

SHEMOT



JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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Cover photo: Jewel of Merit medal awarded to Abraham Boas. See Cynthia Shaw’s article in this issue.

Shemot is the journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain. It is published three times a year and is sent free to members. We publish original articles, submitted by members or commissioned, on a variety of topics likely to be of interest to our readers. We particularly welcome personal experiences that include sources and research methodology, explanations of technological developments and innovations, articles highlighting archival material and the work carried out by volunteers to preserve our heritage, biographical or historical accounts, and practical research tips. We also publish book reviews and letters.

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The Szatkowskis of Lask, Piotrkov, Poland. Or “Udla, Udla, Udla!”

Leigh Dworkin

My paternal grandmother, Rose, was a Shatkofsky. My memories of her are of quite a stern lady around whom we were meant to be seen, not heard. We regularly visited her in her London flat where my father was brought up, and later in her flat in Bournemouth after she became a widow. In some ways, she was the last of the Shatkofskys, because her eldest brother Jack changed the family name to Jackson, her older sister Rae died young at forty-four in the 1940s and her older brother Samuel died very young, aged just twenty-one in 1927. I heard a story – perhaps apocryphal - that he may have drowned in a swimming accident, which was why Rose would never let my father go swimming. Of course he did anyway ...

Her marriage to Louis Dworkin in 1932 was captured by the famous photographer Boris (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Rose Shatkofsky married Louis Dworkin on 28 August 1932.

Rose’s parents were Simon and Leah Shatkofsky, and I vividly remember their wedding photograph being displayed on Rose’s mantelpiece at her flat (Figure 2).

As my research progressed I found pictures of them in later life. My Shatkofsky great-grandparents died long before I was born; Leah first in 1937, aged sixty-eight, and Simon following in 1944, aged seventy-four. I know little about them except from the words of a grand-daughter who said that Simon was a very religious man, who “did nothing but *daven*”, forcing his wife and other family members to work to support them all. My grandmother Rose’s birth certificate from 1907 Mile End in London (Figure 3) stated that Simon was a journeyman tailor – so I guess he did *some* work – and that Leah’s maiden name was Pineras – a name that proved impossible to research.



Figure 2. Simon and Leah Shatkofsky, believed to be on their wedding day in 1894, and in later life.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH

The statutory fee for this certificate is 3s. 6d. Where a search is necessary to find the entry, a search fee is payable in addition.

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON.

Application Number 90

REGISTRATION DISTRICT Whitechapel

1907 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Mile End New Town in the County of London

| REGISTRATION DISTRICT | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------|------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------|---|------------------|------------------------|
| 1907 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Mile End New Town in the County of London | | | | | | | | | |
| No. | When and where born | Name, if any | Sex | Name, and surname of father | Name, surname, and maiden surname of mother | Occupation of father | Signature, description, and residence of informant | When registered | Signature of registrar |
| 275 | Issentpeth January 1907 40 Spital Street | Rose | Girl | Simon Shatkofsky | Leah Shatkofsky formerly Pineras | Tailor journeyman | X The marks of Simon Shatkofsky Tailor 40 Spital Street Mile End New Town | Ninth March 1907 | J. E. Brown Registrar |

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the 2nd day of March 1960.

BC 012848

This certificate is issued in pursuance of the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1953 (1 & 2 Eliz. 2, c. 20). Section 34 provides that any certified copy of an entry purporting to be sealed or stamped with the seal of the General Register Office shall be received as evidence of the birth or death to which it relates without any further or other proof of the entry, and no certified copy purporting to be given in the said Office shall be of any force or effect unless it is sealed or stamped as aforesaid. CAUTION—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

Figure 3. Rose Shatkofsky’s birth certificate from 1907 London.

To find out where the Shatkofskys were from originally was straightforward. Although they had married before coming to the UK, and therefore there was no United Synagogue marriage authorisation, my next port of call was the UK National Archives for naturalisation documents. The Shatkofskys, just like all of my other great-grandparents, had chosen not to go through the naturalisation process – probably because they could not afford it and “putting food on the table” needed to be prioritised. However, their eldest son, Jack Jackson (originally Jankel Szatkowski or Shadkovsky or Shatkofsky) had naturalised – probably for business reasons – and this may have been when the surname was anglicised to Jackson. Jack’s birthplace was noted as Lask-Piotrikowski, Lodz, and his birth date was noted as 22 October 1896 (see Figure 4).

HOME OFFICE,
LONDON.

Under Secretary of State.

