

YEAR 1949
MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

by

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PREFACE

WHAT URGED ME TO WRITE MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Sometime ago I read in The Jewish Daily Forward that the Yiddish Scientific Institute (IVA) was conducting a contest under the heading; "Why did you, as a Jewish Immigrant, leave your home in the Old World and what are your accomplishments in this country?" An immigrant myself, I was spurred to tell of my experiences. It was not the prize that the institute offered for the best written article that attracted me. Instead, I wanted to experience the mental satisfaction of recollecting and going over the occurrences that had happened to me in the past half century . . . experiences that varied in sadness and gladness, experiences that, to this day, remain indelibly engraved on the tablets of my heart. I wanted to live through my past again and putting it on paper seemed the best way of achieving it. Much transpires in one's life that is difficult to describe through the medium of the written word. Many incidents happen during one's life-time that are worth recollecting though many were sad ones at the time they occurred.

I am going to call my story: "The Autobiography of a Jewish Immigrant". I know it will be of interest to my children and I hope it will also be of interest to others who would care to read it. What could I, an ordinary human being, relate from my life that would be of interest to strangers? I have not given to humanity anything outstanding, yet I was and still am a cog in the great machine that rotates and is called the Universe. I shall go back in my writing to the time when happenings began to leave an impression on my childish mind. I will try, step by step, and to the best of my ability, to relate everything that has happened in my life. I do not wish to omit the sixteen years of my youthful life up to the time when I reached the shores of the New World in 1903. After that part of my life's story is told, I will deal with the main topic, "Why I Left the Old World, and my Accomplishments in the New World". I was sixteen years old when I landed in my adopted, beloved country, the United States of America, on the 7th day of September, 1903 (Labor Day).

THE STORY

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A JEWISH IMMIGRANT

I was born over sixty years ago in a small town by the name of Evie, in the State of Vilna, in the heart of Lithuania in Russia. I first became acquainted with my father when I was four and one-half years old. That seems a rather strange statement to make, but I hasten to explain how it came about. Father was away from home and would return only for a visit during the Passover holidays. I was too young to recognize father on his visits. Father was a Hebrew teacher by profession. He conducted a school (cheder) of his own, where he taught children of the middle grades. There were not enough students in our small town to give father a living income so he was compelled to seek out his students elsewhere. These he found in Uman, a city in the State of Kiev, in the Ukraine. Father's earnings in Uman must have been quite meager also, for he sent very little money home. Mother had to bake bread and spin flax in order to support the family.

There were four children in our family - the eldest being a girl, two older brothers and I, the baby of the family. My sister had already been married at the beginning of my life story, but I wish to relate what I recall of the wedding. I must have been three years old then and the music of the orchestra was very fascinating to my childish mind. The wedding took place in a neighbor's house because it accommodated more people than our own house. Father was not present at the wedding. Presumably it would have been too expensive to travel from Uman to Evie. The married couple moved in with us and took over the only bedroom in the house. Mother and we, the three boys, found our sleeping quarters in back of a big oven that took up one-third of the only large room left. My brother-in-law was also a teacher by profession. He was giving private lessons to school children helping them in preparing their school work. He had to struggle to make both ends meet so sister had to work to help out with the household expenses.

There really was another reason, as I later found out, why my father did not send home enough money to support the family. He was saving some of his income hoping to accumulate enough and so enable him to bring his family to Uman, where he wished to make his permanent residence. That is exactly what did happen when I was four and one-half years old. Father sent mother money for transportation and told her to pack and come to Uman. She sold our house and all its belongings and started with the three small boys for our new home to be, leaving sister and her husband in the small town. I recollect distinctly the day when the news spread that we were leaving to join father. I do not exactly remember what route we travelled by, but I do know that from Evie we left by horse and wagon till we reached a certain body of water. There we boarded a boat, and I will never forget how the shrill whistles of the steamer frightened me so much that I was sick throughout the rest of the voyage. After five or six days of traveling by horse and wagon, by water and rail, we finally arrived at our destination, where for the first time I remember being embraced and hugged by my father.

UMAN

Only for three years did we enjoy the company of our father for he suffered an attack of appendicitis and died at the age of 46. At that time the medical profession did not apply surgery for appendicitis whereby father's life probably would have been saved. I was seven and one-half years old at my father's death. I remember him as being a strict person to us, the children, and also to mother. Whether his strictness was a trait of his profession or caused by other reasons I could not judge. I only know that he showed great love and devotion to all of us and he seemed very happy in our midst.

