



## Wo kam er her? (Where did he come from?)

Written by Christine in Herts



**M**y addiction to family tree research really cut in when I started in earnest in February 2004.

Since then, I have been in the habit of sending around instalments of information about new discoveries – primarily to members of the family who are into genealogy, like me, but also to others for whom I have an email address, and who might be marginally interested in my discoveries.

After a while (in about April 2007) a relation, whose father had died when she had been quite young, asked me to research her paternal family history, which she knew nothing about. There were family rumours about her grandfather being linked to J. Lyons & Co (the company famous for its tea rooms), and that this part of the family had moved in society circles. I picked the brains of the members of her family I could contact and started to put all the information together.

I found out that her grandmother had been the daughter of Albert Morris Marks (the one who was supposed to be connected to the Lyons company) and Elizabeth née Cohen. I tried working on the Salmon/Gluckstein family tree, who had connections through marriage to the Lyons family, to see if I could make the connection there, but without success. Perhaps it was all just rumours and wishful thinking, and that the daughter had been just a Nippy (the nickname for a Lyons tea room waitress) or something similar!

Working on Albert, the 1901 census told me that he was aged 37 and a retired 'Australian Merchant', who had been born in Birmingham, England. Although playing around with the birth, marriage and death indexes, I couldn't find anything better than Mordecai Albert Marks, whose birth was registered in December quarter 1863 in Birmingham. I noted it, but didn't buy the certificate - besides, my relation didn't want to shell out on certificates just at the moment, having some other critical expenses for which to budget.

I worked my way a bit further back in the censuses, although I couldn't find him in either 1891 or 1881. In 1871 I found him aged 7 living with his family in Birmingham. His father was a 36 year old shoe factor called Moses Marks who was born in Germany, at a place which looked like 'Himbay'. I speculated on 'Hamburg' as a likely reality, but that didn't really give me anything I could work on.

It's difficult, looking back, to remember all the sequences of stops and starts, brick walls and breakthroughs. Somewhere along the way, I found out that Albert's wife, Elizabeth, had been the daughter of Moses/Morris Joseph Cohen and Isabella Jacobs Jones. Moses/Morris was a younger brother of Hannah Cohen, who married Nathaniel Joseph Lyons... and their son was Joseph Nathaniel Lyons. So that explained the rumour about the connection. Albert had married Joseph (the 'J' of J. Lyons & Co) Lyons' first cousin.

The Lyons company was a family business, so there was no way a non-family member could have got to be a director, as various records were showing him to be. Some googling had even found a site devoted to the history of the firm, where Albert was specifically mentioned as a director in their *Pensioners Index* which helpfully gave an exact date of death.

Along the way, I couldn't resist getting a few records – including Albert and Elizabeth's marriage in Melbourne, Australia, in 1886. Victoria BMD (Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages) enabled me, at a reduced fee, to get the image of the record, rather than paying the full price for a certificate. The bit of the Jewish Chronicle archive that non-members can reach ([Jewish Chronicle Archive](#)) yielded some morsels and the [Times Digital Online Archive](#), amongst other things, yielded accounts of the grandmother being presented at Court in 1913.



**Albert Morris Marks**

From the Lyons Staff Magazine held in the Lyons collection (ref - LMA: ACC/3527/268  
Vol I Portrait Gallery)  
held at the City of London, London Metropolitan Archives and reproduced with their  
kind permission.

However none of this was getting me any information about Moses/Morris Marks from 'Himbay' Germany.

Google which took me to [Rootsweb](#), had found him in 1879, emigrating with a lot of his family to New Zealand. That explained why he wasn't in a number of UK censuses after 1871, but meant I would have fewer sources from which to pick out his place of birth. The *London Gazette* had a likely candidate living at 199 Sherlock St, Birmingham, getting into financial difficulties from time to time. He appeared in trade directories – I was helped with that information by members of the [Birmingham History Forum](#) and [Midlands Historical Data](#). These records tied in with a hit (at last!) on [The National Archives](#), where I'd searched for 'Naturalisation' and 'Marks'. Amongst the list of results was a promising record:-

*HO 1/152/5977: Naturalisation Papers: Marks, Moses, from Germany. Certificate 5977 issued 22 October 1868.*

The National Archives at Kew was calling me, so I took my next chance to visit in September 2008. Armed with a digital camera I called up that record... and it was the right one. It described him as a shoe dealer of 199 Sherlock St, Birmingham (matching the censuses and the trade directories), and it gave me a date of birth, as well as a very readable place of birth - 'Himbach'. I played with [Google Maps](#) and found that there were three possible places, but one just north east of Frankfurt in the area of Limeshain looked the best bet.

I happened to be aware that most places in Germany seem to have their own website, so I started looking for 'Himbach.de' or something like that. Eventually, Google showed that the nearest place which had its own site was Limeshain itself on [Gemeinde Limeshain](#). I knew enough German to be able to navigate the site reasonably well, and found that there was a list of local societies in 'Vereine und Verbände in Limeshain'. These included the 'Geschichts und Kulturverein Limeshain'. 'Kultur' had to be 'culture' (or something very similar) and I knew that 'Geschichte' was 'history'. I made use of the contact information to email (in German but with the original English as well just in case I'd not said what I'd meant to say!), to ask whether 'culture and history' extended to 'family history', dropping in what information I had about Moses and his family. I had a reply back very promptly (in very good English), saying that they would pass on my query to a member with that particular interest although, unfortunately, they were visiting Asia at the time.