PARTICULARS RELATING TO APPLICANT.

Full Name **Jankel SZATKOWSKI, known as Jack SHATKOFKY or Jack SHALKOVSKY.**

Address **18, Church Street, Stoke Newington, N. 16.**

Trade or occupation **Tailor's presser.**

Place and date of birth **Lask-Piotrikowski, Lodz. 22nd October, 1896.**

Nationality **Polish.**

Single, married, etc. **Married.**

Name of wife or husband **Annie and Leah SHATKOFKY or SHADKOVSKY.**

Names and nationality of parents **SIMON Russian.**

(For Oath see overleaf.)

Figure 4. Naturalisation certificate of Jack Jackson, aka Jankel Szatkowski.

The Shatkofsky name was much easier to research in Poland than the Pineras name. Very quickly, using JRI-Poland,² I managed to find Simon Shatkofsky's birth record in Lask (actually Łask, pronounced Wask), near to Lodz (actually Łódź, pronounced Wutch), originally in the Piotrków Governorate or Gubernia (Figure 5).

| Surname | Given Name | Year | Type | Akta | Microfilm |
|-----------|------------|------|------|------|-----------|
| SADKOWSKI | Szymon | 1869 | B | 61 | 767128 |

Figure 5. Birth record index of Szymon Sadkowski, aka Simon Shatkofsky, from 1869 Łask.

As a microfilm number was in the results from JRI-Poland, it was easy to get a copy of the actual record from the London FamilySearch Centre,³ currently housed at the UK National Archives in Kew (see Figure 6).

If you do not read Cyrillic, I apologise. If you do read Cyrillic, I also apologise, as the handwriting is very bad in places. A translation from JewishGen ViewMate⁴ revealed that Simon's father is Samuel Sadkowski (I knew this already from Simon's tombstone), born 1826, and his mother is Udla née Kuperl (b. 1846).

Udla Kuperl was a new name for me, and very exciting news, as I could name another great-great-grandmother along with when she was born. As many of us know, it can be quite hard to find out even the names of our female ancestors as their names are not captured on many records, unlike their husbands' names. Examples of this are Jewish tombstones' patronymics but no matronymics, English marriage certificates' fathers of the bride and groom but no mothers of the bride and groom – unlike in Scotland. Fortunately, Polish birth certificates do name the mother, as in most countries ... Sadly, after this breakthrough, the trail ran out as I could find no information about the Kuperls of Łask.

