

here? Let's hear your song!" she croaked. We dutifully sang something about goblins and jack-o-lanterns and then held out our paper bags (no gaily decorated plastic containers in those days). She asked us to remove our masks, and when we did she peered into each one's face as she started to dole out apples. When she got to me she snatched back the apple and growled, "Nothing for you. I won't give anything to a Jewess!" We all just stared. I didn't even know I was a Jewess. I just thought I was Jewish. With the light making her appear to be all black, and her nasty voice and ugly facial expression confirming it, we yelled, "Witch, Witch!" and jumped off her porch. We all ran for home, forgetting to meet to divvy up our loot. Since then, thank goodness, I have never met up with another real, live witch.

❖ **MARGY KLEINERMAN—MIDLAND, PENNSYLVANIA**

I grew up in the small town of Midland, Pennsylvania (population 6,500). My father was born in Transylvania and my mother in Hungary. Although Transylvania was sometimes part of Rumania and sometimes Hungary, we were always considered Hungarian. My mother came to America as a young child and my father as a young man. They met in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, and settled in Midland after they got married. My father was in the grocery business with his two older brothers.

Midland had about twenty Jewish families and a small Orthodox *shul*. The synagogue was open on the High Holidays and other special occasions. A rabbi (or sometimes a layman who was well-versed in Hebrew and tradition) was hired for the Holidays each year and stayed with one of the families for *Rosh Hoshonah* and *Yom Kippur*. Many times people were called and asked not to go out of town for the holidays, or there might not be a *minyan*. On *Rosh Hoshonah* afternoons, different families would host an open house where many varieties of strudel, honey cake, and other traditional sweets were served. I think this was done on a rotation basis each year.

The major industry in Midland was the steel mill. Many of the businesses were owned by Jews. If one walked down the main street on *Rosh Hoshonah* and *Yom Kippur*, all the Jewish-owned stores were closed. The stores were open late on alternate Fridays and every Saturday because that was when the mill workers got paid, and the farmers came to town for their provisions.

During the Depression, times were very hard in our community. Some families in the general community had fifteen or more children. Most of the businesses were owned by Jews: grocery, clothing, furniture, etc. The Jewish families all had sleep-in maids because the large families were only too happy to have their daughters live someplace else, thereby giving them one less mouth to feed. Sometimes this arrangement was used in lieu of these families paying their bills to the entrepreneurs. In those days even groceries could be charged. With the advent of World War II, these girls were able to get jobs in defense plants and make a much better living.

Midland was basically a town of immigrants, mostly Italian and Serbian. I don't think there was a lot of overt anti-Semitism, but a few incidents stick in my recollections. In high school the most prominent club for girls was Tri-Hi-Y and its counterpart for boys, Hi-Y. They were like fraternities in that you had to be bid to become a member. Although we were friends with the members, we could not be members since it was considered a Christian organization, even though it was an official school club with faculty sponsorship. We accepted this as a fact of life until we found out that our Jewish friends in other towns were in this group, and it was against the policy of the national organization (YMCA) to be so discriminatory. Our parents told us just to ignore it.

Another time a junior high music teacher threatened to fail us if we refused to sing Christmas carols. (I was a monotone, and the rest of the year he usually asked me not to sing). When we told our parents about this, they told us that we should just move our lips and not make waves. "Jew's piano" (cash register) and "Jew down" were often used by the teachers in the business department, although sometimes they would apologize.

The school day began with the reading of ten verses from the Bible (usually the New Testament). Then we had to bow our heads and recite The Lord's Prayer. During the Christmas season, the Nativity Scene had a prominent place in each classroom, along with the seasonal decorations. Each year the teachers would ask us to tell the class how the Jews celebrated Christmas, and we explained about *Hanukkah*. We did not bring our *menorahs* or *dreidles* to school, however. There was a community Christmas pageant, and each class would participate. We Jews were usually part of the chorus. The nativity scene was also a major part of this event. *Hanukkah* was never mentioned at these events, nor did we expect it to be.

No concessions were made to our being Jewish. If school activities or exams were held on Jewish holidays, that was too bad, although we were usually allowed to make up the tests.

Our high school graduation banquet was in the basement of the Catholic Church. The menu was pork roast, but because they knew we (two of us) were not supposed to eat pork, they served us steak instead. Even though we knew it was not kosher, we decided to go ahead and eat it since the committee meant well.

At one time we had a kosher butcher in town, but because there was not enough business to support him and his large family, he had to leave for a larger town where he could make a living. After that we went to Pittsburgh for kosher meat every Sunday. Fifth Avenue and Logan Street were filled with the Jews from the surrounding small towns enjoying the kosher delicatessen and restaurants and meeting their friends. During the winter, when the weather was inclement, the butcher could send our orders via Greyhound bus. A *shochet* did come to town each week to prepare the chickens for *Shabbos*. A non-Jew was hired to flick (defeather) the chickens, then our mothers completed the removal of the giblets and the insides.