Sometime around then, I must have found the [Rookwood cemetery](#) site, which had a photograph of the gravestone of a female family member from the other half of the tree. I was puzzled about her Hebrew name, because it didn't seem to have the correct father's name on it (according to my information to date), so I put up a query on the [British Jewry mailing list](#). I had named names, and soon had the reply, "I have some of the people you mention on my tree". Wow! Some messages went to and fro, and I began to realise that this person didn't live that far from me. A few questions later, and I found out that she lived, quite literally, around the corner with not even a road to cross! She was willing to share lots of information and help me with the extra resources that she had, including information about the Marks family. Then, later in the November, I received another email from Germany asking if I would give them my postal address as the chairman would like to send some material about the area. Shortly afterwards, I received a fat envelope containing a couple of brochures - one about Limeshain, and the other which was celebrating the 950th anniversary of Himbach itself.

Apart from seasonal greetings at Christmas, everything went a bit quiet after that, until I was away in the USA in February 2009 searching for my elusive grandfather Bennett ([In Search Of Grandfather Bennett](#)). Since my friends there are also genealogy addicts, there was no problem with us keeping an eye on our emails, especially as one arrived in excellent English from Germany:-

*I am glad to tell you that we were successful. We contacted a lady in our area who is investigating the history of the Jewish population of several communities here, among them Himbach.*

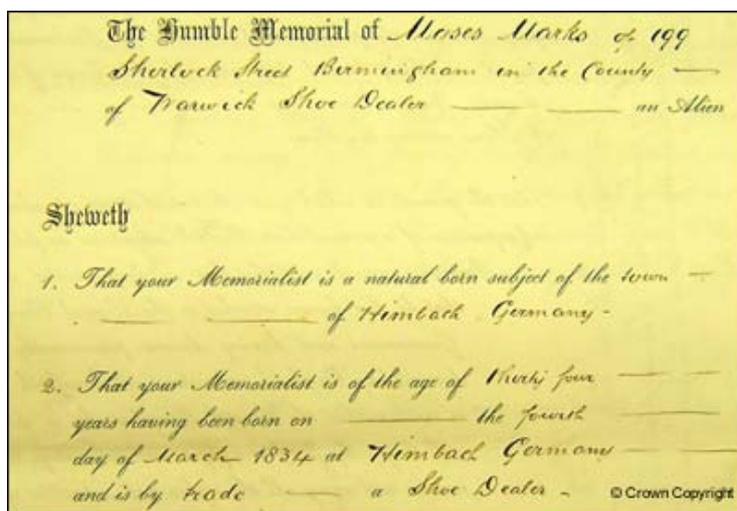
*The family Marks/Marx in Himbach is well known to her. Following are papers which she gave to us and which I will forward to you by mail -*

*1. A compilation of this family, part of which is Mardochai Marx's family - Moses Marks was one of his sons.*

*2. Two copies of photos of tombstones, unfortunately of poor quality. It seems to be the ones of Mardochai Marx and his wife Braeunchen. I will visit this cemetery lying outside of our district in the spring. I hope to find these tombstones to send you pictures of better quality.*

*3. A copy of the marriage licence of Mordechai Marx and Braeunchen Storch. The transcription in latin handwriting is from [the specialist researcher].*

*4. A copy of a letter of Moses Marks which he sent in 1905 from London to Himbach to get a birth certificate. Transcription again by [the specialist researcher].*



**An extract from Moses Marks' naturalisation papers.**

Much as I was enjoying my USA holiday, I half (but only half!) wanted to dash home there and then. When I arrived home, there was the envelope full of lots of wonderful information. Mordechai and Braüchen were Moses Marks' parents, so now the 'Mordecai Albert' whom I had found in the BMD indexes, seemed a much more likely match. The letter written in 1905 had been written from the same address given by Albert Morris Marks in both 1901 and 1911. Whatever doubts I may have had about whether or not Moses/Morris and Albert Morris

were father and son, were completely dissolved.

Obviously, I was profusely thankful for their help, and for the specialist researcher's generosity. I was also delighted to find that the information on the 1861 census that I had sent to her mentioning Moses's elder sister, Johanna, and younger brother, David, had resolved a problem in her own tree. The next child after David, was a Suschen Marx, born on 1st June 1838 and described as 'vierte kind der Ehe' (the fourth child of the marriage), however she had Moses as the eldest, so Suschen seemed to be only the third child and not the fourth. Big sister, Johanna, was the missing factor, so I was so pleased to have been able to give back something in return for her kindness.

This May, our driving holiday in continental Europe will take us as far as Budapest, visiting friends on our way to and fro. We have arranged to drop in to Himbach, staying at a B&B run by the chair of the Culture & History Society, and plan to meet these people who have been so kind and generous, and to take a gift from my relation to thank the specialist researcher for all she has given us.

## Christine in Herts

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