

My First 40 Years



By Ben Nicholas

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To Esther Penny Adams
By Ben Nicholas

With love
your brother-in-law
Ben Nicholas

Introduction

We knew so little about our parents before they migrated to America, how they lived, under what circumstances and other pertinent facts of their lives that bothered me for a long time. I realized that my children and grandchildren knew so little about my childhood that I decided to write the story of my early years in an honest and open report, to show wrinkles, warts, good and bad events and include customs and conditions of the times as I recall them. No attempt was made to keep in strict chronological order.

At times it was difficult and emotional reliving these experiences and I hope my readers will find a better understanding and appreciation of their parents.

Through all the tragedies, struggles and problems, an important result emerges that we can all be proud of. A family of poor immigrants with little or no education managed with love and determination and hard work become intergrated into American Culture, raised fine families and made contributions to the country and to the community, all within one generation.

BEN NICHOLAS, 1982

Chapter 1

As a child of 5, asleep on an old couch near a window, suddenly I was awakened by an outburst of noise coming from the street below. Frightened, I jumped up to see the cause of the furor; people milling about, screaming, yelling "Happy New Year, Hoorah for the Twentieth Century" . . . Bells ran out from the nearby church, horns and factory whistles added to the din, people were parading through the canyon of tenements in the Jewish Ghettos of New York City's Lower East Side, where I was born. A new century was born. I can still remember the thrill of being part of the ushering in the 20th Century on January 1st, 1900.

New York City was already a bustling city, growing rapidly with expansion of the Industrial Age. It was the financial capital of the nation. New industries sprang up overnight, the demand for cheap labor was quickly filled with the new immigrants arriving daily. Pay was low, 5¢ per hour for a 10 hour day, six days a week. Workers were unskilled, gladly accepted any jobs, factories were unsafe and unsanitary, no one questioned, nobody cared. Those, because of their religious restrictions or others whose ambitions were toward business of their own, became peddlers, rented pushcarts, loaded them with all types of goods, clothes, anything salable and found space along the sidewalks on Hester, Rivington, Essex and other streets, by paying a small rental fee. They labored long hours defying the ravages of weather and when days grew short, kerosene lamps were hung on poles attached to the carts. Late at night, teams of street cleaners hosed down the streets, with heavy fire hoses. At times casual walking through the streets would become dangerous, as without any warning a package of excrements would be quickly tossed from a window that was immediately closed. No one saw where it came from and people who were hit, suffered humiliation, misery and mess.

It was relatively easy to get into America, one needed to be in fairly good health and have a relative or friend in America. Later, regulations were strengthened, a minimum of \$25 and the ability to read any language was required. Both my parents were born in Lemberg, Austria in 1863, a provence of Galcia, once an independent dutchy with a long history of changes of nationalities, to Poland, to Austria-Hungary, back to Poland and last to the Soviet Union, who captured it after signing a non-aggressive pact with Hitler, both attacked Poland before World War 2.

Father left Lemberg, alone, sometime between 1888 and 1890, as he had difficulty in supporting a wife and 4 children. He landed at Castle Garden, at the Battery, then the Port of Entry. We had no knowledge where he lived nor how he existed, yet he managed to save enough moeny to send for the family. They arrived at Ellis Island, in New York Bay, the new Port of Entry from 1892.

I was the first born in America at 95 Ridge Street near Rivington. Midwives helped deliver all mother's children except me; for some unknown reason, a doctor from the Essex Street Free Clinic was called. I was sickly and weak, the doctor was sure I would not survive the month, expressing it succinctly "he has as much chance to live as I have to grow grass on the palm of my hand", but I fooled him. My name registered in the New York Health Department records me as MALE Nicholas. Orthodox Jews do not name their sons until circumsion, 7 days after birth, if they are registered at all. Midwives were uneducated and ignorant of the law and most of children they delivered were not registered, that caused many future difficulties, because Jews calculated birth days according to Jewish holidays. My birth was 10 days before Purim which then was March 23rd. I was born March 13th, 1894.

The family name was Necheles and as with most immigrants, Immigration officials used whatever spelling they saw fit, so father's name was registered Nicholas, other relatives got different spellings, Nichols, Nechols, Necheles. That's why there are so many Cohens and Levys. My birth certificate listed my parents' ages as 36. They rarely spoke of their lives in Lemberg. Mother was an orphan at an early age and raised by an aunt. Father's family consisted of brothers and sisters. Mother proudly told us that she resisted pressure to shave her head when she got married, as was the custom. She showed fierce independence. Father wore a beard all his adult life. Father's name was Saneh, mother's Ruchel, (English names were Samuel and Rachel.) After a few miscarriage, Schindel was the first born, English, first Sarah, then Sadie. Then Yonah (Charlie), Masha (Molly), Channah (Annie) then me Beral Lipe (Ben) Meyer (Max) Allya (Alfred) Goldie (Gertie).

We lived in a three room cold water flat, without running water or toilet, a cold water sink was in the hall for four families on each floor, toilets were in outhouses in the back yard. Tenement houses were built on 20 foot lots, attached to the next house at the kitchen with an open areaway for clothes lines and to visit with neighbors. We changed residences, often to improve our existence. Rents were low, \$6 per month, we were always overcrowded, more so with each addition to the family. It's still a mystery how we survived, with constant attachment to bedbugs and cockroaches, efforts to get rid of them by squarting kerosine over mattresses, around moldings, sometimes caused fires, yet the vermine stuck with us. Somehow we found room for a dear, old friend of mother's on mother's insistance. Raisele, a widow, without family or children, gratefully accepted space on the floor. A frightened, suspicious woman, afraid of being robbed, she hid her money tied in a rag between her legs, every coin or bill saturated with urine and overpowering. We loved her as she was kind and good. She stayed about a year.

Our heat came from a large wood-burning stove in the kitchen where we gathered in the winter and had all our meals there. Lighting was by kerosine lamps, wicks had to be regularly trimmed before they started to smoke. Later,

we moved into flats with gas, metered at 25¢ at a time when the light began to dim, about once a night. A supply of quarters had to be on hand. We also used candles. At the whim of the landlord, or for non-payment of rent, tenant's belongings were moved out with hardly a notice, no hearings, no delays, only a signed paper by some official, turned over to a deputy sheriff, your furniture, beddings, babies, pots, pans, rags and all were loaded out on the sidewalk, even in bad weather, cruel and heartless.

From early morning to late at night, mother toiled, always rushed, always harrassed. Almost daily, after breakfast a large boiler was heating on the stove with soiled clothes being washed and steaming in hot summer and winter. The wash had to be removed with a broom handle and taken to the sink in the hall for scrubbing on a board until all dirt and grime was removed. Mother used Fels Naptha soap, loaded with harsh caustics that caused her fingers and in-between them to fester and crack. Nothing could convince her to change soaps as no other soap would please her. After rinsing and wringing out by hand, they were brought back, hung on lines or taken and hung out on the roof. In bad weather, clothes were hung all through the flat on chairs, table, beds. In the winter, they would freeze stiff and had to be warmed indoors. Except for an occasional headache, Mother was strong and healthy.

She was a poor cook, everything tasted the same except gifilte fish and kechel, a rounng flat cake with kimmel seeds, onion, unsweetened, hard and delicious. Food was cheap, butchers were generous, added free, soup bones, liver (for the cat?) and miltz, (I believe part of the lung), spongy with a thick cover, with the purchase of a few pounds of meat. We had soup almost every night, boiled chicken, tasteless and overcooked, beef stew and goulash with noodles. There was a favorite dish, potted beef, and vegetables prepared in a deep pot that I took to the baker Friday afternoon for baking slowly until I retrieved it Saturday noon. It was called Chulent. Saturday nights usually we had dairy dishes, lox and cream cheese, bagel, boiled eggs, and duplicated on Sunday morning. Breakfast was oatmeal, rolls and coffee boiled in milk, half coffee and half chicory. I didn't know how coffee really tasted until I drank it in a restaurant.

There wasn't much conversation between my parents, except for news of the day, about the children and friends, hardly ever about their past. They quarreled about money, he never satisfied her needs or the way he meted it out. Out of one pocket book he gave her a dollar or two and showed her that he had the same amount left. When she tried to search him, he fished out another purse with a few dollars and finally got the last one out with coins only. It was like a scene from a play. The children showed no sympathy and kept pushing him. Our language at home was Yiddish, parents were proficient in Polish and German. They used Polish to keep us from knowing what they were talking about. Mother took over all responsibility of the family, father rarely interfered. We gave her our confidences, our problems, accepted her advice, her word was almost law, she ruled by love and the great respect we all had for her. She was bright, understanding, kind and friendly, our friends loved her. She managed pretty well with English. She put on considerable weight, lost her teeth while fairly young after Gertie was born. At night she'd soak them in a glass of water. She had a barber come into the house to give Max, Al and me haircuts. He laid some newspaper on the floor, put a dirty sheet around us, used

hand clippers and cut all our hair off, except for a small area for bangs, all got the same and we looked alike, he finished only after he sprinkled some evil-smelling water and said "Nadja Colone", all for 10'.

Chapter 2

Father joined the Lemberger Lodge that entitled the family to burial spaces and the Lemberger Chevra (Synagogue); he was a charter member. Once a month, he attended meetings and every quarter, there was a dinner, wives were included; they dressed in their best. Mother had put on considerable weight and when it came to donning her corset it became a terrible ordeal. She had help from Sadie and Molly, they needed all the strength they could muster to hook up the front and lace the back. They tugged while mother groaned and complained bitterly with *Oi's Oi's* until the job was done. The style called for a narrow waist and the breasts on top barely covering the nipples, an hour-glass figure. We all watched and when she finished dressing we praised her and told her she looked beautiful, she was pleased. After they returned home and she removed the corset she let go a sigh of relief you could hear next door.

Father always came home from the regular dinner meeting dead drunk, staggered into the door and immediately collapsed, mother had to remove his clothes and roll him into bed. The next morning he woke with a terrible hang-over, groaned he was dying and very nauseous, we had to run and get bromo seltzer. He quieted down and fell asleep, yet he never missed these affairs, he could have been the "Life of the party". He had many friends at these meetings, but they hardly ever visited us.

I wasn't close to father, as were Max and Al. At times I hated him. I remembered as a young child, asleep on the floor near them, I heard mother call out "Stop. . . You are hurting me", I wanted to get up and kill him. When he got angry, which was rare, he turned red, put his forefinger crooked into his mouth and yelled "Hunt, Ich'll dehargen der", (Dog, I'll murder you.) and gave us a sharp slap.

The synagogue was housed in the ground floor tenement, all partitions removed, the Ark held 2 torahs in the front, the pulpit and benches set in place, the women's section curtained off in the rear. The reason for the segregation of women in Orthodoxy was to keep the men from taking their minds off holy thoughts and away from temptation.

At Simchas Torah, the last of the Holy days of Roshonna, Yom Kippur and Succoth, occasionally an affluent member of the congregation would donate a new Torah; it called for a big celebration. A canopy covered the

donor as he carried the Torah through the streets of the East Side, a band played, all members and friends followed in a long procession, kids danced. Wine, cookies and ice cream were offered. It was a great event.

Friday evening prayers were attended only by men and was nothing special as it is today. They went home to dinner, the wife lit candles and all sat down to eat. Saturday morning prayers were different, wives attended, fathers wouldn't carry their talles nor prayer books, a son had that job, that caused me to become the victim of a petty larceny loss. Returning home from services on Saturday noon, with Al and Max trailing, engrossed in their usual conversation, I was stopped by a well-dressed man and asked if I would run an errand for him for a penny. He asked to tell his girl friend on the 4th floor that he was waiting for her. No use taking that package, he would hold it until I came down. The package was my father's talles and prayer books that evidently didn't mean much to me, so I willingly gave him the package and off I went. My brothers ignored my leaving but waited for me. I ran up and there was no one by the name he gave me, and he was gone when I returned. I couldn't blame my brothers, who didn't share the beating my father gave me.

All Jewish holidays were strictly observed. Rosh Hashonna is the time the Lord gathers all the good deeds and bad you did during the year, prepare for your final judgement of what will be your fate for the following year to be encribed in your book of judgement on Yom Kippur. A 2-day holiday, treated like the average Saturday. Yom Kippur, a week later, the holiest of them all, required preparations. Early that morning the flat was thoroughly cleaned, preparations for a big dinner for the entire family to begin at least an hour before sundown. Ater then, no food or water could pass your lips until sundown, 24 hours later. We all proceeded to the Kol Nidra services. Our parents left early Yom Kippur morning to spend the entire day in the synagog. We dragged in later, dry and hungry.

Father donned a white, clean gown called a *kittle* over his clothes as did most of the older men. Some become most emotional in their praying, prostrate themselves on the floor crying for forgiveness. Some prayers call for the beating of breasts for each sin they think they committed. Occasionally they came outdoors for a breath of air. Yom Kippur is one of the hottest day of the year, even when it falls in September. Close to sundown, a shoffar, a ram's horn, is blown signalling the end of the holiday and a mad rush is made for the exit. Grocers, bakers and delicatessen shop owners leave earlier to open up for those who need extra shopping. Water never tasted so sweet nor bread so good, I felt I accomplished a good deed, especially when my headache left.

One ritual we followed, I believe before Yom Kippur is called *Shluggan Kipures*. Live chickens, feet tied and used to transfer our sins into them, by twirling them over our heads 3 or 4 times, reciting prayers while the chickens loudly protested. We then took them to the *cherchof* (Kosher butcher) and waited to have their throats slit, hung over a barrel to drain the blood, taken home, we all joined in plucking, cooked and eaten for supper. Could the sins we gave them return to us? Also another procedure was a prayer meeting at midnight called *Sliccas*. I never learned of its significance, but father woke me up to accompany him. Add another procedure, casting bread upon the waters. A large group of supplicants paraded to the East River carrying bread that we cast out on the water, with prayers. Christian kids followed us, throwing in-

sults, making faces, but they were ignored.

The next important holiday was Succoth, celebrating the harvest. A frame wooden structure was erected in the back yard of the shule covered with branches and leaves, used for a week for prayer and for some, dining. Each morning members marched 7 times around the structure carrying a palm frond in one hand and a citrus type fruit grown only in Israel, in the other, shaking them while loudly saying prayers. For the housebound and for women, these items were brought to them. They paid for the service.

I once read a story of a find made not so long ago. Digging a barbecue pit in a military camp in Georgia, workmen uncovered stone tablets with strange markings. To have them deciphered they were sent to experts in Harvard University and were declared genuine Hebrew scrolls that depicted a celebration similar to our Succoth, (parading 7 times around a fire waving palm fronds, etc.) It was believed they arrived around King Hiram 2nd time B.C., drifted in reed boats from the Middle East area. Could the Jews have discovered America first?

Passover too was special. It celebrates the deliverance of Jews from Egyptian slavery, reciting the event from the *Haggoda*. It is filled with instructions for preparation of the feast, with old etchings, songs, prayers and procedures. It is the time for real spring cleaning. All week long mother and the girls cleaned the house, washed the clothes, scrubbed all the floors and on the eve before the big event, the Passover dishes, one set for milk and one for meat were cleaned and scrubbed, the pots scoured and the regular sets put away. That night, bread crumbs were strewn in areas around the flat, and father and mother went searching for them (*Chumatz*) with a clean cloth, a feather, a wooden spoon and a prayer book, and candle. The crumbs were brushed into the cloth, tied up with spoon, feather and placed aside for me to burn the next morning. I called on all our neighbors to burn their *chumatz*, paid a few cents each and joined my friends who did the same in their houses. We got a can, punched holes in the bottom filled it with paper and wood scraps added some potatoes and had a party. This went on all over the East Side.

That afternoon, everything was ready except the cooking. The table was set, the dishes in place, the herbs and special Hors d'Oeuvres and *matzos* on the table and a special setting for the Lord and Master, a couch, piled high with pillows and featherbeds ready. Both parents went to *Mikva*, a ritual bath, father to *shule*, mother to put the final touch. Returning from the synagogue, he donned his *kittle* and reclined on his lordly couch. A pan of water was brought and a clean towel. Wine glasses were filled and we all sat down to the big feast. After father washed his hands, he wrapped three matzos in a towel, called *Arphokomin* and hid them deep under his pillow. No matter hard the children tried none managed to reach them, he played a game, allowed his favorite to get the package. The youngest male asked the four questions, the others answered them, Why do we celebrate this night over all other nights, etc.? These questions have been asked at Seders for thousands of years. One wine glass was set aside for the angel Elijah, the giver of food and the door is opened to invite him in. Once a man appeared that scared the hell out of us, he just was looking for a friend.

Purim is celebrated in the spring, March or April, for the deliverance from genocide threats of Haman, the villain, by the Jewish Queen Esther. A

special three-cornered cake is baked, called *Humantosh*, filled with prunes, raisins and poppy seeds and is delicious. Children played with pegged dice with Hebrew characters on each side and spun around.

The last holiday of the year was Channukah, around Christmas time. Gifts are exchanged, plates of cookies and sweets were delivered to friends and neighbors. Each night a candle is lit in the menorah until all seven are lit, commemorating the time the Jewish army rested in a cave, there was enough oil just for that night, but the Lord kept the oil burning for 7 days.

Chapter 3

On Saturdays we had our dinner at noon. Father like beer and bought a chit from the saloon to be used on Saturday. I was sent with the beer can, the chit was for 5¢ and got the can filled up. After eating he laid down in bed covered himself completely over his head and soon was asleep. That night after a "Light bite" of dairy foods, he poured some whiskey on the table and lit it, tried to capture the flames to put in his pockets for good luck and a successful start Sunday.

Being strictly orthodox, father never worked on holidays or on Saturday, he became a peddler of his craft he learned in Europe, upholstery. He marched through the streets with a small piece of leather under his arm, yelled "*Lunch-in fixin*" (couches repaired) in all kinds of weather, hardly missing a day and kept very healthy. Around holiday times he was very busy and did well. There were good days and bad ones. He left early and returned home late, just before dark, Fridays he got home at noon.

Upon rising, he put on his *talles* (prayer shawl) and "laid" *twillem*, consisting of two leather covered boxes containing holy script about 1½ inches square, one for the forehead, tied on by a strap, the other over the left arm muscle, the strap wound around the arm with the correct number of turns, then around the middle finger according to ritual. After prayers, he filled a water tumbler with ½ alcohol and ½ kimmel, drank it down with one gulp, shook himself, rubbed his hands and he sat down for breakfast, usually left-overs, beef stew or pot roast. In spite of having 2 or 3 teeth left he managed very well. He would not eat again until that evening, repeating the prayers and drink.

Sometimes he took me along to buy liquor in a liquor store on East Houston Street, well kept and brightly lit. It was fascinating to see the hugh barrels lined against the wall, marked with the names of the contents, gin, bourbon, rye, etc., all guaranteed for smooth, pure taste because these barrels were used as ballast on sailing ships for a year or more. The barrels were of virgin oak.

Father's best friend, younger and better learned was Tzaller, from Lemberg. He lived alone, saved his money to bring his family to America. Almost every evening he came to walk with father. One Friday night they rested on the steps of Clark House a settlement house on Cannon and Rivington streets. The caretaker was a cranky drunkard, he tried to chase the men

off, and when they ignored him he started tugging and swearing at them. My father grabbed him by the throat, pounded and choked until the caretaker was thoroughly subdued. The next morning I was greeted by my friends as a hero, told me what a tough fighter father was.

On summer nights, I slept on the fire escape or on the roof. Sleeping on the fire escape was at times hazardous, for us and those sleeping beneath us. We peed in our sleep and when it leaked below, all hell broke loose, yells and screams. We went through the same ordeal from those sleeping above us. When a sudden shower hit, we scrambled in doors dragging the bedding. Asleep one night on the roof, a bunch of girls were playing 'Follow the leader' a favorite game. The leader uncovered me, pulled my penis and the others followed, including my two sisters, Molly and Annie. They all acted wildly, scaring me to death.

