



Beaufort West: The Soskin Family Phillip and Golda Children: Becky, Morris and Bella.

Phillip (Koppel Pesach ben Avraham) Soskin arrived in South Africa from Lithuania around 1910. He was a tailor by trade and married Golda (née Tillim) in 1912 and initially lived in Johannesburg. They relocated to Beaufort West in 1923, since it was believed that the dry weather of the Karoo would be beneficial to Phillip as a sufferer of TB. Sadly, Philip passed away on 11 June 1927 at the young age of 35 years, and was buried in the local Jewish cemetery, leaving Golda a widow at a young age. (See Phillip [SOSKIN's](#) gravestone)

The Soskins had three children, Becky (born in 1915), Morris (born in 1918) and Bella (born in 1921).

The only son, Morris, who suffered from a heart condition, passed away on 28 October 1948 at the young age of 29 years. He was an avid stamp collector and corresponded with other like-minded collectors all over the world. He is also interred in the local Jewish cemetery. (See Morris [SOSKIN's](#)

gravestone)

Golda, who was on her own from a very young age, owned a small fish shop in New Street, Beaufort West (see photograph). She showed exemplary perseverance and tenacity to run a business without any family support.

Golda was an endearing and sweet soul, who was always obliging and popular in the eyes of all those who bought fish at her shop, including *Eerwaarde* (Dutch Reformed Church cleric) Adam Barnard, the father of the famous heart surgeon, Christiaan N Barnard. She was kind-hearted and generous with a legendary love for animals, especially cats. Any stray cat or dog in the town was welcomed by her and found refuge in her home where compassion and empathy were generously dispensed. Her business premises, like many other businesses suffered severe damage in the flood that hit the town in April 1941.



Mrs Golda Soskin and her beloved pet doggie

Golda (Golda bat Zvi) passed away on 26 February 1957 and is also buried in the Beaufort West Jewish cemetery here. (See Golda [SOSKIN](#)'s Gravestone



Mrs Golda Soskin's fish shop (Visserij in Afrikaans) in New Street Beaufort West c1950 (next door to Charley Dubowitz's General Dealer)

The Soskin's younger daughter, Bella (Beila bat Koppel Pesach) passed away on 28 April 2008 at the age of 87 years and her husband Sam (Shmuel Yakov ben Dov Byer) Lazarus passed away in Johannesburg, after a motor car accident on 1 October 1990 at the age of 72 years. Both Bella and her husband, Sam, as well as her elder sister, Becky, are buried in the West Park Cemetery in Johannesburg.

The **Soskin family history** was compiled from my correspondence with Bella's son **David Lazarus**. Bella (née Soskin) married Sam Lazarus who was born in Volksrust in 1918 to immigrant parents. David's grandfather hailed from Gomel (Russia) and grandmother from Leeds (England) having been born in the Raseiniai (in Yiddish, Reisen) area in the Kovno Gubernia (Province). After the Second World War, in 1946, David's parents, Sam and Bella, both having served in the Union Forces, married in the Berea Synagogue (Johannesburg) and settled in Volksrust. David and his brothers were born there, attended the local schools, and celebrated their *barmitzvahs* in Volksrust before leaving the 'dorp' (town) to attend the university in Johannesburg in the 1960s. David and his family, left South Africa in 1993 and having lived for 30 years in New Zealand, currently live in Melbourne, Australia, while his two elder brothers Philip and Mervyn and their families live in the USA.

Natie Finkelstein, Cape Town September 2024.