His teaching in Uman had evidently brought him a nice income for we were well taken care of. A short time after our arrival father bought a home on the outskirts of the town and made a substantial down payment on it. It was only a short time after buying the home that father sent for our sister, her husband, and their daughter, who was born after we left Evie. Father wanted to have his whole family near him and hoped there would be a livelihood there for all of us. How does the proverb go, "Man proposes and God disposes". I already told you that father died three years after our arrival in Uman, and I was seven and one-half years old then.

Since family ties are intradependent, I would now like to relate what happened to all the members of our family during Dad's short association with us and also after his death. My oldest brother, Charlie, at the age of thirteen, became a baker's apprentice, learning the trade. My younger brother, Abe, was attending father's school (cheder) since he was in the middle grades category. I, at the age of five, started at a lower grade Hebrew school (cheder) where one starts from the alphabet and learns to read and translate the prayer book and the Bible. At the age of six, I also entered a private school to learn the Russian language, - reading, writing and arithmetic. I had to discontinue attending the latter school after father died, but I did continue the advanced study of Hebrew and Talmud from another teacher for a short time. Conditions for the family turned bad after father's death. My brother-in-law and mother tried several undertakings to derive a livelihood, but it was of no avail. We couldn't keep up the payments on the home and it was finally taken away by the mortgagor. It became harder from day to day to make ends meet.

The family began planning to return to the small town where we came from and where our relatives lived. The first one of the boys to start back was my oldest brother, Charlie. He did not go to our small town, but went to the capital of our State, which was Vilna. There, following his trade, he found a job in a bakery and earned a nice living. My other brother followed him in departing from Uman. He went to Evie, where he took up cap-making as a trade. He later went to Vilna where he found a job in the cap-making industry and was getting along quite well.

During our stay in Uman, an aunt of ours, a sister of my mother's died. Her husband hearing of mother becoming a widow wrote and asked her to take her dead sister's place. We, the children, used some persuasion on mother and she accepted his offer. She went to the little town of Deliatich in the State of Minsk and married our uncle. A short time later our sister and her family also returned to our small town while I alone remained in Uman. I was nine years old then and from that time on I was on my own in the wide world of ours.

I was left in the care of a family by the name of Guberman, who lived in the same vicinity where we did and who were friends of our family. This family also came to Uman from Lithuania and this was another reason why we were befriended. Knowing that I had decided to stay on in Uman, the Gubermans offered me a home and family friendship until I could find something different. I accepted their offer and was treated royally by them. I had my meals with several neighbors who, out of pity, offered to feed me one day a week. Many a meal I missed for one reason or another, but the Gubermans tried to fill in the meals I missed. Some meals I missed though, and no one knew about them except my stomach which felt the lack of food.

About the very same time, there was established in Uman, a charitable institution in the form of a boy's trade school. It was financed by the Jewish Community and was admitting children from the poorer families and also orphans of my status. It was called; "Talmud Torah and Trade School" and consisted of five classes; three of the lower grades and two of the higher grades. When a student would be promoted into the first of the higher grade classes he was considered old enough to choose a trade. There were three trades to pick from; blacksmith, woodcarving and machinist. I applied for admission to this school. At my age and with my previous education I was admitted to the third of the lower classes of the school. At the age of ten I was promoted to the first of the higher grades so I was in line to choose a trade. I will come back to this point later for here I want to relate the following.

One year after I was left in Uman in the care of the Gubermans, and being fed by the good-hearted neighbors, the wealthy Jewish philanthropist, Baron Hirsch, (who was then considered the "Sugar King of Russia") came to the aid of our school. He contributed a substantial endowment to the Talmud Torah and I benefitted by this generosity. The school authorities, knowing of my plight, had taken me in as one of their wards. They found a home where I was given lodging and board, and the school also provided me with shoes and clothing. From then on I was sure of my daily meals, so my starving days were over, and I had decent clothing to wear.

I previously said that when I was ten years old I entered the first of the high grade classes. I was expected to pick a trade, but I would rather have had an educational career. Since I had no choice in the matter, I picked the machinist trade.

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The time spent learning the trade was a few hours after school. The machinist trade was fascinating and interesting work even though I didn't like it. Especially since the headmaster was too bossy and even abusive at times. An accident happened to me while I was working in the shop that definitely killed my desire for becoming a machinist. I was operating a drill-press and a younger fellow apprentice, was turning the wheel which was the power for operating the drill-press. I was adjusting the drill-press with my right hand and pressing down with my left hand. My shirt sleeve was caught between two cogs of the press, and before my helper brought the wheel to a stop, my left wrist was caught between the cogs and several arteries were severed. I passed out and when I regained consciousness I found myself in the city hospital where a doctor, without administering an anesthetic, sewed up my wounded wrist. I considered myself lucky that my arm was saved. The incision is still visible after fifty long years.