The kitchen of the building next to us was attached, our windows inches apart. Mr. & Mrs. Murphy, an Irish couple, lived there, and we became good friends. He was a hod carrier, she weighed about 250 pounds, with only one leg. She used a kitchen chair as a crutch with surprising agility, she loved her beer. I ran her errands when she wanted her daily beer, she'd yell "Bennie, get me a can of suds, here's the growler," handed me the can and a nickel and a penny for me. Mother and she seemed to converse constantly, in spite of language difficulties. Her husband came home one night dead drunk, found his way to the outhouse and fell asleep, in the middle of winter with his pants down. Rats gnawed on his testicles did not seem to awaken him, he was found dead the next morning, a horrible fate, we suffered with her. She moved away after the funeral.

When I was about four, mother enrolled me in a *chaidr* (private school) that was located in a basement, the entrance from the street, the wall was marked with obscene words and drawings. I got a thorough education, cussing, no one tried to erase, except the word fuck was changed to book.

The room had a few long tables and space in the back of the room for play. A *melamed* (teacher) sat at the head of a long table with benches on each side. Students sat waiting for their next. The teacher was tall and thin almost emaciated looking with a straggly beard, one hand used to stroke it and to search for lice he cracked out loud, the other hand had a pointer he used to guide your reading progress and to stick into your hand when a mistake was made. He was unfit for other work or trade, in Europe he was a *Yeshiva Boosher* one that spent all day in the synagogue learning, hoping to attract a patron with a marriageable daughter. He taught the alphabet and to read prayers.

If there was no room on the bench we played in the rear, craps, marbles, argued, fought, someone always quarreled, noisy, hardly disturbed the teacher. When it got unbearable he attacked us with a switch. I learned little of religion, but became expert in shooting marbles, cussing and craps. Father never questioned me of my progress, that suited me fine and when Bar Mitzvah time came I was completely unprepared. We were forced to wear a sarapi type garment called a *Lapzdeckel*. It had fringes about 12 inches long on each corner that reached around your knees. Each time you urinated, the fringes got wet. When you said any prayers, these fringes had to be wound around your finger and kissed before and after. As soon as I knew better, I got rid of it.

When quite young there were few games we could play, we had no toys, except those we got on holidays. We loved tag, follow the leader, prisoner's base and shooting marbles and craps. The popular one was prisoner base; you tried to pull your opponent from across the street to your side, pushed, shoved, tugged and tore shirts. Follow the leader, our leader was Gimpy, evidently a polio victim, whose one leg was quite a bit shorter than the other. He told us he caught cold wading through puddles with one foot on the sidewalk and the other in the water. He was fearless, tough, and led us to roofs, leaped across from one building to the next a distance of about 6 feet, yelling "Follow The Leader". Nobody got hurt.

There were a thousand or more children on one block, 50 buildings 20 flats to a building each family averaged 5 children on each side. We divided the block for fights with rocks and stones, accumulated in anticipation, at times added bricks removed from chimneys. We used covers from wash boilers as shields. The fights didn't last long before the police appeared and we dispersed. Most of the time, we gathered at the corner. Peacefully. Sometimes we'd climb rear fire escapes and steal seltzer bottles, break off the lead valves, crush and sell to a junk man.

The Irish cop covered our beat was beloved by all. We'd hang on to his legs, laughing and he'd carry us along for a few steps, but when he called "Halt" and wasn't obeyed while running away, he threw his night stick along the ground so expertly, throwing one down by striking between the feet. He never missed, regardless the distance.

Automobiles were rather scarce in the early 1900's. The neighborhood smithy was kept pretty busy. We would visit him. He let us pick up discarded horse shoe nails we fashioned into rings. He was a tall, powerful orthodox Jew, with a long black beard, "a mighty man was he". When an auto did appear we ran after it yelling "Get a horse".

Every summer, a boat was anchored in the East River used as a swimming pool. Slats on the bottom about 3 feet deep filled with water for swimming or just playing around. Slats on the sides help us push the garbage, filth and turds out. The kids loved splashing about, oblivious to the dangers. Those that survived, and I was one, built an immunity that lasted till today. Boys came in the nude on "boys day" girls on girls' day. A guard once stopped me, warned that I had to wear a bathing suit, trunks and a shirt, as I was developing a fuzz under my nose and my penis was getting longer.

As a child I was sickly and once developed a large carbuncle behind my left ear, it was called a *Maka* and very painful. No home treatment helped so mother took me to Gouverneur Hospital. Using no anesthetic, the doctor cut a hole on each side with surgical shears to drain the puss and cleaned it with gauze saturated with carbolic acid. The scars are still there.

I took my brothers to the free baths and once while soaping them I slipped and fell on a broken milk bottle left unnoticed, that cut a deep hole in my right elbow. It bled profusely, I found a rag to stem the bleeding and used it as a bandage and never told my mother. It healed without problems, but I still have the scar.

We managed to obtain tickets for an outing to Coney Island, preparing the family was quite hectic, getting sandwiches made, and the young ones, Max and Al dressed. With mother in the lead, Molly, Annie, Max, Al and I

were off on the grand adventure, a picnic on beach. We went by train for the first time, that was before subway and elevator, reached there. It was most exciting and unforgettable experience to see the vast ocean and to play in the sand.

I assumed responsibility for Max and Al. Max was the gentler, Al the stronger always ready for a fight. The two were inseparable. Our conversation at home and in the street was Yiddish, but when we were with others we switched to English, made us feel, I suppose closer to one another. English was typical New Yorkese (titty toid, etc.) with curses and filth. We slowly improved after school. When Max was losing a fight, I made Al take over and soon the fight was over, the opponent ran away. Al was strong and had a terrific punch. He loved to do pin wheels on cross bars rapidly gyrated, faster and faster, until he got dizzy. I warned him some day he would scramble his brains.

Al caused a lot of excitement one day and Max was not involved, I can't remember where Max was that day. Mother asked me to run an errand to buy some groceries and she couldn't find her purse, that so often happened, but this time a thorough search didn't locate it and she panicked, she cried "*Ma bartele, ma bartele*" (My purse, my purse) and Al also was missing. I went to search for him and found him behind the hall stairs, his shirt unbuttoned and stuck inside was the pocketbook opened with money sticking out. He was busily chewing candy with about a half dozen friends. Al did the treating. Only a few cents were missing, but he got a severe licking.

He had a voracious appetite, at lunch time when the noon bell of the school pealed its first sound, Al was at the door of our flat before the bell stopped ringing, flung open the door and yelled "*Epis Essen*" (Food.. Food) and mother had to have it on the table or he'd yell. Once he and Max couldn't settle their quarrel in the house, decided to fight it outside, but soon returned with their arms around one another, when asked "what Happened?" Max replied "We can't fight, we are brothers." Max broke a leg trying to climb over a fence, but the cast never slowed him down.

Father was very strict about food, it had to be kosher. He completely trusted a "holy" man who churned butter in a basement that tasted better and was 'Home Made'. The merchant's plant was inspected by the Board of Health and immediately closed. He was found to add lard to improve taste. Pa never ate butter again.

There were times when things were tough, not enough money came in. Mother decided to help, she got a case of eggs on consignment, sat at the stoop on the sidewalk with lots of foot traffic and did business. It didn't last too long.

Chapter 4

Father had two brothers in America when He arrived, one soon committed suicide, the other was Zaida, his oldest brother who was blind, a widower with five children, the eldest was Harry who assumed the responsibility for the family, a hard-working gentle man. Next was Charlie, with a hugh nose and then Max, Bennie and Annie. Three boys, Harry, Max and Charlie became painters trained by their cousin Hermann Nechels, Rose's father.

Max became a sailor on a Standard Oil sailing vessel and was treated most cruelly, beaten physically, thrown into irons that left him unable to work. He wound up in a mental institution for the rest of his life.

Annie became a prostitute, shipped to Argentina where she died. Bennie drifted into begging. Harry and Charlie lived normal lives. Harry married Rose Shupler who was unable to become pregnant, until she took the advice of a friend and left for Europe, back to where she was born. Ater she returned she became pregnant and gave birth to a son and five more children followed.

Zaida had to have therapy and I was chosen to lead him to the hospitals for treatments. We went on street cars and I held his arm while he used his cane, rarely a word passed between us, except to complain. We often ended up visiting his cousin Hermann in his paint store on West 39th Street, where we were fed and he got a hand out. In my usual preoccupation, day dreaming, I once walked him into a lamp post, he got a bump on his head and I got a well-deserved caning. I quit right after.

I was invited to stay overnight at his home and while I protested, I was urged to accept. They lived in Brownsville, that meant an elevator ride, in the same type of flat, I slept on the floor. During the night I began to cry I wanted to go home, poor Harry had to get up and he took me home.

We never openly showed any affection, but we loved one another in many of our acts. Annie and Molly were very close with the same friends, the same as with Max and Al. One Christmas Eve Sadie loaded one of her stockings with candy and hung it on the mantel piece for me. The next morning I was sure Santa brought it. At school emphasis was on singing of Christmas, when the song "Twas the night before Christmas", I tried to hide under the desk when it came to "and St. Nicholas would soon be there", the children turned and pointed fingers at me.

The church across the street had a Christmas party, a friend and I went. A

kindly man warmly welcomed us, paid particular attention to me loaded us with candy and talked that Christ loved little children that frightened us, we edged closer to the door, he asked me to promise I would soon return, I nodded and ran. I told my mother; it made her very angry. I promised never to go near the church again. I later learned that the kindly man was a former Jewish Rabbi converted to Christianity became a minister, his missionary zeal was to get Jews to convert.

Most donations by Jews went to the Jewish National Fund to buy land in Jerusalem, but many Christian donations were for missionary work. A friend's family were very poor, the father died and the mother and her 4 children were penniless. This church converted them, supplied the rent, food and clothing. There was no other place for them to go.

Streets were lit by gas lamps on high posts on every corner, serviced by a man with along stick, a lighted wick and hook to open the gas valve, before sunset, returned at sunrise to turn it off. Transportation was horse drawn street cars, carriages and wagons. We hitched rides on the Delancey Street horse cars, the conductor would chase us off. I once fell off into the mud on a rainy day. We did a lot of walking. Then came electric cable cars, an arm holding the cable extended to electric wires overhead. Pranksters loved to pull down the extension and cut power off. The conductor needed help to get it back.

Halloween was an exciting time. We turned our coats inside out, filled long stockings with flour or ashes, hit every kid in sight and had a great time. Every thing made of wood and could be torn off was carried away, was loaded onto a big bonfire, gates fences, cellar covers and even heavy freight wagons. All enjoyed the excitement without any concern of the damage.

The 1904 Presidential Campaign was another excitement for me. Teddy Roosevelt ran against Alton B. Parker, a popular judge, the Democrat. We were against Tammany so we distributed Roosevelt flyers, sang songs about the "Rotten Democrats". Roosevelt had an easy victory but Tammany carried New York City. That night there was a huge victory march, with torches and brooms, signifying a "clean sweep".

St. Marks Church on the Bowery arranged an outing and boat ride, for poor families, I managed to obtain a ticket. It was for Sunday June 15, 1904, my mother forgot to wake me up early so I had to run all the way from my home and arrived at the East River landing just as they were closing the gate, refused to let me jump on as the boat had already left the dock. I was mad and I cried feeling miserable, blaming it all on my mother. The boat was General Slocum, with over 1000 women and children aboard, caught fire within the hour of leaving, it overturned and few were saved, one of the worse disasters in America, and I missed it by seconds. Fate? luck?

The East Side had many fascinations, with its sounds and odors, of fresh baked goods, herrings, pickles. Bread was most tasty, pumpernickel, well baked rye with kimmel seeds, rolls, cakes all mouth-watering. And the wurst stores, (now delies), pickle barrels you stuck your hand in to get the big ones, herring, wrapped in newspaper, corned beef, pastrami, salami, bologna. For 15¢ you could buy a "Club Sandwich" thick slices of meat, on a ½ loaf of long rye bread with mustard and pickle, to satisfy the hungriest boy.

Candy stores were everywhere, store windows were opened, with a

counter and fountain for drinks. For 2¢ you got a glass of plain seltzer water and for another penny, fruit syrup. Inside were glass cases of candy, newspapers and books. We used to hang around this one store run by Mrs. Samuel Ornitz. Sam was usually there, reading, rarely waited on anyone. I often spoke to him about living, the future. He had written a book, "Haunch, Paunch and Jowl" an expose of political life in New York, specially the crooked judges: it made his reputation. He was a socialist, later became a screen writer and one of the Hollywood 10 in McCarthy's witch hunt. The judge he condemned was Aaron J. Levy, famous on the East Side, high in Jewish circles.

I sold Jewish newspapers while the regular newsboy was sick. I carried 3 daily papers, calling out the names: Morning Journal, Freiheit and Forvitz for 1¢ in restaurants. Wages were low but food was cheap. Saloon were on every other block, competition was fierce, brewers subsidized them, specially in placing signs and offering special deals. There was a sign over a saloon, with a hugh picture of a schooner of beer, a ladder alongside and a man of top poised for a dive, a big 5¢ on its side, the price included a free lunch, a sandwich or even stew. Kosher meals in restaurants cost from 20¢ up, including soup and meat dish.

Charlie, my brother caught pneumonia, then almost a death warrant. He laid in bed in the front room, the doctor from Essex Street free clinic treated him with *Bankis*, small vacuum cups heated with alcohol to cause a vacuum and placed on his back and chest to draw pressure from the affected areas, an old remedy, but he didn't seem to respond, few recovered. The crises was approaching, on Saturday night, mother took me with her to see the *Roove*, head rabbi to pray. Her head was bowed, dispondent and miserable. She had me stay outside.

The style of the times was a hand made fob, made by braiding shoe laces, with space inside for a dice and a fringe on the bottom. I was most proud of the one I made and wore at my waist. Some boys saw my fob and tried to tear it off but I held on with my right hand and struck out at them with my left. One boy with a knife tried to slash it off, instead almost cut my finger off. Blood spurt out that frightened them away. I found a rag, staunched the blood and used it as a bandage. My mother never noticed it. When she left the *Roove's* place, her eyes were shining, her back was straight and she was smiling and I asked her what had happened, she replied "Bennie, your brother will be alright, I gave him a new name". The doctor was just leaving when we entered the house and said "Mrs. Nicholas, your son will be O.K. he just passed the crises." He soon began to improved, but I still have a deep scar on my forefinger.

There was little music in my house, except some Jewish ditties, most of them funny, humming some popular tunes that we learned from peddlers plugging songs. A man, carried a wooden box, stopped at street corners, got on his box held a sheaf of papers with words of the song he was plugging and started to sing, over and over. A crowd soon gathered, we all joined in, then he sold the sheet for a penny or two and went off to a different corner. Jewish and Hebrew songs were peddled the same way.

Popular music was just about coming into its own. Among those early immigrants were experienced musicians, Italians and Jews, slowly were absorbed

in American culture and began writing and playing their music and it took hold. Many musicians believe it started Tin Pan Alley. There was other music, first opera, then organs crried on the backs of organ grinders, with a monkey tied on a leash, who climbed up the legs to collect pennies or even up fire escapes. Some had parrots and a box with fortunes on small cards, the parrot would pick one for a donor. Later came the Hurdy Gurdy carts played popular songs and children danced and sang. Frustrated opera singers covered back yards, sang their hearts out for money thrown from the windows and some were very good.

With all other changes, clothing styles led the rest. After 1901, Queen Victoria's death, the bustle slowly disappeared but the hour-glass figure remained. Women's shoes were narrow, ending in a point and buttoned with a button hook, the metal hooks laced with shoe laces followed, then full lacings. $\frac{1}{2}$ shoes called pumps were worn for fancy balls and full dress. Large picture hats were decorated with Ostrich feathers and or with artificial flowers, most attractive.

Chapter 6

Charlie had many friends, his best one at that time was Harry Sheirer, a young policeman. They had a quarrel and decided to fight it out. The date was fixed, Sunday morning in front of R.H. Hoe and Co.'s plant on Cannon Street, deserted on that day. A large crowd encircled the gladiators, I had trouble finding a place to stand and had to be satisfied looking between the big boys legs. They stripped to the waist, fought without a stop, bets were made and after an hour or more, they were both too tired to continue. I kept running around for a better view, crying my brother is being hurt, and walked home with him, praising his prowess and was sure he would beat the hell out of him when they resumed at a later date. They made up and the fight was never continued. They fought with fists, no gloves, no rounds.

A terrible event happened on the same street during a funeral procession for the top and most important Jewish Rabbi of his day. A long line of mourners followed the hearse, praying. Out of a top window of the plant, pails of boiling water were thrown, scalding many people, and caused a near riot. Mourners tried to tear the bricks from the walls, until the police came. I don't know if anyone was arrested.

A nickelodeum opened in the neighborhood about 1905, for 5¢ showed "moving" pictures in a large vacant store, it won immediate success and caused great excitement. The shows were crude, many delays, but a new and different form of entertainment. Stock companies performed in local theatres, the most beloved and famous was the Corse Payton Stock Co. on 14th street, prices were 10, 20 and 30 cents depended on location. The cast was expert, all melodramas, changed weekly. We cheered the hero and hissed the villain. They lasted a long time.

Minsky opened his first burlesque theatre, the Thalia on the Bowery and Charlie once took me there. It was a new and wonderful experience for me especially being with my big brother. I can well remember the clothes he wore, always in the highest style, peg top pants, narrow at the ankle, wide at the pockets he constantly pulled out, derby, high button shoes, neatly polished. He looked great and felt proud. We sat in the gallery and had a great time.

Women's clothes styles were slowly changing from bustles to wide skirts below the ankle. They wore camisoles before bras, (they came much later) tits wiggled when they walked. Shoes were long, narrow with pointed toes and

high heels, soon changed to metal hooks laced with shoe laces, then hooks were out and laces were in, up to the top, over the ankle. Old men's shoes were of vici kid, soft and pliable, with rubberize cloth one each side, no hooks or laces. Men's shoes were like women's

Sheet music was sold later by song writers and assistants on trucks played a piano, sung by the crew while they offered the sheet music for 10¢ or 3 sheets for 25¢ all over New York.

New York was divided in many specialized districts, ethnic, cultural etc. The center of the East Side, mostly Jews, Irish east around Goreck, Mangin and the river, Italian on the west, Mulberry St. old Italians played Bocci Ball on the lawns of neighborhood parks. An area called 4 Corners in the Italian neighborhood was a hang-out for gangs and many battles. The East and Hudson Rivers were outlets for sewers, polluted but kids used it for swimming, while pushing crap and garbage out of the way.

Chinatown was around Pell St. close to the Italians. Hidden away were opium parlors. Chinese Tongs ruled the community, some for good, occasionally wars broke out among them. Many whites enjoyed the restaurants, cautiously without any violence. There were few serious crimes, guns were rarely used.

Yorktown around East 86 St. was known as Germantown. Wall St., the financial district; Park Row, Newspapers; City Hall, Legal. 14th Street was then the center for theaters, melodramas and burlesque, fine restaurants and department stores. That was before Times Square.

I was slow in maturing. When I reached six my mother refused to enroll me in school, she feared I wasn't strong enough, I had to wait another year that I never made up. The school P.S. 77 on Sheriff was near our home. It had a large playground. Classes were separated, girls and boys in different rooms, and in different sections in the Assembly, each throwing glances at one another. In Fire drills, they were sent in different directions, it was difficult to get acquainted.

We learned the alphabet, singing a ditty, ABCDEFG . . HIJK . . LMNOP . . LMNOPQRST . . UVWXYZ, XYZ . . Oh dear me . . HOW CAN I LEARN MY ABC. I was an average student with little interest until I reached the 4th grade, my teacher was Elias Lieberman with a unique way of teaching. He made a game of learning, especially prepositions, with a song, reciting them in alphabetical order . . abroad, about, above, across, after, against, along, amid or amidst, among or amongst, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, between or betwixt, beyond, by, etc.; I can still recite after 75 years. He was already on his way to become a great poet, after he went through the offices of education. He was dearly loved and respected.

I came home from school around three o'clock, my friends already assembled and I was hungry, I'd call up to my mother on the fourth floor to throw down some bread; she packed a thick slice of delicious rye bread, thick with butter and the hard back with plenty of rubbed garlick, in newspaper. I never missed catching it. As soon as school vacation started, off went my clothing, underwear, shoes and stockings and I'd put on a pair of overalls, bare feet got tough as leather.

