

# THE STRIPPER AND THE RABBI

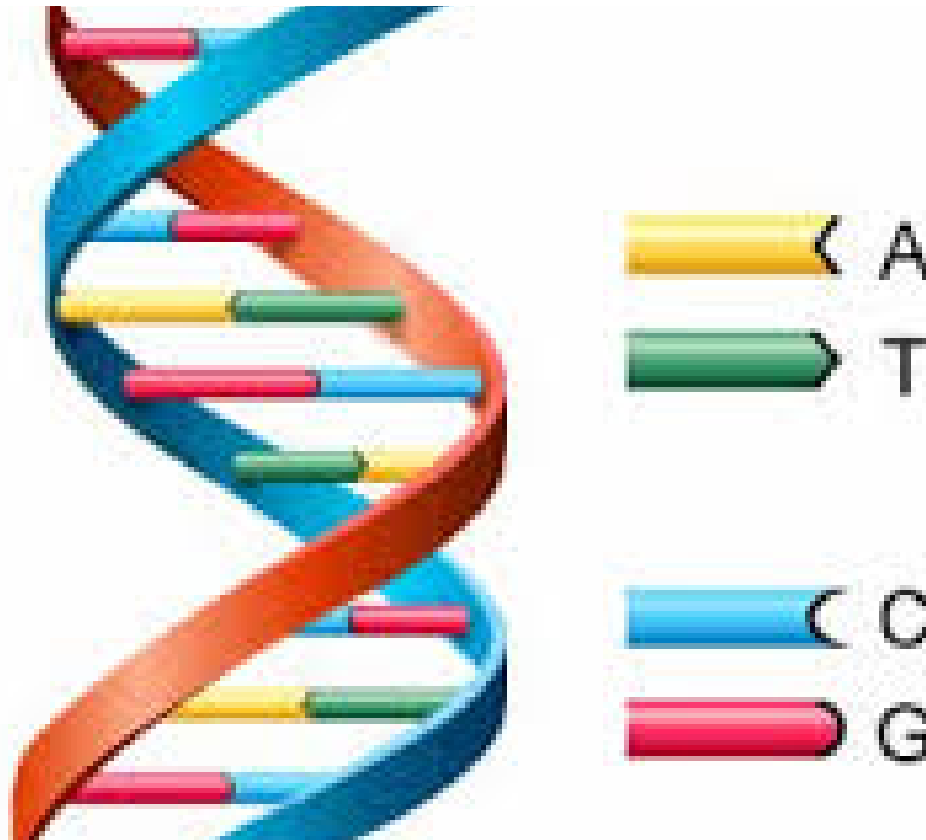
A DNA Success Story



This is a story about a stripper and a Rabbi.

It's a pretty interesting story, but it's not what you're thinking. The Rabbi is the stripper's grandson, and the stripper is not *that* kind of stripper!

It all started with DNA.



- It was January of this year. I received an e-mail from my cousin L. Evans. She had just received her DNA results from 23andMe. L. Evans is a 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin on my Nathanson side (my mother's father's side).
- Her top 3 matches:
  - M. Nathanson, her 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin (and my 1<sup>st</sup> cousin)
  - Stephen Kaufman, unknown person
  - A. Nathanson, her 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin (and my 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin)
- She asked me if I knew who Stephen Kaufman was. I said I didn't know of any Kaufmans who were biological relatives.
- And so the puzzle began.

I contacted Stephen Kaufman.

- His 4 closest matches on 23andMe:
  - A. Nathanson, predicted 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cousin
  - L. Evans, predicted 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin
  - M. Nathanson, predicted 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin
  - D. Nathanson, predicted 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin
- All 4 of these are my known Nathanson cousins!
- He doesn't know of any Nathansons in his family.

