

AARON MANDELBAUM 3rd Edition

by Richard Grayson
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Note: see 2nd edition for references not mentioned here.

Aaron Mandelbaum, son of Daniel, was born in Sachsen, also known as the kingdom of Saxony, now a part of East Germany, on the 14th of August, 1837. His wife Lena was born in Sachsen also, on the 10th of October 1839.

Aaron is said to have had 6 or 7 brothers. Of these, the following are known: Solomon, born the 10th of December, 1843 in Saxony, and Jacob, born the 6th of January, 1852 in Germany.

Simon Mandelbaum and Aaron were the first two Mandelbaums listed in the city directory of Chicago, apparently arriving in 1864 or 65 and Simon is probably another of Aaron's brothers. ^{a cousin of} Simon's gravestone at the Free Sons of Israel Cemetery in Forest Park, Ill. in a plot very near to Aaron, Lena, and the daughter Irene, is inscribed with the following: "Simon Mandelbaum, born in Gehaus Sachsen W. Germany, Dec. 21, 1836. Died Jan. 17, 1890, in Chicago." The same birthplace is listed on the stone of David Mandelbaum, born in 1816; David was probably the brother of Daniel, Aaron's father. See the narrative summary of David for more details.

Aaron came to the United States at about the age of 15 in 1852. The first record of him is in the city directory of Cincinnati, Ohio, where in 1863 he is a cigar maker boarding at 37 Clinton street. This is the same address where a Moses Mandelbaum is listed as a boarder in 1864, and therefore Moses and Aaron can be assumed to be related. Perhaps Moses was another of the brothers. It is known that Solomon Mandelbaum was also in Cincinnati during this period, learning the cigar trade. Another Mandelbaum in Cincinnati was a Samuel Mandelbaum at 477 Plum street in 1865. According to an old map, this address is but a few blocks away from the Clinton street house. Samuel was possibly related, therefore. ^{Aaron's brother,}

^{at the year the civil war ended}
Aaron started his business of "cigars and tobacco" in Chicago in 1865, at 111 West Madison street, the heart of the business district. His brother Solomon was in the store next to him at 109 W. Madison in 1866 as an umbrella manufacturer. It is significant that Daniel Mandelbaum, their father, was an umbrella manufacturer also when he first appeared in the City directory in 1874.

Aaron continued in the cigar business at the Madison street store until about 1869 when he moved to 61 West Van Buren street where he was in the stove and furniture business. His brother Jacob boarded at the store with him from 1869 through 1871, suggesting that perhaps Aaron's family lived at the store much as his son Jacob Daniel Mandelbaum would do at his hardware store later.

Meanwhile, Aaron married his cousin Lena, also a Mandelbaum, it is said. Their first child was Emma, born in 1868 in Illinois, who married Charles James Louis Maerker. Aaron and Lena's second child was Hannah, born in Chicago in October of 1869. She married Herman Weil, son of Julius and Helen Weil.

Before the 3rd child was born, the great Chicago Fire occurred and destroyed Aaron's store and possibly his home. A newspaper account from that time has been researched which tends to document the catastrophe: (1871.) *

"Chicago, Oct. 8--12:30 a.m. The most terrible conflagration that ever occurred in this city broke out about an hour and a half ago, and having already swept over six entire blocks is still raging with almost unabated fury. The fire started in a large planing mill situated between Clinton and Canal and Van Buren and Jackson streets....."

"Later, 1:30 a.m.---The fire is apparently raging as fiercely as ever. A block of buildings on the north side of Van Buren Street, which was thought an hour ago would be saved, are now wrapped in flames.....The glare from the buildings lights the streets so one may see to read a half a mile away..."

"Chicago. Oct. 9---The whole business portion of the city is in ashes, from Harrison street north to Chicago Avenue, and east of the river to the lake, an area three miles in length, and a mile to a mile and a half in width.....50,000 people are homeless, most of them in a destitute condition."

In 1872, Rosa, the 3rd child of Aaron and Lena was born. Her child was Harry Solomon and her common law husband was Phillip Solomon.

The next mention of Aaron Mandelbaum in the city directory is in 1874 when he was a clerk for Childs and Baer. His residence was at 13 English street.

Irene Mandelbaum, the 4th child of Aaron and Lena, was born Dec. 25, 1874. She died, unmarried and without issue, by her own hand it is said, June the 10th, 1903, at the age of 28. A large tree-trunk shaped stone marks her grave near Aaron and Lena at Free Sons. A photograph of her gentle face is cast in ceramic in the grave stone.

Jacob Mandelbaum, who gave himself the middle name Daniel after his grandfather, to distinguish himself from the other Jacob Mandelbaums, his cousins and uncle, was born the 5th child of Aaron and Lena in Illinois. The date was the 15th of September, 1877, according to the Grand Secretary of the Masons.

Aaron and his family were next recorded in the 1880 census in Dyer, Lake county, Indiana. Aaron was listed as a peddler. Lena, Aaron's wife, died at the birth of their 6th child, Theresa, the 13th of March 1884. She was only 44. Her gravestone stands in good condition at the Free Sons cemetery. The date of the infant's death has not been discovered.

* Madison Weekly Courier (Ind.).

In 1886, Aaron and his family had moved back to Chicago, where he was listed as a pedler, living at 86 Newberry Avenue. A second listing the same year was Aaron Mandelbaum, travel agent, living at 292 W. 14th street. The meaning of this second listing is unclear. In 1893, Aaron Mandelbaum was listed as a salesman, residence, 48 Hastings street. His daughter Emma Mandelbaum was a clerk this year at 122 Wabash Ave., and lived near him at 39 Hastings. Jacob, his son, was listed as a machinist at the 48 Hastings address.

Some of the memories of ^{about} Aaron are as follows:

- "Aaron frequently visited his cousin Sarah Mandelbaum Joel to play cards, says David Nobel. He would empty his pipe on the floor and when Sarah complained, he told her that sweeping the floor was "women's work."
- "Aaron visited the Well home many times when Irma was a child, she states. He was frugal to a fault and had a thick German accent."

Sylvia remembers Aaron well. When he was old, he had his own room at the back of the hardware store of Jake and Stella on Lincoln Ave. When Stella gave him a soup bone with meat on it he would say "Verdamte! You are too ~~xxx~~ extravagant!" Stella then would make up a story and say to him, "I got it for nothing--the grocer likes you," and then he felt better about eating the soup bone. Aaron liked Sylvia and always called her "Sophie". When he was very old, Aaron, the former cigar-maker, gave up smoking when the price of tobacco went up a half cent. Aaron was not orthodox, never went to a synagogue. Did not join the Masons.

Annaleah states that Aaron died at the farm of his friends the Peschels. He had great pain in his abdomen. The Peschels called Jake and Stella to come at once and they did at midnight go to the Peschels' place. Aaron had about \$5,000 when he died which the Peschels turned over to Jake. Jake divided the money among Aaron's surviving children.

Aaron Mandelbaum died the 14th of November 1926 at the home of his friends the Peschels in Crete, Will county, Ill. at the age of 89 years and 3 months after living there the previous 11 months. He is buried at Free Sons of Israel Cemetery in Forest Park, Ill., where a neat, small stone marks his grave.