Passover supplies were ordered well in advance and were kept in a special area in the back room of our family's store. Passover dairy products were imported from Youngstown, Ohio and sold in the Isaly's Dairy Store. Our mothers had to plan very carefully since no extras could be available.

Although most of the families were basically Orthodox, we went to a Reform temple in East Liverpool, Ohio for religious school and twice-a-month *Shabbos* services. Student rabbis from Hebrew Union College came twice a month to officiate at services and help with the general education and holiday observances. A choir was hired from the non-Jewish community. There were fourteen students in my Confirmation class and we came from three states: Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. East Liverpool also had a small Orthodox *shul*, and we formed a youth group that had about eighteen people. Because the girls outnumbered the boys by two to one, our events did not include much dancing.

In Midland there were six of us in the same general age group (born between 1924 and 1927). When it was time for the boys to study Hebrew, we three went to Cheder with them. The Hebrew teachers came and went. These were still Depression years (1936 to 1939), and the teacher was paid

very little, plus dinner at a different home after each lesson. Our parents joked that each teacher would stay until we reached page gimel, and a new one could come. After the boys became *Bar Mitzvah*, our Hebrew training came to a stop. *Bat Mitzvah* was not done at that time, and I was sixty-three when I achieved that rite of passage!

As teenagers, we went to Beaver Falls for AZA and BBG meetings. The chapters encompassed all the small towns in the area. We traveled by bus from Midland, which passed through three or four towns and picked up one or two members along the route. In the summer each small town *shul* had a picnic in the local parks. All the Jews from the surrounding areas came. The picnics were fun and made us really feel connected to the larger Jewish community. There were games, swimming, dancing, and attempts at matchmaking by those who were eligible or who had children of datable age. Dating was difficult because we were not allowed to date non-Jews, and the boys with whom we grew up were like brothers and did not see us as more than platonic friends.

After high school I went to the University of Pittsburgh and became an elementary school teacher. I taught for the city of Pittsburgh for one year and then moved to California. My teaching career (twenty-eight years) was also in small town schools. In most of the schools I was the only Jewish teacher, although there were a few schools where there were one or two other Jews. I rarely had a Jewish child in my classes. Now in the schools a *Chanukah* song is thrown in with the Christmas carols and menorahs stand beside the Christmas tree. The nativity scene is still seen in some classrooms—some teachers say this is cultural and not religious.

In 1948 I came to California. In my search for a teaching position, I went to the town of Anaheim. (In the pre-Disneyland era, Anaheim was indeed a small town). At that time one's religious preference was on the application blank. The following conversation took place between the superintendent and me at the interview:

The superintendent said, "This is a small town, and we like our teachers to live here." I replied, "I'm single. It will be easy for me to relocate."

The superintendent further said, "We like our teachers to become a part of the community and lead a Girl Scout Troop." I again replied, "Fine. I was a Girl Scout, and in high school I helped the leaders with the troops."

The superintendent continued, "Well, we really want our teachers to be involved and to teach a Sunday School class, and since we have no Jewish church in this town you wouldn't be able to do this so you would not be happy here."

End of interview. Anaheim now has a magnificent Conservative Temple and a good-sized Jewish community.

A few years later the first Jewish teacher was hired in that district and was told that if she did not do a good job, no other Jewish teachers would be hired. Fortunately, she proved to be an excellent teacher, and now there are many Jewish teachers in that district.

Things have changed considerably since my youth. The sense of community is not as strong as it was when I was growing up. We still live in a fairly small town. Bagels, lox, and Passover foods are no longer esoteric but can be purchased in any supermarket. My children were welcomed in any organization they chose to join in high school and have rarely encountered anti-Semitism in school or employment.

I think the emphasis on education was extremely important in my youth. Most of our parents had very little formal education but almost all of us went to college. I have not had contact with anyone from that area for many years so I do not know what they are doing now. As far as I know, no one stayed in Midland.

✦ **MOLLY LIPSCHULTZ—KENNETT SQUARE, PENNSYLVANIA**

I was born and raised in South Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. My father, Isador Gomberg, was born in Russia, near Kiev. He was a violinist and a barber. My mother, Shirley Rubin, was born in Foscani, Romania. She was a dressmaker. Their common language was Yiddish. I learned to speak English when I went to kindergarten. As far as I know, their parents were born in the same countries. I have no sisters or brothers.

In 1955, when I was twenty-seven years of age, I married William Lipschultz (Bill) and moved to Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Bill had been living in Kennett with his older brother Albert and his parents, Mary and Irving Lipschultz, since 1937. The Lipschultz family had moved to Kennett Square from Coatesville, Pennsylvania.—a steel town ravaged by the Great Depression. The Lipschultz's started a family business in Kennett Square selling automobile parts. When brother Albert married, he and his wife moved