## But did Steve Kaufman match me?

- My DNA was not on 23andMe. It was only on Ancestry DNA, Family Tree DNA, and GEDmatch.
- Steve agreed to upload his DNA to GEDmatch.
- On GEDmatch, my sister Beth and I were his 2 closest matches (out of thousands of matches!) We were both predicted to be 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> cousins.
- This was a shock! We really were closely related. But how??
- We explored different possibilities. He also matched other Nathanson relatives and did not match my relatives on other sides who were on GEDmatch.

## Other things I learned about Steve Kaufman:

- He was born and raised in Minneapolis (home of Nathanson family).
- He is a Rabbi who taught for years at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and now lives in Las Vegas.
- His father, Leo Kaufman, was also born in Minneapolis.
- He has a brother named Bob, also a son of Leo.
- His paternal grandmother, Bessie Bellman, was the daughter of a Rabbi and lived with her parents.
- He had a “mysterious grandfather” named Charles Kaufman. He knew NOTHING about him except that he was Jewish.

# Leo Kaufman's Birth Certificate

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
Division of Vital Statistics

42490

PLACE OF BIRTH *Neunepo* ALTRD. 11-5-69

County of *Neunepo* ALTRD. 11-5-69

Township of .....

Village of .....

City of *Minneapolis* (Not in Minneapolis City Hospital, St. 5 Ward)

FULL NAME OF CHILD *Leo J. Kaufman*

Sex of Child *Male*  Twin, triplet, or other?  No. in order of birth .....

Legitimate? *yes* Date of birth *Mar. 26, 1913*

FATHER KAUFMAN		MOTHER	
FULL NAME <i>Charley S. Kaufman</i>	FULL MAIDEN NAME <i>Bessie Bellman</i>	FULL NAME	FULL MAIDEN NAME
POST OFFICE ADDRESS <i>112-11 Ave. No.</i>	POST OFFICE ADDRESS <i>112-11 Ave. No.</i>	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	POST OFFICE ADDRESS
COLOR <i>W</i> AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY <i>36</i>	COLOR <i>W</i> AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY <i>23</i>	COLOR	AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY
BIRTHPLACE <i>Russia</i>	BIRTHPLACE <i>Russia</i>	BIRTHPLACE	BIRTHPLACE
OCCUPATION <i>Factory Worker</i>	OCCUPATION <i>Housewife</i>	OCCUPATION	OCCUPATION
Number of children born to this mother, including present birth..... 1	Number of children of this mother now living..... 1		

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE\*

I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was born alive at *7:15* P.M. on the date above stated.

(Signature) *Herbert Collins* (Here affix or affix stamp)

Address *City Hospital*

PHYSICIAN, MIDWIFE, PARENT OR INFORMANT. (Cross out words which do not apply)

Given name added from a supplemental report .....

19.....

MAR 31 1913  
HEALTH DEPT.

MARGIN RESERVE FOR BINDING. WRITE PLAINLY. WITH UNFADING INK.—THIS IS A PEARL. ENT RECORDED. This certificate must be made for each, and the number of each, in order of birth, stated.

## Information on Leo's Birth Certificate

- He was born on 26 Mar 1915 at Minneapolis City Hospital.
- Name changed from “Baby Boy Kaufman” to “Leo J. Kaufman.”
- Father, Charley Kaufman (Kauffman crossed out), was 36 years old, born in Russia, a factory worker, lived at 1112 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. No.
- Mother, Bessie Bellman, was 23 years old, born in Russia, a housewife, lived at same address.
- This is the only record where Charles Kaufman appears.

# What was Leo like?

(Source: Steve Kaufman)

- He was a natural salesman; his primary talent was “chatting up people.”
- He tried different fields early on: carpets, jewelry, but soon settled on men’s clothing.
- During his prime years, he was Sales Manager at the Minneapolis firm of Block and Heller, which produced wool shirts.
- Also sold children’s and men’s outerwear for different companies.
- Loved the ladies. Married 6 times!
- Liked to gamble on sporting events and occasionally go fishing.
- Strong personality. Liked to get his way.

