Harry Gittleman
October 28, 1916 – May 4, 1995
World War II
Early Life: Growing up in Brooklyn, New York

Harry Gittleman was born on October 28, 1916, in New York.¹ He lived with his father and mother, Meyer and Lena Gittleman, as well as his two older sisters, Frances and Anna.² As Gittleman was growing up, he lived with his family at 569 Christopher Avenue in Brooklyn, NY.³ The family owned the house and had other renters living with them, including another Gittleman family in 1920, likely their relatives.⁴ Harry’s father, Meyer Gittleman, worked as a machine operator in a clothing factory and then as a tailor.⁵ The family continued to live in Brooklyn through 1940, though they may have moved to a house on a nearby street.⁶

Gittleman’s father and mother were both Jewish immigrants—Meyer from Poland and Lena from Austria.⁷ Though records vary, it appears that Meyer and Lena immigrated to the United States between 1900 and 1904, and they married around 1908.⁸ Throughout the early 1900s both of them are listed on census records as “aliens,” including on the 1930 Census seen here, rather than as naturalized citizens, and it seems that they spoke Yiddish.⁹

Meyer and Lena immigrated to the United States during “one of the largest waves of immigration in all of Jewish history.”¹⁰ About two million Eastern European Jews immigrated to the United States in the late 1880s until World War I in order to escape persecution and seek out economic opportunities.¹¹ Like many other Jewish immigrants arriving in the United States during this time period, Meyer and Lena Gittleman settled in New York City.¹² They may have chosen to live in New York due to “the abundant economic opportunities available to Jewish immigrants in the city, especially in the fast-growing clothing trade, and with the comforting presence of tens of thousands of other Yiddish-speaking Jews nearby”; after all, Meyer worked as a clothing factory worker and then as a tailor, and the family spoke Yiddish.¹³ Therefore, Harry Gittleman likely grew up immersed in a community of Jewish immigrants and children of immigrants in Brooklyn.
In 1940, Meyer Gittleman was still working as a tailor, and Harry worked with his father, also as a clothing presser and tailor, as seen here on the 1940 United States Census. By the time of his enlistment three years later, Gittleman’s occupation is noted as a retail manager.

**Service in the US Army during World War II**

Gittleman enlisted in the military in March of 1943 at the age of twenty-six, and served until August 27, 1943. Under the terms of his service, he was enlisted “for the duration of the War or other emergency, plus six 6 months,” which was “subject to the discretion of the President or otherwise according to law.” However, he ultimately served for five months, remaining a private for the duration of his military service. Injury, illness, or other factors may have resulted in his service ending prior to the conclusion of World War II.

Gittleman was among the approximately 550,000 Jews who were in the United States military during World War II. Many Jews in the service faced anti-Semitism. The military brought together people from different regions and religions, and at times prejudice against Jews emerged in these new encounters. However, military chaplains from different religious backgrounds worked together to promote interfaith understanding, and Jews and Christians often came together to pray and hold services for those who were killed. These are some of the experiences that Gittleman may have had as a Jewish soldier in the US Army during World War II.

**Post-Service Life in Florida**

Harry Gittleman married Anne Rothman, whose maiden name was Anne Molly Chikelavitz, in Brooklyn, New York in 1971. They presumably married around June of 1971 based on the date of Anne’s name change to Anne Gittleman. By 1991, the Gittlemans had moved to Tamarac, FL. There, Gittleman owned a clothing boutique called Heshy II Boutique. An article from the police report section of the *Fort Lauderdale News* on January 31, 1984 states that in Tamarac, Florida, “Harry Gittleman, 67, said a man and a woman entered his store, took clothing, and ran off.” Gittleman died on May 4, 1995, with his last known residence in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Anne Molly died on April 28, 1995—one week before her husband. Both Harry and Anne Molly Gittleman are buried at Florida National Cemetery in

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Bushnell, Florida. The Star of David is depicted on Harry Gittleman’s headstone, representing his Jewish faith. When relatives and friends visit the Gittlemans at the cemetery, they will likely place small stones on top of their headstone as is customary in Jewish tradition in order to honor those who have died.

Endnotes


3 Ibid.


9 Ibid.


11 Ibid., 151-152.


20 Ibid., 266.

21 Ibid.


24 Ibid. Prior to her name change to Anne Molly Gittleman in 1971, Anne Molly was known by several different names. Records with the Social Security Administration show that, following her birthname of Anne Molly Chikelavitz, Anne was known by the surnames Lampell and Rothman.


27 Ibid.


# DEATHS REPORTED IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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*Note: This is a sample of a census record from the Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920.*
REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 28, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1897)

SERIAL NUMBER 1617

1. Name (First)

Meyer Gitelman

2. Place of Residence (Street)

354 West 86th St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

3. Mailing Address

Same

4. Telephone

5. Age in Years

58

6. Place of Birth

Punia

7. Name and Address of Person Who Will Always Know Your Address

Wife Lena Gitelman same as above

8. Employer’s Name and Address

9. Place of Employment or Business

114 junk, 16th St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

I Affirm That I Have Verified Above Answers and That They Are True.

Meyer Gitelman

D.S.S. Form I

(Revised 4-1-42)

(Registrar’s signature)