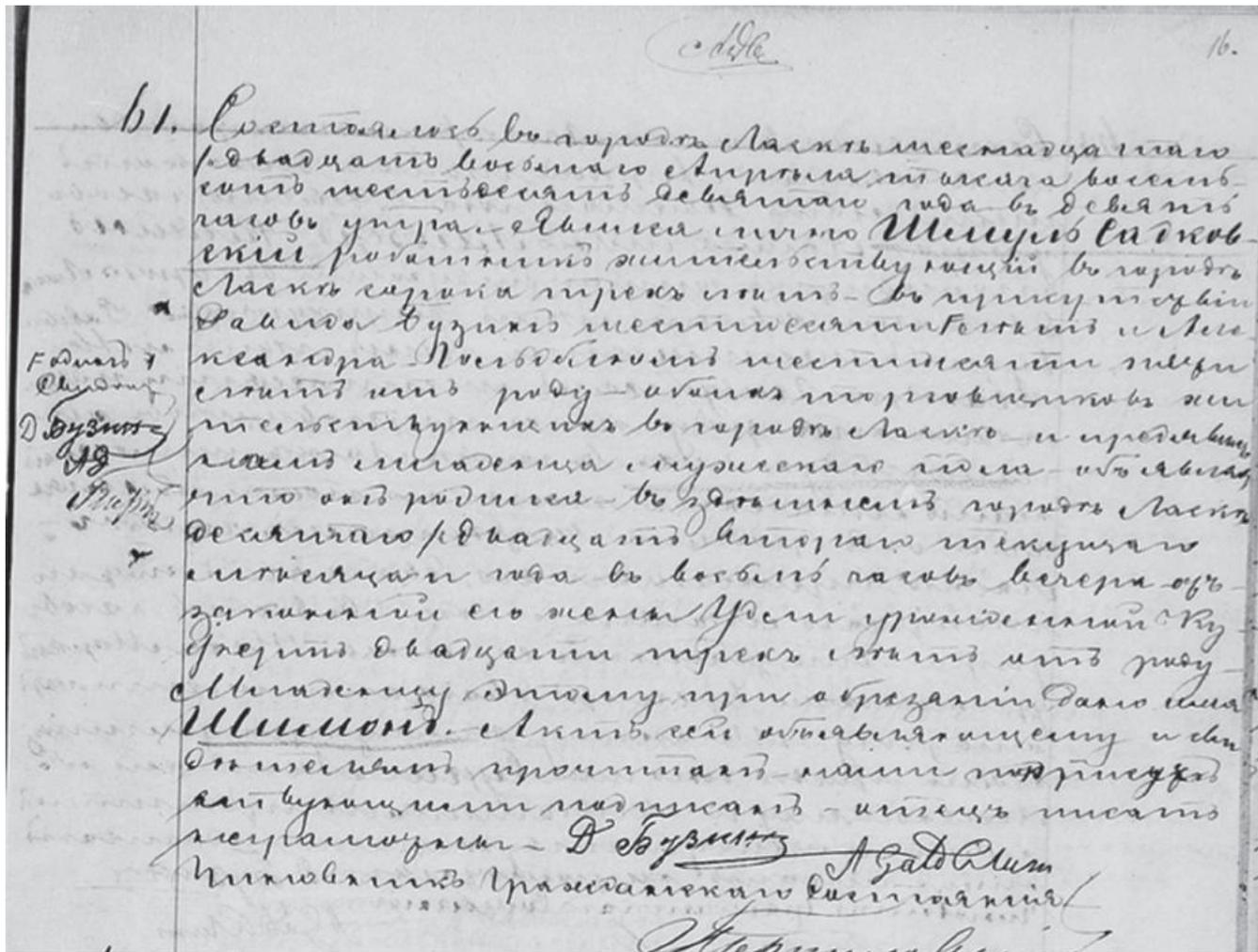


Figure 6. Birth record of Szymon Sadkowski, aka Simon Shatkofsky, from 1869 Łask.

Also, using JRI-Poland, I managed to find in the indexes mention of an 1896 birth in Łask of a Jankel Szadowski (Figure 7). This had to be my great-uncle Jack Jackson. However, there was no mention of a microfilm number, nor could I find this record on the Polish state archive website.⁵ When I asked some friends at JRI-Poland as to why this was, I was told that even JRI-Poland may not have seen the record. (In the early days they had purchased just the index pages from Polish towns such as Łask and so the minimal data may have been all that was available.)

| <p>Please Read our Conditions of Use jri-poland.org ©Jewish Records Indexing - Poland</p> | | <p>Lask PSA Births 1821,26-39,70-97 Marriages 1870-92 Deaths 1844,70-92</p> <p>Last Updated December 2001</p> <p>To support indexing 'Your Towns(s)' records, please donate to JRI-Poland here Already supporting indexing projects? Please consider supporting our General Fund</p> | | | <p>JRI Poland Łask Piotrków Gubernia (records in Fond 1554 Lodz Archive) Located at 51°35' 19"08"</p> | |
|---|------------|---|------|------|--|--|
| <p>Click Here to TOGGLE Empty Columns</p> | | | | | | |
| Surname | Given Name | Year | Type | Akta | | |
| SZADOWSKI | Jankel | 1896 | B | 113 | | |

Figure 7. Birth record index of Jankel Szadowski, aka Jack Jackson, from 1896 Łask.

So I was stuck. There was no Pineras family nor a Kuperl family in Łask. The birth record of Jack Jackson, aka Jankel Szadowski, might reveal more, but was unavailable. Three brick walls.

The only creative solution I could think of was to visit Łask, make a trip to the nearby archives in Łódź, and see whether I could break down these brick walls. Yet only an idiot would do this to further their genealogical understanding. I contemplated this idiocy for several years, until the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) announced that their summer conference in 2018 would be in Warsaw. I booked a hotel in Łask in the week following the conference ...

In preparation for my extra week in Poland after this conference (which was wonderful but has been covered elsewhere in *Shemot* and in the JGSGB Newsletter), I decided to get a second opinion regarding the translation of Simon Shatkofsky's birth certificate (Figure 6). This time I used a Facebook group called Genealogy Translations⁶ to try to decipher the Cyrillic scrawl. I begged for a full translation and received the following:

Łask 16/28 April 1869 at 9 in the morning, there appeared **Szmujl Sadkowski**, age 43, **laborer**, resident of Łask with witnesses Dawid Buzin[?] a merchant age 61 and Alexander Goldblum, age 65 state that in Łask on the 10/22 of this month at 8 in the evening, his wife **Udel/Udla nee Kufert** (Купертъ) age 23 gave birth to child who was named **Szymon**.