# Bessie Bellman's Sad Life

- Born in “Russia” (probably Ukraine) in 1888; immigrated with parents and 3 brothers about 1906, never became a US citizen.
- Lived with her parents in North Minneapolis (about half a mile from the Nathansons). Father was a Rabbi.
- Her occupations included housekeeper (1910), “stripper” (1912), machine operator (1918), seamstress (1919), track operator in knitting factory (1920).
- Had a son named Leo 26 Mar 1915. She was 23 years old at time.
- In 1924, she was living with Leo, no occupation listed. He was 9 years old.
- By 1930, she was a patient in the State Colony for Epileptics, Cambridge, MN (not able to speak English according to census). Lived there for at least 25 years.
- Died in 1955 at age 66.

# Bessie Bellman Kaufman's Death Certificate

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH Division of Vital Statistics CERTIFICATE OF DEATH				3449	006506
1. PLACE OF DEATH, STATE OF MINNESOTA a. COUNTY <b>Tanah</b>		3. USUAL RESIDENCE (Where deceased lived, if institution, address before & county) a. STATE <b>Minnesota</b> b. COUNTY <b>Hennepin</b>		REGISTERED NO.	
b. TOWNSHIP OR <b>Cambridge</b>		c. CEMETERY		d. CITY OR VILLAGE	
e. CITY OR VILLAGE		f. ADDRESS WITHIN CITY OR VILLAGE		NO. 0	
4. NAME OF (If not in hospital or institution, give street address or location) HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION <b>Cambridge State School &amp; Hospital</b>				5. I. O. ADDRESS II. <b>Minneapolis, 1217 Humboldt Ave. So.</b>	
6. NAME OF DECEASED (Last or First) <b>Bessie</b>		7. NAME OF DECEASED (Last) <b>Kaufman</b>		8. DATE OF DEATH (Month) (Day) (Year) <b>February 20, 1955</b>	
9. SEX <b>Female</b>		10. COLOR OR RACE <b>White</b>		11. DATE OF BIRTH (Month) (Day) (Year) <b>10-12-1888</b>	
12. USUAL OCCUPATION (Give kind of work done during most of working life, even if retired)		13. USUAL RESIDENCE (State or foreign country)		14. CITIES OF BIRTH (Country)	
<b>None</b>		<b>None</b>		<b>Russia</b> <b>Unknown</b>	
15. FATHER'S NAME <b>Abraham Bellman</b>		16. MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME <b>Unknown</b>		17. SPOUSE'S NAME <b>Charles Kaufman</b>	
18. WAS DECEASED EVER IN U. S. ARMED FORCES (If yes, see 19 or dates of service) <b>NO</b>		19. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. <b>None</b>		20. DECEASED'S OWN RECORDS ADDRESS <b>Records of Cambridge State School and Hospital, Cambridge, Minnesota</b>	
21. Enter only one from (a), (b) and (c). a. BEING OR CONVERSION (Indicate directly to death) <b>Hypostatic pneumonia</b>		b. IMMEDIATE CAUSE <b>General Debility</b>		c. TIME BETWEEN ONSET & DEATH <b>4 days</b>	
22. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS Contributing to death but not related to disease or condition causing death		23. Epileptic		d. TIME BETWEEN ONSET & DEATH <b>About 60 years</b>	
24. SEX OF CHILD		25. MAJOR PHASES OF GESTATION		26. ATTORNEY YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
27. ACCIDENT OCCURRENCE		28. PLACE OF BURIAL (In, to or about home, farm, factory, post, etc.)		29. CITY, VILLAGE OR TOWNSHIP (COUNTY) (STATE)	
30. TIME (Month) (Day) (Year) (Hour) (Minute)		31. HOURS OCCURRED (If how did hours occur)		32. DATE SIGNED <b>2-20-55</b>	
33. I hereby certify that I attended the deceased from <b>11-1-1944</b> to <b>2-20-1955</b> , that I last saw the deceased alive on <b>2-20-1955</b> and that death occurred at <b>12:25 PM</b> from the causes and on the date stated above.					
34. SIGNATURE (Sign in ink) <b>H. T. Sherman</b>		35. ADDRESS <b>Cambridge</b>		36. DATE SIGNED <b>2-20-55</b>	
37. SIGNATURE OF FUNERAL DIRECTOR OR CREMATOR		38. NAME OF CEMETERY OR CREMATOR		39. LOCATION (City, village or county) (State)	
DATE FILED BY LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT <b>2/22/55</b>		SIGNATURE OF REGISTRAR <b>Myrtle Peterson</b>		SIGNATURE OF FUNERAL DIRECTOR OR CREMATOR <b>James E. Johnson</b>	