I loved to read, sometimes lying in my bed on the floor with a lit candle, adventure stories, about great fictitious athletes, Baseball pitcher Frank Mer-

riwell, Nick Carter, great detective, Horatio Alger, Aesops Fables.

Athletic meets in the playground were regular events most pupils took part. I ran 50 yards but never finished first.

When a band wasn't performing, the platform was used by ambitious young performers for practice and try out their stuff. Some danced on skates, jigging and tap dancing, others acrobats, singers, comedians, some made it in big time, among those, Georgie Jessel, Eddie Cantor, Georgie Price, George Burns and others. Fanny Brice I slightly knew as a shy kid, older than me, she was funny when she put on her Yiddish accent.

Financial conditions improved for us as the older children started to work, Sadie was 12, Charlie not much older when he got a job delivering telegrams, for the American District Telegram Co. His cap with ADT on it was his uniform, kids called it MUT. Molly got a job making sample cards, pasting small swatches on cards; Annie as a sewing machine operator. The money they brought in, helped support the family, enabled us to move to better quarters, with cold water sinks in the kitchen and toilets in the halls.

A good friend was a Hungarian Catholic in our neighborhood, one of few nonJewish families. Our parents accepted our friendship. Israel Zangwill published his scientific study, called The "Melting Pot", that this wonderful city of New York in America brought in people of all Ethnic groups, who would eventually melt into a new Ethnic group and thus develop the "American Culture". Forty or more years later, two researchers published their study they called "Melting Pot, Revisited", refuting all of Zangwell's conclusions. They followed each group Zangwell wrote about and found that Jews who moved out of the East Side to the suburb or to any other area, joined other Jews who had gone before them. The same pattern was followed by every other group, that suggested, people feel more secure with their own kind.

There were few incidents of anti-semitism, only when we ventured out of our neighborhood were we chased and beaten, we did the same to them. The word anti-semitism was unheard of. Chinese were treated most cruelly in every neighborhood. The pigtails they all wore were pulled, chased by kids, mimicked and dead rats thrown through the transom of their stores. These hard working people, exploited by their own, with no time off, sleeping in shifts on cots along walls; hardly time to cool the bedding.

Bicycles were rented for pennies an hour, the first and only time I got on one, I had to leave my hat and jacket as deposit. It was difficult to balance, wobbly, I was thrown off several times, the last damaged the bike. I walked it back into the store, with an innocent look, hoped the damage would escape the eagle eye of the lady owner, but she caught me, began beating me with my cap and coat, yelled "You dirty bastard, dont you ever come near my store again", I never did nor did I learn to ride a 2 wheel bike.

I had a great desire to play pool, but you had to wear long pants to prove you are old enough. I put on Charlie's long pants, far too big, but couldn't get away with it, so after many attempts, I gave up and never did learn.

Father got his citizenship papers not long after the family arrived, even though he couldn't read or write. He marked his ballot with an X, after the Tammany Hall captain paid him \$3 and pointed to the column he should mark. He never missed the opportunity to vote. The rest of the family automatically became citizens but Charlie had to use Father's papers to

register the first time. Once he was on the voting roll he didn't need them.

A red headed kid became my friend and visited with me regularly. He was a brilliant Hebrew scholar. Once he came with a swollen cheek, asked that I accompany him to a dentist to have the tooth removed. There was a barber across the street, a barber pole and a sign above over his entrance of a big tooth, marked "Dentist upstairs". The barber used long plyers to extract the tooth and pulled part of his gum all for 25¢. That night his family had to rush him to the hospital to stop the hemorrhaging, he recovered.

The Williamsburg Bridge was completed in 1903, the approach to the bridge was along Delancey Street from the Bowery to the river, all buildings had to be razed, displaced many residents and a million rats. They had to find homes elsewhere. The rats landed in nearby cellars. We stored our coal in a bin assigned to us, but we were afraid to go down — all except my sister Molly, fearless and courageous. She took a pail, shovel and a baseball bat, started swinging as soon as she got down, the rats scurried away.

Some time before the bridge opened to passengers, a friend and I decided to venture across to Williamsburg. It was an adventure to go to a new unknown area, we found it strange, yet familiar, same tenements and dirty. After all the rubble was removed and the bridge opened to traffic, peddlers all Italians used the area on Fridays, most selling "Fresh Fish". Jewish housewives came in droves to buy fresh fish for gifelta fish, attracted because of good quality and price, but some were not satisfied. One woman picked up a fish, opened its gill and stuck her nose in, the peddler got terribly angry, grabbed the fish from her hand and said "Hey Sheeny, don smella there, smella here", pointed to his behind.

The New York subway was completed from the Battery to the upper West Side and opened on October 27, 1904. A French worker on the subway made an important discovery, a time and motion study of how to estimate the cost to remove one cubic yard of earth. His name was Berday, I believe was the father of efficient management controls.

My cousin Bennie took me to an oyster restaurant and ordered soft shelled crabs for us. I got a slight guilty feeling but ate the crab with relish, I knew it was against our dietary laws. Later we quarreled, Bennie squealed to my father, I got a severe licking. A dress salesman hired me to carry his heavy sample bags for the day for \$1 and lunch. I ordered ham and eggs, the salesman looked surprised and asked if I knew it was traef (not Kosher). Oh yes, I said "I always wanted to taste it".

Chapter 7

Clark House, one of four settlement houses on the East Side, was located on Rivington and Cannon Streets, others were on Madison Street, University House and Educational Alliance, famous for attracting intellectuals. All were equipped with gymnasiums, meeting and reading and play rooms. The concept was the brain child of Mrs. Hull a philanthropist who built the famous Hull House in Chicago for a place where people could gather for social and educational purposes and to keep young people off the streets and out of mischief. Girls and boys used the facilities on different days.

We used it daily, Mike Hertzoff, Jack Waldman and I formed a basketball team called Olympia Club and had shirts made with the name on them. We also bought sneakers and shorts and challenged other clubs. One such club was captained by my old friend Gimpy, he also had a hump on his back. He was rough and tough, we hated to tackle him and his team usually won. His brothers became college basketball stars. Professional prize fighters used the gymnasium to train, our idol was Leach Cross, a young dental student and a great fighter, fought for the World Lightweight title, but lost. He would invite me to put on gloves and box with him.

There was an empty lot across the street filled with mounds of dirt but that didn't stop us from playing baseball, bases placed on top of mounds, making running bases uneven and caused many errors. Sides were chosen and captains were appointed, usually the same ones every time, with lots of excitement and complaining. If an error was made, you could expect a kick in the behind or a punch. We were most serious. Later the grounds were cleared and leveled, covered with asphalt, fenced in and a director hired. It became a city playground with swings and athletic equipment.

The director once arranged a baseball game with a team from another playground and chose one on Staten Island, a place we've never been to. I was on our team, we walked to the ferry landing, took the ferry to Staten Island, enjoyed it immensely.

The playground was near the ferry landing in a poor Irish section. We were beating them handily, I caught a lucky ball on its way to a home run, then it started to rain, ending the game. We began running to the ferry landing, the Irish kids came after us, threw stones and yelled "Jew Bastards, Sheenies, Kikes", etc. but we laughed all the way home and for a long time we recounted our success.

One boy in our crowd always had money he would show us. His friends were local thugs and we were certain he was used sexually, he had "protection" and we were afraid to fight him, except Mike Hertzoff would kick him in the behind and chase him away. We were aware of being exploited, abused sexually but managed to escape. Fist fights were part of our daily diet, often just a few blows exchanged without damage, except one fight I had, I broke the fellow's nose and felt sorry afterward.

We were enthusiastic followers of baseball, our favorites, the New York Giants with our heroes Mike Donlan, the home run king; Christy Matthewson, and Joe McGinty, pitchers; Roger Bresnahan, catcher. McGinty was called the Iron Man, who often pitched both games of double headers. Prize Fighters were our great interest, Jim Corbet, Jack Jeffreys, Bennie Léonard, light-weight World's Champion; Leach Cross, and we traded picture cigarette cards of these athletes and shot craps for them.

We never gave up playing "Pussy Cat", played with similar rules of baseball, except a stick about 18 inches bat cut from a broom handle and a "cat" 6 inch peg with a tapered end. Bases were set, home plate marked, but there was no pitcher. The team at bat would set the peg on the base and hit it as far as possible, the opposing players tried to catch it or field it. We often played along R.H. Hoe factory where there was little traffic. Most days the Hoe workers played the game during the lunch hour. I happened to walk on that street and was hit by the peg, bent my nose out of shape and was sore for a month. It is still slightly bent.

Tzaller, father's best friend, finally was able to bring his family over, and he brought his two young sons to visit. We got along well with the boys and thought we should have some fun, find out if they could read English. They were shown the sport page of the Evening Journal with the heading "Giants beat Pirates and Wagner," (the greatest shortstop and champion hitter.) They read "Gints bet Perits und Vognor" and we became hysterical. They intergrated rapidly and became very successful.

Molly was courted by a young dentist who had treated her teeth and they fell in love and planned to marry. He was short, stocky, an athlete, had won a gold charm football, and a Christian. He offered to undergo a Jewish ritual conversion, even circumcision, but Mother refused to agree to the marriage, threatened to commit suicide if Molly married him. She insisted that no child of hers could ever marry out of our religion with her permission. That settled it and he left with a broken heart. It was a great disappointment to all of us, we really loved the guy who soon disappeared. Molly never got over it and it was one of the few times I got angry with Mother.

One of our friends announced to the boys gathered that he knew of a whorehouse where they charged 25¢ and invited us to come with him. I refused, I was afraid but most of the others accepted. A close friend who went, got syphilis and was ruined. Another boy was struck down with Spinal Meningites and died within a week.

A large lumber yard along the river front was often used for love making. I took a girl there hoping for a good time, but she was so boring, complained how poor they were and how mean she was treated I felt pity and took her home. I later found she played the field.

Time for my Bar Mitzvah was approaching and I was unprepared, needed

help, so I called upon my redheaded friend, that fine Hebrew scholar. He came every day after school and tutored me until I was letter perfect. Speeches were not part of the ceremony. Services were held in the synagogue, I was called up to read passages in the Torah by following the Hebrew words pointed to with a gold finger by the rabbi. I also led the congregation in prayers, and it was all over, after the members came to congratulate me. We served some cookies a few drinks, no big deal, no fuss. Later I had to be coached to use Phylacteries in my daily morning prayer, small leather cases holding scripture, one fastened with leather thongs on the forehead, the other on the muscle of the left arm held on by winding a leather strap with designated number of turns, finally around the middle finger. They are kissed before and after the service. I quit using them a few weeks later.

My parents took me to buy a new suit for the Bar Mitzvah, the first, to Division Street, a coat, vest and knickers that strapped under the knee. Division Street was famous for top quality clothes at low prices that required hard bargaining. Merchants were most aggressive, by just looking in the window was a signal for a salesman to rush out and attempt to drag you in, they may still be doing it.

There were no junior high schools, after the sixth grade we were transferred from P.S. 34 to P.S. 62 corner Hester and Essex Streets, about a mile away. It was a new school that had already established a fine reputation of high scholastic and athletics that gave all students great pride. One incident, we felt great shame was a pupil in my class got angry at Mr. Becker, our teacher and stabbed him with a knife, not too seriously. The boy was arrested, the teacher recovered, but we had a hard time living it down.

Young Mintz was my friend and protected me in school when bigger boys threatened me. I helped him with his home work. His father owned a famous wurst store on Rivington Street. Young Mintz was tall and athletic and an excellent basketball player. His father was also tall with a long black beard and a holy look, but a scandal broke out, his Christian maid became pregnant, he was responsible. The East Side buzzed with the shame.

I graduated from P.S. 62 in February 1909, we still lived on the East Side and entered De Witt Clinton High School on West 59th St. and Columbus Avenue. Each day I traveled by subway from Spring St. Station to Columbus Circle and walked 2 blocks to the school.

I got 10¢ for fare and a tomato herring sandwich on thick slices of rye bread. The trip to the subway station was about 2 miles through an Italian neighborhood; alone I had no trouble as I was sort of swarthy, but with friends, we were chased and insulted. On most days we walked home, over 10 miles to save a nickel fare on nice days, used the money to shoot craps Saturday mornings and I always lost. I tried out for the junior basketball team without success. I worked out in the gymnasium for a while every day, became fascinated with chinning, practiced, practiced until I broke the school record of 75 without supervision, then we walked home.

This day I arrived home and immediately fell into a coma, a doctor called, a nurse assigned to take care of me. In about a week, I opened my eyes, the nurse bent over with a big smile said "Welcome back, you have beautiful teeth". I suffered an enlarged heart, lucky to recover without serious damage. I was sent to a convalescent home in a town along the Hudson, a lovely farm

area about 50 miles north of New York City. I had my first sight of live cows, pigs and fruit trees. After a few days of rest, my energy returned, I began running, hurdling over hedges, too impatient to relax too long. Another patient and I would lie on the grass and he told me he was unhappy with his wife and blamed her for him getting sick, he couldn't satisfy her sexually enough, she constantly pressured him, and she was too big. He hated her. I stayed two weeks.

Although I was promoted on my return after the summer vacation, and didn't finish the term, I flunked in Latin, had to take it over again. I noticed a name of I. Nechols on the blackboard, left there from an earlier class, but didn't connect it to anyone I knew. One day a tall blond boy came to my class and asked to see Ben Nicholas. It was my third cousin Irving Nechols, 6 months younger and a class higher. We ate lunch together every noon, Irving marveled that I always ate tomato herring sandwiches.

B.F. Keith had a chain of vaudeville houses all over America and one on West 57 Street. When a favorite act or comedian played there, I went to see it, played hooky, sat on the gallery seat cost 10 or 15¢. they all were great and famous performers, very funny; Weber & Fields, (German accent), Avon Comedy 4 (Jewish) Lou and Ben Welsh, the funniest Jewish comedians of the day, Smith & Dale (Jewish) whose story was recently staged as the "Sunshine Boys". Ben Welsh always slayed me with his monologue "I had a fight wid a fella, he grabbed me by de troat, but I grabbed him by the pocketbook". He later lost his sight and had to be led on the stage to do his act.

Columbus Circle was the starting point of many parades, one that stands out in my mind was the celebration parade of the return of Ex-President Theodore Roosevelt from his search for the "River of Doubt" in the wilds of South America. It was never found, to my knowledge. Teddy with his great toothy smile, rode a spirited stallion in the lead, bands played, leading hundreds of marchers, down Broadway. People lined both sides of the streets, many standing on wooden boxes. Easter and St. Patrick parades started, I believe, on Fifth Ave.

Chapter 8

Charlie introduced Sadie to Sam Dolmatz who soon started calling on her, but Charlie objected to their going steady. Sam was a tough guy, leader of his block, unreliable and had only one eye; he lost the other as a young man in an accident. Sam's father owned a barber shop so Sam was nicknamed Bob to the very end. He had a great way with people, could get them to do almost anything he wanted, they loved him. That asset proved of great help to him in latter years when this uneducated poor boy made close friends with the most sophisticated intellectuals in New York, writers, theatrical, comics, especially the Marks Brothers.

When the young people decided to get married, the Dolmatzes insisted there first be an engagement party, we reluctantly agreed and hired a hall, a band and a catered dinner that stripped our coffers almost bare. Charlie was in a tuberculosis Hospital in Raybrook, Lake Saranac, was not able to attend, but Minnie Berger to whom he was sort of engaged and her friend Yetta Bloom were invited, their entance caused lots of excitement. They were dressed in the height of fashion, large picture hats with veils, long dresses with tight waists and high button shoes. They were salesgirls in Siegel & Cooper Department store on 14th St. near Fifth Ave.

Charlie was stricken with what was then called consumption and was sent to Raybrook for treatment. he laid outdoors all day, warmly wrapped in blankets, summer and winter and fed nourishing foods. He gained weight and was taught how to live to survive. He was sent home within the year. Charlie and I shared the bedroom. He lectured me on the importance of fresh air, kept the window open when it was snowing and extremely cold. There was no heat in the room and some mornings snow piled high. He told me how he hated to get married and wished he could escape, but the date was set. He was earning \$12.00 per week when he got married. He was a printer. They settled in Brownsville In Brooklyn. Howard was born in 1911.

Sam & Sadie had already married, he without a job but had planned to join the husband of Sadie's friend in the picture frame business in Philadelphia where Gladys was born November 1909. The partnership didn't last long so they returned to New York, had no trouble in getting a job as a dress salesman and they moved out of the East Side. Gladys was an amazing child, walked and talked before one year old, mixed Yiddish and English "Don carry Goldila,

Goldila vill fall". Arnold was born two years later. Sunday mornings I'd try to sleep late but Sadie would leave her 2 children by throwing them into my bed while Sam and Sadie went on dates. It got me very angry, but not for long.

After Molly and Annie began to work, we had little communication. I slept in the same room with Molly. she'd get up early, sat on the side of her bed for about 10 minutes, yawning, stretching and scratching, slowly put on her stockings until fully awake, then she really moved. Molly was the most dependable and talented of us all, Sadie was Mother's confidant, Annie and Molly close friends, though I have little recollection of Annie.

Gertie was the last born and the only one born in the 20th century. As with all the others, except me, she was delivered by a midwife. A sort of a cradle was set and small flags were hung her around it to "keep the evil one away", but had little effect. In later years she had many unfortunate illnesses, St. Vitus Dance, a large stomach tumor that had to be operated upon and Mumps that sent her to the Mt. Lebanon Hospital across the street. Father came home and was told about Gertie, without thinking he ran to see her and was struck by a street car, landed in the Lincoln Hospital some distance away. He had a concussion from which he never fully recovered. We didn't know who to call on first. We were living in the Bronx on East 152 Street, near the subway station.

Annie worked as a seamstress on foot operated sewing machines for the Triangle Shirtwaist factory. I was still in school when on March 25th, 1911 a fire broke out, all doors were locked to keep out visitors and from workers sneaking out. The doors opened inside, thus trapping hundreds of girls behind the locked doors. Bodies were piled high, burnt beyond recognition. We couldn't find Annie but Raisele, Mother's friend found her. It was the most dreadful blow, Mother never really recovered from it.

The funeral attracted many people, many friends and *landsmen*. It started from the Lemberger synagogue on the East Side, the hearse followed by a long line of mourners, some old bearded Jews shaking alms boxes, begging for donations for the poor and for the National fund to purchase land in Jerusalem. Most Jewish families had similar alms boxes in their homes. She was buried in the Lemberger's section of the cemetery where both our parents now lie. At the grave site, the rabbi cut a section of the male's clothes, "rent the garment" sort of, we had to wear during the Shiva, the seven day mourning period. All mirrors were covered, we sat in stocking feet on wooden boxes and ate on larger boxes. Neighbors came in each morning, formed a *minyón* of 12 males for morning prayers and returned each evening.

For years I was disturbed by my lack of sorrow or emotion of Annie's tragedy, often asked myself why. I loved my sister. I now believe it was a time when I felt unhappy, bored, aimless even with my school, left out of everything, so when a few days later Charlie came to our home and told me I had to quit school and go to work, I didn't protest. He came back, took me to find a job and he did. It was errand boy for Weisenburger & Mock, millenary accessories, flowers and Ostrich feathers. Pay was \$3.00 per week for 60 hours, ½ hour earlier on Saturday.

The Red Cross visited us later to express sympathy, gave mother \$100 to help for the loss of Annie's wages. It was gratefully accepted. The great tragedy of this event brought revulsion throughout the country and a demand

to reform, the working conditions for women, that for the first time, new laws were enacted to protect working women. One of the leaders in this movement was Francis Perkins, later appointed F.D.R.'s Secretary of Labor, the first woman in a Presidential Cabinet.

A new statute was passed outlawing the use of Ostrich feathers, it put my firm out of business. On my own, I got a job with an Architectural magazine as office and errand boy, to carry the photographic equipment. The most important assignment was to photograph the New York Public Library on Fifth Ave. cor. 42nd Street, before it was officially opened. The photographers were most kind by explaining what they were trying to capture, all the fine details taken while the library was bare. It was exciting, but the firm had problems and sold out to another publisher and I went along with the deal — they were photogravure printers who printed from copper engraved plates, that were locked to a flat bed, ink rolled on by hand, wiped with a rag, then talcum powder used to polish the surface, paper applied, and the padded top lowered by a wheel and tightened to apply pressure. The printer's assistant, removed the paper and placed tissue to keep it from offset, the next print. It was slow and expensive but each copy was perfect.