This was not straightforward and a number of translators had been debating Udla's surname. Eventually Kufert was decided upon because there was documentary evidence for Kuferts in Łask (Figure 8).

Lask Births, Marriages 1827-32,36,66-69 Deaths 1827-32,36,44,66-69

Last Updated December 2014

| Surname | Given Name | Year | Type | Akta | Microfilm |
|------------|------------|------|------|------|-----------|
| KUFERT | Szlama | 1867 | B | 128 | 767128 |
| PYZDROWSKI | Falek | 1867 | M | 5 | 767128 |
| KUFERT | Uderl | 1867 | M | 5 | 767128 |
| CUDEK | Szmul | 1868 | M | 23 | 767128 |
| KUFERT | Zola? | 1868 | M | 23 | 767128 |
| PYZDROWSKI | Falek | 1868 | M | 24 | 767128 |
| KUFERT | Bajla | 1868 | M | 24 | 767128 |

Łask
Piotrków Gubernia
Located at 51°35' 19"08'

Figure 8. Evidence of the Kufert family births and marriages from 1860s Łask.

One of these was an Uderl, which seemed to be very close to the more Russian-sounding Udla we were looking for. Luckily, all of these records were available to study in depth on the microfilm images at the London FamilySearch Centre at Kew.

From the above index, it appears that we have Udla marrying a Falek Pyzdrowski in 1867, a sister Zola marrying a Szmul Cudek in 1868, and then Falek remarrying another sister, Bajla, also in 1868. This was complicated, but when I had the records fully translated via Genealogy Translations, the complexity could be understood – and it got even worse. In fact “Zola” had been mistranscribed and Genealogy Translations (and my own reading) proclaimed this to be “Udla”. The timeline we have is therefore:

- 1867: Udla, aged 20 (my great-great-grandmother), marries Falek P (aged 40). Her parents are Szymon and Perla.
- 1868: Udla, aged 21, marries Szmul Cudek (aged 44, a widower). Her parents are Szymon and Perla, both deceased.
- 1868: Udla's sister Bajla (aged 19) marries the jilted Falek P (aged 40 still).
- 1869: Udla (aged 23) has a child, my great-grandfather Simon, with a different man yet again: Szmul Shatkofsky (Sadkowski) aged 43.

Oy, oy, oy!⁷ Udla, Udla, Udla!

Still, they were different times to today and we should not judge by today's standards. With no evidence for divorces or religious *gets*, it is hard to get the full picture of this bigamy or trigamy (to invent a term), or to know if this intermingling of a small number of families was the norm in a small Jewish community and was perfectly legal, if a tad fickle.

A few months passed and I found myself in my hotel room in Łask. On the off-chance, I fired off an email to the acting JRI-Poland town leader for Łask, who turned out to be one Stanley Diamond, who started the JRI-Poland revolution in the first place! Stanley very kindly supplied me with both the original birth record in Cyrillic for Jankel Szadkowski (Figure 9; see Figure 7 for the index) and then proceeded to extract the data from it for me (Figure 10).

