

The Segall and Lurie Families

of Stellenbosch 1902 - 2004



The Segall and Lurie families had a presence in Stellenbosch for a total of 102 years, from 1902 to 2004.

It all started with Daniel Segall (left) and Edward Lurie (right).

We don't know whether they knew each other in Lithuania but we do know that they went into business together in Stellenbosch in 1902.



The Pale of Settlement in the Russian Empire

Before Daniel and Edward went to South Africa, they were living in an area called the Pale of Settlement in Eastern Russia. Czarina Catherine the Great established this as a territory for Russian Jews which included the territory of present-day Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus and remained in effect from 1791 until the Russian Revolution in 1917. It was created to keep Jews and their businesses out of Moscow and to keep their supposedly evil influence away from the Russian masses.

Life in the Pale was very harsh and restrictive for our Lurie and Segall families. They endured extreme poverty caused by limited economic opportunities and discrimination which included punitive laws governing where Jews could live and what occupations they could hold, all factors which made it very difficult to make a living and bring up a family.

Since the Pale's borders were always uncertain, expanding and contracting at the whim of its rulers, our Segall and Lurie families would have constantly lived on the edge of disaster. They never knew when a decree would come down ordering them to leave their homes which prompted them and others to migrate to more tolerant countries such as the United States of America, Argentina, Palestine, Canada, England and South Africa.

Travel developments and opportunities

At the time our families were thinking of leaving Lithuania, improvements in mass transportation took place which would have made it easier for them to escape the hardship of life in the Pale of Settlement. Railway lines were being laid at an increasing rate linking small towns with cities and steamships replaced sailboats for ocean crossings. Competition amongst shipping companies was fierce resulting in affordable prices for passengers. Many Jews from Eastern Europe were lured to

South Africa by the diamond and gold rushes and found work as shopkeepers, itinerant peddlers or traders servicing the burgeoning populations.

Daniel and Edward knew that life wouldn't be easy for them when they arrived in South Africa. Yiddish was their first language, they had to re-establish themselves and find work in a foreign country. We can only admire their tenacity and pioneering role they played in their new country.

Edward Lurie

Edward, born in Lithuania circa 1879, was the only child of Chatzkel Lurie and Rosa Jacobson and the grandson of Rabbi Shimon Sheima Lourie and Rebecca Ragolar. His father died before he was born and he was sent to live with his aunt **Sare Lurie (his father's sister)** and her husband **Leon Lurie**. According to Harry, one of Sare and Leon's sons, Leon's family had taken the name Lurie



Leon Lurie

two generations previously, the original name being Lieberman. It was common practice to change surnames at that time to avoid being conscripted into the Russian Army. In those days Lithuania was part of Russia. The eldest son was usually exempt but any subsequent sons were eligible for service.



Sare Lurie

Edward's mother Rosa, after his father's early death, remarried a Mr Kahn and moved to New Jersey in the United States of America. No further information has been found about Rosa, her second husband or any children they may have had.

Emigration to South Africa in the 1880s

Sometime in the late 1880s, Sare and Leon decided to leave Lithuania and start a new life in South Africa with their nephew Edward. Leon came alone at first, then as was usual then, once established, he sent for Sare and Edward. They first lived in the Transvaal living in Johannesburg and Brakpan where they had nine children, seven surviving into adulthood. When the Boer War broke out, they moved to the Cape and ran a dairy farm in Ottery Road in Wynberg. It is presumed that Edward moved there with them.

At some stage Edward went to **Stellenbosch**. He went from farm-to-farm selling goods. After a while he progressed to have a general dealer and grocery shop in Dorp Street. He rented a semi-detached cottage across the road.

According to Edward's application for naturalisation dated 10 September 1903, he was born in Mitau in the Frauenburg District in Russia (now known as Saldus in Latvia). His age was given as 26 and his occupation as a general dealer. His place of residence was Stellenbosch and he had been in the Cape Colony for four years. It was dated in Stellenbosch.

In 1906, having saved enough money, Edward sailed for the United States and **married his first cousin Etta Ganenda Lurie in Boston, Massachusetts, USA**. His father Chatzkel and Etta's father Marcus were brothers. Etta accompanied Edward back to Stellenbosch where they lived and raised a family.

Etta Ganenda Lurie

Etta was born in Lithuania circa 1880 and was the eldest child of Marcus Lurie and Rosa Sachs. She was one of eight children. Her sisters Mary and Dora and brothers Abraham, William and Harry were also born in Lithuania, while her two youngest brothers, Moses and Reuben, were born in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

Etta moved to Boston when she was about 12 years old. After completing her schooling she went to a commercial school in Boston and then worked as a stenographer until her marriage to Edward.

