training as the center of their lives.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY & OUR FAMILY BUSINESS

Joseph worked in Cleveland for a few years hoping to one day open his own Shop. As luck would have it, at the train station in Cleveland supposedly heading to Steubenville, Ohio he got on the wrong train ending up in Lorain, Ohio. He would tell the story that "if you are lost, what do you do? You find the Jewish Synagogue."



1913

At that time there were two Jewish Congregations in Lorain: Agudath Achim and Beth Israel, so not sure which Temple Rabbi suggested he stay in Lorain because they needed a tailor. Joe Givner opened up his first Second Hand Clothing Store at 1720 Broadway in 1918. His store front sign said "Highest Prices Paid for Second Hand Clothing Call Givner's." In 1926 a newly remodeled storefront was a sign of success with the addition of Stetson Hats & Shoes and dry-cleaning services.

Becky brought lunch to Papa Joe everyday in the same basket for many years. Their Jewish group of friends (Flignor's, Gusarov's, Goodman's and Rosenthal's) celebrated Passover seders, Bar Mitzvahs and weddings, illness and funerals together. In 1925 when both Lorain Jewish Temples merged, ABI became the center of their religious life. In 1936 when my father graduated from Lorain High School, they opened a second store at 912 Broadway whereby in 1940, Givner's Luggage & Jewelry was born.

In 1944, Givner's Luggage & Jewelry opened up at 962 Broadway next to the railroad tracks at 10th Street. Jewish businesses were many up and down Broadway. There was Hart Jewelry, Harry's Men's Wear (Harry Levine), Ted Jacobs Women's Clothing, Allen's Shoe's (Alfred Guth), Flignor's Market, The Margolis Brothers had furniture stores (Joseph, Ben, Nate, Harold and Hyman,) Statman's Furniture Store. Epstein's Furnniture. Wissman Jewlers, Bear Furniture (Mort and Joe Goldberger) and Bergman's.

What had been two stores at 962 Broadway was remodeled in 1944 into one large store. Eugene Givner (Sonya Shur "Sunny" / Bruce 1950, Debra 12.19.1982 and Lisa) sold luggage, Stetson hats, and used musical Instruments. He also owned and operated Givner's Realty. Irving Kahn (Florence Givner Kahn / Linda -3.11.1942 and Michael 06.8.1944) was the Accountant for the store and owned Kahn Realty, and Marvin Lieberman (Agnes Givner Lieberman / Susie 12.14.1946, Judy 1949 and Lorrie - deceased) managed the Tuxedo and Dry-cleaning business adjacent to Givner's Luggage & Jewelry.



1918

My dad, William “Bill” Givner was first born son and Papa Joe put him to work as a very young boy who pressed pants and shirts while standing on a chair. There were no Child Labor Laws at that time and Dad always said he hated pants and white dress shirts. Music was a very important part of his life, playing saxophone and clarinet in school bands/orchestra and then as he got older he joined a small hometown band. It was at this time that Antisemitism was alive and well in neighboring cities like Vermilion and Sandusky. Signs at bars and restaurants stating “no Jews or Blacks allowed” were posted and this affected “the young Jewish music man.”

Working in the store at 912 Broadway, Dad learned the jewelry business on his own while enlisting the Jewish Jewellery Salesmen in Cleveland for goods. He found his passion as a businessman. In 1942 duty called and Bill joined the Army.

He served for close to 4 years and the first two years played in the Army Bands with Tommy Dorsey and several famous visiting musicians. He became a Sargent while serving in the Philippines. His father, sister Agnes, and brother Eugene helped run the family business in Bill’s absence.

Upon returning to Lorain after serving his Country, he became active in the many Veteran’s Organizations, serving through the years as Commander and Veteran of the Year twice in the Jewish War Veteran’s. He was a member of the DAV (Disabled American Veterans

Louis Proy Chapter 20), Polish Legion (Post 38), and past Chairman of the Lorain County Anti-defamation League for years. We have copies of wonderful letters he wrote concerning antisemitism issues within the Lorain Jewish Community, Lorain Public School System and Lorain Community at Large.

