

Max Litwin

May 24, 1911 – February 18, 1995

World War II

VA



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

National Cemetery
Administration



**Department
of History**

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Max Litwin (May 24, 1911–February 18, 1995)

By Sarah Schneider

Early Life: Family and Immigration to Providence, Rhode Island

Max Litwin was born on May 24, 1911 in Poland to Joseph Litwin and Fannie Litwin, née Mlawski.¹ Joseph Litwin immigrated to the US in 1914, most likely to establish himself in the US and earn enough money to bring over the rest of his family. In 1921, Litwin, his mother, and Litwin's siblings - an older sister, Sarah, and two younger sisters, Matilda and Helen - joined their father in the United States.² After the family settled in the US, Litwin's brothers Paul and Alfred were born.³ By 1930, the family of eight was living in Providence, Rhode Island where Joseph Litwin worked as a salesman at a furniture store, as is seen here on the 1930 US Census.⁴

A Jewish family, the Litwins were part of a wave of Eastern European Jewish immigrants who settled in Providence, Rhode Island in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when there was a “250 percent” surge in the state's population due to industrialization and the surge of manufacturing jobs. Much of this economic activity centered in Providence, which attracted Jewish and Italian immigrants in particular. By 1915, about two-thirds of Providence residents were immigrants or first-generation Americans. That same year, there were over 8,000 Eastern European Jews in the city.⁵

In the 1930s, Litwin lived and worked as an insurance agent and salesman in Providence.⁶ Litwin's father died in 1939, as is noted here in a 1941 City Directory, leaving Fannie Litwin to take care of the family.⁷ In 1940, four of Litwin's siblings still lived at home, while Sarah worked as a secretary and Matilda worked as a social worker in order to contribute to the family income.⁸ In 1940, Litwin married Edith Fine; the couple lived with Litwin's father-in-law in Providence.⁹ That year, Litwin worked as a salesman for a retail roofing company and his wife worked as a stenographer.¹⁰

Service in the US Army during World War II

On May 18, 1943, Litwin's brother Alfred enlisted in the US Army.¹¹ Litwin entered the military a few months later on August 17, 1943 at the age of thirty-two.¹² Jewish men such as Max and Alfred Litwin comprised about eight percent of those serving in the US military during World War II, "about twice their proportion to the population as a whole."¹³ Additionally, about 340,000 Jewish women served as nurses or in other roles in the US military during the war.¹⁴ Despite the discrimination and anti-Semitism that many Jews faced in the military, "military service had empowered Jews as Americans and as Jews" and many American Jewish soldiers were optimistic that the US would strive towards its purported values of democracy and equality.¹⁵ Before Litwin's service ended on September 14, 1944, he rose to the rank of Private First Class in the US Army.¹⁶

Post-Service Life and Work in Miami, Florida

Litwin may have worked in Miami, Florida soon after his military service.¹⁷ In the post-war period, Miami was one of the "fastest-growing Jewish communities" in the country, and Litwin may have been part of this movement of Jews to the sunbelt.¹⁸ From February to April of 1945 a Max Litwin posted in the *Jewish Floridian* newspaper about a business called "Hotel Roberts Tailors."¹⁹ The postings in the newspaper originally listed Litwin as being in business with Morris Enzer, but by April, Litwin is listed as the sole owner.²⁰ There was a Hotel Roberts in Miami, so the business probably provided tailoring services in the hotel or at a location nearby.²¹ There is not enough information to know for sure that this is the same Max Litwin, but it is likely that he ran the business.

Litwin ultimately lived on Bay Harbor Island in Florida's Miami-Dade County.²² At least three other Litwin siblings, Matilda, Sarah, and Alfred Litwin, also moved to South Florida.²³ Sarah and Matilda Litwin moved to Florida in the 1970s and were actively involved in the Jewish communities of Rhode Island and Florida throughout their lives.²⁴ Litwin may have had a similarly strong connection to his Jewish identity and the Jewish community. He died at the age of eighty-three on February 18, 1995 in Florida.²⁵ A memorial marker at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida pays tribute to his life and service.²⁶

Endnotes

1 “U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Florida National Cemetery.; “1930 United States Federal Census,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Providence, Providence, RI.; “Matilda R. Litwin,” *The Providence Journal*, November 11, 1989, page A-09, NewsBank.