My job was to sweep floors and run errands. I unconsciously pushed the broom or stepped on the foot of an elderly printer that enraged him, he called me a Jew Bastard — that I did it on purpose, I called him an old bastard. His son who was also a printer came after me, his eyes blazing with hatred, tried to hit me, I hit him only once, blackened his eye and that was enough. He went to the boss to complain, the boss called me in to hear my side that I wouldn't take "Jew bastard" from anybody. I was told to go back to work and stay clear of them. One of the copper engravers was the president of the A.A.U. Amateur Athletic Union, the ultimate authority of all amateur athletic activities.

With newer and cheaper methods of photogravure printing, my firm changed hands again — I went with the new firm. There were many women employed, two girls in particular I recall got into an argument of, who had the bigger and firmer tits and asked me to judge. After fondling each one and making wise cracks, I made my decision and tried to date the winner, she refused and the other got mad at me.

We often had to work late, girls would prepare coffee and sandwiches, in another room that was dark. One insisted I stay with her until the coffee was finished — she was engaged to be married — small, with a snub, upturned nose. As soon as we were alone she grabbed me, began to squeeze and kiss me, rubbed against me as hard as possible. Later she and I were sent to take inventory in an empty loft they owned, I was an escort. There I lost my virginity. We were sent often, on the last visit I was caught by a man who wanted to rent the loft, I came out of the room we were in, with my pants down. She had to be assured the man never saw me until I was decent. That was the last time we were sent.

I was entitled to a week's vacation and got Max to take my place. He was a nuisance, restless. He hated the job, not enough physical activities and couldn't understand how I could like the job. The office girls complained he never sat still. Molly got Max a job as a plumber's helper with Sam Minskoff, a boss plumber and husband of Molly's friend. He stayed in the plumbing business the rest of his life.

The Nechols family were vacationing on a farm in Hudson, N.Y. I decided to join them. I traveled on the Hudson River Day Line, was met at the pier by the farmer's wagon and the Nechols children. The farm was out of the city, had large orchards of apple, peach and pear trees, cows and chickens. We kept busy picking and eating fruits, helped feed the chickens and enjoyed a great time. Max was relieved when I returned. Soon thereafter the firm went broke and I was out of a job. Did I bring hard luck with me?

Once again Charlie came to my rescue, a job was opened for a young man with C.S. Hammond & Co., Map Makers, where Charlie worked as a pressman. After being interviewed by Mr. Hammond, I was hired as a Jack-of-all-trades, sorting printing plates, learned to pick proper plates for various colors usually 3 colors of the rainbow. I learned to letter maps, proof read, was given many responsibilities and was appreciated by the staff and Mr. Hammond. I felt quite secure.

Only Rand McNally in Chicago was larger. The printing plant contained 3 hugh Meihle presses and many job presses, Charlie worked on a Meihle, sat high on a stool on top of the press feeding paper into it. His best friend was a deaf mute who taught Charlie the sign language — they communicated all day while feeding the presses. It was most amazing and made me proud of Charlie's wonderful ability.

Rumor reached Hammond that some men in the shop were talking to union organizers, Charlie was the ringleader so he was fired. I pleaded with Hammond to reconsider, my brother was a married man with two children. Hammond said he would like to accomodate me but he couldn't trust him again. Hammond was really fond of me, he once asked Snow if my family was related to royalty. I assured him we are poor, ordinary Jews as are most Jews, if people would try to know us better. Charlie soon opened the Metropolitan Press with a partner and was much better off.

Chapter 9

My favorite place for lunch was a saloon on Church Street, beer was 10¢ a glass double the price in other saloons. They served a thick cornbeef or tongue sandwich on rye bread, free. Henry Nichols once owned a saloon, beer 5¢ included a plate of goulash. Another favorite was the Exchange Buffet restaurant. Food was displayed on tables with prices marked. You went from table and pick-what you wanted. One table had Apple pie and a large plate of cheddar cheese, cut in cubes to help yourself for 5¢. When finished eating you approached the cashier and paid for what you ate. If you tried to cheat, an inspector tapped on your shoulder and recited ever item you ate and the amount you owed, warned you never to return.

Hammond was among the first to use a product for large presses. It was a grooved plate of correct height to replace printing from type, so difficult to get accurate registry. The new plates came with a special key to lock plates securely and made it easier to shift for perfect registry. It was a vast improvement in time and quality.

Hammond was short, stocky, with slightly protruding upper lip, a pleasant smile, silvered hair with an important appearance. He loved young women and tried to date some of them. His sister, Mrs Bird was his partner, the wife of a doctor. She seemed an exact duplicate and could have been his twin. She and her husband occasionally came to the office. Hammond's name was C.S. Hammond, the "C" stood for Caleb. His sons were also name Caleb but only used "C", the oldest was C. Dean Hammond and the other was C. Robert. Dean was plant manager, Robert a college student.

Richmond Snow was in charge of sales, advertising and the retail store on Church Street. We had received a new line of large maps brought over from Germany by a Jewish map maker who fled from the Nazis. Snow urged me to try out as a salesman to cover private and parochial schools. I called first on a Catholic high school and was met by a priest, I was frightened to talk to him. After a few such calls, I was taken off.

Dean was hospitalized with an appendicitis and had to be operated. It was a dangerous operation, but was successful, took months to recover. Hammond put me in charge of the shop with instructions to send anyone who gave me trouble in for for his check. I had no trouble. My job included proof-reading. I used the U.S. Printing Office instructions. A young woman read to me from

the original copy, I corrected the galley sheets. The girl was engaged, had a fight with her fiancée and looked for ways to punish him, asked me how to contact the Fire Department to report he had cheated on his entrance exams. I balled her out and she dropped it. They were married soon after.

After Dean returned, I was given a new assignment, to edit a World Almanac for newspapers. We printed the body, they, the cover and frontis sheet. I had to bring an old almanac up-to-date. I wrote to our foreign consulates for latest data. Little did I know how valuable the stamps would be. A prospective buyer from out of town stopped off to see Hammond, huddled over Hammond's desk and then they called me, to find out what the finished book would weigh. There was a dummy on Hammond's desk, I asked if that was the dummy of the almanac, when he answered yes, I suggested we weigh it and we would have the answer. Both men looked amazed. There was only one salesman selling the almanac all over the country, he left in January or February and didn't return home until November, and built up one of the largest circulations. He was married. One year, he had to be recalled home in the middle of the year as his wife was in the hospital after she attempted to commit suicide — her lover jilted her. He quit and we stopped printing it. War had started in Europe.

In 1916 Pancho Villa, a Mexican Revolutionist general attacked a town in Texas, President Wilson ordered an expeditionary force headed by General Pershing to capture him. It was an exciting time for us; we printed enlarged maps of Mexico, mounted one in the window of the store on church Street and every day we followed his progress, by placing colored pins along his route. The display attracted vast crowds and we got many orders for these maps, too many for our plant to handle, we made extra plates and farmed out the work to other plants and it was my job to coordinate the work and keep them supplied. I hired a taxi by the day and even Hammond had to have my permission to use it.

Richmond Snow was engaged to marry a girl in our office named Virginia and when they got married the joke around the office was "There will be six inches of snow in the middle of Virginia".

I was so busy, I hired an assistant, a fine young Italian and we became friends. He invited me to visit him one Sunday in the East Bronx, introduced his friends all smoking cigars and he gave one to me, the first I ever tried and liked it. The boys were rebels against the Catholic Church and often tried to disrupt the services.

Irving, Jesse and I became good friends, went everywhere together, sometimes we'd crash a Jewish wedding on the East Side and were welcome especially where there were few young men present, ate, drank and danced until closing time in the early morning hours, then had to take the girls home as far as East New York, miles away. We got to be good dancers, learned all the new steps and demonstrated them to a gathering of Rose's friends.

Irving graduated from high school, took a special course in advertising, got a job in a department store in Olean, N.Y. near Niagara Falls, as a copy writer. I soon began courting Rose, kept inviting her out, a steady visitor that started them talking; we were "keeping company".

War clouds were gathering, preparedness news became a big issue, parades were planned in every city and town to alert the public. New York City

arranged a massive parade, separate units for each industry. The Jewelry group was well organized and Jesse invited me to join him as he was active in it. I accepted, cigarette smoking was prohibited, chewing tobacco replaced it. I took one chew that sickened me, but continued marching, lines extended for miles, bands playing, flags flying, every state and city official marched with us. It was very successful.

On Good Friday, April 6, 1917 my Italian friend and I had lunch, stopped to see the big News Board in front of the New York World building on Park Row to see if Congress would declare war on Germany, as expected, on Good Friday, it was. My friend, a member of the New York National Guard said "I'm afraid this is the last you will see of me, I'm sure I'll be called out at once." I never saw him again.

A draft law soon passed for youths 18 years and older, only Charlie and I were eligible, Charlie, married, father of three children was never called. I tried to enlist, visited all the military recruiting stations, but was turned down on account of poor eyesight, and the physical I took when called by the draft board. I had to appear before an eye doctor every month. Jesse was among the first to be drafted and sent to a training camp in Georgia. Irving didn't fare any better than I, he was inducted close to the war's end and sent to Governor's Island where he met his future wife, Betty Liss.

Henry Ford made thousands of Model T Fords, fondly called "Tin Lizzies" and put the country on wheels, so what was needed were good road maps and Hammond decided to publish them, put me in charge. I wrote road instructions, usually copied from others: "Set your speedometer at zero at Columbus Circle, drive north to church, turn left for 5/8 miles to clothing store", etc. etc. Instructions were folded-into a cover of the map and were an immediate success. Business was booming with sales of European war and road maps.

There were some interesting people at Hammond's, a draftsman named Thompson, he was colorblind, couldn't tell the difference between red and green and had me help him. He taught me to letter and print; a married man he tried to date every girl in the shop. He invited Rose and me to a rally held in a huge tents set on the grounds of the old Polo baseball grounds to hear the famous evangelist Billy Sunday, a retired top baseball pitcher and a reformed drunk. Thompson, a church elder and usher at the meeting got us seats close to the speaker. There stood Billy on the platform, his arm outstretched as if he was to throw his favorite pitch, threw his arm out, pointing with his other hand on the ground and yelled "Devil, I defy you" over and over, you could feel the suspense, no one moved. It was so phony yet the crowd loved it.

Max got a job as a plumber at a ship building firm in New Orleans for the war. He was paid full union scale and plenty of overtime, the foremen made sure the men were not working too hard, the firm was paid cost plus. As he was sent from one job to another, a man followed him, he didn't know why, so he asked him, "Why are you following me?" the answer was, "I'm your helper".

The war was coming to a close. Rose and I decided to get engaged, I met her around lunch time and bought a small diamond engagement ring from a nearby jeweler, on leaving we heard the EXTRA "Armistice declared", but it was a false alarm, the armistice was signed a week later, November 11, 1918 at 11 o'clock, and the soldiers were soon coming home. There were wild celebra-

tions all over the world, it ended the "war to end all wars".

In 1917, a severe outbreak of Spanish Influenza struck the world. It hit the soldiers in the trenches, people everywhere and thousands died. Rose caught it too. I lived on 152 St. East Bronx and she on the West Side. I went to her every morning, hugged and cheered her up even after her doctor warned I would surely catch it. I escaped unaffected.

News from the front, the hardships endured by our troupes, list of names of those died or killed made those at home put forth a greater effort as every family was affected. New and fine patriotic songs were written by George M. Cohan, Irving Berlin and others became popular and sung everywhere. Drives for the sale of War Bonds engaged the services of famous greats of the theater. I felt left out, although I had to appear every month for an eye examination, when it was decided to draft me, it was too late, the armistice was signed. The war was over and the boys began returning home.

Irving and Jesse came home and the threesome renewed our friendship. Max got back to his work as a plumber. He was anxious to get a Master Plumber's license and had to pass an examination. He failed twice — he complained to his fellow worker, Goerge Meany's brother. Meany was president of the New York Plumbers Union and chairman of the Plumber Examination Board. The brother suggested he pay \$200 under the table, Max did and passed. He had enough money saved from his war work to go into business for himself as a contractor. For one job, he took on a partner, Jake. They accepted a job out of town, rented a room near the job, set the alarm for 5 A.M. Jake woke suddenly about 2 A.M. thought he overslept and hurriedly woke up Max. They hurriedly dressed and looked for a place to eat, soon learned of their mistake. When the job was finished, the partnership was finished.

Al became a rivetter's assistant, caught hot rivets in a pail for the rivetter. Later he became a rivetter, developed hugh muscles. In an argument with a co-worker who called Al a Jew bastard, Al beat the guy up almost knocked him off the bridge they were working on. He was sweet and gentle but a tough and strong fighter. Later he got a job with Wilmark, an Investigating Agency of New York with branches around the country. After a training period, he was sent to Chicago, the first time he ever went away from home and it was a trying experience.

With Charlie, Sadie, and Molly at work, Gertie helped with the housework. She was easy going, gentle and sweet, but a tigress when she washed the floor on her knees. If anyone dared to come into the room at that time, they were met with a yell, "Get the hell out of here" and a wet, dirty rag thrown in the face. At times she bullied us but being the baby, she received special attention. Rose got her, her first job in the Fifth Ave. Jewelry shop where she worked as secretary at the time.

I was becoming bored with my job at Hammond. Irving kept after me to quit as there were many fine opportunities outside. I finally made up my mind and gave Mr. Hammond and Snow plenty of notice. They did their best for me to stay, even offered a generous increase in salary and said how much they liked me. Had I known what the immediate future would be, I dont think I'd quit. I should have swallowed pride and asked to be taken back.

I took a job selling advertising, called on Cassidy & Goldberg, high quali-

ty manufacturers of Ladies Coats and asked for Mr. Cassidy. A little elderly Jew came out and asked "Vat do you vant". I would like to see Mr. Cassidy, I said, I'M Cassidy" with this I burst out laughing, couldn't stop. He yelled "Get out you bummer". I couldn't stop laughing as I left. It was a discouraging experience. I didn't do well and quit. I tried other services without much success.

Mike Hertzoff, my old friend brought his brother-in-law Jack over to my house with a proposition. They felt I was a good salesman and capable. Jack was a chemist, employed by the United Piece Dye Works in Lodi, New Jersey. He was working to develop an intermediary Dimetholanaline to make Rhodamine Red, an important color for dyeing piece goods, important enough for Germany to send the only U-Boat with a load of Rhodamine Red to the United Dye before we entered the war. Prices soared from a few dollars a pound to \$50 and more, all that was missing to be made here was the intermediary. Jack was positive he solved the problem, decided to manufacture it himself with a 3 way partnership, he, Mike and me, if I agreed. They painted a bright picture of this wonderful opportunity and I finally agreed. I had little money of my own and had to borrow from Max and Irving. They had found an empty, small building in the Jersey meadows, misquoto ridden, across from a soap factory and foul-smelling when the wind blew your way. We bought equipment, a boiler, vats, laboratory supplies, everything needed to get started. I made deals with chemical supply houses to job their products and I called on dye makers. Mike was finishing law school and came in after classes, Jack came in after working hours. I was salesman and manager.

Jack got up samples for me in our shop for prospective customers. The samples were not up to requirements, Jack kept on making new ones. In the meantime United Piece Dye sold out their dye manufacturing business to E.I. DuPont, Jack went along with the deal. He gave me orders for laboratory equipment from DuPont and I got orders from customers, but not enough to meet our expenses. We were falling into debt as none of the samples Jack made met specifications, some special ingredient was missing, we found out after the war ended. It was a potash found only in Germany that was responsible for the great success of German dyes. After a long struggle, we called it quits, I was blamed because I couldn't get enough sales for laboratory supplies. It broke up our long friendship. I was deeply affected. I remember he once invited me to stay overnight at his home in Middle Village. Their house, a one family, was along the railroad tracks at the crossing. All night, train whistles made it difficult to sleep and the cocks crowing in the wee hours of the morning added to the difficulties. His mother, harrassed and sour was overworked taking care of 4 boys and a husband.

Mike was going with a girl we introduced him to, and married her. She too broke her friendship with us. They sold the equipment, refused to pay me my share so I had to sue them. The trial was depressing, my witnesses were Max and Irving and we won a \$250 judgement.

I got a job selling a system for steam boilers to cut coal costs, and cut smoke exhausts to zero. It consisted of a series of jets laid over the hot coal bed that sprayed super heated steam that increased the temperature of the steam, cut coal consumption and smoke. It worked well but buyers were reluctant to experiment with equipment like boilers so very expensive. In one plant I was

intrigued with what they did to recover carbon dioxide from the smoke for the carbonated soda they sold. They installed a flue half way up the smokestack directed it into a tank to capture and purify and compress and used the gas in drinks they bottled. It was ingenious to recover an obnoxious gas that polluted our air and turn it into money saving and useful purpose. Why wasn't other air polluters using a similar method. Remember this was in 1919. I called on a brewery one very hot day and asked for a drink of water, I was directed to a cooler in the basement. Instead of water, it contained ice cold beer. It was delicious, I drank enough until I got dizzy and had to go home.

I later quit and got a job selling a soap powder made from corn. It had no advertising budget, but a demonstration easily sold the storekeeper, who had trouble moving the stock. They raved, one used it for tooth paste, but didn't reorder. I was a sucker for strange and exotic items. I also got a job as a collector of rents for a large realty management firm, in a slum area, a tough neighborhood, always with the fear of being held up or mugged. I travelled across roofs, through cellars to adjoining buildings, safely. I replaced a collector who was injured and held up. I was alert and lucky. I also sold advertising and collected delinquent accounts for the Actor's Guild magazine from some top stars.

We entertained ourselves in those days with social parties in friends homes, the Nechols' place was one of our favorites. Rose or Sadie (Syd) would play the piano, Irving would lead the singing and play his violin and all join in. After the folks left the room we'd play games, the most popular was "spin the bottle". A circle was formed on the floor and a bottle was spun around, when it stopped the spinner would pick the one of the opposite sex and both would go into the bedroom. If they stayed more than a few minutes, others yelled "come out, come out". We danced, went to shows and movies, and got great enjoyment innocently.

Chapter 10

Henry Nechols introduced me to Herman Oshann, an insurance agent. He was an active member of Shakespeare Lodge, Knights of Pythias, invited me to join, which I did. I developed many good friends, one we are still friendly with, Paul Pakula. Membership included some doctors and lawyers and I picked Greenberg, of a fine legal family. His uncle was a judge, to file suit against Mike Hertzoff and Jack, to recover my share of the partnership. Greenberg promised to sent me the judgement money less his fee as soon as it was paid and after months of waiting and many telephone calls I decided to file my complaint with the Bar Association. The next day I received the full amount without deducting his fee. I learned later this was not the first time he withheld clients money.

After going through the initiation, I was appointed Inner Guard, the bottom rung of the ladder, then Prelate, who administers the oath, lectures on how behavior should be in life, ie "tell your friend only what he cannot use against you when he becomes our enemy", followed by Vice-Chancellor and finally Chancellor Commander (President). During the installation ceremonies I was extremely nervous, my acceptance speech was with a quivering voice, and shaking knees and took many meetings to overcome.

The social life was excellent, many parties, some with full dress, tails, white tie, spats, stiff shirt and winged collar, and half shoes called poms. Sometimes, for New Year's Eve parties we hired high hats. What made it most enjoyable, we organized the Lady Shakespeares who met the same night, so wives and sweethearts were not left out. I even had an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist who was a member, remove my tonsils in his office while sitting on a chair, under a bright light and only with a local anesthetic. I sucked ice to stop the bleeding. It was a success.

We had a picnic in a park along the river, played all sort of games, races and some of the boys formed a pyramid. Paul Pakula was in uniform as he had enlisted in the Coast Guard brought his girl friend, Bertha. He volunteered to be at the peak, but the others couldn't carry the extra weight, began shaking and poor Paul fell off, hurt. I urged my throat specialist to examine or help him with first aid, but he refused. He never did any other medical tasks than his specialties, that made us pretty sore at him, and Bertha didn't help, kept scolding how clumsy he was all the way home. That romance



Group Photo
at the
Madison Park, Cal.
Feb. 18, 1925

1925—7, Ben Kapp, Calder, Leon Schwartzberg, Zeke Escott, ?, Blaust, Ben



1906—Waldman, Mike Hertzoff, Ben



1925—Mother



1912—Ben, Irving Nichols, Jesse Measer



1904—Ben, Molly, Mother, Charlie, Gertie, Av, Sadie, Father, Annie, Max

broke up. Paul met and courted Jeanette and later married her. She was a lovely young attractive lady and Paul's friends soon welcomed her into our circle.