At the age of twelve years I graduated from this trade school and I was an honor student all through my school days. I did not accomplish very much at the machinist trade because my heart wasn't in it. I longed for a real home and for my close relatives like my mother, and my brothers, and sister. I was dreaming of joining my family in Lithuania.

One day in March, 1898, I bade goodbye to Uman where I had spent eight of my then twelve and one-half years, and started back to the place of my birth. My destination was Vilna where both my brothers were located. The older brother was still working as a baker and the younger as a cap-maker.

A certain question is always in my mind for which I cannot find the proper answer. In the eight years of my attending schools from the lowest grade in cheder to the graduation from the trade school I had made big strides and extraordinary progress in education. I had been in the above average group of students considering the handicaps I was under. I, therefore, wonder what could have or would have been my accomplishments had I had the proper home environments that most children of that age enjoy.

I arrived in Vilna in March, 1898, and was met at the railroad station by my oldest brother. I was to share with him a room at the home of a co-worker of his. I was very happy to meet my kin again after a separation of four years. Upon my arrival in Vilna, my brother had only time enough to meet me at the station and to deliver me to a certain bakery where the lady of the house in which he was staying was waiting for me as pre-arranged. The bakery was owned by her sister. I am relating these details for the following reason: a little brunette girl whom I met at this bakery, a daughter of the owners and a niece of my mistress, is the very girl that I married and who is the mother of our three children.

I arrived in Vilna a few weeks before the Passover holiday and I stayed there a couple of weeks in order to get my bearings in the new environment. I then left for our small town and visited a short time with my sister, and from there I went to see my mother. Mother lived in another small town a few miles from Evie. I stayed at mother's over the Passover holiday and then returned to Vilna.

VILNA

In the city of Vilna there was a prominent school of higher education called "The Teacher's Institute". This was a government owned school that would admit only Jewish men students. There were only two such schools in the entire Russian Empire. Surprisingly enough, since the percentage normal to the other middle and higher grade educational institutions for our brethern was ridiculously low, this school was exclusively for Jewish students. This school offered a lot of privileges to the students after graduation. A student, when admitted to this institution, was to spend the four years required for the course in the school's dormitories. There was no tuition fee to pay -- the student was fed, clothed by the school and was prepared for a teacher's career. Upon graduation the student would have to accept a teaching position in a small town or village, wherever the government would designate. He would be paid a salary, would be given a home and servant, and, in addition, would be freed from military service. I was attracted by the privileges and opportunities this school offered and admission to this school became my ambition. I mentioned my intentions to my brother and he, too, favored the idea. He promised to help me reach this goal providing I would do my part.

There was a preparatory school in Vilna supervised by a well-known pedagogue, Mr. Tzunzer. A student graduating from this preparatory school had all the necessary requirements for admission to the Teachers Institute. During the summer, after my return to Vilna, I took some private lessons brushing up on several subjects, and in the fall I entered Tzunzer's Preparatory School. Four years I attended this school and graduated with high marks. I was then ready to apply for admission and take the necessary tests at the Teacher's Institute. During the four years past, knowing that it was hard for my brother to support me, I helped him along with his task. I gave private lessons to students of the lower grades and helped them prepare their home work. I also gave lessons to working men and working girls who were anxious to become literate. I didn't mind teaching them both the Russian and Yiddish languages, for I knew both more than enough to satisfy their need. The compensation for such lessons was small indeed, but I felt some independence since this relieved my brother of part of his burden in supporting me. Yes, there was some suffering in leading such a life, depending on a livelihood from prospective students. It did become especially hard when my brother had to flee the country for political reasons and I had to support myself. Some months there wasn't enough income to keep body and soul together, but I was not alone in such a condition at that time.

Vilna was the center of attraction for many a youth of my age who came there from the surrounding towns seeking enlightenment and education. They, too, supported themselves by means of giving private lessons.

I met and made friends with some of them. Together we feasted when we earned enough, and together we starved when the income dwindled. We were young then and were dreaming about an educational career and a bright future, so nothing else mattered.

