

## THE EFFRON NAME

From the National Jewish Post in answer to an inquiry on the origin of the name Efrom (Efron) 194-?:

"Efrom is the name of a distinguished Jewish family originating in Vilna, Lithuania, and related to the celebrated Gaon of Vilna. The name is a Russian adaptation of the Hebrew name Ephraim. As a rule, Russian Jews had no family names before 1804. In that year the Russian Czar Alexander I, issued a decree obliging his Jewish subjects to choose family appellations.

The head of the family chose the name Ephraim for the reason that, according to a family tradition, it was descended from Ephraim, the grandson of Jacob who lived about 3,500 years ago. The Russian authorities changed the name to Efrom. The family has produced many men of outstanding merit. Ilya Efrom, among others, was the prominent publisher who produced the 86-volume Russian Encyclopedia and other noted works."

## SAGA OF THE EFFRON FAMILY

AS NARRATED BY SAMUEL EFFRON

During the beginning of the reign of Alexander I, the Czar of Russia, there was a small town in the government (gubernie) of Grodno called Amdur.

The population of this town was mostly Jewish, and surrounding it were many villages. The peasants, who lived on the farms on the outskirts of the town, would come into the town to trade, to see what was for sale and to buy what they needed.

There was in that town of Amdur, a man by the name of Motte - - his mother's name was Tsine. Tsine, mother of Motte, had three more sons, namely, Cheikel, Chaim Lozer and Afracim. (It is possible that the three sons at the census taking adopted different family names instead of Efron, as we do not know much about them).

~~About that time, in the beginning of the 19th century,~~ the Jewish people had no family names, but they were called after the father's or the mother's or the wife's name; therefore Motte was known as Motte Tsine's, after his mother. But during that period, the government decided that every family should have a second name on record. So I imagine a census was taken and each family was given a name (this is the census taking referred to above). I suppose the person who answered the questionnaire of the census taker was called Efracim (his first name), so they shortened it and called the family Efron, and that is the beginning of the large EFFRON family.

Motte had five sons and three daughters. The sons were Mashe, Yankel, David, Gdalie and Shevach; the daughters were Shifre, Etche, and Cunne.

**MASHE:** First son of Motte Tsines had two sons, Motte and Efracim. Motte was known in Amdur as Motte Matsul, and Efracim was called Efracim Visranker, and those were their nicknames. Motte Matsul had five sons and two daughters, namely, Cheikil, Laibe, Mashe, Victor and Yankel; the daughters were: Taibe and Etke, and they were all known as Motte Matsul's children, and very few in Amdur knew them by the name of Efron.

**CHEIKIL:** The first son of Motte Matsul came to the United States about 1890 and settled in Perth Amboy, N.J. He had two sons, Dr. S. Harmon Efracim who now resides in New York, and another son named Gdalie, and two daughters, Nadis and Sarah.

**LAIBE MATSUL'S:**

He had four sons, Avrom, Ezra, Shevach David, Isaac and Israel, and three daughters, Sarah, Taibe, and Cima.

**MASHE MATSUL:**

He had two sons, Myron and Samauel and two daughters, Lena and Tilly.

**VICTOR MATSUL:**

He had one son, Mashe (Buddy) who lives in Pawling and a daughter Jenny who is married to a man by the name of Buchsbaum, and they live in Ellenville, N.Y. Buddy has one son, Charles, and Jenny has a daughter, Dawn, who is married and living in New York.

**YANKEL MATSUL:**

He had three sons: Mashe, Gdalie, Laibe and three daughters, Sarah, Taibe and Fanny.

**TAIBE MATSUL: (Toby Escol)**

She had three daughters - Sadie, Molly and Sarah and one son - Mashe (Morris). Sadie is married to Mr. Ike Mannheimer and she resides in Florida. Sarah is Mrs. Sarah Harris of Florida. Molly who lived in New York is deceased. Morris lives in Pennsylvania.

**ETKE:**

Second daughter of Motte Matsul married an Effron in Bialostok and emigrated to Tel Aviv in 1920. They had five sons: Avrom Ezra and Shevach in Tel Aviv, Schmucl in California and two more sons in the United States (Alex and Max).