Edward and Etta had four children who were all born in Stellenbosch:

1. Sima 10 October 1910 - 16 March 1998
2. Riva 30 August 1914 - 12 November 2001
3. David 1 December 1916 - 4 March 1984
4. Molly 29 June 1918 - 3 January 2010



Etta and Edward were married for 11 years when Etta died suddenly on 28 September 1918 at the age of 38.

Her sister Mary (see later, who had married Edward's business partner Daniel Segall) in 1910, took over the care of her youngest child Molly, who was still a baby of three months, while Edward, with the assistance of his domestic staff, cared for their other three children, Sima aged eight, Riva aged four and David aged two.

Etta was buried in Stellenbosch.

Left: Etta and Mary Lurie

Edward was the chairman of the Community in Stellenbosch in 1923, when the foundation stone for the **first shul** was laid. The house that the community bought, next door to the shul building (the Skuinshuis) served as a cheder and the minister's house and also as a small hall. For the first time the Jewish community of Stellenbosch had a purpose-built synagogue and a venue for barmitzvahs and weddings.

The Prince of Wales visited Stellenbosch in 1924 and Edward being the representative of the Jewish community, was invited to a luncheon in his honour.

Edward died in 1949 and is buried in Stellenbosch.



Edward Lurie with his daughters: Sima, Riva & Molly



and his son David

Daniel Segall

Daniel was born in Lithuania circa 1878. He was the son of Avraham Yehuda Segall and Esther Nachama Sharfanovich. He was one of six children. His siblings were Chaim, Eliezer Nosen, Moshe, Sarah Raisel and Ella.

Daniel arrived in South Africa with his brother Eliezer Nosen and they started off in business together establishing a soft drink business, the Silver Aerated Water Factory in Stellenbosch. They had a falling out and Eliezer Nosen took off for Riebeeck Kasteel, about 80 kilometres north-east of Cape Town.

According to his Naturalisation Certificate, Daniel was a native of Shawel (now known as Siauliai and pronounced Showlay) in the district of Kaunas (then known as Kovno) and a resident of Stellenbosch. His age was given as 24 and his occupation as a store keeper. He had been a resident in the Cape Colony for a period of three years. His application was dated 24 March 1902 and was approved on 9 May 1902.

Mary Lurie

Mary, Etta Ganenda's sister, was born in Lithuania in 1882 and was the second child born to Marcus Lurie and Rosa Sachs. She moved to Boston with her family when she was about ten years old. She graduated from the Wells Grammar School in Boston in 1897 and from the Girls' High School, City of Boston in 1900 aged about 18. She then went to New York to train as a nurse at the Lebanon Hospital receiving her Registered Nurse Certificate in 1906 from the State of New York.

As a new graduate Mary moved back to Boston and commenced employment at the Mount Sinai Hospital. It was recognised that many poor people, among them immigrant Jews, were contracting tuberculosis. It was suggested that a nurse be employed to visit them at home to investigate living conditions and ensure that the prescribed treatment was being followed. She organised women to work in the crowded tenement districts and to conduct educational campaigns about tuberculosis, also known as consumption, among the immigrants.

Her fluency in Yiddish was a great help to her patients. At that time families lived in over-populated tenements with no sewers or drains and with toilets and running water often located outside. This meant that residents had to go down flights of stairs to access these facilities. Such unsanitary conditions, coupled with overcrowding and dirt, took a heavy toll on their health. Morbidity was high and diseases such as dysentery, diphtheria, tuberculosis and poor nutrition developed as a result.

The Mount Sinai Tuberculosis Programme was supported almost entirely from funds from an association started by Mary. Late in 1907 the group changed its name to the Jewish Anti-Tuberculosis Association and early in 1908 it was chartered as a charitable organisation.

In 1908 Mary resigned from the Mount Sinai Hospital and travelled to Stellenbosch, South Africa to visit her eldest sister, Etta Ganenda Lurie and her husband Edward Lurie (who was also the sisters' first cousin).

Here Mary met Edward's business partner, Daniel Segall and they married in Cape Town in March 1910.