I graduated from the preparatory school but there my ambition for a teaching career ended for the following reasons. To enter the Teacher's Institute the student had to be seventeen years of age. To prove your age one had to produce a birth certificate and I didn't have one. I did have a passport that every human being in Russia had and which was issued by a Board at the place of your birth, but I did not have a birth certificate. My parents either neglected to register me at my birth, or the idea of not being registered would save me from military service was in their minds then. For one reason or another I wasn't registered and could not get a birth certificate. I didn't have any money to bribe officials in order to get one, so my hopes to become a student at the Institute were lost. My only hope left was the New World, the United States of America, where both of my brothers had already made their homes

I will now go back a few years and give some details and circumstances concerning both of my brother's departures from Russia. Times were very turbulent in Russia at the end of the 19th century. Czar Nicholas the Second was the ruler then. There was revolution in the air all over the country. The workers tried to organize into unions even though unions were forbidden, but organization was going on in a secret way. The oppression of the entire population was so severe that intellectuals of all walks of life were mingling among peasants and workers agitating against and preaching the overthrow of the regime. The punishment for such agitation, if one was caught, was imprisonment or isolation in Siberia. The entire country was strewn with nests of spies who would stop at nothing to apprehend the revolutionists. The jails were filled with thousands of agitators and also many innocent people who were incarcerated as a result of false accusations of the spies. There were also plenty of provocators or squealers among the organizations and they would, for a price, betray their fellow members. An active member of any labor organization was not sure of his liberty at any time. The government was bent on crushing the oncoming revolution at any price.

Vilna was an industrial center and was following the trend of the time. In order to avenge the arrests and abuse of labor leaders or active union members, a strong-arm unit was organized by labor. To this unit belonged some members of the various labor organizations. When a labor leader was roughly treated by the Zshandarms to make him betray other labor leaders or active members, the strong-arm men would take it out on the spies who were instrumental in the arrest, or on the provocators who were suspected of being traitors. My brother the baker, was an active member of his organization, but he did not belong to the strong-arm group. In an alley in Vilna the police found a mangled body of a provocator. The killing was blamed on the baker's organization and searches were made for suspects and evidence in many of the homes of the bakers.

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A search was also made by the police at the home where my brother and I lived. In looking through our room the police found a pair of my brother's trousers which they withheld because of the stains which were disclosed to be blood stains. My brother's nose bled frequently because of the intense heat from the ovens in the bakery and that's how the trousers were stained. He was arrested, but later released when it was confirmed by a doctor and many witnesses that the stains on his trousers were caused by his nose bleed.

It wasn't very long after that that my brother was re-arrested on a trumped-up charge. The idea behind it was to get rid of active members of the unions and he was one. The punishment meted out to him was that he had to leave Vilna and remain on probation for one year at our small town of Evie. There he was to report to an officer of the law twice a week. One day my brother failed to appear before the officer and a couple of weeks later he appeared in a tenement house in New York City. Thus, his association with Russia ended. My younger brother was then already in the United States of America. Instead of being drafted into the Armed Forces of Czar Nicholas the Second, he thought it more advisable to join Uncle Sam, and at the first opportunity migrated to America. My brother-in-law and an uncle of ours preceded him by a couple of years.

I will now try to summarize, in brief, what had transpired in my life during my four years in Vilna. Living among workers and mingling with some of the revolutionary elements, I was naturally influenced and was in sympathy with the revolutionary movement. I willingly helped to spread illegal leaflets and other means of propaganda. I even conducted classes of my own where I enlightened working men and women of the issues of the time. I taught them to the best of my ability about political economy, about organization and about unions. This work involved great risk of being caught and you already know of the punishment that went with being caught. I must admit that luck was with me and I was never apprehended. It may have been my youth and my uniform that I had to wear as a student that distracted attention from me. I was a valuable asset to the movement. I even preached revolution to the many young friends that I had made while on summer vacations at my little home town. Thus, I passed my time in Vilna by going to school, being active in revolutionary movements and by helping a good many illiterates gain some education.

Toward the end of August, 1903, I left Vilna to join my brothers in the United States of America. I started out by secretly crossing the border into Germany. From there I went by rail to Antwerp, Belgium. I left Antwerp on Saturday, August 29, 1903, aboard the steamship "Finland". Nine days later, on Monday, September 7, 1903, Labor Day, I arrived in New York harbor. My brother, Abe, had sent me the steamship ticket and traveling expenses. He also met me at Ellis Island upon my arrival and I was put into his custody by the immigration authorities. There had to be someone at the port to receive anyone seeking admission to this country. My brother took me to 194 Madison Street in the heart of the East Side of New York City, where I was to share quarters with him. This was my first home in the New World, "The United States of America."

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

N - nto thy shores I was admitted when I was sixteen years young;
N - ew to me was your way of life, also your tongue.
I - knew yours was the land of the brave and home of the free;
T - o partake in such ideals and amongst such life I desired to be.
E - ven have I forsaken my birthplace in the land of the Czars,
D - evotion I pledged to the flag of the stripes and the stars.