All of Motte Matsul's children came to the United States or Tel Aviv, except his son, Laibe, who remained in Amdur. He and most of his family perished during Hitler's onslaught, with the exception of his oldest daughter, Mrs. Sarah Weiner, who is living in Kingston, N.Y. and one grandchild, a son of David, whose name is Joseph and who is in the real estate business in Cuba.

Motte Matsul lived to a ripe old age - 85-90 years.

**EFRAIM VISRANKER:**

The second son of Mashe, had one son, Mashe, and two daughters, Etke and Sprina. Etke married a man by the name of Kaplan in Grodno. They came to the United States and they had two sons, Albert and Mashe. Albert married and three sons were born to him: Stanley, Billy, Rodney - they are now living in Kingston, N.Y. Mashe, the second son, also lives in Kingston and he has one son and one daughter.

**THIS COMPLETES THE GENERATION OF MOTTE MATSUL AND EFFRAIM VISRANKER EFFRON.**

**EXPLANATION**

Why was Motte Efron nicknamed Motte Matsul? He was doing business mostly with farmers or peasants around Amdur, and as he was doing some trading with them, and farmers called him Matulka or Matsulka, and some of the Jews in Amdur heard the way he was called by the farmers, so they crowned him with the nickname of MATSUL! Again, Efraim Visranker: this is a Russian farmer's expression. Vistranke means droppings, human or animals. The surplus of the food which they consumed was dropped out by nature. Efraim was living out of the city limit, but very close to it, so the Jews of Amdur called it Visranker, and anyone who was living in that house was called by the same term - Visranker.

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**MOTTE**

**YANKEL:** The second son of Mashe had two wives. With the first wife he had three children: Israel, Mordecai and Channe. With the second wife, he had three children also: Shmerrill, Anna and Chatskil.

**MORDECAI:** He had five sons and three daughters. He was a baker and was called Mordecai the Baker. Isaac, his first son, was also a baker and he moved with his family to a town called Luna and became a baker there. He had a large family and all I know of them is that he had one son who had a bakery shop in New York at 163rd Street near Jerome Avenue. His name was Morris Efron. Of the rest of his family I don't know very much. I suppose they all perished during Hitler's regime. Israel, his second son, was living with his father, as

they had a good business. Israel had two sons and two daughters; one of his sons came to the United States about 1905. His name is Jack - - he has been driving a taxi in New York City for a long time. He lost his wife about eight years ago and recently married the widow of Harry Effron of Brooklyn, and he is still driving the taxi. All the rest of Israel's family went to the gas chambers of Treblenko, but Israel and his father Mordecai died before Hitler came.

**VICTOR:** The third son of Mordecai, came to the United States in 1890. He married and had one daughter, Eva. She went through Law School, studied law and was admitted to the bar. She married Edwin Robin of Stamford, Connecticut, who was in the luggage business. They have one son Richard and a daughter, Jane.

**YANKEL:** The fourth son of Mordecai, came to the United States in 1904 and settled in South Norwalk, Connecticut. He has a family, but I don't know much about him or his family.

**LABE ZISEL:** The fifth son of Mordecai, came to the United States about 1906 - went to Cincinnati and married there. He had two sons, one is a violinist with the Symphony Orchestra in Cincinnati. He also had one daughter. Labe Zisel passed away at the age of 55.

**MORDECAI:** He had three daughters. The first was called Shanee Stirkey, who married a Mr. Cohn. One of their sons lived in South Norwalk, Connecticut. He came to this country as a young boy and went to live with his Uncle Victor, and he died at a young age. The second daughter was called Channa. I suppose she was also married. The third daughter Rivka married a man named Gershune in Grodno. I suppose Hitler destroyed all of them.

#### THIS CONCLUDES MORDECAI'S GENERATION

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**ISRAEL:** The second son of Yankel - had four sons: Motte, David, Tanchun, and Shevach, and two daughters: Chae a Itke.