2 “1930 United States Federal Census,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Providence, Providence, RI.

3 *Ibid.*, “Rhode Island, State Censuses, 1865-1935,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed July 18, 2017), entry for Max Letwin sic, Providence, RI, Ward 2. Note: The 1925 Rhode Island State Census lists the youngest brother as “Abraham,” but it appears to be referring to Alfred Litwin.

4 “1930 United States Federal Census,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Providence, Providence, RI.

5 *Ibid.*, 9-11, 16.

6 “Rhode Island, State Censuses, 1865-1935,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Providence, RI, 1935.; “U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed July 19, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Providence, RI, 1937.

7 “U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed July 19, 2017), entry for Edith Litwin, Providence, RI, 1941.; “Rhode Island Deaths and Burials, 1802-1950,” database, *FamilySearch.org*, <https://familysearch.org> (accessed July 17, 2017), entry for Joseph Litwin sic.

8 “United States Census, 1940,” database, *FamilySearch.org*, <https://www.familysearch.org> (accessed July 17, 2017), entry for Fannie Litwin, Ward 3, Providence, RI.

9 “1940 United States Federal Census,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Providence, RI.

10 *Ibid.*

11 “United States World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946,” database, *FamilySearch.org*, <https://familysearch.org> (accessed July 17, 2017), entry for Alfred I. Litwin, Providence, RI.

12 “U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Florida National Cemetery.

13 Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 221.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 259.

16 “U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Florida National Cemetery.; “U.S., Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin.

17 “Legal Notices,” *The Jewish Floridian*, February 16, 1945, page 5, University of Florida Digital Collections, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00010090/00889/6x?search=max+litwin>.

18 Edward S. Shapiro, *A Time for Healing: American Jewry Since World War II* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 134.

19 “Legal Notices,” *The Jewish Floridian*, February 16, 1945, page 5, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00010090/00889/6x?search=max+litwin>.; “Legal Notices,” *The Jewish Floridian*, March 2, 1945, page 6, University of Florida Digital Collections, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00010090/00891/6x?search=litwin>.; “Legal Notices,” *The Jewish Floridian*, April 20, 1945, page 6, University of Florida Digital Collections, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00010090/00898/6x?search=litwin>.

20 Ibid.

21 W.A. Fishbaugh, *Hotel Roberts on West Flagler Street - Miami, Florida*, 1921, Photograph, State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/40352> (accessed July 18, 2017).

22 “Local...Litwin, Max,” *The Miami Herald*, February 22, 1995, page 4b, NewsBank.

23 “Matilda R. Litwin,” *The Providence Journal*, November 11, 1989, page A-09, NewsBank.; “Sarah Litwin,” *The Providence Journal*, May 11, 1990, page C-02, NewsBank.; “Area Deaths...Litwin, Alfred I.,” *The Palm Beach Post*, April 13, 2006, page 9B, NewsBank.

24 “Matilda R. Litwin,” *The Providence Journal*, November 11, 1989, page A-09, NewsBank.; “Sarah Litwin,” *The Providence Journal*, May 11, 1990, page C-02, NewsBank.

25 “Local...Litwin, Max,” *The Miami Herald*, February 22, 1995, page 4b, NewsBank.; “U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Miami, 33154, Miami-Dade, FL.

26 “U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed June 12, 2017), entry for Max Litwin, Bushnell, Sumter County, FL.