## Definition of “Stripper” (ca. 1910)

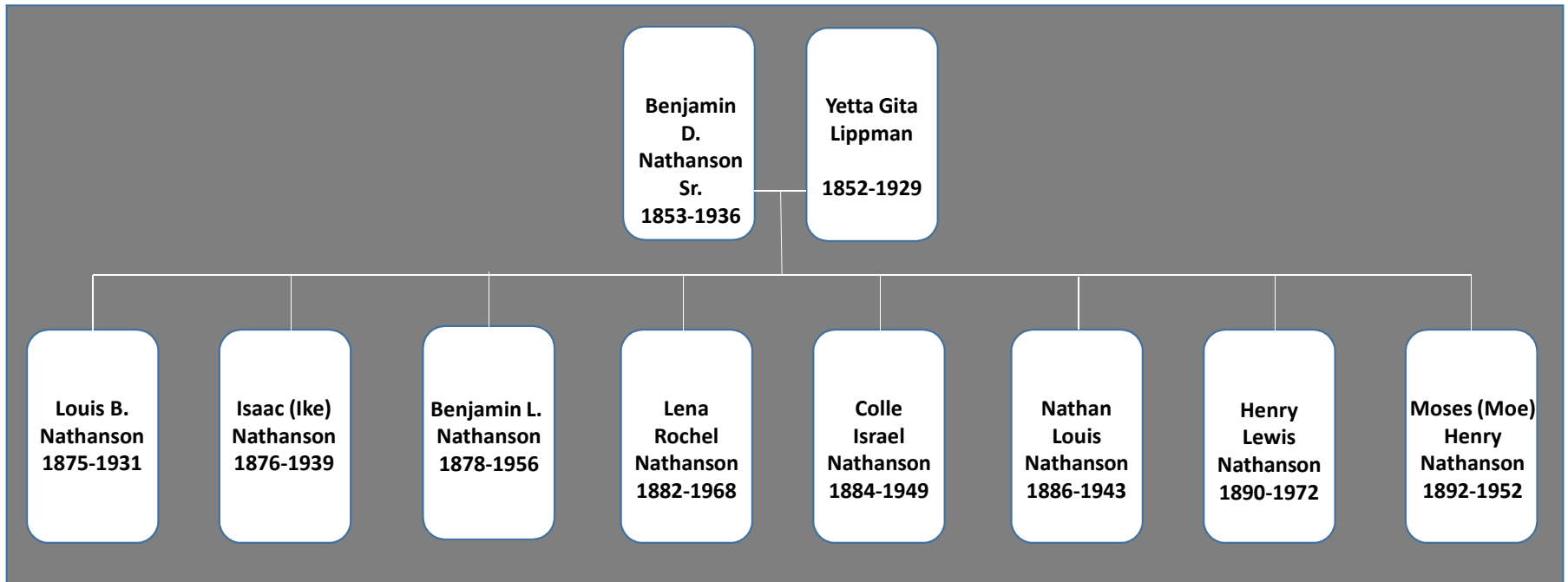
- In a cigar factory, a stripper “strips the center vein out of tobacco wrapper leaves.”
- Nathanson Bros. owned a cigar factory in downtown Minneapolis at this time. Here it is:



## Our hypothesis is ...

- That one of my Nathanson great-uncles fathered Leo Kaufman.
- They could have met Bessie Bellman in the neighborhood or at the cigar factory.
- If that were true, Steve and Bob Kaufman would be my 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins, as DNA predicts.