**MOTTE:** The first son had four sons: Yankel, Leibe, Meyer and Eizel.

Yankel, the son of Motte, had the following children:  
Leibel, Aaron, Hadassa, Hanna.  
Leibe, had the following children: Manuel, Berta,  
Adalla, Rosita.  
Meyer had one son: Isaac.  
Isaac's children were: Avrom Ezra, Leizer and Benita.

**DAVID:**

The second son of Israel - came to the United States in 1890 and settled in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. He married his cousin Anna, the daughter of Shmerrill, who was a brother of Israel. They had five daughters: Eva, Jennie, Ruth, Dorothy and Bertha, and one son Alvin James (Billy). Billy is married and has two children, David and Lauri. He and his family live in Danbury, Connecticut.

**TANCHUN:**

The third son, had six sons - Shmerrill, Simon, Yankel, Isaac, Ennach and Avrom Ezra. He had four daughters: Bashe, Channe, Chae, Shanee. Shmerrill is married and has one son; Simon is not married, Yankel is not married, Isaac has one son, Bashehas and one son and two daughters; Channe has one son and one daughter; Chae has one son and one daughter; Shanee has no children. They all live in Argentina.

**SHEVACH (Samuel):**

Has two sons - William and Robert, and three daughters: Eva, Estelle and Sadie Jane. William has three sons: Jack, Ira and Michael. Not married yet. Robert has three children: Jean, Emily and Betsy. (Emily and Jean are twins). Eva Acker has two daughters: Theresa and Miriam (Terry and Mimi). Estelle is married to Dr. Steven Dobo and they have one son, Peter. Sadie Jane is married to Dr. Simon Cahn and they have one son, Stewart.

**CHAE:**

The oldest in the family, was married about 1876 in a town called Slonim. The marriage was not successful, and she and her husband separated. She came to the United States about 1892 and settled in New York City. Her husband went to Montreal, Canada, a couple of years later. He later went to New York, and they divorced there. Chae married again, her second husband was a man by the name of Schneider, and they went to live in Chicago. She died many years ago. Her only known child was a daughter by the name of Elsie Schneider, who lived in Chicago.

ITKE:

The second daughter of Israel was married to Gdalia (Charles) Effron, the third son of Motte Taibe Effron while in Argentina. Her family will be described under the name of Motte Taibes, son of David in a latter chapter.

Israel and the whole family - Motte, Tanchun, Itke, Shevach, and mother Odess emigrated to Argentina in 1895 to become farmers on the land of the Jewish Colonization Association. Itke, Gdalia and Shevach (myself) left for the United States in 1899, and settled in Poughkeepsie, where my brother David had proceeded us. The life of the family of Israel as follows: Israel died at the age of 89; mother Odess 88; Chae about 75; Motte about 75; David 75 and Tanchun 82. Itke died young in an epidemic in 1917. She was about 42 years old. Shevach (myself) going on 82.

THIS CONCLUDES THE GENERATION OF ISRAEL, SECOND SON OF YANKEL BY HIS FIRST WIFE.

Channe's generation -- Channe, the daughter of Yankel by his first wife was married in Bialostok to a man by the name of Rothstein. They had two sons: Lazar and Abram and one daughter - Mandel (Minnie). She came to the United States and married a Mr. Siegel. He lived in St. Louis and was in the building trade. In Miami, Florida there is a grandson of Channe - Edward Rothstein, who is engaged in the jewelry business.

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CHATSKIL:

First son of the second wife of Yankel had four sons: Shevach, Noske, Mottel and Yankel and three daughters: Itke, Taibe, and Sima.

SHEVACH:

He married twice. With his first wife, he had four children: Jack, Max, Leah and Nathan. His wife died, and he married again. His second wife was a widow with one daughter - Sonia. She was adopted by him and bore the name of Effron until she married. Shevach had four children with his second wife. They were: Leon, who passed away at the age of 48 in Australia, Maurice, Linonel, Lola (Lifsha). Mottel or Max arrived in Australia in 1905, died 1941. His wife's name was Odel (Olga). His children were: Sadie, Leah, Maurice (born in Bialostok), Jenny, Solly, Norman, Philip (born in Australia).