In the meantime my courtship with Rose was heating up; I daydreamed while riding on the platform of the subway, of what it would be like when we married and how much I loved her.

We were under pressure to set a date for the wedding, I finally agreed to June 15, 1919. Irving and Betty also planned to wed and joined us to get marriage licenses. At the spur of the moment, we decided to be married by a clerk right then and there. The event did not escape newspapers, who informed the world "Brother and sister marry together"

Betty Liss's family were athiests, yet agreed for them to be married by a rabbi to satisfy Irving's family. This occured on Sunday in the Rabbi's study, attended only by the immediate of both families. Father Liss studied for the Rabbinate in Europe but gave it up on arrival in America. They had 2 children, Betty and her younger brother Stanley. He owned a successful and profitable liquor store.

Our wedding was held on Sunday June 15, 1919, a lovely, bright sunny day, at the Nechols's home on Aqueduct Ave., west Bronx. Rose looked radiant in her wedding gown and veil, I, in my full dress suit I had purchased long before for \$15 "upstairs and save" shop, Father Henry, in afternoon dress, stripped pants and coat with tails. The Rabbi, an army chaplin was in uniform performed a strictly orthodox wedding under a *Chuppah* and the breaking of the glass. In civilian life the Rabbi changed and took over a Reform Temple. Both our families were present, the house was large and easily accomodated us all. Jesse Measer was invited, back from service. He called early, to inform that he was coming with a nice present, but never showed up, nor called. He was deeply in love with Rose, resented me being chosen and extremely jealous. We never saw him again until many years later in Los Angeles.

After a sumptuous early dinner, we changed into street clothes and accompanied by Betty and Irving rode by subway to the McAlpin Hotel on 33rd & Broadway where we had a room reserved. After three years of sometimes torrid courtship, Rose lost her virginity that night. We had the wedding breakfast of ham and eggs, and hot cakes. We then left by train for Arverne by the sea, near Far Rockaway, for our two week honeymoon. The first time I entered the ocean, I got water in my ear and couldn't jar it out and had to have my lodge brother, a general practioneer lance it. He advised me not to try to use up my sex too quickly, as it should last a long time. I spent the rest of the "honeymoon" rinsing my ear.

The following Sunday we attended Si Dolmatz's wedding, Sam's brother. There were 4 children in the Dolmatz family Sam, Si, a sister and Rose, who I once took out on a date. A guest at the boarding house asked Rose how she, so young and beautiful could marry a bald, old man. This infuriated her.

The honeymoon over, we returned to the apartment built for us in the house on Aqueduct Avenue. It was most comfortable on the top floor, with a kitchen, living room, bedroom and bath. Rose went back to her job and I continued to look for work. I answered an ad. for a printing expert by Orr & Co., Canada's finest quality printers and was offered the job with expenses to move to Toronto. Our families strongly objected, we were too young, it was too far away and Rose was pregnant. We were adamant, but reluctantly softened

when, upon the urging of Sadie and my mother, Sam consented to hire me. For years we both regretted that we didn't have enough courage to take that printing job.

Sam went into partnership in the dress jobbing business with an old friend from his Norfolk Street days, Sam Abramowitz and were doing well. I had to learn the business, helped in the shipping, was an assistant to Si who ran the inside, called on buying offices, checked on contractors who used our materials, supplied labor only. I soon became a valued employee. The dress business had two seasons, spring and fall and in between there was little activity, with plenty of time on our hands. We became experts in pinochle, klabash and casino. On Saturday afternoon, a high stakes crap game was held in the shop. A long table was covered with canvas, our porter was the croupier who made more money for the day than his weekly salary. The players, headed by the two Sams were manufacturers, buyers and other gamblers. One resident buyer was a regular customer won over \$10,000 on three successive Saturdays, picked up his winnings and left early.

I quickly learned how to deal effectively with contractors, could estimate how much material should be used, the number of stitches, and what the contractor's cost would be and what profit we would pay him. I earned some extra money moonlighting — wrapping political literature to be distributed before election.

In 1922, a recession hit the country that forced Dolmatz and Abramowitz out of business and I was again out of a job. My sister Sadie had been squeezing money from Sam on every occasion, socking it away in a saving bank, money that tided them over until he opened his commission buying office. I looked for a job with other dress jobbers, got some good offers with my fine credentials but was always turned down because Sam Dolmatz was my brother-in-law, afraid I'd report to Sam.

After a stormy courtship with Leon Schwartzberg, Sadie (Syd) Rose's elder sister married him. Leon had gone into partnership with Zeke Escoett, a fraternity brother, making laundry bleach, a mixture of chlorine gas and caustic soda. It was developed during the war by a doctor and a scientist, Carol and Dakin for cauterizing wounds, successfully. It was also discovered this could replace chloride of lime, that was hard to dissolve and difficult to handle. Zeke worked as a chemist with a large chemical manufacturing firm in Buffalo, decided that laundry bleach business was what he should start, and with his firm's blessing, raised some capital and invited Leon to join him. They were a good customer for chlorine and caustic.

They found an empty building in Yonkers, outfitted and started making bleach. Leon was the salesman, soon got many customers. Covering the large New York area was too much for Leon. Knowing I was looking for a job he asked if I would be interested to work for Washine, (the firm's name). Without any hesitation I accepted, my territory would be Brooklyn, Long Island and Northern New Jersey. Leon spent just one day with me and I was on my own.

Laundry business was practically a new and growth industry. Wet wash had started right after World War I. It proved to be the greatest boon for the emancipation of women ever developed. It gave women a freedom from drudgery, backbreaking and energy sapping toil, by presenting to them a deal: to wash a bag full of clothes and linens and returned clean and damp, ready

for drying for 50¢. Plants could hardly keep up with the demand. New wet wash plants sprang up everywhere, in dark basements with poor drainage, in large buildings, laundry machinery manufacturers expanded and new ones were opened, everybody prospered. Few appreciated the importance of the service more than I, remembering how my mother struggled almost daily over a hot tub, now she was finding more time to live.

Every morning, I would make a list of the laundries I planned to cover that day, left by subway for the long trip to Brooklyn without samples or advertising pieces. I found my best approach was to admit I knew nothing of the business, except my bleach was the best, strongest and most efficient. I convinced a number, every day I received trial orders and made them into regular customers. I covered the area in all kinds of weather, walked about 10 miles a day and didn't have a sick day. I learned fast by picking the brains of washmen and managers and soon could hold my own with the best.

I was working for D & A when Rose gave birth of Fred, she had quit her job a few months earlier and early Sunday morning, she woke me up, said she was ready to call the doctor, my friend of Shakespeare Lodge who met us at his hospital on Lexington Ave. and 105 Street. It was in a large private home and comfortable. At 5 A.M. there was no action, he suggested I go home as it may take some time, he would call me immediately when ready. I used the Ford it took a short time to get home and go back to sleep. At about 6:30 the phone woke me up, it was the doctor with "Congratulations. Its a boy healthy and perfect." I was so excited, I ran downstairs to the folk's bedroom, jumped on the bed, yelling "Its a boy" and about scared them to death. I didn't wait to explain, I rushed back to the hospital this beautiful, bright, Memorial Day, June 30, 1920,. There she was, sweet and clean, smiling broadly with Fred in her arms. It was 8 A.M. A week later we had the circumcision in the hospital. 30 days we had the Pidya Na Ben, only for first males.

Medical costs were low and doctors took personal interest in their patients. Their officers were in their homes, the wife acted as helper, bookkeeper and secretary. Doctors took more time with patients, did minor surgery, and jobs not performed today. My doctor even had patience enough to pick crabs off my genitals that I caught in some unknown toilet, one by one with tweezers. Fees ranged for \$2 office calls and \$3-10 home calls more for night calls.

Our house had a large open porch where Fred was kept in his carriage, during the day. For almost a week, just as we were ready to sit down for the evening meal, he began to wail until someone came to pick him up and soothe him, it usually was Ethel. It got most annoying, I had to stop it, so one day, when he wailed, I ran out, stood guard and allowed nobody to come to him. This went on for three days ignoring remarks like "How could you be so hard hearted", "mean" and more but that was the last time he cried at dinner time.

Ethel catered to Fred's every mood, walked him in his carriage, and once taking him off the porch's 5 steps, she lost control and the carriage turned over throwing him out on his head. You could have heard the screams a block away, everybody ran out to help. Damage was minor, a large bump on the head, Ethel wanted to kill herself.

Dad bought a Model T Touring car with a convertible truck body that was attached after removing the rear seats and it worked well. No license was

required to drive then, Henry Junior was shown by the salesman how to drive and he mastered it at once. He was only 16, he taught Dad and me. I taught Rose to drive.

One morning, we watched while Henry Jr. backed the car out of the garage, Dad walked in front of the car to close the garage doors, Henry hit the reverse instead of the breaks, knocked Dad down and ran over him in his excitement. There was Dad, lying on the ground as if dead. We ran out to help, he was not seriously injured, just badly bruised, the empty car was light. The next day Dad was back on the job.

I was chauffer for the family. Pappie's sister was visiting, so we took her out to visit some friends. The streets were covered with snow, driving had to be careful. In the rear was Dad, Mother and the sister, all well endowed, Rose and I were in front. As I was making a turn the car skidded, hit the opposite sidewalk and started overturning, the rear passengers were forced out of their seats and came down immediately, the car straightened up and we proceeded without any further trouble.

The car was an open touring car with isenglass curtain that were stored under the seat when not used. A fine Sunday morning I took Rose with Fred in her arms and Ethel on a drive through Van Courtland park. It soon began to rain becoming heavier every minute and then a gale. I had stopped to put the curtains on. It was a difficult job, everyone got soaking wet, Fred wailed and I finally got the job done. We huddled together as thunder and lightening flashed around us. Lightening struck a nearby tree. We were scared, at last the storm abated so we could get home safely.

The Ford Model T was a most remarkable car that put the world on wheels. It was cheap, easy to handle and easy to maintain. A comutator was used drawing power from large storage batteries, one for each cylinder. This was the weakest part as it had a weak spring that kept tensions as the roller rotated, it broke often during a rain or at night. I learned how to repair it in the dark, just by feel. Gas was very cheap around 10¢ per gallon.

In the meantime my term as Chancellor Commander of Shakespeare Lodge came to an end, I was presented with a gold Waltham watch properly inscribed, "Ben Nicholas, C.C. Shakespeare Lodge #174 ,.P. Jan 1st 1920." We continued to be active in the lodge.

Two months before Fred's birth, Betty gave birth to Doris, a real beauty. They lived in Patterson, N.J. where Irving was an advertising manager for the largest department store there.

In 1920 Congress passed the Volstead Act better known as Prohibition Law, prohibiting the sale of liquor except wines, permitted limited sales only for religious purposes. During the voting, congressmen were celebrating in the cloak rooms, staggered in when their names were called. It was a hypocritical display, gave birth to orgnaized crime, lawlessness reigned throughout the land. Speakeasies sprang up, women lost their inhibitions, wore skirts above the knees, discarded corsets, the new dance craze was the jitterbug, women smoked cigarettes in the open and were called Flappers, morals were looser and most parents were distraught. Ethel was a flapper.

Frank Liss, Betty's father owned a profitable liquor store, the law put out of business. He ran sales and what he couldn't sell he stored in the basement of his home, expecting prohibition wouldn't last too long. Some of the bottles

had celluloid lined corks that soon dissolved leaving a smell and taste of carbolic acid, thus ruined most of his stock.

On Yom Kippur Eveing after Kol Nidra, we would sit on the porch the coolest part of the house. Yom Kippur is usually the hottest day of the year and watched our neighbors walk by, laughing, smoking cigarettes acting as if they were critical of us for "keeping the faith", that always annoyed me. Why were these sinners not stricken down for defying the Hebrew rituals and laws? We began, Rose and I to question our beliefs, the truth, the purpose and our faith. We got a lift after a 24 hour fast when we broke the fast with a drink and the first bite of food. We slowly drifted away, I am sure without any influence from Irving and the Liss family. We began to study religions; we read the bible, books on religion, attended seances, joined the Rossacrusian Society, made some horiscopes and looked into numerology, all helped to strengthen our disbelief.

Barney Taritz, a friend of Sam from Norfolk Street days was introduced to Molly and after a brief courtship, they married. He was a genius in casino, a card game that paid off for him in the army. He was backed up by gamblers whenever he played with professionals, and rarely lost. He owned a taxi that he mastered expertly, shifted gears without using the clutch, drove on car tracks over excavated streets. It was an adventure to ride with him. He was a safe, good driver and might have made a top auto racer. He rarely talked, except when it was a favorite subject then he kept on and on. Later he sold the taxi, took a job as a laundry driver for a large Bronx plant.

Gertie was the next to marry Julius Hirsh, they were a happy-go-lucky couple. He worked for a Wall Street broker, later handled accounts on his own, earning lots of money they spent as if it grew on trees. Head waiters greeted them by name, but the bubble soon burst. Charlie often joined them, they were good friends.

Max courted Esther who was excellent in English, used words we had look up in the dictionary. She had 2 brothers and a widowed mother. They were the next to marry. Max built a profitable plumbing business. They settled in the Bronx. Al got a job with the Wilmark Detective Agency, an investigative company that served retail stores and hotels. They checked the honesty of sales people, by a team of two young women and the investigator, Al. One girl with marked cash made a purchase, and quickly left, followed by the second one who also made a purchase and waited for her receipt, then Al would check the register whether the first girl's purchase was registered, if it wasn't he examined the cash drawer if the money was in it. Most times they caught the clerk and after careful questioning, would get a confession and restitution. The girls traveled with him. He loved his job.

Chapter 11

Dad and I had become good friends, he loved and trusted me and I reciprocated. Peppie and Irving who at first didn't approve of me, I wasn't good enough for their daughter and they could have been right, soon changed and we were one happy family.

Henry Nechols left Lemberg in 1880's when only 16 years old, with his older brother Adolph whom he adored. A sister lived in San Francisco, married to a tailor, Zier and the boys planned to visit them. Left behind were 3 sisters and a younger brother, Isadore. They came to America later.

They managed to make themselves understood in spite of little knowledge of English, sold cheap watches and jewelry along the way, across the continent, through Indian Reservations, prairies, over mountains, all on foot and where lawlessness still existed. Their favorite city was Butte, Montana, a copper mining area with miners from Eastern Europe. Here there was no difficulty in communicating, they spoke Polish, German and some Hungarian and their English improved. They finally reached San Francisco and a reunion with their sister and her family. They were fortunate to escape being shanghaied at the infamous Barbary Coast, where innocent young men invited to have a drink, were drugged and carried off to a ship that sailed as soon as the quota was reached. Dad held his family spellbound reliving and reciting his adventures.

Adolph married a German Jewess, moved to Oklahoma Territory and opened a tailor shop, before it was opened for homesteading, stayed for many years, raised a family. The oldest, Leo, tall and handsome, entered college in New York and stayed with the family for a short while.

Dad met Peppie in New York after she arrived to be with her sister and to get a job. They soon fell in love and married in 1894. Peppie's family, Fialkovich emmigrated from Hungary, settled in Cleveland, Ohio, mother, father, nine daughters and stepsons. Irving was born in December 1894.

Now that I was a family man I thought it time to take on some political responsibilities, something I never gave a thought to before and urged Dad to come with me and join a Republican Club, who met not too far away. We hated the Democrats, dominated by corrupt Tammany Hall. We went to the meeting. We were met at the door by the leader who wielded lots of power, showed great surprise that we wanted to join and become active. A burly guy,

rough looking, had the floor, accused the Democrats of every crime, specially those Jewish Democrats in the next district, called them kikes and they should be kicked out of the country. We heard enough got up and walked to the door, the leader followed, appologized said the man was a trouble maker and wished he would resign, urged us to return, as the other members were friendly. That was the last encounter with politics until we left New York.

Dad was a most generous, outgoing man and easy going, rarely lost his temper, willing to help others, his relatives never left empty handed. He loved good food and good times, a hearty eater. His favorite food was caviar topped with lemon and chopped onions and a tartar sandwich on rye bread, (raw hamburger and chopped onions).

Fred was almost two when we decided to get an apartment of our own, overriding all objections. We found one, three rooms and bath on Walton Ave. close to the subway station and the Nechols. Dad stopped off everynight on his way home to spend time and play with Fred, they adored each other.

Early one April morning our phone rang and a wildly hysterical voice yelled "Poppa died" and hung up, it sounded like Gertie's so I hurriedly dressed, took the subway to my folks house, burst through the door to see my mother calmly eating her breakfast. She looked surprised, asked "What's wrong" and I realized it was Dad. My father was in shule. By the time I got back, Rose had already gone and taken Fred with her. The news was out.

Henry Jr. woke early, went to the bathroom and saw a pair legs protruding from under the raised bathtub, almost dropped dead from fright. Dad got a heart attack in the bathroom, died instantly without making a sound. He must have struggled as he fell and rolled under the tub. He was only 52 years old, with so much to live for, a terrible tragedy for the family and specially for Rose who felt the loss for many years after. The burial had to be delayed until his out-of-town brothers and sisters arrived.

Dad was an entrepeneure, bought, sold buildings he renovated. His principal interest was painting contractor, had $\frac{1}{2}$ interest with a Mr. Blumenstock in real estate. Blumenstock was prosperous looking with a flowing mustache and florid complexion. He asked me, before I was married to take his adolescent son to a whorehouse to "put some life in him" and be "broke in". I suggested he take him himself, that he might also enjoy it.

With Dad gone, my territory in Brooklyn, we decided to sell the Aqueduct house and all of us moved to Brooklyn, as it would mean a saving of 2 hour daily travel to work and home. We found two apartments on 45th Street in Brorough Park, near a subway station, we upstairs and mother and Ethel downstairs.

During the war Henry Jr. ran away from home and enlisted in the army. Soon as Dad learned where he was, he left immediately for the Camp to get him out even before he finished basic training. Henry Jr. was 14 years old, over 6 feet, convinced the enlisting officers he was 18. He was immediately discharged and returned to school, bragged of his military prowess. He became ill with a lung disease and hospitalized. It was tuberculosis and was in for a long stay. He had two back ribs removed in the Veterans Hospital where he was admitted after he joined the American Legion; they and others helped him get an honorable discharge. He returned home soon after we moved to Brooklyn.

Washine bought me a model T. Ford because my business was increasing steadily. Pauline bought a Dodge touring car, and Rose became pregnant.

In the winter of 1924, I chose to go the movies on Friday afternoon. That night, after a good dinner, I got a high fever and called a neighbor in, her brother was an M.D. in the area. She phoned him, he came in his car, wrapped me in my overcoat and covered me with blankets, took me to his clinic in a brownstone house, gave me an enema, then wrapped me in hot sheets, then cold ones and put a cold compress on my head. I soon fell asleep. For several days I was given many more enemas daily, and water only, no food. It got so that if some one knocked on my door, I would yell "Who is there, friend or enema". I had pneumonia.

Dr. Wald, with an M.D. degree refused to practice standard medicine, he became a naturapathic practitioner, that originated in Europe. They used natural methods of treatment, first to clean the system of all poisons through enemas and fasting, then with careful dieting the patients recovered much sooner. Wald's treatment included massages he gave in his basement, used a high pressure hose of cold and hot water from 10 feet away. First I had difficulty to stand up but soon I could. I felt stronger every day until he broke my fast with some grapes and water drained from boiled vegetables. I got diaharraria that took a week to cure. He injected a wide tube in my rectum, used a light to examine the area if something else was the cause. The whole treatment lasted two weeks I went home weak but cured.