S - ojourn and in cooperation with others in your folds,
T - o make this land even a better place to live in,
A - s the one I found when I had to begin,
T - hat was my aim and for my actions toward that end I deserve
no scolds.
E - verlasting may God's blessing be bestowed on our land,
S - o we will always be independent and no one over us shall
have the upper hand.

The foregoing pages have related the happenings during the first sixteen years of my life. The following ones will be devoted to my life and accomplishments in my new home in the United States of America. Here is how it started.

NEW YORK CITY

The first couple of weeks after my arrival I spent resting up from my journey and also in getting my bearings on the new life. My brother took me to a ready-to-wear men's clothing store on Division Street and bought me necessary clothes so that I might look American rather than like a green-horn. I was pleasantly surprised when I looked at myself in the mirror and noticed the change that clothes can make in the appearance of a person. After two weeks had elapsed we began talking about the future and discussing jobs that I might try so I could earn my living.

New York City was then, as it is now, the center of the clothing industry. Most of the immigrants and most of my relatives were employed in one or another branch of the needle trade. Was I also to enter a sweat shop of this industry? Being a student from the Old Country, I was advised against it, so I looked around to find something different. Answering an ad in one of the newspapers, I obtained a job in a cigar factory. The making of cigars was considered a somewhat better trade than the needle industry and my relatives were satisfied with my choice. In this cigar factory they were also making tobacco cigarettes. They are cigarettes wrapped in tobacco leaves instead of paper. One had to pass some time working on these cigarettes before they taught you the handling of cigars. The first two weeks I had to work without compensation and at the end of the third week I received the sum of \$3.00. It was the first cash I earned in the United States of America. My boss proposed that I do piece work. I accepted the offer and being a fast worker I increased my earnings to \$6.00 per week.

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The amount of \$6.00 per week was considered a fair wage in those days and it certainly helped with my expenses. (Today this wouldn't seem like much, but then it did.)

The home where my brother and I roomed belonged to my uncle. There were eight of us in the three-room apartment. This uncle's family consisted of one boy and two girls, my uncle and my aunt. There was another relative besides my brother and myself. That condition prevailed in most of the tenement houses in New York, where roomers and boarders helped to defray expenses.

The work at the cigar factory did not agree with me. Being a student I was never cooped up within a building for long hours, and the tobacco dust did not do me any good either. I stuck to it for five months, from October to March. During these five months I attended night school where classes began the first of October. I was very anxious to learn the language of the land and I made rapid progress in learning the English language. Everyone who listened to my use of words then admitted that my accent was so American that it was unbelievable for one who was foreign born. My teacher praised me for my accomplishments and I believe that my educational background helped me considerably. On February 12 our school celebrated Lincoln's birthday and the night school students were gathered for the celebration at the school's auditorium. My teacher selected me out of a class of forty pupils to recite a poem before the assembly. I recited Longfellow's "The Village Blacksmith" and I was very proud about it when teachers from the other classes complimented me. They claimed my recitation was as good as any American-born school child would have recited it. I left night school the first of March, the very same time that I quit my job at the cigar factory, for I also departed from New York.

My older brother, Charles, at that time lived in Butler, Pennsylvania. Upon his arrival in America he did not care to follow his trade as a baker nor did he wish to take up the needle trade. An uncle of ours lived in the small town of Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania. My brother wanted to try his luck on the province, so he wrote and expressed his desire to our uncle who invited him to his home. He accepted his invitation but he did not stay at Mount Pleasant. He somehow drifted and settled in Butler where he found a job with a junk dealer. Hoping I would also like a country town, my brother invited me to come to Butler and I did. It was in March, 1904, that I paid my first visit to Butler. I say my first visit for I stayed there only four and one-half months. Between March, 1904, and August, 1917, I visited Butler many times. In August, 1917, I became a permanent resident of Butler.

I am writing this autobiography in 1949 and it is over thirty-two years since I made my home in Butler. Before leaving New York the first time I naturally notified my teacher and he expressed his regrets and sorrow to lose me as a student. In recognition of my accomplishments, he issued a school certificate to me for my satisfactory work and presented me with a book entitled "The Reign of Terror."

I had learned to like this teacher of mine, whose name was Rabinowitz, for he was an outstanding personality. I thought very highly of him and considered him an intellectual in a class by himself. To this day I cannot forgive myself for not looking him up and renewing our friendship when I returned to New York four and one-half months later.

Upon my first arrival in Butler, my brother proposed that I try to sell certain small articles to the residents of the city and its suburbs. He would advance me the necessary cash to buy the merchandise. I agreed to try it and after buying a variety of articles that could be packed into a suitcase I started out by knocking on doors in an attempt to sell its contents. I had an assortment from shoe laces to gas mantles that were used at that time when there were only dreams about electricity. I fared rather well at this venture and earned my expenses, but yet I was not much of a success. Maybe it was because this kind of life was not my ambition, or business was not my slant on life. I tried it for four and one-half months, but gave it up and returned to New York.