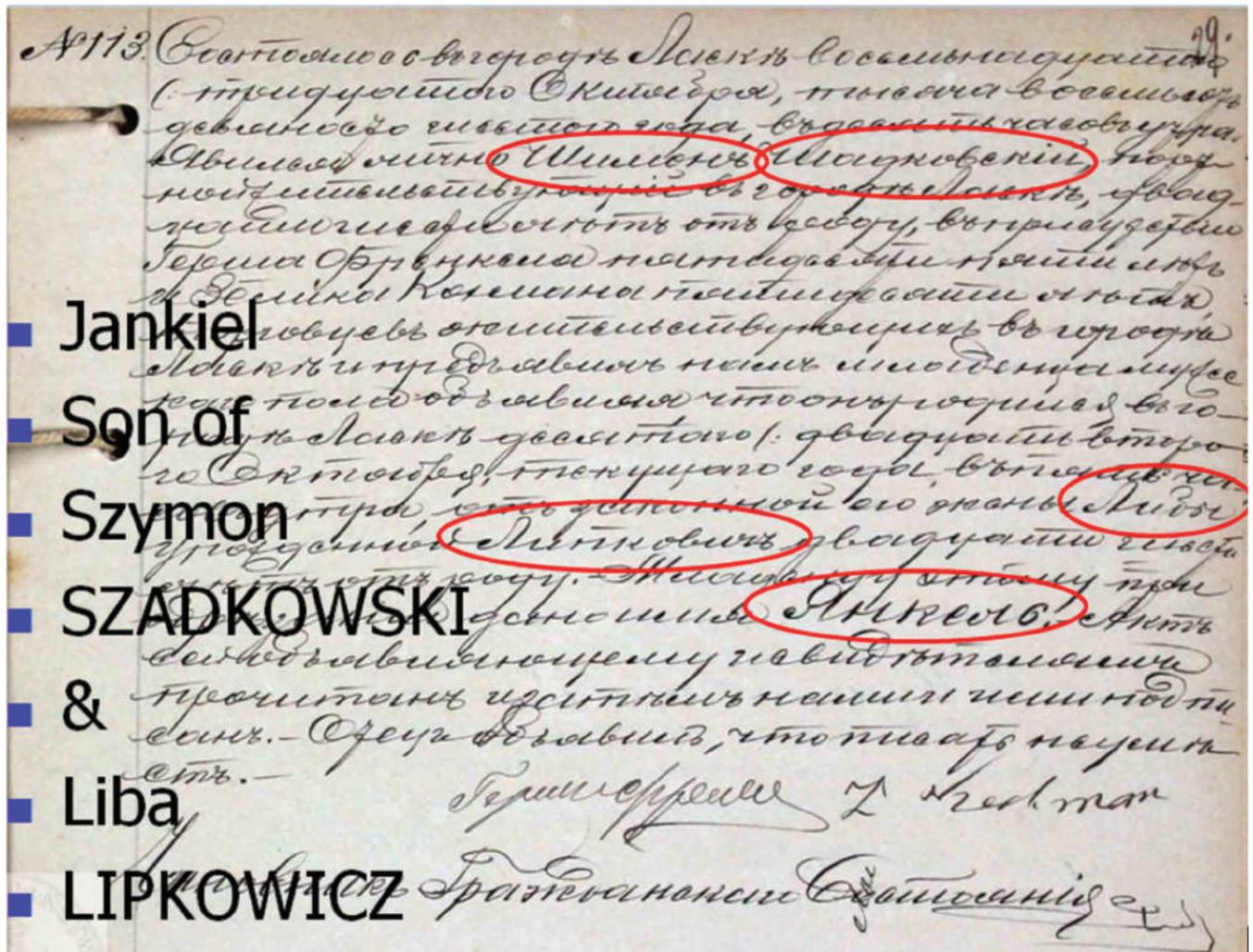


Figure 9. Jankel Szadowski’s birth record from 1896 Łask.

| Image # | Type | Year Recorded | ACT | Day of event | Given Name | SURNAME | Sex | Father's Given Name | Father's Age | Father's Occupation | Mother's Given Name | Mother's Maiden SURNAME | Mother's Age | Birth Town | Town Living In |
|---------|------|---------------|-----|--------------|------------|------------|-----|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| 29 | B | 1896 | 113 | 22-Oct-1896 | Jankiel | SZADKOWSKI | m | Szymon | 26 | tailor | Liba | LIPKOWICZ | 26 | Łask | Łask |

Figure 10. Jankel Szadowski’s birth record data extraction from 1896 Łask.

So, we have Jankiel Szadkowski born on the exact same day as on the naturalisation certificate above (Figure 4). It must be the same Jack Jackson who was my grandmother Rose’s eldest brother. The father was right: Szymon Szadkowski (Simon Shatkofsky) but the mother was unexpectedly Liba Lipkowitz rather than Leah Pineras. Leah and Liba are close enough, but if Lipkowitz is right then Pineras must be wrong!

Stanley Diamond also provided a data extraction from another record that I had not seen in the JRI-Poland indexes (Figure 11). In fact, it is still not there today, and I suspect is in a secret trove of records that will be published by JRI-Poland in the near future.

| Image # | Type | Year of Record | Act | Date of Marriage | Given name | SURNAME | Age | Sex | Status / Profession | Father's Given Name | Mother's Given Name | Mother's Maiden SURNAME | Town Living In | Supplemental information |
|---------|------|----------------|-----|------------------|------------|-----------|-----|-----|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--|
| 70 | M | 1894 | 39 | 11-Dec-1894 | Szymon | SADKOWSKI | 25 | m | single | Szmul | Udla | KUFERT | Łask | Banns in Łask synagogue - 9, 16, 23 Nov 1894 |
| 70 | M | 1894 | 39 | 11-Dec-1894 | Liba | LIPKOWICZ | 25 | f | single | Pinkus | Estera | LIPKOWICZ | Łask | Banns in Łask synagogue - 9, 16, 23 Nov 1894 |

Figure 11. Szymon Sadkowski’s marriage record to Liba Lipkowitz from 1894 Łask (extracted data).