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**TAIBE:** Her husband was Gershon Trivaks. Her children live in Argentina. She had one son, Hershell, one son Jack and one Son Hyman, and two daughters: Genia Blumental and Esther Bards.

**NOSKE:** He was the second son of Chatskill; his children were: Osher (killed), Yetta (killed), Yente (killed), Mottel (killed) and two children survived.

**YANKEL:** Fourth son of Chatskil. His children are: Tevil (Theodore), living in Chicago, who is married and has three daughters. Dora and Mottel were probably killed during the Hitler's regime.

**ITKE:** She was married in Pinsk to a man by the name of Kaganowitz.

**SIMA:** She was married to a man named Mariapolski and she had three sons. Only one survived Hitler and he is living in Israel.

**SHMERRILL:** The second son of Yankel by his second wife. He married near Sapotskin in Poland. He had two sons and two daughters. Anna Chae was the oldest, the second child was Yankel, the third Morris and Rivke (Eva) the youngest. Shmerrill died very young, possibly in his 30th year. Anna, the oldest daughter, came to the United States about 1892, and she married David Effron in Poughkeepsie. Then came Yankel (Jake) and Mashe (Morris) and Eva, and their mother Esther Richel. They all established their home in Poughkeepsie, New York.

**YANKEL:** The oldest son was married to Fanny Weiss and had two sons and a daughter. Sidney, the oldest, was married and had one son Edward Raymond and a daughter, Louise. Sidney died at the age of 47. Harold married Sybil Klaff of Baltimore and is living there. He has three sons: Barry, Jimmy and Mark. Florence married Dr. Theodore Rimai and has three daughters: Barbara, Judith and Lois. Yankel died at the age of 68.



MASHE:

(Morris), second son of Shmerrill, has four sons and two daughters: Merrill, Jesse, David, Marshall, Anna and Betty Jane. Merrill, the first son of Morris, married late and has no children. Jesse has one son Walter. David has two daughters: Sarah and Helen. Marshall has two sons: Andrew and Seth and one daughter Lucy. Anna is married to William Dorfman and they have a daughter Susan. Betty is married to Dr. Benjamin Katzen and they have six children. Their children are: Barbara, William, Anna, Jimmy, Louise and Ellen. Esther Richel, the wife of Shmerrill (who was affectionately known by her grand-nieces as "Tante Bubby") died at the ripe old age of 84 in Poughkeepsie.

RIVKE:

(Eva) - The second daughter of Shmerrill, married Joseph Golden of New Milford, Connecticut. They have four sons and one daughter: Merrill, Lawrence, Walter Archie and Ruth. Merrill has two children: Louis and Dorothy. Lawrence has four children: Miriam, Joseph, David and Anida. Walter has two children: Joseph and Sara Beth. Archie has five children. Ruth is married to Joseph Katz. She has two children: Richard and Judy. They live in Baldwin, Long Island.

ANNA:

The daughter of Yankel by his second wife married a young man in Amdur by the name of Avrom Levine. They had two daughters - Chae Rivke and Itke. Avron Levine died as a young man, the same age as Shmerrill, his brother-in-law, about 1881. Anna married again, and her second husband lived quite a distance from Amdur. She took her younger child with her. Chae Rivke (Ida) remained with her grandparents - the Levines. She was a girl full of life, and at the age of 15 she left for America, and went to Chicago where she had two uncles. After a couple of years, I suppose she married a young man and they had two daughters: Bessie and Tilly. Then trouble began, and she divorced her husband. Then in 1903, she came East to look for a husband. She had another uncle living in New York, Motte Leibe Levine, and she went to visit him. At the same time, a young man came to New York from Canada, also named Levine, but no relative. His wife was dead, so the two young people became acquainted and were married. She journeyed to Mt. Forest Canada, with him, where they made their home, and three daughters were born to them: Ety, Sadie and Rebeccah. After a stretch of 18 years, my son William married Sadie.

THIS CONCLUDES THE GENERATION OF YANKEL, THE SECOND SON OF MOTTE TSINES.