He served 10 years on the Lorain Board of Health, served on the Sheriff’s Advisory Committee and was past Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 451, past President and founding member of The Lorain Veteran’s Council. He was vice president of the Lorain Memorial Association with President Jack Lavriha, journalist at The Lorain Journal for over 40 years. Together they both helped to make it possible to place granite monuments at Veteran’s Memorial Park in memory of those men and women who died in American Wars as well as serving as a Parade Marshall . The Veteran’s Council included representatives from the Jewish Community like Beverly Gelb, Steve Smith and Art Goodman (“OUA” - “Old Uncle Art” - name given to him as leader of AZA groups 1947-1982 at ABI). So many others that shared their love for our Country and for the City of Lorain regardless of their race, creed or religion.

At Salem Jewish Cemetery in Sheffield, they honored William Givner’s service to Veteran causes by placing a plaque above the War memorial on the flagpole. The War Memorial (“At the going down of the sun and in the morning we shall remember them”) is where the names of the fallen Jewish soldiers are read on



Esther & Bill

Memorial Day. He was Service Director for the City of Lorain during the administration of William Parker. He was a member of the Downtown Merchants Association, the 501 Board and served as an Israeli Bond Chairman.

Bill met Esther Globerman through Lorainite, Dr. Sydney Gelman who was graduating from Podiatry School in Cleveland and was friends with Esther's brother, Dr. Albert Globerman from Michigan. A blind date was set up on April 8, 1948 and exactly two years later, daughter Muri (04.08.1950) was born. Muri attended ABI Hebrew and Sunday School as did brother Joel Givner (09.24.1953).

Esther was very involved in ABI. Setting tables for Oneg shabbat lunches with Margie Bergman, working at Fundraisers, in addition to serving as a Past President of JWVA (Jewish War Veterans Auxiliary Chapel #222) She worked with my father when he downsized the store until he retired in 1988. At 96 years old, Esther continues to help Mark Jaffee calling ABI members for their donations to The Jewish Welfare Fund for Lorain every year while living in South Carolina. She misses her Maj Jong games with Sue Lang and the many friendships she and Bill made through the years (Barbara & Nate Margolis, Al & Sally Guth, Art & Barbara Goodman, Bella Margolis Cook, Rhoda Gelman to name a few). She is enjoying life in Sun City Carolina Lakes, Indian Land, SC. and having family close by.

Muri Givner Corzin graduated from Admiral King High School in 1968 and Lorain Community College School of Nursing. During her career as a Pediatric Nurse, she also was most proud, as a Jewish Woman, serving as a Red Cross Nurse Volunteer for over 12 years in Charlotte, North Carolina and only one of four

Jewish Nurses. As my Dad would say "Jews need to be seen and heard, not just in their Religious Communities, but in the Community at large."

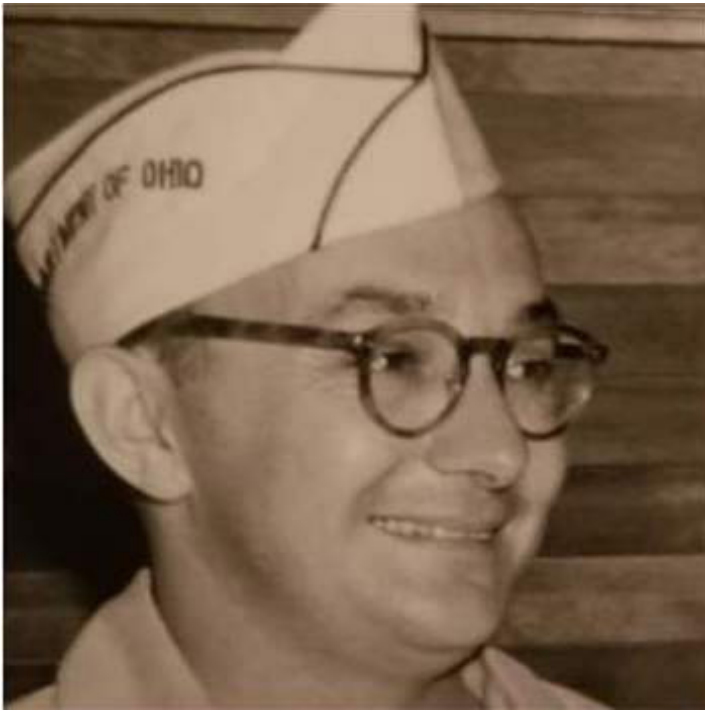
Muri & Harvey met through Harry and Jennie Levine (Harry's Mens Wear- Downtown Lorain) who were friends and co-workers with Harvey's father years earlier in Cleveland. When I got married at ABI, Betty Goodman sang Sunrise Sunset (a very long song). I remembered the years of High Holiday Services with our Givner family filling up 2 rows, Junior Congregation Services, Sunday School and beloved Mr. Emil Schoenbrun (I continue to honor him every year at Yom Kippur by lighting his Yahrzeit candle) at Hebrew School. In Akron, Ohio, we had a wonderful Jewish Community as it does "take a Villiage to raise a child." Rebecca "Becky" Corzin-Hess (Stephen and 22 -month-old Myles, ICU-PICU Heart Transplant Nurse) and our son, Kyle Corzin (Medical IT Specialist).

