

Letter from <sup>BLAND</sup> SON of  
VICTOR Behar's SISTER  
(RENEE) RASHEL Behar POSKAR GOLDENBERG  
HIS MOTHER WAS VIOLET NANCY Behar  
MARRIED TO WILLIAM JONATHAN HAMMEL!

27 Menlo Place  
Berkeley, CA 94720  
June 12, 1989

The SENDER is: EUGENE A. HAMMEL (WIFE JEAN MARIE SWINGOLE)

Ms. Sadie E. Mardy  
1172 Shephards Ln. NE  
Atlanta, GA 30324

Dear Sadie,

I was delighted to receive your letter of June 8 and very happy that you found my old letter of 1972 and that that prompted you to write. To tell you the truth, I had forgotten all about having written the letter in 1972. In recent years, I have had occasional contact with my Uncle Jack but have been completely out of touch with the rest of the family. Let me try to bring you up to date, although you may also have had some news from Jack Brookes. Actually, your letter inspired me to call him tonight; he is in great shape and was very informative. I am going to send him a copy of this letter, too.

My father, Bill Himmel, passed away in 1978. He had changed his name around 1945 when he became a US citizen, to Hammel. His only surviving relatives were Caroline and Harry Platnik, 15100 Glade Dr., 2G, Silver Spring, Maryland 20906, their son Stanley and his family, and my cousins Marilyn and Burton. Caroline was Bill's sister, and Marilyn and Burton are the children of his other sister, Pauline. He also had a brother, Irving, who died sometime after 1946. I have not had a letter from Aunt Caroline for several years. Marilyn wrote to me when my father died, and I had seen Burton when he visited California a few years before that, but otherwise I have had no word from anyone. Perhaps my Uncle Jack remembers more.

Violet, as you must know from Jack, passed away in 1979, ten years ago next week. I had not seen or had any contact with other members of her family except Jack since I was a child. I only vaguely remember her mother and am not sure I remember her sister, Margaret. She, herself, was in touch only with Jack. We have seen Jack within the last ten years on one of his visits West, and we do manage to correspond about once a year. He always sends us a fruitcake at Christmas time. I am afraid I am not as good a correspondent as I should be, but I try to keep him up to date. I have not had any contact with his daughter Jacqueline since I was en route to Germany to serve in the military in 1953 and visited the family in Long Island. You will surely have her address: William and Jacqueline Finkle, 10 Park Ave., NY 10016, (212) 685 0560; also 103 Harbour Ave., West Bayshore NY 11706 (516) 968-5881. (I just got this information from Uncle Jack, and I am putting it in this letter so as to keep a record.)

I was sorry to hear that both your husband and Margaret's had passed away. I guess no one lasts forever, although it does seem that Uncle Jack is making a good try at it. By my reckoning, he was born on December 25, 1899 and was 2 or 3 years older than Violet, who was born sometime between 1901 and 1903. Perhaps when he sees this letter, he can correct my impression.

My wife's father, Millard Swingle, passed away about a year ago at age 80. His family was Swiss on his father's side and Scots Irish on his mother's, and that last branch had been in this country since the Revolution. He was born in Ohio and still has one

surviving brother who must be at least 89 by now but who still ran the old family farm until recently. Joan's mother (who is now 79) lives just a mile or so from us in her own house and is in very good shape and quite a good bridge player. She is an accomplished oil painter. Her family was English on her father's side and German on her mother's. She was born in Fort Valley, Georgia, and has a sister in Connecticut and a brother in Virginia, as well as some relatives still in Georgia.

Let me bring you up to date on our own family. I married Joan Swingle in 1951 and we have four children. I teach anthropology, demography, and computing and statistics at the University of California, Berkeley. Joan has worked in pottery, stained glass, and now weaving in addition to raising four kids. Because I work a lot overseas, we have lived in Germany, Peru, England, and Yugoslavia for extended periods. We are pretty outdoorsy types and have done a lot of camping, backpacking, and flower and birdwatching.

Our oldest son, Kenneth Edward (37), is married to Karen Cornwell. They have two children, Lily (who will be 6 this month) and Garth Nicholas (who was born just about a week ago). Ken has a Ph.D in biochemistry from U.C. Berkeley and teaches at SUNY-Syracuse. They live at 816 Cumberland, Syracuse, NY 13210. Karen is a botanist and chemist. Her family lives in northern California in the area between Eureka and Redding and have been there for a couple of generations. Her father was in the school system in the area as a teacher and administrator.