RHODE ISLAND STATE CENSUS-1925

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County Providence

E.D. 192

Town or City of Providence Ward 2 V.D. 1 Date of Enumeration April 15

PLACE OF ABODE				NAME	RELATION	Personal Description			NATIVITY	CITIZENSHIP
Street, avenue, road, etc.	House number (see instructions)	Number of family in order of visitation	Number of family in order of visitation			Sex	Color or race	Age at last birthday		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	26	4	6	Morin Jane	Daughter	F	W	3 1/2	Rhode Island	na
	26		7	Ostrou Nathan	Head	M	W	53	Russia	na
				Lena	Wife	F	W	52	Russia	na
				Charles	Son	M	W	19	Russia	na
				Meyw	Son	M	W	25	Russia	na
				Brodesty Abraham	Son	M	W	17	Russia	na
				Estimide	Daughter	F	W	24	Russia	na
			8	Woldenberg Nathan	Head	M	W	63	Russia	na
				Roscha	Wife	F	W	53	Russia	na
				Mark	Son	M	W	29	Russia	na
				David	Son	M	W	19	Rhode Island	na
	28 1/2	5	9	Taker Charles	Head	F	W	55	Russia	na
				Anna	Daughter	F	W	21	Rhode Island	na
			10	Cohen Samuel J.	Head	M	W	45	Russia	na
				Ruch	Daughter	F	W	14	Maine	na
				Annette	Daughter	F	W	13	Maine	na
				Samuel	Son	M	W	10	Maine	na
				Harold	Son	M	W	8	Rhode Island	na
				Eleanor	Daughter	F	W	2 1/2	Rhode Island	na
	32	6	11	Wosler Philip	Head	M	W	34	Russia	na
				Lena	Wife	F	W	35	Rhode Island	na
				Joseph	Son	M	W	14 1/2	Rhode Island	na
				Saul S.	Son	M	W	5 1/2	Rhode Island	na
				William	Son	M	W	5 1/2	Rhode Island	na
	30		12	Bloom Mat	Head	M	W	59	Russia	na
				Celia	Wife	F	W	56	Russia	na
			13	Long Gabriel	Head	M	W	54	Russia	na
				Rose	Wife	F	W	34	Russia	na
				Edney	Son	M	W	10	Rhode Island	na
				Joseph	Daughter	F	W	8	Rhode Island	na
	34	7	14	Feinberg Samuel	Head	M	W	33	Russia	na
				Sarah	Wife	F	W	30	Russia	na
				David	Son	M	W	3 1/2	Rhode Island	na
				Nicholas	Daughter	F	W	1 1/2	Rhode Island	na
	34 1/2		15	Mack David	Head	M	W	37	Russia	na

ENTRIES 25 BLANK 0 TOTAL 25

RHODE ISLAND STATE CENSUS-1925

Page 3

County Providence

E.D. 192

Town or City of Providence Ward 2 V.D. 1 Date of Enumeration April 15

PLACE OF ABODE				NAME	RELATION	Personal Description			NATIVITY	CITIZENSHIP
Street, avenue, road, etc.	House number (see instructions)	Number of family in order of visitation	Number of family in order of visitation			Sex	Color or race	Age at last birthday		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	34 1/2	7	16	Mack Esther	Wife	F	W	38	Russia	na
				Anna	Daughter	F	W	17	New York	na
				Frank	Son	M	W	15	Rhode Island	na
				Sara	Daughter	F	W	13	Rhode Island	na
				Minnie	Daughter	F	W	10	Rhode Island	na
			17	Pullman Max	Head	M	W	31	Russia	na
				Sylvia	Wife	F	W	30	Russia	na
				Belaie	Daughter	F	W	3 1/2	Rhode Island	na
				Isid	Son	M	W	8 1/2	Rhode Island	na
	36	8	18	Mellion Rosetta	Head	F	W	57	Russia	na
				Irring	Son	M	W	24	Russia	na
				Frank	Daughter	F	W	11	Rhode Island	na
				Franklin	Son	M	W	16	Rhode Island	na
	38		19	Benson Simon	Head	M	W	40	Russia	na
				Minnie	Wife	F	W	32	Russia	na
				Leonard	Son	M	W	11	Rhode Island	na
				David	Son	M	W	7 1/2	Rhode Island	na
				Harold	Son	M	W	1 1/2	Rhode Island	na
			20	Weiner Samuel	Head	M	W	34	Russia	na
				Anna	Wife	F	W	32	Russia	na
				Dorothy	Daughter	F	W	11	Massachusetts	na
				Natalie	Daughter	F	W	4 1/2	Rhode Island	na
	42	9	21	Woldia Eli	Head	M	W	31	Russia	na
				Lea	Wife	F	W	31	Russia	na
				Lonia	Daughter	F	W	9	Russia	na
	44	10	22	Swick Tobias	Head	M	W	48	Russia	na
				Era	Wife	F	W	40	Russia	na
				Marion	Daughter	F	W	20	Russia	na
				Jean	Daughter	F	W	19	Russia	na
				Sarah	Daughter	F	W	15	Russia	na
			23	Litwin Joseph	Head	M	W	38	Poland	na
				Harriet	Wife	F	W	31	Poland	na
				Sarah	Daughter	F	W	15	Poland	na
				Marl	Son	M	W	14	Poland	na
				Matilda	Daughter	F	W	13	Poland	na