This is from the marriage of Simon to Leah/Liba. It confirms Simon’s parents as Szmul Sadkowski and Udla Kufert, but gives Leah/Liba’s parents as Pinkus Lipkowicz and Estera Lipkowicz. I already knew that Pinkus was Leah’s father from her tombstone, and believe that my own father, Paul David Dworkin, was named after his great-grandfather as his Hebrew name was Pinkus Dovid. Estera Lipkowicz was a new great-great-grandmother discovery.

On reflection, this also gave me the solution to the Pineras conundrum. When my grandmother Rose’s birth was registered by her father Simon Shatkofsky, he spoke little English and definitely couldn’t write it, not even to sign his name. When asked his wife Leah’s father’s name, he stated “Pinchas” in a guttural heavy Polish accent. Is it any wonder that the poor English registrar wrote down Pineras? The evidence for this is not strong, except within my mind ...

Having got over the embarrassment of realising that I could have emailed the town leader of Łask from my own home, rather than from a hotel in Łask, I then sought to solve the final mystery of Udla’s tangled love life. I did visit the archives in Łódź and managed to photograph many vital records from Łask. Even though I had already obtained the records from microfilm, I took pictures of all of the records mentioned above. In some cases they did not look identical so must have been copies made at the time. I do not fully understand this, but wherever there are multiple copies of what you consider to be an original record, there is potential for differences and for mistakes to creep in.

As a first example, the above birth record of Jankiel Szadkowski is different in the Łódź archives as the Jankiel (which I ringed above; see Figure 9) is split over two lines in Łódź. As a second example, I decided to research Szmul Cudek, who was Udla’s second husband before Szmul Shatkofsky. In this 1828 birth in Łask (Figure 12), Szmul Cudek (Sodek)’s parents are Jakob and Frayda Sodek.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------|------|---|----|-------------|------|--------------------|--------|----|
| PAW | TWOR | | | | 18-Nov-1828 | PAIS | CESARZ / WOLKOWICZ | Jakob | 26 |
| SO | Szmul | 1828 | B | 85 | | | | Frayda | 20 |
| | | | | | 21-Nov-1828 | | krawiec | | |

Figure 12. Szmul Sodek’s birth record index and extracted data from 1828 Łask.

Jakob signs the two versions of the record differently. In the first version he signs in Polish and Hebrew using his surname in Hebrew: Tzadek (Figure 13).

The image shows two lines of handwritten text. The top line is in Polish: 'Jakob Sodek' and the bottom line is in Hebrew: 'יַאֲקֹב טְזַדֵּק' (Jakob Tzadek). To the right, there are two dates in Hebrew: 'ג' כ"ח שבט תרט"ח' and 'ג' כ"ח שבט תרט"ח'.

Figure 13. Jakob Sodek’s signature on son Szmul’s birth record from 1828 Łask.

In the second version, photographed in the Łódź archives (Figure 14), he has signed in Polish and Hebrew again, but this time the Hebrew uses a patronymic rather than the surname.

The image shows two lines of handwritten text. The top line is in Polish: 'Jakob Sodek' and the bottom line is in Hebrew: 'יַאֲקֹב בֶּן טְזַדֵּק' (Jakob ben Tzadek). To the right, there are two dates in Hebrew: 'ג' כ"ח שבט תרט"ח' and 'ג' כ"ח שבט תרט"ח'.

Figure 14. Jakob Sodek’s signature on son Szmul’s birth record from 1828 Łask (Łódź archive version).

It is hard to read, but I think the Hebrew is נעים יעקב בר יוסעל, my interpretation of which is “(Word of) Yaakov ben rev Yossel”, that is Jakob son of (Mr) Yossel. Yossel is a diminutive form of Joseph, so we have gone back one more generation to Joseph Cudek/Sodek/Tzadek. As Jakob was born in 1802 from the data in this birth record, his father Joseph must have been born in the 1780s or before.