To me Wald was a magician as he cured hundreds of patients, brought in on stretchers and left within one or two weeks skipping down the stairs. All got the same treatment whether they suffered from prostate, high blood pressure, diabetes etc. An uncle of Rose's was dying, and I urged him to go to Wald, he did and felt wonderful in two weeks but complained of the harsh regimen. Wald told him to change his life style or he would be dead — he died. I saw Wald massage his hair with dissolved Epsom Salts every day, then pull hard and I watched the hair grow into a thick crop. We took the family to Atlantic City to recuperate.

While I was in the hospital, Henry took the family out for a ride in the Dodge. On the way home they got into an accident and Rose was thrown out, terribly frightened, being well advanced in her pregnancy, badly bruised not seriously, she held on to her treasure. She got labor pains a few weeks after and rushed her to the Israel Zion Hospital on 11th Avenue near our home, but brought her back as it was a false alarm.

The next week on May 18, 1924, after hours of labor, Helen was born in the afternoon. Rose was crying as she was rolled back to her room, pointed to me and cried "It was your fault", she quickly recovered. The doctor prescribed a special bottle formula to augment the lack of sufficient breast milk. The bottled milk caused problems later.

Pauline was unhappy living in an apartment after many years in private homes and wanted a house. Irving urged us to share it and I resisted as long as possible, but finally gave in. She bought a lovely two family house on the corner of Avenue I and 28th Street in Flatbush with a two car garage. As soon as we were settled Rose wanted to take a vacation, just the two of us and leave the children with Pauline.

Rose made reservations for a boat trip to Norfolk, Va., just an overnight

ride, that we found exciting. It was our first experience. That night we ate a delicious dinner, I lit a cigar and we strolled on deck to watch the lights of Atlantic City. Suddenly I felt sick and nauseous and threw up at the railing. Soon Rose became woozy. We both spent a miserable night, but began to feel better as the boat approached the dock. We took a bus to Virginia Beach, a beautiful stretch of white sand extending for many miles. The beach was deserted. After seeing the sights of Norfolk we took a ferry boat to Washington, D.C. A storm was brewing ahead, with very dark clouds and the bright setting sun that emphasized the black clouds, made an attractive picture. It wetted our appetite for future travel.

The next day we covered most of the Capital on foot, visited many government buildings and were very impressed. I got a sharp pain in the heel of my right foot, it was the first sign of gout and I was only 30 years old.

Chapter 12

Business was increasing, Washine decided to hire a salesman for New Jersey and hired Caesar Calder, a graduate chemist who chose selling chemicals instead. His father was Italian, named Calcagno, his mother, Jewish, and when they were divorced she changed the name to Calder and had her mother come to live with them. He was raised as a Jew and proud of it. I took Caesar around to get acquainted with the territory and the job. He took to it very quickly.

Calder courted a lovely Jewish girl and planned to marry her. Washine gave him a bachelor party in a Broadway Night Club. It was a real bash, everyone got drunk; I drove home alone and picked Ninth Ave., under the elevator as the least traveled street but found myself trying to weave around elevator pillars without hitting them. I got through safely, crossed the Brooklyn Bridge but couldn't maneuver the car into the garage; I gave it up after denting a fender on the car only a week old. Rose had to undress and put me to bed. Caesar was escorted home by two of the guests; they propped him up at the door and rang the bell. His mother opened the door, he sheepishly grinned said "Hello mother" and fell down, fast asleep. We talked about it for a long time.

Our next door neighbor on 28th Street had a boy Tommy, about Fred's age, they were fast friends. One morning Fred came crying into the house "Tommy called me a Jew and said he couldn't play with me, his father told him. I said he was a Jew himself". Rose gently explained how proud we are of being Jewish and he should be too. The boys were soon back playing together, the father joined them after checking if anyone saw him.

Helen got a severe case of eczema from the milk formula, but it didn't disappear even when the bottled milk was stopped. We took her to specialists without success. She kept us and the neighbor awake half the night scratching and screaming, we had to put gloves on to keep from tearing herself apart. All our friends knew it and were most sympathetic. One in the Bronx learned about it and called, suggested we see a pharmacist around the corner from us, about her condition. She warned to be most discrete as he couldn't act as a doctor. We cautiously approached him, he looked Helen's face and arms over, nodded and gave us a salve and liquid and instructions. Within two weeks all traces of eczema disappeared and never returned.

Sadie and Gladys; they left for Columbus. We arrange to meet again in Buffalo to return home.

After several days in Sharon, Pa. and a few more in Cleveland, we took a night boat that carried automobiles to Buffalo to pick up Sadie and Gladys for trip home. On the way we again broke a bearing and had to be towed to the nearest town. The garage didn't have the bearings and we were stuck there for two nights. We were ready to leave and this was Saturday but didn't have sufficient cash, the mechanic refused to accept my check unless it was certified. I wired my bank, they certified it by wire, he accepted it. The rest of the trip was uneventful. We dropped our passengers off at the Hudson Tubes and proceeded to pick up our children.

On one vacation, Al and Regina Meltzer, Regina was a life long friend, came with us, on a trip to Maine. It was splended, drove through new England and stopped off in lovely homes that displayed "Tourists welcomed" signs. They were old homes full of old antiques. We paid a few dollars for the night that included breakfast. We didn't realize their values, we could have bought real bargains. Travelling by auto was different before motels. Farm houses welcomed travellers along the main highways. In a beautiful home near Boston, we bedded down in a well furnished bedroom that had a figure of a crucified Christ hung above our heads and I had trouble falling asleep.

In Old Orchard, a few miles south of Portland, we stayed in a hotel at the beach and went swimming. The water was extremely cold, I judged 36 degrees, enough to run in, swim a few strokes and out again to warm up in the bright sun. There and in Portland food consisted mostly of shell fish, freshly caught lobster, in chowder, cocktail, boiled, broiled and oysters, raw and fried. We drove through Poland Springs, famous for bottled spring water, then west to one of the many small lakes where we rented a cottage among the edge. The water was warm, we swam a lot, drove around sightseeing. Our lake had an outlet into a lower lake through locks, we carefully examined. The waterway was for small craft and canoes.

On one trip we took along the Cohens and Pakulas (Moe). We found a lovely cottage on a farm near where I stayed to recover from my heart trouble. It was great fun, we were treated royally and promised to return, but never did. A most interesting trip was with the children through new Hampshire and Vermont, and the Presidential Range to Mt. Washington the tallest in the East. All were named after American Presidents, contained some of the great American sights: The Lost River, a natural formation carved out by the river that disappeared into a cave and formed many beautiful structures, one room named the Throne Room had a chair that looked like a throne, other rooms similarly formed, only the sound of the unseen rushing waters was heard. At the bottom, the river again appears and continues on its way. Further on came the one made famous by Emerson, The Old Man of The Mountain, formed by nature of a stern figure of a bearded man, standing near the top of a mountain. Another land mark is the famous Indian head, with perfectly formed features and a large clump of trees as his head dress. How can anyone forget such experiences.

We were once on our way to spend a few days at an adult camp in New Hampshire along the Merrimack River that had recently flooded. Hugh boulders were still rolling down, lots of debris, dead animals and it was raining

heavily. We barely made it to camp, given a small tent, water seeping in and had a miserable time. It cleared up the next day, but we left after breakfast. We were constantly looking for interesting places to spend our vacations, one was to Ausable Chasm, near Ticonderoga in upper New York, with our children. There the river narrowed and cut through high hills to form a miniature Fjord, we viewed by boat.

A resort we were most fond of was Camp Tammamin in the Pocono Mountains in Northeast Pennsylvania. It faced a lake below, formed a natural amphitheater. It had a stage, where entertainments were held of popular stars, stage and opera. Many discussion groups headed by intellectuals and liberals. It was owned and operated by the Ladies Garment Workers Union (LGWU). You drove through a forest to reach it and had to watch out for deer crossing the road. We often visited the camp with our children and friends. It still is a successful resort.

My father was ailing, never fully recovered from the street car accident. He was forbidden to drink liquor, sat all day sucking hard candy that seemed to satisfy him and attended to his prayers. he became ill with prostatitis, little could be done, surgery was not available and he died. The doctors thought the prostate was cancerous. Orthodox funeral services were held, mourners walked behind the hearse, long-bearded men shaking alms boxes for donations, some for themselves and some for the Jewish National Fund to buy land in Jerusalem, some for the synagogue. At the graveside the rabbi rent the clothes of sons and brothers by cutting a slit in the vest or tie to remind us we were now fatherless.

The family gathered to discuss what should be done about mother, alone and bewildered. I wanted her to return to her apartment as soon as possible to try living alone, among her friends and neighbors, she was resourceful and capable. Max was strongly against it, he wanted her to live with Gertie and her 3 children and he would support them. The others agreed, the issue was settled. Every Friday, about noon, I visited Mother in Gertie's house in Brownsville to eat Mother's *gefilte* fish and *kuchel*, a hard round onion biscuit.

Morty Dolmatz was enrolled in Camp Kenmont in the Berkshire mountains in Conn, a boy's resident camp, operated by the Kiviat Brothers. Abel Kiviat was a retired champion mile runner, the camp had the reputation of being of the highest quality. There was a large guest house for parents to stay overnight, we thought it would be a good place for Fred for the summer. We decided to drive up with Sadie, Gladys and Arnold, on visiting day. We packed clothes Fred would need. It was raining heavily, on a dirt road to the camp that was soft and muddy. I was sure we could safely make it, but the car got stuck over a large rock, and lost traction; we needed a tow. Arnold was chosen to find help, he did after a time, a team of horses and a tow rope got us off. Poor Arnold, wet to the skin and burning mad, his suit ruined.

The layout of the camp, its operation, warmth and friendly atmosphere greatly impressed us and after reassuring Fred he would like it, he agreed to stay. The councilor assigned to him and the group made him feel welcome. His councilor was a handsome young college student. We brought the extras Fred would need, on the next visiting day to find that Fred was made captain of his cabin. his councilor assured us that Fred had leadership abilities, had over-

come his shyness, learned to swim and kept up with the best of them. It cost about \$300 for an 8 week period, Fred went back three summers, the last, his cousin joined him, Leon Jr. Schwartzberg. He was big and clumsy, proud he won a wading race.

Later that season my office got a call from the camp "tell Mr. Nicholas we are closing camp, one of our boys got sick and we are afraid it is polio. He must be at Grand Central Station by 3 oclock to pick him up and have him contact Schwartzbergs". The word "polio" frightened parents of young children, a terribly crippling disease. I couldn't reach Rose but did get Syd. We were there when the train arrived, there was a mad rush to reach our children. Fred and Buddy were fine. Rose almost dropped dead when she returned home and saw Fred. He later complained of a headache, we called the doctor who found him OK. We were grateful that the camp authorities acted with responsibility and dispatch.

Helen was 5 when we brought her to the Montessori Camp in New Jersey. She hated it and it was there she got hay fever. She didn't return the next year, but she did go to camps for a number of years, and she liked them all.

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Chapter 13

Shortly after I went to work for Washine, I got a taste of what the laundry industry was. I stood outside the entrance of the Great Wet Wash Laundry on Van Sinderan Ave. in Brooklyn waiting for Issy to return from answering the phone. Some kid were fooling around the horses of parked wagons awaiting loads of wash, ready for delivery. A driver caught the kid, kicked him in the ass and told him not to come back. The kid shook his fist said he'd get even. Issy returned, saw 2 big boys approach looking for the driver, Issy warned them not to go into the plant, they ignored. Issy ducked into the office and made a call. In the meantime the big boys walked out empty handed, they saw men approaching, they lit off and were chased. One of the thugs had a knife in his hand, caught up with one boy, I watched it all, saw a knife flash brought down on the boy's back cut a fine slit through the shirt, and skin, drew blood. He was taken to a drug store and had the wound taped. The scene sickened me, I left for home and thought I should quit, but I didn't. This was protection paid by most Brownsville laundries. A tough character called little Doggie was the leader.

Competition among the wet wash people was keen, drivers used any means to increase their business, even used other laundry's tags on wash left outside the customers door for pick up, few women knew their drivers. The week started one minute after midnight on Sunday when drivers left the garage or stable. Customers were told to leave their laundry outside the door if they wanted it washed and returned Monday morning, many bundles were picked up on Saturday and stored in the plant. Thugs hired by competitors would break in, destroy the bundles by pouring raw bleach over them or even start fires. Other tricks were to steal the wagon or truck while the driver was busy picking up inside a building. The truck or wagon was later found empty. The owner received a phone call to come with money (ransom) to retrieve the bundles and pay for protection, It was seldom reported to the police.

The largest and most influential wet wash laundry was the Independent in Brownsville, among the first in the country. It started in a small building by Mr. Boslow, his four sons and a son-in-law as drivers. As business thrived, others were hired as drivers and inside help and were trained. Some quit after learning the business, opened their own plant. The Boslow boys protected their business with their fists and the plant continued to grow, a new, modern large

building was erected and that too soon filled up. It was a sight to see the entire family when they quarreled quite often in the open, with fists, every one screaming including the old man, then suddenly stop. They decided to split and divide the assets, three kept the Independent, Father, the oldest (cockeyed Louie) and Muttick the son-in-law. Nathan, Hymie and Harry built the Brighton Laundry, a hugh 2 story building with the latest technology then available, with improved quality control and efficiency. The Boslow clan were most neurotic, yet experts in their knowledge of the business.

Many plants located in the East New York and Brownsville area of Brooklyn bought protection from thugs, but they did nothing for the drivers who formed a local union. Its business agent was Barney, a tough, hardened character who punished delinquent drivers into paying dues on time. I saw him beat a poor driver with his fists, ignored that he had doctor bills to pay, for his sick wife. There were many gangs in New York, before the mafia took over, some had interests in laundries.

Once I got involved, unknowingly. Frankie Yale, leader of a large and well known gang in Brooklyn began organizing a laundry union for drivers and inside workers, with the intention of selling out to the bosses, I knew it and others knew it. He enlisted his "Friends" to sign them up. In one plant, a washman, my friend asked my opinion whether he should sign up, I told him it was scheme of Frankie Yale's to build it up and sell out to the bosses. He spread the word around, and to an agent for the union. When the guy threatened him he admitted that Ben Nicholas from Washine told him. The poor man became so upset, he called me at home that night and cried that he did something terrible to me, put my life in jeopardy and I got frightened. I knew the vice-president of the new union very well who told me about the new union and I asked for help. He assured me that he would take care of it and not to worry. That was the end of it.

When Frankie Yale was killed, he had the largest and costly funeral held in Brooklyn, hundreds of car loads of beautiful flowers followed the cortege to the church where the priest held outdoor mass. His charities and "good deeds" were recited, overlooking the murders and killings he was responsible for. He was just an Italian gangster.

A large linen supply plant, my customer, had a partner, a Number 1 gang leader. He had an office on the balcony with a window overlooking the plant where he watched the girls at work. When one looked good to him, he told Harry Levy, the manager to send the girl up. She knew what was expected of her and if she refused, was immediately fired. Raising pigeons was his mania and used the plant's roof.

Talking to a customer, an Italian, of a laundry in the Italian section of Brooklyn, we observed two men enter, he became terribly frightened and turned pale. Pointing, he asked me if I knew who they were and I didn't. In a low quivering voice he said one of them was the head of the Black Hand, known as two-fingered Tony, the forerunner of the Mafia.

To succeed in my job, I figured that I would have to offer more than quality, I'd have to make close friends and give extra service. I decided to help improve their sales force. I was invited to sales meetings where I lectured on how to "sell" themselves, how to pick up new business by knocking on the door of a neighbor, no matter how rushed they were and ask if they could pick

up her bundle when he picked up her neighbor's, if she said yes, he had a new customer within 5 minutes, if it was no, he would stop off every time he was there. It went over big. Most drivers came from the slums, rough, uneducated, I made friends with many.

An Italian laundry invited me to speak, there was a door-to-door salesman talking ahead of me, I listened. He suggested, they make friends with customers and spend some time with them, they nodded and seemed to agree. I was next, I said "Why do you listen to that bullshit, you know you don't have the time to do this, you should have challenged him". they laughed and applauded me. I urged them to become the best driver in the plant, because we all need some success to point to, when things go wrong.

I started many things, a free employment service to find jobs for people I knew in the industry, drivers, washmen, managers. Once I was double crossed by a washman I placed at \$100 per week, an unheard of high salary. He was very good in maintenance as well. He gave my bleach business to a competitor and said he hated to do it, but he had to save the firm money. He lost the job and I got the business back. He told me how he regretted the double cross and asked for forgiveness.

I made friends with a court clerk, who was also a fixer. He urged me to send any customers who were ticketed for some infraction of building codes, like smoke nuisance, to him, he would take care of it, even as far as getting a refund of part of the fine. These extra services helped build personal good will that came to good use later on.

When business was good, plants held annual sales dinners and I was invited to speak on sales, on plant management, Victor Kramer was the guest speaker. We became a team and good friends. Victor and a partner owned the Sunshine Laundry on Long Island, a very successful plant that used innovative ideas in advertising, once sent up a balloon to distribute "flyers" some that offered prizes to the lucky one who brought their laundry in with it. Kramer was "born" in the business, his father owned a laundry in Boston, After graduating from Harvard, Victor decided to come to greener fields, to New York. He got a job with a large plant in the Bronx as claim manager. The boss took him into the claim office, piled high with unsettled claims, swept the table clean into a waste basket and said, "here, you now have a clean start, and don't let them pile up again." He and a friend raised enough capital to build a new, mod-plant, the Sunshine Laundry on Long Island. He soon got involved in industry affairs.

Kramer accepted invitations to speak at laundry dinners, a real orator. I sometimes felt embarrassed when I had to follow him, but some how managed to get my message across. He was the guest speaker at an annual Laundry Convention in Boston that Rose & I attended. He gave a great speech he called it "Alice in Launderland", a fine history of the industry. Our friendship continued even after we left for California, until he died.

Sadie and Murray were visiting their families in Boston at the time. Whenever we ate in a Chinese restaurant, they said it didn't come close to the food in the "Bucket of Blood" the best Chinese restaurant in Boston and they invited us to have dinner. The place was a dump, the food and service poor and the Cohen's were besides themselves and apologized many times.

We made friends with Harry and Yetta Boslow of the Brighton Laundry

and when I learned they were looking for a salesmanager, I asked Harry's brother, Hymie, the senior partner to interview my brother-in-law Barney Turitz as he was well experienced. He agreed and after they met, hired him, the family moved from the Bronx to 26th Street and Ave. U. in Brooklyn.

In the middle of the 20's I got a call from Harry Boslow and he asked me if I wanted to put them out of business, to come immediately. He took me into a large room piled high with torn sheets and shirts, each had a large hole torn out. A quick test showed traces of acid along the edges. We carefully went over the wash formula, but no acid was used; it was a mystery. Other suppliers were called in, no answers. H. Kohnstamm, the oldest supplier had an excellent laboratory, they also manufactured fruit and other dyes, came up with an answer, the cause was damage by smoke. Other laundries complained and refused to accept the verdict, finally samples were sent to the U.S. Dept of Interior for tests. They agreed to Kohnstamm's findings and called it "winter damage".

Tests proved that when damp clothes are hung outdoors on days under overcast skies, close to a chimney, in the winter, the smoke from burning coal couldn't rise through the overcast, carbon and sulphur dioxide was precipitated and settled as a white or colorless powder onto any billows of the drying shirts and sheets, when ironed, the acid was activated and holes would fall out. The Interior Dept. published these reports, but never came up with a cure.

I have believed that this phenomenon occured when a new element was introduced into the atmosphere, Radio Waves. Radios just began to sell and were responsible for the start of ACID RAIN so many areas are suffering from. Laundries solved its problem by a new service, wash and dry.

Al was moved from Chicago to open a new office for Wilmark Agency in Philadelphia and we told the Boslows about it. Yetta wanted to know if Al was married, when it was no, she suggested we drive down some Sunday to visit him, she wanted her sister to met him. We picked a day in the depth of winter during a heavy snow storm. Harry's Cadillac made it ok, but had to stop several times to scrape ice off the windshield. It was a pleasant visit but no spark.

The Boslows became part of our circle, joined in poker games. During a game in our house, Yetta got a hysterical call from her maid "Rush home quick, the baby woke up cross-eyed." Soon Boslows house was crowded with relatives, her mother insisted she try an old European, Jewish remedy, pee in the baby's face. Yetta squatted over the child and let go. The eyes straighten out the next morning.