**ENTER THE NATHANSONS:  
MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER BEN NATHANSON  
AND HIS FAMILY**



# The Ben Nathanson Family (7 sons, 1 daughter)



# Where were the Nathanson brothers in 1914?

(Sources: Mpls. City Directories; Articles about Nate)

Name	Age	Marital Status	City	Employed by
Louis	39	Married	Minneapolis	Nathanson Bros. Cigar Mfg. Company
Ike	38	Married	Minneapolis	Nathanson Bros. Cigar Mfg. Company
Ben L.	36	Married	Minneapolis	Nathanson Bros. Cigar Mfg. Company
Colle	30	Married	Minneapolis	Nathanson Bros. Cigar Mfg. Company
Nate	28	Married	Toronto	Nathanson- Wadsworth Company
Henry	24	Single	Minneapolis	Nathanson Bros. Cigar Mfg. Company
Moe	22	Single	Minneapolis	University of MN

It could “conceivably” have been any of the Nathanson brothers.

Even Nate could have come home for a visit during the summer.

Photo of Leo Kaufman:  
Consensus: “He looks like a Nathanson.”



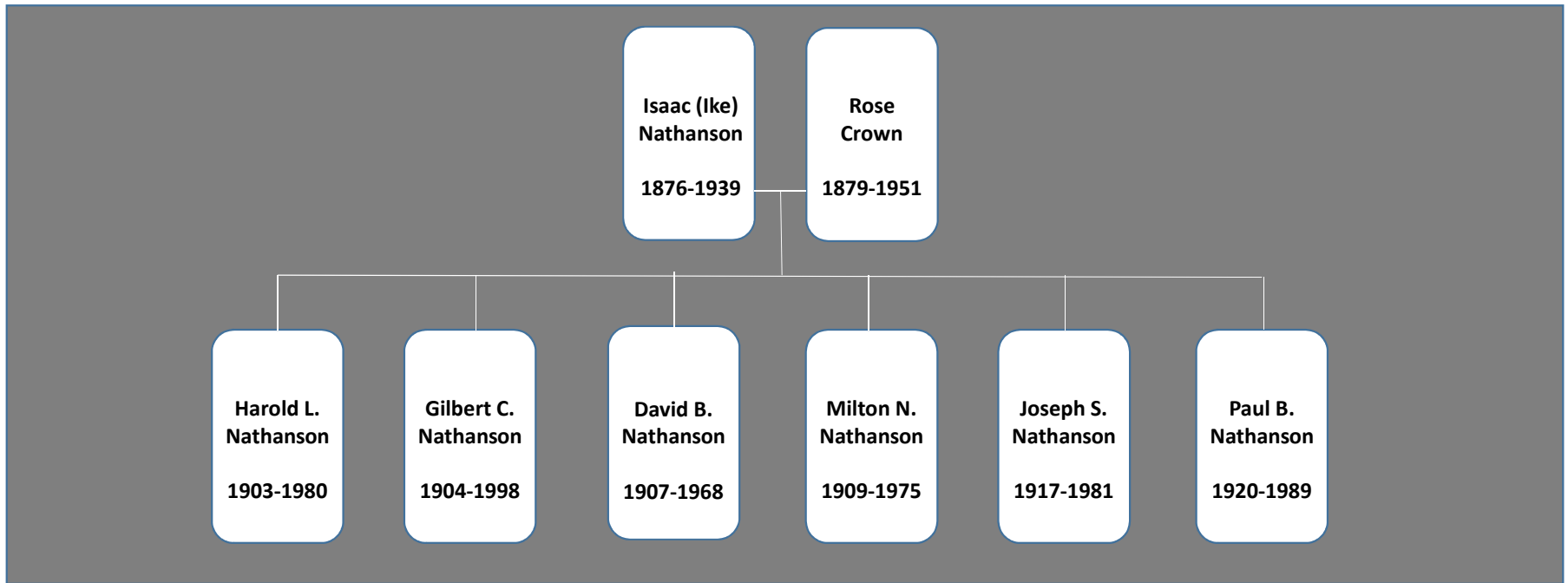
# Why did I focus on Ike?