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**DAVID:** He was the third son of Motte Tsines. He married a girl called Taibe. They had only one son called Motte. David, the father of Motte, died young. So Motte was known in Amdur as Motte Taibe's, after his mother. Motte married and had seven sons, namely: David, Chaim, Gdalia, Shevach, Yedide, Leibe, and Yuddel. Motte was well educated in Hebrew, and all of his sons received a good education in Hebrew.

**DAVID:** The son of Motte Taibe's married and had two sons and three daughters: Shlime, Ellia, Gitel, Rachel and Youdel.

**CHAIM:** The second son of Motte Taibe's was married to a girl by the name of Braverman, and they had one son Pesach (Paul) and a daughter Betty. Chaim's wife died, and he remarried. His second wife was the daughter of the chazen of Amdur, a girl named Chave Elitzer. Chaim and Chave had five daughters and two sons; Dora married to Milton Apfel and they have one son Herbert; they live in Brooklyn. Morris had two sons, Howard and James. Howard is married and has a son and a daughter, his son is named after his father Morris who died at the age of 48. They reside in Poughkeepsie. Edith - second daughter of Chaim, is married to a man named Werner and she has one daughter, Matilda. The third daughter is married to Ted Pincus and has one daughter Paula and a son Robert. Joseph was the second son of Chaim and is unmarried and resides in Poughkeepsie. Ida, the fourth daughter, is married to Jack Kalburn, they live in Brooklyn and have no children. Rose, the fifth daughter, is married to a man by the name of Stern and she has two daughters, Phyllis and Marcia, and they also live in Brooklyn.

Chaim and his family came to the United States in 1915 and settled in Poughkeepsie.

**GDALIA:** The third son, was married to Itke, the daughter of Israel Efron, while living in Argentina. They came to Poughkeepsie in 1899. They had two sons and three daughters. Matilda, the oldest child, is married to Donald Taylor, and they live in New York. They have one daughter called Efron Ida (Ronnie). Mary, the second child is married to Harry Guthait. They have no children and they live in New York City and California.

Ethel, the third daughter, is married to Milton Bruml and they reside in Princeton, New Jersey. They have one daughter, Elise. The older son is Abraham Efron, who is unmarried and is carrying on the business started by his father when he first came to Poughkeepsie. Dr. Benjamin Efron, the younger son, is married, and has one daughter Kathe, and resides with his family in Poughkeepsie.

**SHEVACH:** The fourth son, was married in Argentina and had two sons: Bernardo and Raphael, and also three daughters, names unknown.

**YEDIDA:** The fifth son, was married in Argentina. They had three sons: David, Tobinas, Raphael and Two daughters, Taibe (married to Dr. Kaplan) and Teina. They all live in Buenas Aires, S.A. David, however, is at present living in Geneva, Switzerland, where he has a post with the U.N.

**LEIBE:** The sixth son, lived in Argentina, and had two sons: Bernardo; second-name unknown and three daughters, Taibe, Gittel and Rivke.

**YOUDEL:** The seventh son, lived in Argentina, and had three sons: Fraucisco, Bedisha, Simon and two daughters, Taibe and Cima.

**THIS CONCLUDES THE GENERATION OF MOTTE TAIBES** -- He emigrated to Argentina in 1895 with all of his family, except Chaim who came there in 1911, and from there, Chaim came to the United States in 1915 with his family.

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**GDALIA:** The fourth son of Motte Tsinas, had two sons: Motte and Yankel. Motte had a son Avrom Ezra and he had a son, Rubin. Rubin is a lawyer in Washington, D.C., and that is all we know about the generation of Gdalia, the fourth son of Motte Tsinas.

**SHEVACH:** The fifth son of Motte Tsinas, had two sons: Motte and Chaim. Motte's children came to the U.S. about 1888; went to Chattanooga, Tenn., and established the Efron Dept. Store there, but we do not know how many descendants there are.

CHAIM: The second son of Shevach, emigrated to Argentina in 1895, together with his family. He had three sons, Shevach, Gdalia, and Yankel.

THIS CONCLUDES THE GENERATION OF GDALIA, THE FOURTH SON OF MOTTE TSINAS, ALSO SHEVACH, THE FIFTH SON.

