A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words

The Siegal, Shaffer and Smilovitz families.

The group of people in this portrait includes the Siegal, Shaffer, and Smilovitz families. Their grandfather was Aaron Siegal, who came to America around 1907 with his eldest daughter and two older sons. Aaron Siegal, a butcher in the small town of Derabon, Romania, made his way to Pittsburgh because he had "landsleit" (family) living here.

In Pittsburgh, Aaron Siegal worked in a factory. Within a year he saved enough money to send for his wife and three remaining children.

His wife, however, had other plans and wrote back:

"You have three children and I have three children. I can not live through the ocean voyage." But Aaron Siegal prevailed and they all were united in Pittsburgh around 1909.

People in the portrait include Betty Shaffer, the third row left. She married Dave Fineman. Ethel Shaffer in the first row left, became Mrs. Morris Panser. In the first row, third from right, Ida married William Barron. Dora Smilovitz, in the first row, right, married Clarence Gordon. Her baby sister, Goldye Smilovitz, married Harry Olitzky. The lone little boy who would not stand still until he collected every one's jewelry is Ben Siegal, who married Jean Abrams.

By Benjamin Siegal

Rauh Jewish Archives

Through photographs, diaries, letters, synagogue documents, and business records, the Rauh Jewish Archives tells the stories of Jews who helped to build Western Pennsylvania. The collections are housed in our Library & Archives and available Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

You can help preserve the heritage of Western Pennsylvania's Jews. • Donate personal papers, family photographs, and the records of synagogues and organizations. • Become a member of the Rauh Jewish Archives by becoming a member of the History Center.

Membership information available at 412-454-6406 or www.pghhistory.org

SENATOR JOHN HEINZ PITTSBURGH REGIONAL HISTORY CENTER
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

1212 Smallman Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania