



Leon Berger

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Leon Berger, of Blytheville, Ark., formerly of Memphis, the son of Abraham and Rebecca Berger, was born in Horodenko, Austria, in 1893. His education was received at Zablotow until he was thirteen years old. He has mastered the Jewish, German, and Polish languages.

In 1906 he left Galicia for Sadagura where his mother died. After his mother's death he continued his studies and in the meantime was engaged as a clerk.

In 1914 he was with the Austrian forces having gone through all the horrors of War fighting from 1914 until 1917 in the trenches, having been wounded several times. In 1917, December 17, he was taken captive to Russia, Kamanetz, Podolsk. From there he was transferred to supervise a Russian Range. In 1918-19 he witnessed all the Russian atrocities and massacres that occurred during that period, and participated in the Jewish defense.

In the city of Kitaigorod, as a war captive, he also was instrumental in influencing the local Jewish youths to organize a Jewish Dramatic Circle and it was there that he met Miss Ethel Petrovsky, whom he married the same year. Unfortunately, however, two weeks after their wedding, instead of a honeymoon, the town lived through one of the most horrible massacres and again Mr. Berger was on the self defense line, not only helping to protect the family, but saving all the Jewish souls possible.

When this was over, early in 1920, the Bergers moved to Chernowitz Bukovina, at that time still part of Roumania, remaining there for about six months. From there they wandered as war refugees to Bukovina, and since Mrs. Berger's father, Tobias Petrovsky, was already then in Memphis, the Bergers also decided to immigrate here.

He came to Memphis in December, 1920 and worked for S. Shainberg & Co. at a small salary. In 1922, he began his own business at Jackson and Main with a capital of two hundred and eighty five dollars.

Besides devoting his time that his business requires, Mr. Berger is one of the founders of the Arbeiter Farband here. He was also instrumental in organizing the Farband School of which he has been the Secretary since 1929, now being the Chairman of the Farband Culture Center.

He is also known for his activities for the Pioneers in Palestine. He has made several efforts for the promotion of Jewish literary plays, participating in the same, and is one of the organizers of the Memphis Dramatic Circle.

He was chairman of the Farband Culture Center School Drive for 1931 and a prominent member of the B'nai B'rith and an Elk.

Mrs. Berger is one of the organizers of the Mothers Club for the Farband Culture Center having been active for all these years. She is now the Secretary of the Mothers Club and it is to her credit that Mr. Berger is able to continue in all of his Jewish Social and Cultural work, as Mrs. Berger assists and encourages him in all of his undertakings. Their children are Rebecca, 11, and Tobias, 6, both in school.