On the way back to New York I stopped in Pittsburgh to visit a family from my home town in Europe. They were surprised to see me and invited me to stay over a few days. I accepted the invitation because the son of the family was a boy of my age and a friend of mine from the Old Country. I wish to relate an incident which happened the first night in my friend's home. They lived in the hill district of Pittsburgh and occupied the basement and the first story of an apartment house. My friend and I slept downstairs. When I awakened the next morning and started to dress, my trousers and vest were missing from the chair where I had placed them for the night. I awakened my friend and told him about it and to our surprise his trousers were also missing. Mine were the only pair of trousers that I owned, but my friend being of the same build as I, loaned me a pair of his. We both got dressed in a hurry and rushed out of the house with intentions of reporting our loss to the police. In the yard, though, we located our loss with the pockets turned inside out. I lost an Ingersoll watch, three or four dollars in bills and some change. A check for \$65.00 which my brother had given me was lying on the ground nearby and I was thankful that I had not cashed it.

While in Pittsburgh I answered an ad and got myself a job in a restaurant as a dishwasher. This job was a better paying job than the one I previously held so I thought I would try it. It lasted only two weeks. One Saturday while I was cleaning up the place, and it was a hot July day, my nose started to bleed. The Owner, Mr. Hennessee, happened to walk in and noticed my bleeding nose. He called me to his office and told me to pack, paid me off saying that he did not wish to employ sick help.

In a day or so, I was back in New York at my uncle's home on Madison Street.

NEW YORK CITY

I mentioned earlier in my writing that most of my relatives, and also my brother-in-law, were all working in the needle industry. My uncle and my brother-in-law were working in a knee-pants shop.

My cousin was a skirt operator, his oldest sister was a ladies' waist maker, and my brother was a reefer maker. A reefer was a coat for teen-age girls.

Coming back from Butler, I worked for a while as an errand boy, as a shipping clerk in a large cloak making establishment on Waverly Place, and also tried button-hole making in the same shop. Finally, I became an operator in the needle trade. I started as an operator in the same shop where my brother-in-law worked. I lasted at this job until the needle from my machine accidentally punctured my finger and I fainted at the machine. My next job was as a helper for my brother in the reefer making industry. This was a better paying trade than the knee pants industry. There were garments of various grades in the reefer line and for better grade garments the operator was paid more. Since the entire work was piece work, the more garments an operator could make, the more he earned, and the working hours were not limited either. Two partners by the names of Adelson and Shapiro owned the shop where my brother and I worked. The shop was located in what was then the garment center around Bleeker and Lispenard Streets. Most of the employees of our shop were relatives and countrymen (Landsleit) of both bosses. The latter catered to the relatives and Landsleit, and the better grade garments were divided amongst them while the other workers in the shop had to work on the cheaper grade garments. This condition lasted until the industry was unionized just six months after I joined my brother as a helper. There was a general strike in progress in this industry and our shop was one of the last and most difficult to organize and make join the union. A trick was played by the organizers to get the workers out of the shop and make them join. One nice afternoon we all heard screams that there was a fire in the building where our shop was located. Some of us, who were in sympathy with the union, knew beforehand that this was a signal. We grabbed our coats and made a dash to the exits. The other workers followed and on the outside the strikers from the other shops and organizers were waiting for us. We were persuaded to come to the union headquarters and our shop then also joined the union. The strike lasted a few weeks and all of us who were union members picketed our shop. I was assigned to that duty one day and several of us, in groups of two, were walking up and down the street on the opposite side from the entrance to our shop. Police were guarding the entire district against violence.

Mr. Adelson, our boss, resented the idea of us picketing the shop and told one of the officers to chase us. The policeman came across the street but instead of asking us like a gentleman to move, he used his club and struck me. I was going to report the policeman for striking me. The officer guessed my intentions and before I had a chance to take down his badge number he arrested me and took me to the Center Avenue Police Station, the one nearest to the shop. There he preferred charges against me for disturbing the peace and put me in a cell until a hearing could take place before a judge. When I tried to lay my case before the desk sergeant, he told me to shut up and I did. A couple of hours after my arrest, my cell door opened and a young man introduced himself to me as the lawyer of our union.

He was the well-known and beloved socialist, Meyer London, who, a few years later, was elected as the first socialist congressman from his district on the East Side of New York City. I told Mr. London my case and he told me not to worry, that I would be released as soon as the case came up before the judge. He also told me not to make any charges against the policeman. That was exactly what did happen when my case was brought up in court -- the case was dismissed and I was cautioned by the judge to keep the peace.