My borthor Joel Givner (09.24.1953) graduated from Admiral King High School and attended Miami University (Oxford, Ohio) and is a Nuclear Physicist living in New Jersey. He is married to Lorainite, Lisa Chapla Givner who helps run their business JGivoo Consultants. They have 2 children: Ariel (Family Law Practice Attorney) and Will Joseph (2022 graduate from Drexel University School of Architecture).

I remember a conversation my father Bill had with Rabbi Meyer on a Sunday at our house. I was in Junior High at Hawthorne (always stopping to see Mr. Froman at his store on my way home) and Rabbi was concerned that my father was too involved in Lorain's Veteran's and Civic Organizations. He asked why my dad wasn't involved in ABI board member activities. The lesson I learned that day: Dad told Rabbi Meyer that ABI is his religious home and Judaism his base - learned from

attending ABI and his large Jewish extended family. After coming back to Lorain from the Army in 1946, he felt his involvement in the Civic and Veteran's Organizations was important. He told Rabbi Meyer, "Jews need to be seen and heard, not just in their Religious Communities, but in the Community at large."

As to our relationship to the ABI community, my Grandfather Joe Givner, was active in many ABI Temple functions and clubs throughout the years and



never hesitated to help the Jewish Community that welcomed him years before. Our store was a hub for meetings concerning issues with the Jewish Community. In September of 1960 Senator John F. Kennedy brought his presidential campaign to Lorain because it was one of the largest Catholic communities in Ohio and they had a parade down Broadway. It was so exciting when Senator Kennedy walked over to shake my dad's hand. Senator Metzenbaum and a very young Sherrod Brown would come into the store to talk with my father several occasions. Dad was a lifelong Republican and the Senators were Democrats which made no difference to either man.

And even though customers knew our family was Jewish, they still brought in colored baby chicks at Easter, Christmas cookies and hand-made Hanukkah decorations for our family. Our family enjoyed celebrating numerous holidays with the multi-cultural families in our orbit. Many ABI members became extensions of our family calling them Aunts and Uncles. On Saturdays we attended Junior Congregation or Regular morning services and our fathers of course would be working at their stores on Broadway, but came lunch time, they would all show up at Temple for the Oneg Shabbat lunches served and prepared by our Mothers. I learned to make the best Kugel ever from Mrs. Flignor in the ABI kitchen as a young girl. I would be remiss not to mention that on January 1, 1995 while in Florida, it was Erwin Froman who stayed with my father, serving as his Shomer for two nights prior to when Bill was brought back to Lorain for burial.

Again, the ABI relationships somehow grew into years of shared simchas and sorrows and to this day I have wonderful memories of the ABI Jewish Community.

The most important fact about our family and the Jewish Community of Lorain, Ohio, is how thankful and lucky we were that Joe Givner took the wrong train!

A Side Story: When Mr. Emil Schoenbrun came to the Lorain Jewish Community, he told us how he escaped the Nazi Concentration camp and hid in the woods, eating whatever forage he could find. He spoke sadly about his two daughters and wife he had to leave behind and who died in the Holocaust. And I remember him saying that teaching children would be his life. And he was a wonderful man, teacher and friend as well as a talented artist who made sure that all his students had a beautiful chalk drawn picture of something special only to them.

Sean Martin is prepared to help put me in touch with anyone who's interested in reconnecting.

Email him at (smartin@wrhs.org)

Photos courtesy of the Givner Family.