

## BIOGRAPHY

It is my wish that after my death a copy of my Biography be given to my children and grandchildren, to be framed and kept in a desirable place.

I, Doctor Morris Meyerovitz, was born in a small town in Retovo, Russia, capital state of Kovno, on the 23th day of September in the year 1860.

My father died when I was five years old, my mother was left a poor widow. She was unable to raise me and I was taken over to an uncle of mine by name Libe Appel in Kovno.

He raised me and gave me a Hebrew and Public School Education.

After graduating from Public School, I took up a Self General Education for reason not being able to enter into higher schools of learning.

At the age of sixteen I entered in the Jewish Hospital in Kovno, "Bikur Cholim" under the direction of Doctor Theodore Meyerovitz, Chief Surgeon of the Hospital, a relative of mine. After serving at the Hospital five years I passed the examination for a Russian Feldsher, which means in Russia an Assistant Physician. Realizing that I could not take up the study of Medicine in Russia! First--I had no means. Second--Because only three percent of Jewish students were admitted to the Russian Universities.

At the age of twenty-one I married Alta Orelovitz of Kovno.

Four children were born in Kovno. Namely:

1. Abraham Jeshnah
2. Mordechai (or Max)
3. Abbie
4. Rose

Having no future prospect for me and my family to remain in Russia, I decided to emigrate to America, leaving the family in Kovno.

I landed in New York on North German Vessel "Verra" in the month of May 1886. I stopped for a short time at Aunt Libby Epstein's home, but they were unable to help me financially.

After living five months in New York and could not find a position to make a living or a possibility of study, upon the request and advise of your dear mother Alta, I have decided to return back home in Kovno.

While coming out from Yarmolofsky's ticket office in New York going to the ship to sail next day to Bremen, Germany on my way home, as I stepped out of the ticket office I met at the doorway Meyer Kantor of Chicago a relative of mine, passing by with Kantor Israel Michalofsky, "Kantor of Paris". Meyer Kantor recognized me, he stopped me, asking me where am I going?

I told him that I am going home to Kovno. Well, he said, how long have you been in America? I told him four months only. This is what he said:

"Durex einer! What will you do in Russia?" "Nein, he said, "you better give your ticket back to the Steamship Company and come with me in Chicago, there I will help you and you will be able to study medicine.

He took me over to his hotel, treated me with a fine dinner, bought me a railroad ticket to Chicago, and directed me to stop at his home and wait there for him until he returned to Chicago, which I did.

When I came to Chicago he asked me what I want to do! I said that I would like to study medicine. He said good, go right ahead and I will help you all I can. I had \$125.00 with me. I entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons, now the Medical Department of the University of Illinois. I had my room and board free at Kanter's house and a special room to study. Not knowing the English language, it became very difficult for me to make rapid progress in my studies. But with courage and powerful ambition I have succeeded in learning the English language. I soon was able to recite and spelled it right in our written examinations.

Suddenly Dave Kanter, the youngest son of Meyer Kanter, decided to take up the study of medicine. He entered the same medical school and we studied together at his home where I was rooming. All at once he made a complaint before his mother stating that the "greenhorn" disturbs him from his studies and therefore would like to see me move out from his room. His mother came down and said, that means "look for another place." Well, you can imagine how I felt not having any means nor books to study from, no shelter and no food. I was compelled to appeal to Jacob Kanter the butcher, who lived at the time, at 23 S. Kramer St., asking him to take me in their home and to give me board

and room until I will graduate, and when I do graduate I will pay them five dollars a week for the whole period of three years. This was agreeable to his mother. I moved in their home and from there I graduated on the 23rd day of May 1890, from the College of Physicians and Surgeons now the Medical Department of the University of Illinois.

I was left penniless. I went to Mr. L. Wittenberg the baker on the corner of Canal & Liberty Sts, asking him to lend me twenty dollars, which he did. Out of this I gave five dollars to Mrs. Kantar for Easter, and the balance of fifteen dollars I paid to Mr. Frank Chasoch, a customer peddler for a suit of clothes which I took on payment.

I rented an office on the corner of Jefferson and 14th Sts., and some one stole from me the suit of clothes. And again I was left without money and without clothes. But I succeeded in the practice of medicine and surgery and within six months I brought my family from Europe. I became a very busy practitioner. In a year or two I paid up all my indebtedness, I paid for my room and board and the rest of my indebtedness.

As my aim in life was to obtain a higher medical education and a greater experience in practice, I continued my medical work at the College and at the Dispensaries. I became a Clinical Teacher in "Disease of the Chest" at the College of Physicians and Surgeons and kept on teaching for nearly eight years. Among my students when I was teacher was Dr. Theodore Sax, Superintendent of the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium; Dr. Joseph Beck, prominent throat specialist; and Dr. Richter, famous Surgeon of Chicago.

In 1898 I was appointed Attending Physician at the Cook County Hospital serving there for two years. My junior interne at the Cook County Hospital in Ward 4 was Dr. Lichter, the famous Surgeon now of Chicago. In the same year I was appointed Chief Medical Inspector for the State of Illinois by the State Board of Health to fight a severe epidemic of smallpox in Chicago, and had seventy-five medical men under my supervision. Within sixty days I had the epidemic of smallpox under control.

Later in 1898 again I was appointed a member of the Illinois State Board of Health by Governor John R. Tanner. I was appointed and reappointed, confirmed by the State Senate, and was on the Board for six years. While a member of the State Board of Health, I was Chairman of the Committee on the administration of the Medical Practice Act, and was in a position to investigate all medical schools throughout the United States who were asking recognition by the Illinois State Board of Health.

At the same time I was the author and the originator of the State Lodging House Law for the purpose of improving the sanitary condition and the hygienic surroundings of the unfortunate Hoboes. The new law was passed by the legislature as a party measure. After explaining to the Governor the purpose of the law, an appropriation of \$25,000 was made. I was made Chairman of that committee which I carried out all the provisions of the State Lodging House Law, and was highly commended for this work by the entire press of the State of Illinois.

Later I was offered by the State Board of Health to become Chief Physician for the Smallpox Hospital in Chicago, and have refused upon the request of my wife, Alta Meyerovitz.

At an annual meeting of the State Board of Health held in Chicago at the Grand Pacific Hotel, we were notified that the California State Board of Health has passed a law requiring an examination from all Doctors desiring to practice medicine in the State of California. Before the law was signed by the Governor of California I have requested our Secretary of the State Board of Health, John A. Egan to wire to the Secretary of the California State Board of Health asking him to issue to me a license to practice medicine and surgery in California under the old law which was granted to me. No requirements for my qualifications was demanded by the State Board of Health of California, they said, "Being a member of the Illinois State Board of Health is sufficient evidence of your qualifications and no Diploma is necessary to be forwarded." A license was issued to me which I am still in its possession and in force.

In a short time I was also appointed Physician by the Chicago Surface Line to take care of all the accidental work on the West Side, which capacity I served for ten years. During that time I also served as a surgeon for the Chicago Sugar Refining Factory, where I took care of all the accidental work for seven years.

I am exceedingly glad that I have taken interest in the functions and activities of the various charitable institutions in the city of Chicago

which will remain the greatest monument in the pages of Jewish History.

I am proud of having raised a family of nine children and provided them with the highest education American institutions of learning can produce, and made professional men and women out of them. And today they are occupying high positions in professional life and the industrial fields, and they are good Jewish and good American patriotic citizens.

At the conclusion, my dear children, I am very sorry that I cannot leave you great wealth, but I am very glad that I can leave you and furnish you with a rich Biography, and this is the best will I am able to leave you.

Father Doctor Morris Meyerovitz  
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