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Of the three daughters of Motte Tsinas, we know of only one daughter, which one she was we dont know. But she married a man by the name of Avram Ezra; he was a great Hebraic scholar, or what is known as a sage or a Talmudist, and he became the Ruve of Amdur, and remained in this position until he died. They had one son and one daughter. His daughter married Baruch Margolis, who became the Ruve after his father-in-law's death.

Many members of the Effron family, when a son was born named him Avrom Ezra, and most of the people when his name was mentioned, would always say "his memory shall be blessed".

The other two daughters of Motte Tsinas also married in Amdur, but we don't know much about their families.

In the town of Amdur, there was a man by the name of Leizar Efron. He was known in Amdur as Leizar Shaels, because his father's name was Shael. Leizar married the daughter of Shmuel Choze. Choze had a large estate, very close to the town. As a dowry to his daughter, he gave them a small tract of land close by and a good house, and some other buildings on the land. He had some peasants who worked the land for him. My oldest brother, Motte, when he was about 18 was employed as a foreman on Leizer Shael's estate. When I was about six years old, I was sent to cheider there in Amdur. Leizer had a son, Berril, who was about my age and he also went to the same cheider. My brother used to take me to their house, as he boarded with them. My memory of events begins from about this time.

As to Shael Efron, Leizar's father, there is a story attached to him, and my father related this story. There was in the city of Grodno, a man by the name of Bregman who, with Shael Efron, was in the fur business. They would go all over Russia buying furs, even as far north as Siberia. The Russian government had gold mines in that section. They still have them in operation today. In Russia, votka and the ruble always worked wonders. Shael Efron got acquainted with some officials in charge of the gold mine operations, and a smuggling of gold developed.

The government found out what was going on and the whole gang, including Shael Effron, were put behind bars in prison, awaiting trial. But Bregman was working to get Shael out; Bregman was a wealthy man, so he used vodka and money. Shael escaped from prison. The government placed a reward on his head, if he should get caught, but he went over the border to Germany. Two men came into Germany and started a fur business. They knew where Shael was and got in touch with him, and he engaged in business with them. After a time they had him over the border in a deal, and then revealed themselves as detectives. And he was in prison again! The sensational news appeared in the Russian newspapers that "Effron was caught again". But Bregman and all his friends started to work hard again with vodka and money, and he walked out of the prison disguised as one of the officers of the guard. Again he was over the border into Frankfurt Amien, where he remained until his death. His wife and one daughter were living in the City of Vilna. Shael Effron's son, Leizer, was a well educated man in Hebrew, and I suppose also in Russian. I was told that he became so poor after the First World War started that he died of starvation. Shmuel Choze, his father-in-law, had a large estate so he was land poor, as the saying goes. Berrill, the son of Leizar, came to Buenos Aires in Argentina where he studied dentistry. When I was in Argentina in 1955, I was told that he had died a few years ago.

There are many families by the name of "Effron" in the United States, and many of them do not know their origin. Some of them know that their ancestors came from around Amdur, or Grodno, or Bialostok, but they don't know who they were. For instance, Gdalia, the fourth son of Motte Tsinas, had two sons Motte and Yankel. There is no question in my mind that they had large families like the rest of Motte Tsinas sons. But all we can account for is Rubin Effron in Washington, D.C., the son of Motte Gdalia. I believe all the Effrons, who cannot trace their ancestry, belong to that family.

Now as to the spelling of the name. There are three different spellings of Effron. The Poughkeepsie Effrons spell the name with two F's. The family in Kingston, NY spell their name with an A instead of E - Affron. The rest of the family, all over the world, Argentina, Australia, Israel, spell it with one F - Efron. But they all belong to the same tribe! They all originated from the old Patrarch - Motte Tsinas Effron.

During the last few years, there has been a feeling among the present younger generation to have all the Effrons in the vicinity of New York and surrounding territory to get together for a sort of reunion of the family. Consequently, a picnic was organized to be held at Baird Park in Dutchess County during the summer of 1954. Many Effrons were invited and about 60 members of the Effron Clan were present. A president was elected, as well as other officers, and an organization was formed. But since then there has been no other getting together of the Clan.