Mary and Daniel spent their married life in Stellenbosch and had seven children:

1. Dorothy 14 February 1911 - 19 August 1975
2. Bertha 30 June 1912 - 30 December 1975
3. Leah 1914 - 26 June 1964
4. Sam 2 April 1915 - 30 July 1999
5. Ephraim Louis 2 October 1916 - 29 September 2001
6. Edward Gerald 14 February 1920 - 14 August 1990
7. Naomi 14 June 1924 - 14 April 2001

The Segall and Lurie families lived next door to each other in a row of semi-detached cottages in Beyer Street in Stellenbosch (12 and 14 Beyer Street).



Mary in her nurse's uniform 1901



Daniel Segall



Children of Mary Lurie & Daniel Segall. From left to right: Leah, Sam, Dorothy, Bertha, Edward & Ephraim. Naomi, the youngest hadn't been born when this photo was taken.

Edward Lurie And Daniel Segall - Business Partners



The Jewish community in Stellenbosch would have been relatively small when Edward met up with Daniel. As mentioned previously, they may have even known each other in the old country.

By 1902 they were partners in a soft drink factory known as the Silver Aerated Water Factory and in 1919 they established and registered another business called The Wholesale Supply Company which operated from the same premises as the Silver Aerated Water Factory in Beyer Street adjacent to the Coetzenberg Hotel.

Soft drink bottles used at the Silver Aerated Water Factory. Pictures left are the two glass bottles, known as Cod's Bottles, used by the company. They had a marble inside the neck which created a seal when the bottle was turned upside down and pressed against a rubber ring.

The Next Generation

As Edward and Daniel were getting on in years, the next generation of Luries and Segalls joined the business.

Edward Lurie's daughter Riva joined sometime before the Second World War after completing a Bachelor of Business degree at Stellenbosch University. Her first cousin, **Edward Segall (known as Eddie, son of Daniel)**, joined after serving in North Africa in the Second World War. His military service was short-lived after receiving an infection in one of his fingers which had to be partially amputated. **Eddie's older brother Sam Segall** also worked in the business and was the shammes of the shul for many years.

At some stage, Daniel Segall decided that the business was expanding and approached his nephew **Abe Segall (son of Eliezer Nossen Segall)** and asked him to join the business and run The Wholesale Supply Company so that Eddie could concentrate on the soft drink factory.

Abe had also served in North Africa during the Second World War and had been taken prisoner, spending time in camps in Italy and Germany. After the war he worked for the Cape Provincial Administration as an auditor.

In 1953 Eddie Segall realised that the premises in Beyer Street were too small so decided to build a new soft drink factory on the corner of Bird Street and Merriman Avenue. The Wholesale Supply Company however, remained in Beyer Street. From the **Silver Aerated Water** Factory's new premises, Eddie was able to supply soft drinks to neighbouring towns. One of the favourite drinks was called **Iron Brew** and the factory was affectionately known as the Iron Brew Factory.

Edward Lurie's daughter Sima recalls her brother and sisters and Segall cousins helping out at the Silver Aerated Water Factory during the holidays. They washed, labelled and packed bottles in preparation for the bottling process the following day.

Sometime in the late fifties or early sixties Eddie decided to close the soft drink factory. The machinery was getting old and parts were hard to come by. Coca Cola was becoming a popular drink nationwide and the Silver Aerated Factory sales were decreasing so after approximately 50 years the factory closed its doors.

The Lurie and Segall families still remained partners in **The Wholesale Supply Company** which continued to operate from Beyer Street. The partners were **Eddie Segall** and his first cousins **Riva Lurie and Abe Segall**.

By this time the company had moved from Beyer Street to a property in Devon Valley located on the outskirts of Stellenbosch where they operated for a number of years. Eddie Segall's wife Bunty (nee Sheppard) also worked at The Wholesale Supply Company for some time during the seventies.

Abe Segall died in 1967, Eddie Segall in 1990, Bunty Segall in 1993, Sam Segall in 1999, Riva Lurie in 2001 and Fanny Segall in 2003. They were all buried in Stellenbosch.

The End of an Era

The last Lurie to live in Stellenbosch was Edward's daughter Riva who died in 2001. **The last Segall** to live in Stellenbosch was Diana, granddaughter of Daniel Segall and Mary Lurie and the daughter of Eddie and Bunty Segall. She left in 2004 to live in De Rust, a small village located at the gateway to the Klein Karoo between Oudtshoorn and Beaufort

On this link you can see the wedding of Lily Kellner to Edward Segall at the Vredehoek Shul, Cape Town on 11 June 1946 www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uf0-EAK1xPo

Story supplied by Bubbles Segall, Melbourne Australia, 2014