Before prohibition, we drank little hard liquor and during prohibition we were careful and drank only when we were sure it was safe. The circle was invited to have dinner at the Boslows, it was a grand spread. Harry had gotten whiskey from his brother-in-law, a pharmacist, "the real thing". I was the first to feel sick and went to the bathroom to get rid of it. The others laughed, but not for long they all got sick, fortunately early enough not to suffer any bad effects. Many died from poisonous liquor.

The Boslow Clan was a fascinating family, stupid, ignorant, uncouth, but loyal customers. Here are a few more interesting eposodes: Muttick and Louie had many quarrels, had difficulty agreeing, decided to have the famous Luber-

vitch Rabbi who was to visit the U.S. settle their differences. Both were at the dock to greet him on arrival and he agreed to mediate. His decision was equal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

I got a job for Rose's cousin in the office of the Independent. She was satisfied and they were pleased with her until Muttick happened to walk into the office and noticed she was writing lefthand, he fired her on the spot. When I asked why, he said she was unlucky, as all lefthanded people are.

Louie had a mean temper and when he was aroused, he swore, grabbed his glasses off and hurled to the ground, smash to bits. When I asked why, he said "I don give a dam when I'm mad."

The first part of the document deals with the history of the organization and its development over the years. It covers the period from its inception in 1900 to the present day. The second part of the document deals with the organization's activities and its achievements. It covers the period from 1900 to the present day. The third part of the document deals with the organization's future plans and its goals. It covers the period from 1900 to the present day.

Chapter 14

Nathan Boslow broke with Harry and Hymie, left the Brighton Laundry and built his own plant on 18th Avenue in Bensonhurst. On one visit I took Fred along, as I expected to stay a short time, Fred preferred to stay in the car. I completely forgot about him and overstayed my time and he was mad and made me feel like a heel, no matter how hard I tried to soothe him. Evidently I didn't close the door to his side tight enough, I kept trying to appease him, kept talking and on my first turn, the door swung open, Fred fell out. I saw him lying on the ground in my rear view mirror and almost fainted. I quickly backed up, he had a gash over his left eye. I drove to my friend, a doctor in Brownsville who patched him, sewed the wound and covered it with a bandaid. You can imagine the scene when Rose saw him, he yelled, Rose yelled and we all cried.

The doctor had an interesting background, He was a licensed electrician with a deep ambition, to be a doctor. With his wife's blessing he went to school, his wife got a job and after some years he got his M.D. degree. He was a good and dedicated physician.

We moved further down on Ocean Avenue, 1650, Cohen and some of the others followed to the new building, made new friends. It was across from a large Jewish temple. We once held a New Years party there. I dressed as the New Year, had lots of fun. One neighbor was a buyer for the finest dress shop on Division St. He decided to give a big party, bought a book on mixing drinks, studied it every day for a week and never stopped talking how great it would be. He prepared his mixtures early, tasting, adding at times and by the time we arrived was pretty well drunk. After he filled our glasses, he disappeared. I went looking for him, he had rolled out of bed, under the bed, groaning he was dying, so I called a doctor. One guy fell asleep, with a cigar in his mouth, hanging over the sink in the kitchen. I sobbered up in my own bathroom. Only Moe Pakula was sober and kept telling jokes. It was a party we kept talking about.

Another interesting neighbor was younger, married with two children. He was an athletic type and invited me on a 10 mile hike one Sunday morning. I made it, returned home exhausted but kept it up for many months. One Sunday in September, the beaches were empty, he and I went swimming, he was very good, I could swim a little, we swam out into the deep water and I just

kept afloat, under his encouragement. He and his wife quarreled a lot and they finally separated.

I was the only one of the group who owned an automobile. I kept it in a nearby garage, with full service of nightly car wash for \$20 per month. In winter the car was covered with mud almost every night and the next morning it was clean and polished. I was chauffeur for our friends whenever they came with us. On one occasion we were coming home from a meeting, there was a cloudburst and parts of Ocean Avenue became flooded, I got stuck. I made Murray and Moe remove their shoes and roll up their pants and push the car out. They got it to a dry side and I got it started again.

Around Easter time one year, we took a trip to Bermuda on a coastal Excursion boat from New York. It floated high in the water without stabilizers and before we cleared the harbor, we got seasick as did most of the passengers. A bar was opened as we passed the 3 mile limit. It was during prohibition. Lying stretched out on deck chairs, we met and talked to people, one, a former sea captain who had sailed the seven seas and back, never was seasick, but on our return, he too suffered. We docked at St. George, fully recovered and made a beeline for a lovely pub on top of a hill and drank real beer. We took a car line, we called it "The Toonerville Trolley", after a cartoon title, to Hamilton, the Capital, early Easter morning. Easter music floated from the English Church's open windows as we entered. Everywhere was growing Easter lilies, in full bloom, about ready for shipment to America. It was a beautiful sight.

On the trip back to our ship that was our hotel, I met a woman, poorly dressed, in man's shoes, a raggedy skirt, she looked like an old drunk, until you talked to her. She was an M.D. employed in a city hospital, lived most frugally, saved her money to travel around the world during her vacations. She proudly showed me flowers she picked, pointed out its details, one that looked like a church, by looking down on it. She was an expert botanist, a real fascinating character aroused my desire for travel.

A favorite restaurant was Lundy's in Sheepshead Bay at the foot of Ocean Avenue. Fred and I loved raw oysters and clams and the best place to get them was Lundy's. The oyster bar was a counter about 100 feet long with oyster openers every few feet, lines as many as 6 deep waited patiently until the ones in front finished. We ordered 2 plates of a dozen oysters each. It was worth the wait and the displeasure of Helen and Rose. On no "R" days we ate clams. One Friday I invited Harry Boslow to lunch to Lundy for soft shelled crabs, a delicacy. That night his face blew up like a balloon from hives, laid him up for a week. Maybe that was to pay him back for turning back his time clock 1/2 hour for more time to finish the work for the day for free.

We often attended a legitimate theater at the foot of Ocean Parkway, this night it rained in torrents, flooded the entrance, the management had a porter in waterproof coat and high rubber boots, carry the people into the theater and park our car. By the time the show was over, it stopped raining.

As business expanded so did the sales force. Henry Goodman, an experienced laundry manager, with pleasing ways was hired to take over Leon's Manhattan territory. Leon had ambitious dreams, he convinced his partner Zeke to merge with an independent supplier, Warren Sands, a former Proctor & Gamble district manager. Sands had several valuable connections, sold P&G

laundry products on commission, an exclusive agency, and other supplies, fitted perfectly with our one specialty, bleach. He readily agreed and transferred his interests without any problems.

Leon then decided to open a full laboratory to make Washine products on its own. His fraternity brother, Ben Kapp was making dyes in partnership with another fraternity brother. They didn't get along and Ben wanted out. He was hired and set up a plant on Queens Boulevard in Long Island City, Washine moved its headquarters. Later two other competitors joined, Sheffler Brothers National Bleach and O SO White Co. They were incorporated under the name of Washine-National-Sands, Inc.

About that time, a laundry textile manufacturer, La France Industries was ready to change its exclusive jobber, Washine got it. La France had its plant in Philadelphia, made the best upholstery textiles and the best laundry nets and other cotton products for laundries. These additions put us in strong position to meet any competition. Harry Gilbert was La France's sales manager of its laundry division, an expert. He gave us a thorough education we needed to do a good job.

With more representatives selling their soaps, Proctor & Gamble added another salesman to help us. His name was Ben Secher, a big, jolly, redfaced, happy-go-lucky Jew, assigned to Brooklyn and Long Island. He was married, with one son and was transferred from the grocery trade, a promotion. We soon became good friends and he too joined our circle.

My territory became too much for me to handle, I suggested another salesman be hired to cover Long Island. Leon had hired Duff Shapiro as his private secretary and I like him. I convinced Leon that I could make Duff a successful salesman and to give him a chance, he did. Duff was very pleasant, friendly, with an open, typical Irish face, mother an Irish Catholic, his father, a short, heavy set Jew. One son was a priest, Father Shapiro and a cousin, a Jewish Rabbi. Duff and his sister were unmarried, they lived in Bayonne, New Jersey. The father was a devout Orthodox member of the local Synagogue quietly practiced his religion and kept his children ignorant. When he died, the family turned to the synagogue to handle funeral arrangements, it was strictly orthodox. All mirrors were covered, meals eaten off boxes, they sat on low stools, in stocking feet, and held services with a minyon morning and evening, for a week. We attended the funeral.

The salesmen were unhappy with their pay and complained to Leon. He agreed to work out an equitable solution. It was a complicated point system, each item was set in a unit that paid so much per point per unit, though it was difficult to check, it did increase our take, so we accepted it.

I attended weddings, bar mitzvahs, funerals, one in particular was for a customer. I was surprised, I saw a competitor of the deceased, his bitterest enemy. I asked him why he came, he answered, "I didn't believe the bastard was dead, so I came to see for myself." In the summer the laundry Association held picnics on the shores of Long Island Bay, reached by boat. I learned to eat and enjoy broiled eel and squid and other delicacies.

Henry Ford Sr. was openly an anti-semite, published a Dearborn, Michigan newspaper most critical of Jews and their leaders. He included Aaron Shapiro, a well-known Chicago lawyer, who sued Ford for defamation of character and won, he collected damages, a retraction and an apology. Ford

ceased publication. It was a great victory and made Shapiro famous. He specialized in forming commercial organizations of farmers and other difficult competitor groups, he came to Brooklyn to organize the laundries. He was enthusiastically welcomed on his first meeting that I attended. After many months and concentrated effort, he called it quits. They preferred a loose association, keeping members in line by sabotage and threats and that too ended when the secretary was jailed, found guilty of poisoning horses.

In the city jail he made friends with the former president of the New York Stock Exchange who had swindled friends and brokers. They spent their time scheming how to merge laundries into a new corporation, who to handle the details, who to be accepted and how to get a listing on the big board. Upon release our man contacted his former friends and supporters for help. He was broke and would have to be supported until the idea took root. Two of them put him on their payrolls for enough to support his family. They became his partners.

I was present at the first meeting; most laundryowners were there. His presentation was excellent, he was smart, instructing them on the information needed before they'd be included. They all wanted to get in the deal. He worked hard and long, held many meetings, but was still short of the projected minimum income, needed large plants to be included. Finally he managed to interest the new York Linen Supply, one of the largest in the country and everything fell into line. The owners of the New York Linen included 2 of Betty Liss's relatives. The General Laundry & Linen Supply, Inc. was formed and listed on the Big Board. The promoters divided about 1/2 million in commission. They continued together, formed a worst group and other mergers. When the stock market crashed, they went down with it.

On Yom Kippur, the 29 of October, 1929, as worshippers from the synagogue across the street came out for a breath of air, newsboys were hawking a big extra "New York Stock Market Crashes". It was Black Friday, the start of the Great Depression. While there were signs of impending trouble, most of us didn't take notice, expected-good times would continue forever. We felt secure under the protection of the Federal Reserve Board to preserve the banks and they didn't live up to its responsibility by letting banks fail. We had an account in Public National Bank, owned by Jews that failed but we managed to recover part of our deposits, years later. New York banks didn't want a Jewish bank to succeed and they used pressure on the Federal, the remaining assets went to the big ones.

We bought a fast moving stock, Cities Service, an oil company, on 10% margin, accumulated considerable paper profits and were called upon for more margin until we couldn't afford to hold on and lost our investment and all the paper profits. We also lost our investments in a new laundry in Great Neck, that had to close down before it was actually opened.

In a move to protect American Industry from price-cutting foreign industries, Congress passed the Smoot-Hawley Act in 1930 that dried up Europe's purchasing power that exacerbated our problems and was partly responsible for prolonging the depression. It also started the great German inflation.

Chapter 15

The laundry industry didn't feel the full weight of the depression for several years. People tried to stay clean. Washine got a new large account, Bleach for brightening the appearance of Walnuts. Walnut growers tried out the idea to make walnuts more appealing and it worked. They used tons of bleach in the fall after harvest. As things slowed down, bills were not being paid on time, our commissions suffered and we were asked to help Washine financially. I loaned them, for me, considerable sums plus unpaid commissions, but we kept going.

Pauline and Ethel left for California to visit Aunt Katie, then proceeded to Florida for the winter. Ethel got involved with some guy and married him. It didn't last and the marriage was annulled before they returned home. They took an apartment on West 72 Street, soon Pauline got sick with diseased gall bladder, that had to be removed. She went into the hospital in 1931, operated successfully but developed a blood clot and died. She was only 60 years old.

Irving became the executor of a substantial estate, I, treasurer. Pauline was concerned about the future of her two single children, Henry and Ethel, willed them $\frac{1}{2}$ of the estate as long as they were single, then all would share equally. The three others each received $\frac{1}{6}$ th. Irving handled the estate as an expert, investing carefully and collected money tied up in Cuban Bonds, by hounding Cuban and our officials. Cuba had just gone through a revolution led by Colonel Batista. The bonds were considered worthless.

Ethel decided to leave for Europe, stayed there over 2 years. I mailed her a monthly check, her share of the estate. In Germany in spite of Nazi bullyboys causing occasional havoc, she got interested in modern dance and became a pupil of the famous Martha Graham. She continued to participate in the "Dance" under many top directors. She left Germany and travelled all over Europe, made friends and then to Jerusalem and met Henretta Szold, the organizer of Haddassah Hospital, one of the major charities in America. She also met many of the pioneers of the Zionist movement.

Henry was introduced by Ethel to Sara Weitz of Cleveland when she came to live in New York. He secretly courted her and they secretly married, not to lose that extra income. When it was found out they lost it.

The Paramount Theater in Brooklyn was very popular, we went often as there was fine entertainment and movies. The orchestra leader, handsome with

blond wavy hair was beloved and adored by most women. We were present when Ethel Merman made her debut, her high-pitched voice grated on our ears, we were not impressed but she continued to stardom. Our hero was replaced by Rudy Valee, he was booed the first night; the theater got many complaints but he too became a top star.

I had joined the Men's Club of a large Jewish temple because it had great programs, many well-known speakers, one was the Collector of The Port Of New York. He told of an astonishing experience; a load of crates arrived at the port and was being examined if the shipment could come in tax free, contents over 100 years old, came in free as antiques. The crates contained the walls and partitions of an ancient castle purchased by, it was believed to be Hearst. Tests of the wood used, proved to be American pine that was first sent to England within the past 50 or so years, not an antique. The shipper was asked to pay full duties, a check was soon received without a word of explanation and the shipment went to the purchaser, who must have proudly shown off his genuine ancient walls. I took Leo Fisher, Gladys's husband with me, he enthusiastically joined and for years after, he repeatedly told me how grateful he was to be introduced there.

Hadassah Gresser and her husband, an eye specialist were cousins of Betty Liss and we got to be friends. When Eddie got his M.D. degree, he took a job as a ship doctor for experience and adventure. One Sunday the ship docked in Glasgow, Scotland, he had nothing to do, as most stores and activities are closed for the Sabbath. He idly strolled through the streets in the business area, stopped to look at suits displayed in a store window, a salesman rushed out, grabbed him by the arm, urged him to come inside as he could fit him with a suit at reduced price. Eddie burst out laughing, when the man asked what was so funny, Eddie said "The only place I know where they "Pull" you in is on Division Street in New York". The man said "That's where I came from". Eddie was terribly afraid of infection, he tried to isolate his children and wouldn't permit anyone into his home that had a cold. He died at a fairly young age.

P & G. gave their laundry salesmen 2 weeks notice of any price increase to load customers up at the old price. Ben Secher and I dropped everything and concentrated on getting soap orders. We broke all records, sold more than ten full carloads. The Ivory Soap name was among the best products advertised, P.&G. decided to cash in on its popularity and sell it in bulk to selected laundries. It was our job to chose the right customers who would be helped with advertising and sales aids.

The preparation for the campaign began with a top salesman, who I knew well, sent to Chicago to get cooperation from the laundry drivers union, run by Al Capone. The salesman after great effort managed to have a meeting with Capone and the deal was outlined for him. He was fastinated by the idea, gave his blessing and insisted he receives regular reports. I was assured P. & G. did not make any pay-offs. I doubt it.

Paul and Jeanette Pakula rented a cottage for the summer in Long Beach and urged us to do the same. They found a large one with 4 or 5 tiny bedrooms for us. Jeanette's cousin just married, she wanted the young newlyweds to have their honeymoon in Long Beach and pay a share of the costs if we accepted them. We did and all got along. Al came for a visit, we put him up in

the room next to the newlyweds. He complained the next morning, he was kept awake most of the night listening them making love.

We had to keep a close watch on Helen who tried to crawl into the water. Fred was a different problem. We carried him into the water and he cried and carried on. Our families were often visitors, Rose was busy cooking and servicing them, yet all in all it was a great summer.

Lil Secher's brother had moved to Cedarhurst, found a vacant house nearby and the Sechers moved in. We were impressed when we visited them. A lovely house, with large grounds in a quiet neighborhood near a school and good roads. Before long Ben went looking and found a house he thought we would like without telling us. After Rose, the children and I talked it over, it was decided to move if we liked the house. We did, it was located at the end of Central Ave., a two car garage, 4 bedrooms, three baths, large back yard and rented for about \$50 per month. It had 2 stories, and a cellar with heaters, one for hot water and one for home heat. It was 2 miles from Far Rockaway, in Nassau County with the lowest auto insurance rates, five miles from Long Beach.

We sooned joined a beach club in Far Rockaway and made friends. We lived closer to our friends the Pakulas. Paul bought a house in Long Beach, raised flowers and ran for school board and was elected. We got together about once a week and played bridge.

Our life style improved, I planted a vegetable garden, tomatoes, peas, tended the plants with love and tenderness, fearful when the rains were heavy, ran out to check and repair any damage. I loved it, but keeping the house warm in the winter was not so enjoyable. I experimented with different types of coal, settled on coke and caked with ashes to bank the fire for the night. On extra cold nights, I had to feed the fire several times, an average year's coal consumption was 30 tons, hand shovelled.

We hired a full time live-in maid for \$25 per month and had our problems. We attended and gave parties for our new friends. The raging depression had little effect, we were most fortunate. Our relatives were often over night visitors that kept Rose busy almost every weekend. My mother with her kosher dishes, our sisters and brothers and families. Ann Turitz got along much better with Helen, loved each other, but Seena Hirsh and Helen seemed always at odds, both were spitfires, these visits ended with love and kisses. The boys played well together, Fred dominated on sidewalk handball could easily beat Morty and Stanley. Stanley was attached to Morty, followed him around like a puppy.

Fred had a pet dog, Helen, a cat, both filled the cellar with fleas the year round. He was the sexiest dog around; if a bitch was in heat anywhere in town, the dog was sure to find her and patiently wait till the other dogs were chased away, then he got to her. Once a female's owner told us, he was so taken up with Fred's dog's patience, he let him into the basement. The dog had one very bad habit, whenever a car or truck passed, he would chase it for blocks, barked his head off. Fred decided to do something about it. He tied a stick to his collar and placed it between his legs, everytime he tried to run, it would hit him in the balls and he had to stop immediately. No matter how hard he tried he couldn't unfasten it, he soon quit. He returned from him amorous trips for almost a week, starved but fulfilled.

Fred and I went fishing from a rowboat in the swift running channel. We easily rowed with the tide, anchored and fished. When the tide turned, we would row back. Once Fred caught our favorite, delicious halibut on a fin, it was minding its business. We always came home with some fish. We had Henry Nechols, Irving's son along, it was bright and sunny and were out for a long time. We had a date and left the boys and Helen alone. Henry woke up, burning with fever from sunburn, Fred, gave him an aspirin and covered the burns with unguentine, he felt better and fell asleep. Pretty good for an 11 year old. He was so dependable.

We planned a week's trip with some friends and asked Henry and Sara to stay with the children. They refused, she couldn't stand being responsible. We asked Regina and Al. Meltzner, Rose's oldest friends, they readily accepted. When we returned, the Meltznerns jumped on us, "how could you let your house get so infested with fleas and misquitos with two mangy animals in the house." They were almost eaten alive, picked off fleas as they talked. We apologized and straightened things out before they left.