The strike was settled in a few weeks and we went to work under a union agreement. Work was more pleasant and more profitable from then on. A shop delegate supervised the distribution of the different grades of garments and each worker received an equal share of both the lower and higher paid ones. The friendliness between all workers increased and the bosses acted more friendly also. My earnings increased considerably and I began saving a little cash for a rainy day.

In Vilna I left behind that brunette, Bessie Miller, with whom I fell in love when I first met her. Though we both were young, the romance was getting more serious from day to day. We kept up correspondence from the very day I left Europe. Having saved some money, I started to make plans to bring my sweetheart to this country. Luck was with me. In the Spring of 1905 a war of competition broke out amongst some European steamship lines and passenger ticket prices were slashed. For \$10.00 one could travel steerage by the Cunard lines from Liverpool, England, to the United States. I took advantage of this opportunity and sent my sweetheart a steamship ticket and other traveling expenses for the voyage. In March, 1905, the girl of my dreams, my future wife and now the mother of our three children, arrived in the United States aboard the steamship "St. Louis" from Liverpool, England. A short time after her arrival and after a few weeks of rest, my girl found a job in a ladies' waist shop. Naturally, upon her arrival, I bought her some clothes and paid all her necessary expenses, but she soon earned enough to take care of herself. A few months later when we both had saved some cash we felt more secure. I gave up the job as my brother's helper and went to work in the better branch of the garment industry. I became a cloak maker which was considered the best branch of the trade. One year after the arrival of my girl, we decided to get married, and in June, 1906, we were united as man and wife. I drifted away from the needle trade and tried my luck as a paper-hanger, considering it a better trade than cloak making with better chances for higher earnings. I didn't stick to paper-hanging either, for it was work that was obtainable only during a certain season of the year, and one was idle the other parts of the year.

Being a married man, I hoped to get a job where I would be employed all year round. I applied for a conductor's job with the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company. It was June, the season of the year when the street car companies put on more help to take care of the extra traffic during the summer months. To the surprise of my wife and myself, my application was accepted, and in July, one month after we were married, I was already in a conductor's uniform.

Our first apartment, after our marriage, was located on 99th Street, in the Harlem District of New York City. Since starting my new job we naturally looked for an apartment in Brooklyn. We found one on Bushwick Avenue bringing me closer to my work, the Ridgewood Terminal of the B.R.T. For six years I worked for the B.R.T., to the surprise of everyone, for very few conductors lasted that long. A good many conductors were dishonest and mistreated the company and they were caught by the company detectives and lost their jobs. I, as a married man, was determined to keep my job so I was honest and careful. I did not regret being that way for I had a job during the depression of 1907 while thousands of workers were idle. I was getting 20¢ an hour when I started and worked ten hours a day and seven days a week. That meant earning \$14.00 per week. At that period of time \$14.00 a week was considered a fair, average wage. I also did some extra work during certain seasons of the year and earned a few extra dollars.

In 1908 our first child was born and we were certainly happy that I was holding down a job. Living economically we had everything that a young couple could expect in those days. We had a nice four-room apartment on McKibben Street in Brooklyn. It was nicely furnished and we lived a happy, respectable and independent life.

In 1910 Our second child was born and my wages were raised to 25¢ per hour. In the same year I took out my second and final citizenship papers and became a full-fledged citizen of the United States. Now, having the privileges of a citizen, I began dreaming of a civil service job with either city, state or federal government. There were the fire, police and post-office departments which offered jobs providing one could pass the civil service tests required. When I laid my plans before my wife, she did not approve of the jobs with the fire or police departments because of the dangers involved in those fields. I took the civil service exams for letter carrier and received fairly high marks in the tests. In the spring of 1912, I resigned from my job as conductor with the B.R.T. and began my work as a substitute carrier in a post-office station on 93rd Street and 3rd Avenue in New York. Until a vacancy opened, to become a regular mail carrier, one had to serve a certain length of time as a substitute. A substitute had to report for duty every morning and his work was divided into three categories; the substitute took over the work of a regular mail carrier who was absent for one reason or another; he helped the regular carrier if the mail was exceptionally heavy some morning; or he handled exclusively the special delivery letters arriving at the station where he worked. The earnings consisted of 30¢ per hour for helping a carrier; 10¢ for delivering each special delivery letter; and the full pay of the absent carrier whose place the sub would take. Since a sub could work as many hours as he desired and since my family had increased, I worked hard and put in long hours and earned a nice income during my subbing days. During that period a sub is transferred from one post-office station to another wherever they need his services the most. After one year serving as a sub, I finally became a regular carrier at the salary of \$800.00 a year or \$33.50 every first and fifteenth day of each month. It was pretty hard to get along on \$67.00 per month, but there was the future to look forward to. The post-office department would increase our wages \$100.00 yearly until it reached \$1200.00. We lived accordingly and got along very nicely, thanks to my wife, who was entitled to the full credit of the economical management of our house-

hold expenses. She learned to sew and make the children's clothes and she would not hesitate to walk blocks our of the way when doing the family shopping in order to save a few cents.