Why, you may think, am I so interested in Tzadeks when I am descended from Udla’s third husband, Szmul Shatkofsky, rather than her second husband, Szmul Cudek/Sodek/Tzadek. I’m sure it has crossed your mind that not only does Udla have a penchant for older men, but she seems to go for blokes called Szmul. Could I prove that Szmul Shatkofsky and Szmul Sodek were one and the same, and at a stroke both simplify the timeline above and repair the reputation of my great-great-grandmother Udla? I scoured the Sodek records for any mention of Shatkofsky. There was no mention. I scoured the Shatkofsky records for any mention of Sodek. There was no mention. I reviewed all of my research in case I had missed anything. On my great-grandmother Leah Shatkofsky’s tombstone, there is virtually nothing that has survived the ravages of time. However, I am incredibly lucky to have a family photograph of my grandmother Rose and my great-uncle Jack Jackson standing by their mother’s tombstone (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Leah Shatkofsky’s tombstone, (a) weathered beyond recognition, and (b) in much better days with Rose and Jack.

This tells us that Leah’s Hebrew name is Liba bat rev Pinchas. I had always read this as Leah but this is the proof that her real name in Polish/Yiddish was Liba and she anglicised it to Leah. It also has quite a lot about her husband Simon on the stone – more than about her! In English it has “Leah, wife of Simon Shatkofsky” but in Hebrew it has more interesting detail, translated as “Liba daughter of Mr Pinchas, wife of Simon son of Mr. Szmul Tzadok the Levi” (Figure 16).

I had found evidence, carved in stone, that Shatkofsky and Cudek/Sodek/Tzadok were synonymous.

Szmul Shatkofsky/Tzadok was definitely my great-great-grandfather and Joseph/Yossel Tzadok from the late 1700s was my quadruple great-grandfather. I know nothing about him except that he was captured in a hard-to-read Hebrew signature on a 1828 birth record only available in the Łódź archives.⁸ This enabled me to restore the reputation of my double great-grandmother Udla Kufert Shatkofsky – even if it was only my mind that had sullied it in the first place – and draw this satisfying family tree of my ancestors from Łask (Figure 17).

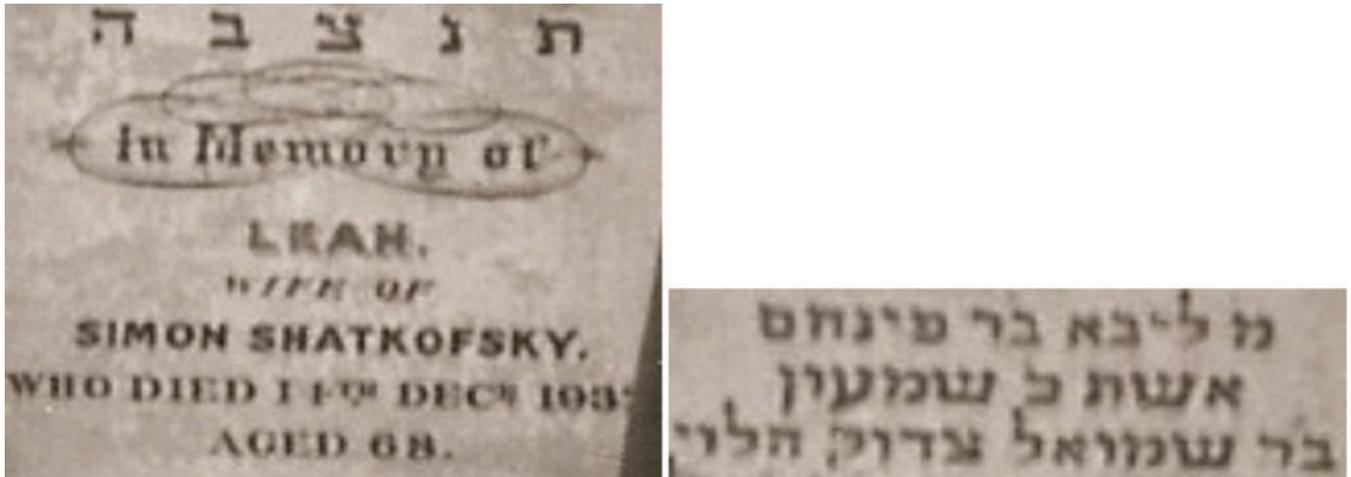


Figure 16. Leah Shatkofsky’s tombstone, detail (a) in English and (b) in Hebrew.