Some winters were brutal, snow piled up so we couldn't leave the house. Ben Secher came over in hip boots to spend the time playing pinochle. Ben tried to be funny, played all sorts of tricks at parties, the principal target was his brother-in-law. He once brought a large salami to a party, used it as a club and hurt one pretty hard, he played rough. He loved to drive me to the East Side Restaurant for their specialty, jellied calves feet that I enjoyed, but it gave me a bad headache. When he sat down in a restaurant, he'd polish the utensils, even force forks through the napkin. He was always in need of money, he borrowed from his customers and repaid when they threatened to report him to his firm. It was difficult to be angry with him, he was so jolly.

Rose was getting impatient with the social life. A young teacher started a day camp for the summer and also for after school he picked the children up for a few hours of camp. Rose got interested and joined him. She bought a hugh, old Packard touring car to pick the children up. The car was heavy, lumbering and hard to handle, but Rose loved it and handled it like an expert. She found a career that lasted for over 25 years.

A new move-in was a couple who returned from California, where they lived for a year, but couldn't find a good job nor adjust to a new way of life. They loved California, spoke of its slow pace, wonderful weather and regretted having to leave. They hoped to return when the economy improved.

One beautiful warm and sunny Yom Kippur morning, we decided to go to the beach, although the Beach Club was closed. We put on our bathing suits, made a picnic lunch and went. Helen didn't hesitate, she ran into the water, enjoying herself and then swam out. The tide was coming in and soon she got over her head and got frightened and screamed. I jumped in and swam out to help her. I never was a good swimmer, I reached her, grabbed a life-line post and spoke quietly and softly to her, bet I could beat her to the beach. We slowly swam together to safety. For me it was a harrowing experience, frightened beyond words and for the moment wondered if this was my punishment for breaking our Jewish laws. I was exhausted and with the recovery, all fears and guilt disappeared. I was back as an unbeliever.

Late on summer evening, Rose and I were driving to Far Rockaway, in heavy traffic, I noticed a man across the street, weaving as if drunk, started to

cross the street. Thinking he would stop as he neared the moving cars, I didn't blow my horn as a warning, he kept on right in front of the car ahead, was hit hard, thrown into the air, dead as he hit the ground. Traffic stopped, the police came immediately. I gave my name to the driver, volunteered to be his witness as I saw it was impossible not to hit the man. In a few days I was called to the police headquarters in Long Island City to give my version of the accident. I gave my story and asked if other witnesses were summoned, yes a number came, some agreed with me, but one reported that the driver was weaving in and out of lanes at high speed. The officer assured me it often happens, each sees the same incident differently. It is the job of the police and district attorney to make judgement. The driver was discharged, he was so appreciative he made me a hand-made oak coffee table, a beauty, he taught wood shop at the local high school. I treasured it.

Time was approaching for Fred's Bar Mitzvah, May 30, 1933. We sent him to the local synagogue for preparation and instructions. He got so deeply interested, he wanted to know why I didn't join and be active. I urged him to study hard, continue his interest, if that was his choice, but for me I had my own ideas and beliefs.

After his Bar Mitzvah was over, he could then decide and follow his own way. It was important for me to have this Bar Mitzvah to satisfy my mother. Fred studied diligently all the prayers and his speech, Helen could recite it almost as well as Fred. The Saturday dawned on a day as beautiful as the day he was born. His performance was flawless and pleased everyone, specially my mother. In the back yard, tables were set up under umbrellas, to accomodate a large number of relatives and friends. The food was delicious, wine and liquor plentiful and we all had a grand time.

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Chapter 16

For his Bar Mitzvah gift, we took Fred on cruise to Havana, Cuba, then open to tourists. The problem was what to do with Helen and what a time we had to convince her to stay with Molly. She finally agreed after Rose promised to take her alone on a cruise to Savannah, Ga. Driving on the throughway from Cedarhurst, I hit a stanchion (obstacle) that stopped the car. Helen got out of the car with me to examine the damage. Part of the obstacle was under the bumper, Helen tried to lift the car for me to remove it. She was so excited and was afraid we'd be late and wanted to help. I got back in the car, backed up, cleared the obstacle and we were off. We left her with Molly, she was sick the entire time.

It was a holiday, long to be remembered. Our accommodations were on the lowest deck with 2 lower and one upper berth for Fred, no air conditioning, only an air vent from the outside. Syd and Buddy came along and a laundry customer and his wife. The boys had a great time and the run of the ship. Ours was the cheapest rate. The next morning men stripped to the waist, got up a poker game, spread out with cigars in our mouths to get as much sun as we could. The trip was smooth, we stopped off at Nassau in the Bahamas for the day for sightseeing. It seemed that all the women carried big baskets on their heads and sang "Mother don want something or other, that I had forgotten, except the ditty ended "she wants to make love all the time". It is a beautiful, tropical island then belonged to Great Britain. They have fabulous beaches.

The ship docked at Havana harbor the next morning. As we disembarked, peddlers surrounded us, one held on to my sleeve, handed me a card and said in Yiddish "Come to Moishe Pippik for a Kosher meal". The first thing that captured our attention were the huge billboards advertising contraceptives. The first stop on the tour was to a brewery that served beer and snacks, free, we met some people we knew, then a demonstration of climbing a tall cocanut palm tree, a native climbed up like a monkey, threw down some cocanuts, later cracked them open and gave each a taste of the liquid, it was bland. The beach was one of the most beautiful we ever saw, equal to famous Rainbow beach in the Bahamas, wide expanse of white sand with stately palms and a calm sea. We did not swim, we didn't bring bathing suits.

The boys were left on board in the evenings we went to night clubs, enjoyed the "clean" entertainers, no nudes, the gambling casino was housed in a

large building, fully equipped with dice tables, black jack and other gambling equipment and it was crowded. After losing a few bets on craps and some drinks, I sat down to clear my head, a woman approached and asked if my name was Nicholas, surprised, I asked how she knew my name, I looked so much like her friend, my brother Charlie.

A world famous bar is Sloppy Joe's in Havana, its fame is due to the way they mix Bacarde rum drinks, by pouring rum into a large container without measuring, add the other ingredients and ice, filled orders without wasting a drop, delicious, cool.

Our four couples visited whorehouse row, without the boys, entered the largest one. Whores were lined up on both sides of a large room, opened their robes to show their wares. We just looked. A male whore solicited our women and took a shine to Syd; she ignored him, he then offered to service her for free, again ignored; he offered to pay her. It was a new experience. Once, years later returning home to California by plane, a woman seated besides me, said she had just left Havana after a week, fully replenished. She made the trip twice a year.

The boys were having a great time by themselves and didn't mind that we left them behind. We went to an X rated theater. The floor show started quite tame, dancers fully dressed, then came men and women bared to the waist, then all nude. This was followed by an announcer and a tall man covered by a long robe. After a long roll of drums, the announcer introduced the tall man, who opened his robe and stood with the largest fully aroused penis. The women screamed and flew to the exit, the men stayed for the movie, Tarzan, the Ape Man. It opened with a handsome young man, all nude comfortably seated on a tree, gazing out on the ocean as a ship was breaking up. A young woman laid on a log unconscious, floated in. Tarzan rushed to her rescue, took her in his arms and carried her to his perch in the tree. Slowly she opened her eyes, looked at his face and then at his penis, hungrily grabbed it. Then came the title "Civilization Comes To the Jungle". Suddenly a voice rang out "Ben you better come out right this minute". We reluctantly left just when the interesting part started. The rear of the theater was lined with booths, curtained, except the front. There was an extra charge for them.

The National Hotel, finished before the revolution, was a tall beautiful building showed many bullet holes and was severely damaged, unoccupied when we were there. The entrance to the Governmental Palace had a large diamond imbedded in thick glass was left undisturbed. The weather was warm and comfortable. It was a lovely vacation but had to return to the cold New York.

I bought a Willys-Knight car with sleeve valves that eliminated need for valve grinding. It was a fine car, easy on gas, but in cold weather it took a long time to start the engine, sometimes it needed to be pushed. The winter of 1933 was the coldest in memory, temperatures reach to 14½ below zero. I couldn't use the car until it got warmer.

Our family relations were excellent, we visited each other often, Mother was living with Molly in Brooklyn and the family met there. I was referred to as "hen-pecked" because I had washed the babies' diapers and helped in the kitchen and did the dishes. I believe marriage is a cooperative effort we had to share, I made no converts.

I was always interested in improving laundry operations. Most changes in

machinery were made by laundry managers, owners and workers inventing new equipment, experimented with different metals like Monel, a combination of steel and nickel, stainless steel, etc. and applying for patents. When the changes looked successful, laundry machinery manufacturers would buy the patent, paid royalty, to make and improve the item or keep it out of competition.

Laundries were having problems, strings tied over the flatwork ironer rolls, from 4 to 8 to a machine to keep the linens from rolling around the roller instead of under it. It scored the heated chest and had to be ground down, a time consuming and expensive repair. A laundry manager and I worked on a plan to eliminate string marks. We had an endless apron made to cover the rolls around them, tried it out, and applied for a patent. It worked very well part of the time, then due to the different thickness of materials fed into the ironer, our apron started to shift, the machine had to be stopped, the apron pushed back in place. We installed stabilizers but they didn't solve the problem. When the apron worked, quality and production improved. A great and worthwhile idea, but no solution. We lost our investment.

Ethel returned to America and stayed with us. We took her to a New Years Eve. party in Cedarhurst to help usher 1933 out. The next day, I was busy working at my desk on my accounts, Rose and Ethel were quietly talking in the next room, soon they entered, Rose said "Ben now dont get angry, we want to ask a question". She asked, "What do you think of us moving to California for good?". I was stunned, waited until I recovered and thought about it, then replied, "Hey that may not be such a bad idea. Now if I can get a line and job lined up before, to be assured of making a living, I'd go for it." The more we talked the more exciting it became. I knew Harry Gilbert had returned from a recent trip from the west coast, maybe he would need a salesman, so I wrote immediately. In a few days I received his answer, "Yes, We do need representation out west, I'll be in New York next week and we'll talk it over".

Before we made our final decision, it was necessary to find out if the climate would be beneficial for Helen's health, we wrote to Aunt Katie, to the L.A. Chamber of Commerce if there was any rag weed present, the main villain that caused hay fever. Helen had gone through the worst time that past fall with a most serious attack of asthma and hay fever. The answers were, no rag weed west of the Rockies.

Gilbert insisted I clear my leaving with Washine, Zeke was agreeable but Leon resisted, Zeke and I worked on his until he agreed. The stage was set. Many preparations had to be made. I was interviewed by La France Industries in Philadelphia and approved. Now to collect moneys-due me, Zeke agreed for me to collect delinquent accounts and Washine would pay the differences with monthly notes, of \$100. Now I began to cash in on all the favors and good will I built over the years and in most cases I succeeded, mostly in weekly payments. Balance due me from Washine was over \$3000.

On Harry's last trip to the west coast, he opened enough accounts to almost guarantee an income of equal or better than my present earnings. What he didn't tell was the he loaded all jobbers before a new cotton tax went into effect January 1st, 1934.

Things looked brighter and brighter, parts fitted in nicely. At first we

thought we'd drive to California, but were soon talked out of it. It was decided to take the Southern Pacific Railroad from New Orleans, reached by the So. Pac ship from New York, a weeks trip and 3 days on the train. We wanted to leave on March 1st. I was in Brooklyn a few weeks before our departure, I met Bea Alexander who was deep in Astrology, ran a chart on Rose and me for a long time. I didn't know she continued her interest. She greeted me with "You are moving to California and will never return, You will be leaving on March 14." I was flabbergasted. I had not made final reservations for the trip, no idea when the ship would leave. When I did, I learned the ship leaves once a month only and would leave on March 14th. The timing fitted us perfectly, gave us sufficient time to sell the furniture. We bought a new Ford V-8 to be delivered in Los Angeles, traded in the Willys Knight.

We packed to take with us on ship, books, utensiles, dishes, pictures and clothes. We hated to sell our lovely furniture, our beautiful Circassian Walnut bedroom set. The hand-made coffee table we presented to Molly among many other things, the rest was sold at ridiculous prices. We burned our bridges behind.

Our suite on board the ship consisted of two staterooms with adjoining bath. Our friends and family were invited to a farewell party, with plenty of food and drink. There were tears and laughter. It was difficult to say good bye, especially to mother. Rose and Fred were seasick at times, Helen and I marched around the deck, enjoying every minute. Most of the time all of us felt very well, the children made friends with most of the passengers. There was a platform on the top deck extended out for shooting clay pigeons, it was often used to shoot sharks.

It was early morning when we landed in New Orleans, that gave us a full day to explore the city. We used a hotel as our base. It also happened to be the headquarters for spring training of the Wasington Senators baseball team, its manager was a former pitching great, Grover Cleveland Alexander. I spoke to him in the lobby and invited him to meet the family, he graciously accepted. Fred shook hands and they talked baseball, Fred was thrilled and wouldn't wash his hands the rest of the day.

New Orleans was and is a historic city and interesting. It is where Andrew Jackson fought the last battle of the War of 1812, after the war was officially over. Here was the home of the Creoles, Spanish people who were married in America sometimes to blacks. They had their own language. We visited the French quarters, the cemetary and other famous sights, Their great reputation was in their restaurants at Antoinnes, we ate famous Oysters Rockefeller. Fred and I stopped at some of the outdoor oyster bars that spread over the city. Riding in a taxi was dangerous when it passed street cars on the left.

The train left late for Los Angeles, crossed the Mississippi River on a train raft, then on and on through Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, finally through California. Our stateroom was comfortable and the food was good. On many stops Indians sold hand made rugs and jewelry, some sat quietly on the ground. Occasionally real live cowboys rode by. It was an exciting trip.

Early in the morning of the third day, we reached Los Angeles and waiting for us was Rose's Aunt Katie, and her daughter Anna Krieger. It was a comfortable feeling. They drove us apartment searching, we found a double furnished apartment on Cloverdale Avenue, north of Wilshire, near La Brea, for

about \$50 per month, two bedrooms, living room, kitchen and bath quite satisfactory. While we unpacked, Fred went out to look around and met Bill Gross, about his age. He lived with his widowed mother in a house behind us, they became good friends at first sight and are still good friends. His first name is Zultan, of Hungarian heritage but called Bill.

I opened a checking account at the Bank of America at Wilshire at La Brea, then to the Ford dealer near by to have a V8, four door sedan to be picked up the next morning, signed a one year time payment plan, and credited for the trade-in of the Willy's back in Cedarhurst.

It was not until we arrived in California did I realize the great courage our parents displayed when they decided to leave their birthplace, their families, friends and all that was familiar and that they held dear. They left without money, with four small children to seek a new life in a strange land with strange culture, strange language, on the other side of the world. All they had was a feeling they would make it, with faith, hope, health and hard work. They truly deserved more appreciation for all of us.

The next morning I picked up my car and drove to John P. Lynch Co. La France laundry jobbers, got a fine welcome. It was then that I learned they overstocked to escape the cotton tax. It was my responsibility to move the stock fast, I arranged to work with the salesmen to aid them and to get acquainted with the trade. My next stop was at the local salemrooms of La France Industries, where they stocked furniture textiles, covers, linings, etc for the Upholstering manufactures. La France was the largest supplier of these textiles of the highest quality.

Rose enrolled the children in the public school in the neighborhood and we became official residents of California.

This is the end of an era of 40 years of my life and the beginning of a new way of life and culture. We have been most fortunate with our good health and a wonderful, loving family. We took this gigantic step in the middle of a great depression, left family and job, old and dear friends in our middle age, seeking new adventures that might have been crazy and reckless. Many difficult problems confronted us the first year that at times we felt we acted foolish, that we should accept failure and return to New York. The feeling didn't last long, our optimism kept us going.

I ended this story upon our arrival in Los Angeles because I believe each one of us has a primary interest to know more about our parents, Our close contact ended when we left.

It is hard to realize the tremendous changes I lived through in over 88 years. It started in the "Horse and Buggy" days and the Victorian Age, shortly after the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, into the Communication Explosion, Space Exploration and now into the Electronic Age, changes far greater than any, since time began. We must include 2 world wars and many lesser ones.

There were many changes in the way we lived, changes in our culture, our foods, our clothes our homes and many more. Transportation was drawn by animals, by foot and by boats. blacksmith shops were everywhere, the blacksmith did more than shoe horses, he repaired cooking utensiles, all metal products and machinery. Few telephones were in homes, most were found in drug stores also called Apothecary Shops, where only drugs were sold. Drug

stores had ice cream. These and candy stores had pay telephones and would call people in the neighborhood to the phone. Indigent old people landed in "Poor Houses" and buried in Potter's Field.

Doctors practiced medicine in their homes at \$2-3 per visit, a dollar extra for house calls during the day, more for night calls. For the poor, a Free Clinic treated them. Free baths, the only place one could take a decent bath was available. Rents were cheap, in tenement houses, cheaper if the cold water sink was in the hall for 4 flats, toilets in outhouses in the back yard. Rents in houses with cold water sinks in the kitchen, toilets in the hall were slightly higher. Kerosine lamps and candles supplied the lights, later, gas was installed, metered by 25¢ pieces. When lights dimmed a quarter had to be rush into the meter. Stoves for cooking and room heating used wood or coal.

Gas lamps mounted on poles lit the streets of New York and serviced by lamplighters who carried a long pole with a lit wick at its end and an attachment to open a trap to turn the gas on, before dark and returned at daybreak to turn it off. Streets were safe, holdups and mugging were very rare, strangers in a strange ethnic area could be subject to beatings by kids. Settlement Houses did an excellent job of keeping kids out of mischief and off streets. Newspapers were sold off racks in few places, but mostly by news hawkers yelling "Extra — Extra Read All About It" through the streets for 1¢ some for 2¢. Only drug stores sold ice cream sodas. East Side business closed early Friday afternoon and opened after sundown on Saturday and holidays. Tempo was slow, everyone walked to work, shop or visit.

Here are some of the great events responsible for the changes:

1895—Marconi, an Italian, invented Wireless Telegraph that sent the first news of the sinking of the Titanic to the world. It ushered in the Electronic Age. — Roentgen discovered X-Rays.

1905—Wright Brothers flew the first "Heavier Than Air" Machine. Albert Einstein formulated the "Theory of Relativity"

1926—Robert Goddard fired the first liquid fuel rocket, opened the way for space exploration.

1938—Nuclear fission of Uranium by German Scientists.

1969—Man Lands on the Moon.

There were other events that changed "our way of life": Property rights were always protected by law and custom. Human rights were completely absent. The first move for Human Rights was made by an American named Coxie. He led a large army of unemployed to Washington that demanded the Government start a Public Works Program to make jobs for people. The U.S. Army dispersed it. Since then there has been conflicts between property and human rights. In 1896 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a Louisiana law that segregated railroad facilities under a "Separate but Equal" doctrine — a set back. However, advances continued.

1902—President Theodore Roosevelt got his reputation as the "Trust Buster" by supporting Anti-Trust legislation. His reputation was challenged by Senator Robert La Follette of Wisconsin. He accused Roosevelt of support for Senators financed by Trusts. They, known as the Trust Senators, joined together to vote as a unit. They helped the Railroad Trust get large tracts of extra land adjacent to the tracks, FREE.

1906—Pure Food and Drug Act passed, it included Meat Inspection.

1911—Woman's working rights law passed.

1913—Income Tax and the 17th Amendment for popular elections of U.S. Senators. Both were ratified. The Federal Reserve Board was established.

1914—Federal Trade Commission was established. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act was strengthened.

1920—19th Constitutional Amendment for Women's Voting Rights was ratified.

1954—U.S. Supreme Court unanimously banned segregation in Schools.

These advances took many years to achieve. Every effort must be exerted to keep these advances inviolate. There are dangers now and ahead. We must not weaken.

Jews survived throughout the ages because they contributed to funds sufficient to pay ransoms and to support minority causes. Two cases in point:

1903—Russian Cossacks with the help of the Czar's Army began a pogrom by slaughtering Jews, that inflamed World Jewry and others.

1904—Russia declared war against Japan and a number of wealthy Jews agreed to finance Japan with the hope of a Japanese victory and to stop the slaughter.

1909—Several liberal Jews and some Blacks organized the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), that included minorities and Jews have continued that support, more or less, ever since.

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