ENTRIES 31 BLANK 0 TOTAL 31

NAME LITWIN, MAX		STREET ADDRESS 114 CYPRESS		155999	
1 CENSUS TRACT - 150		12 CITIZENSHIP U.S. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 NAT. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 PA. <input type="checkbox"/> 3 AL. <input type="checkbox"/> 4			
2 CITY, TOWN OR VILLAGE PROVIDENCE		13 IF AT SCHOOL - NAME OF SCHOOL		19 USUAL OCCUPATION 003 AGENT	
3 TOWNSHIP PROVIDENCE		14 GRADE		20 INDUSTRY 34 INSURANCE	
4 COUNTY PROVIDENCE		15 ANY PHYSICAL DISABILITY BL <input type="checkbox"/> 1 TB <input type="checkbox"/> 4 EP <input type="checkbox"/> 7 HF <input type="checkbox"/> 2 HTD <input type="checkbox"/> 5 OTHER <input type="checkbox"/> 8 HEN <input type="checkbox"/> 3 CRP <input type="checkbox"/> 6		22 RESIDENT OCCUPATION 003 AGENT	
5 IF HEAD OF FAMILY - NO. IN FAMILY		16 EVER HAD MEAS. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 S. PVR. <input type="checkbox"/> 2 DIPT. <input type="checkbox"/> 3 SCHICK TEST <input type="checkbox"/> 4		23 INDUSTRY 34 INSURANCE	
6 SEX MALE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 FEMALE <input type="checkbox"/> 2		17 USUALLY WORK AT GAINFUL OCCUPATION YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 NO <input type="checkbox"/> 2		24 W. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 W.P. <input type="checkbox"/> 2 C. <input type="checkbox"/> 3 S.E. <input type="checkbox"/> 4 CLASS OF WORKER	
7 COLOR OR RACE WHITE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 NEGRO <input type="checkbox"/> 2 OTHER <input type="checkbox"/> 3		18 IF NO-15 HE SEEKING WORK YES <input type="checkbox"/> 1 NO <input type="checkbox"/> 2		25 IF NOT AT WORK - WHY NOT 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AT WORK 4 <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME 2 <input type="checkbox"/> IND. DISP. 5 <input type="checkbox"/> NO WORK 3 <input type="checkbox"/> SICK 6 <input type="checkbox"/> PHYS. INCAP. 7 <input type="checkbox"/> RELIEF PROJECT	
8 COUNTRY OF BIRTH 79 POLAND		19 MONTHS EMPLOYED IN 1935 12		STATE OF RHODE ISLAND CENSUS LICENSED FOR USE UNDER PATENT 1,772,492	
9 DATE OF BIRTH JULY 12, 1912		20 READ OR WRITE ENGLISH YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 NO <input type="checkbox"/> 2		ADDRESS MET. INS. CO.	
10 MARITAL STATUS M. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 S. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 W. <input type="checkbox"/> 3 DIV. <input type="checkbox"/> 4		21		DATE JAN. 4, 1936	
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