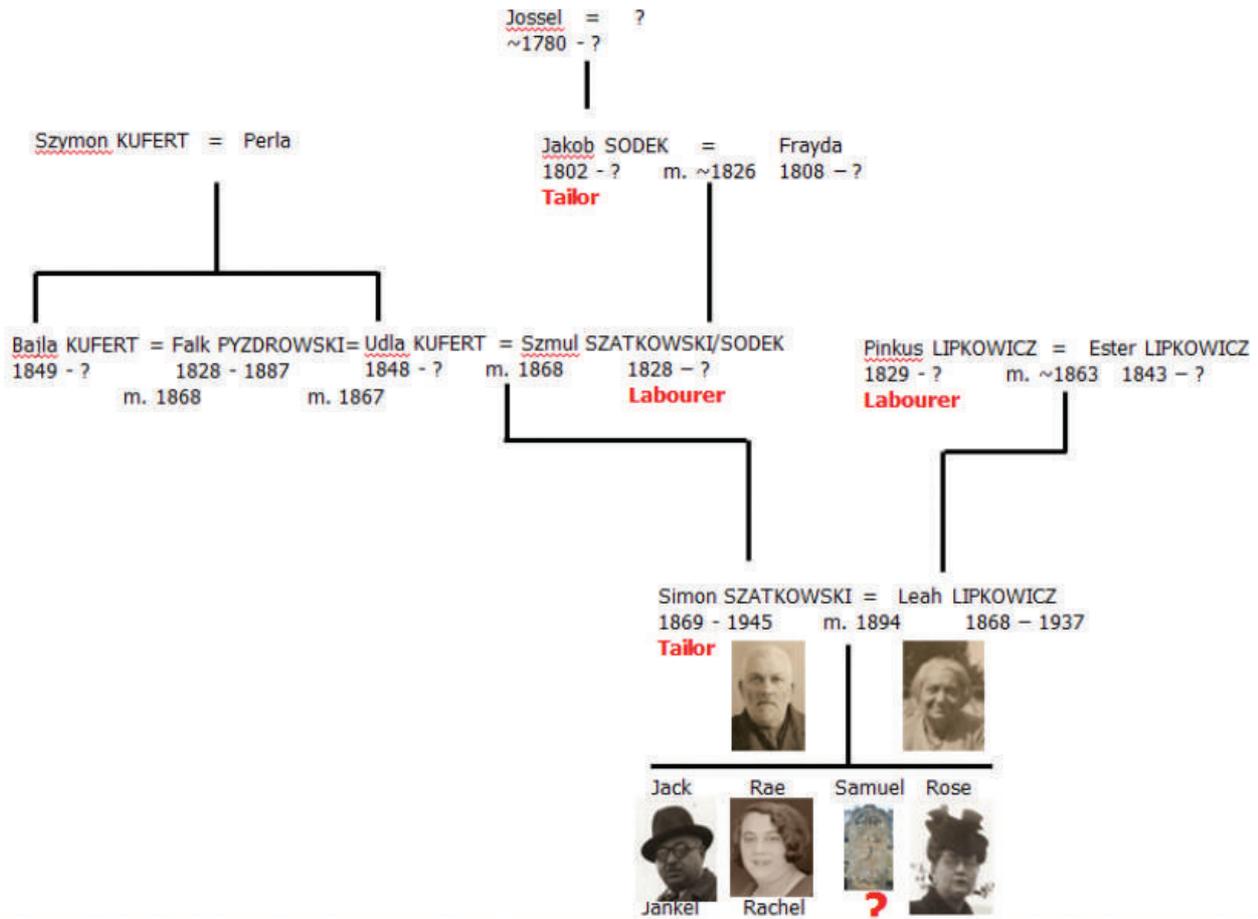


Figure 17. The Szatkowskis of Łask, near Łódź, Piotrkov, Poland.

NOTES

1. *Daven* – to pray, in Hebrew, usually swaying so that G-d notices.
2. JRI-Poland: See <https://jri-poland.org/jriplweb.htm>
3. London FamilySearch Centre (these can also be found in other cities): See https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/London_Family_History_Centre.
4. JewishGen ViewMate: See <https://www.jewishgen.org/ViewMate/> for translations of Jewish Genealogical records and documents
5. Polish state archive website: www.szukajwarchiwach.pl
6. Genealogy Translations: See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogytranslation/>
7. “iAy, caramba!” in Yiddish.
8. Lodz archives, see <http://www.lodz.ap.gov.pl/>

Leigh Dworkin is the current Chairman of the JGSGB. He has been researching his mainly Polish family for the last thirty years, but also tries to research into Lithuania and Belarus, from where his surname originates. He regularly presents at JGSGB Regional Groups, Special Interest Groups and conferences.