Our second son, Bruce (35), is married to Ellen Diethelm. They have one child, Ben, and Ellen is due to have another around August. Bruce has a Ph.D in physics from the University of Colorado; he worked for Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque for several years but has just moved to California, where he works for Livermore National Laboratory. They live in Pleasanton, only about an hour away, 3233 Royalton Court, Pleasanton, CA 94533. Ellen did graduate work in archaeology at New Mexico. Her family is Swiss. Her paternal grandfather is a psychiatrist who practiced in New York, and her father is a surgeon at the University of Alabama in Birmingham.

Our daughter, Debbie (30), has remarried to Eric Engbeck. She had no children from her first marriage. They are expecting a child in about 7 months and have just bought a house in Pinole, CA, about a half hour away. I don't have their new address yet. Debbie and Eric graduated from U.C. Berkeley in the College of Environmental Resources, and both now work for a firm that tests fruits and vegetables to make sure they are safe from chemicals.

Our youngest son, Rick (21), finished high school in Berkeley and went to junior college for about two years. He still lives at home and now has a good union job with a big grocery store chain.

So, that should bring you up to date, and you can fill in some of our grandchildren!

I would be very interested to have Margaret's address, as well as that of any relatives in Turkey. I have never been to Istanbul, although I have been close to it, since I have done some travelling and work in Yugoslavia. Ken Hammel, in particular, is interested in the family history, and I hope to pass on a lot of this information to him. I suppose that when you write to relatives in Turkey, either they must know English, or you are using Ladino. Since I speak Spanish, I would be able to correspond with them, if they still use Ladino.

I have only a few mementos of Violet's side of the family. There is a picture of her mother Rachel and another of Rachel and Margaret that must have been taken when Margaret was about 30. Both of these were of course taken in this country. There is another of her mother and father that must have been taken when Rachel was about in her late 20's, but it cannot have been much after her marriage, because Violet told me her father died of TB when she was about 3. That picture was obviously taken in Europe. There is another picture of two women, also obviously taken in Europe, and on the back in Violet's handwriting, "Mother and Aunt Victoria". In that picture, Rachel looks a few years younger than she does in the picture with my grandfather, whose name, I think, was Oscar. I do not know who Victoria was; as I understand it, Rachel had no sisters, only three brothers: Victor, Albert, and Sam. Probably Victoria was the wife of one of Rachel's brothers. Then there is a family portrait that shows Violet at about age 3, her grandmother Eugenia (after whom I was named and who seems to be about 55 in the picture), Uncle Nissim (Nathan?, who seems to be in his late 30's or early 40's), Cousin Albert (who seems to be about 4 or 5), Aunt Sara (who seems to be in her middle 30's), and Cousin Estelle (who seems to be about 9 or 10. I assume from this portrait that Rachel and Margaret and perhaps Jack may have already gone to the U.S., that Nissim was married to Sara and they had two children, Estelle and Albert, and that Violet was being cared for by Eugenia. I do know that when Violet came to America, she came with Eugenia. I have no knowledge of what happened to Eugenia after she came to America. It is certainly possible that the cousin you speak of in Turkey is the descendant of Nissim or Sara; I do not know if they every came to America. Now it seems to me that the Albert in this picture must be Violet's cousin, and not the person who is sometimes referred to as Uncle Albert, who must be Rachel's brother. As I said, I also do not know anything about Aunt Victoria. Violet told me that her father came from Odessa, so perhaps there are no connections to his family that we know about, but perhaps Nissim was the brother of Violet's father? As I understand it, you are Victor's daughter, Rachel was your aunt, and Margaret, Violet, and Jack Brookes are your cousins. Uncle Jack gave me a little more detail: he did not tell me anything about your uncle Albert's children (if any), but he did say that Sam who was the youngest in that generation had three sons, of whom Sam and Frank were two. Is that right? I may not have gotten it right over the phone. I also understand that you have two nephews, Victor and Raymond, both physicians, the first at Duke and the second in Dunedin in Florida.

I do hope that you can give me more details. It would be nice to have a list of all the relatives you know, with their connections, and where they now live. It is even good to know who they were, even if they have died, because that way we can still tell our children about their history. I think it would be important to include last names, and also the names of the people they were married to. If you could help with this, I would appreciate it very much, and so would all our children. We are the last ones who can tell them.

Please write as soon as you can.

With love and best wishes,



E. A. Hammel