- A. Nathanson (Steve's closest match) was a descendant of Ike.
- Ike was in charge of the cigar business.
- Ike had 6 boys, born between 1903 and 1920. There was a gap between 1909 and 1917. Leo was born in 1915.
- Leo shared characteristics with Ike's sons:
  - They were ladies' men.
  - Multiple marriages.
  - Smooth talkers.
  - Natural salesmen.
  - Risk-takers; entrepreneurial.
  - Bald at an early age.

# IKE'S BOYS

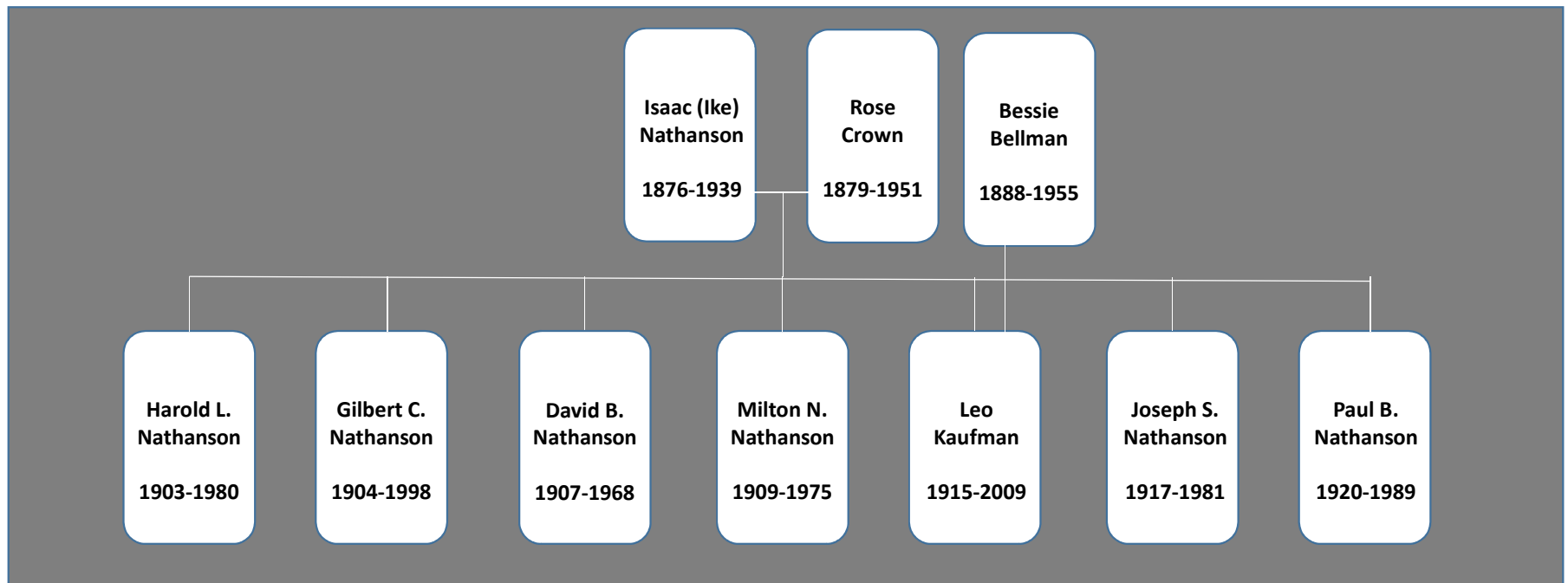


# IKE'S BOYS



# IKE'S BOYS

(with Leo inserted)



And now I'd like to  
introduce . . .

- Rabbi Stephen J.  
Kaufman
- Rabbi Emeritus,  
Hebrew Union College
- Scholar, author,  
teacher
- And my 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin!