It wasn't very long after I became a regular that our entire group was demoted to subs again. The Postmaster General, Mr. Hitchcock, did not get enough appropriation for the department so he economized on the late appointees. This demotion did not last very long, for the law was with us. We were reinstated as regulars again and were compensated for the loss we sustained.

The First World War was in the making and the cost of living had advanced considerably. It became harder to make ends meet. There was no alternative so we did the best we could under existing conditions.

In 1915, our third child was born and we were a family of five, one girl and two boys. We pulled along until 1917 and I was already earning \$1000.00 a year making a little over \$80.00 per month. My older brother Charlie was well established than on his own in the scrap iron business in Butler, Pennsylvania. He was married since 1905 and had a family of two boys and two girls. My younger brother, Abe, was also married. He gave up the reefer industry, moved to Butler, and assumed the responsibility as a foreman in my older brother's scrap yard. By some coincidence, we, the three brothers, were all married within one year between July, 1905 and June, 1906.

In June, 1917, my younger brother quit his job, bought a horse and wagon and tried his luck as a junk peddler. My older brother had to have someone to take care of his scrap yard. He wrote to me and offered me the job vacated by my other brother, I was naturally promised an improvement in salary over my postoffice pay. I discussed the matter with my wife and we agreed that I should go to Butler and try it out. I applied for and was granted a 30 days leave from the post office. I came to Butler in August, 1917, and assumed my duties as foreman of my brother's scrap yard. I didn't like the job for the work was very dirty in comparison to my work at the post office and I was discontented. My brother noticed it and kept promising me a rosy future. I was persuaded and intended to give it another 30 days trial. I applied for another 30 days leave after the first one expired, but this application was rejected. Maybe I didn't have the proper political affiliations. At this point I had to decide whether to return to my post office job or to be persuaded by my brother's promises and remain in Butler. I decided on the latter, naturally consulting my wife first. My brother advanced some money to defray my moving expenses, which I forwarded to my wife. In November 1917, my family arrived in Butler and we made our permanent home there

BUTLER

Our first home in Butler was a three room upstairs apartment with a Jewish family. We stayed there from November, 1917, until May, 1918. The First World War was still in progress and apartments were scarce, so in May 1918, my brother had to buy a house in order to give us larger living quarters. We lived twenty-five years in this particular home from 1918 to 1943.

Those twenty-five years were the most interesting years of our lives. In this period of time we had reached the goal of our hopes. We had raised our three children and we happily watched them attain their independence and raise their own families. I wish to add here that it was also for the children's sake that we decided to make the change. We felt that life in a small town like Butler would be more beneficial for the children's health than living in a large city. It would also be easier for my wife to take care of the children in a country home than on the third floor of a tenement house in Brooklyn.

We raised three children that any parents could be proud of, and we are happy that our children did not disappoint us in our efforts and our hopes. Looking back to those years and our accomplishments, we wonder how we managed it with the meager means at our disposal. Again I want to give credit to my wife who budgeted our income in such a way that we were able to achieve these accomplishments. Indeed we deprived ourselves not only of luxuries but even of some of the necessities to give our children an education and keep them in apparel equal to that of other children. We could not and would not see our children embarrassed before their school friends. It was a hard struggle but we succeeded and gave each one of our three children an education. It was my life's ambition to give each of our children an education that we hadn't the opportunity to acquire ourselves.

Our only girl graduated as a teacher from the Slippery Rock Normal School. Our oldest boy graduated from the Dental School at Pitt as a D.D.S. Our youngest boy, who had an ambition to become a medical doctor, realized that it was beyond our economical means since the other children had exhausted most of our finances. However, he graduated from the University of Michigan where he majored in biology. He applied and was accepted as a science teacher at our Butler Junior High School. He taught school for five years until he was drafted into our Armed Forces of the Second World War. His school term ended Friday and the following Monday he received his invitation from "Uncle Sam".

It was the 17th of August, 1943, when this boy of ours joined the Armed Forces. His brother, the dentist, preceded him by three days. On August 14, 1943, our oldest boy received his commission as captain in the Air Force.

On August 2, 1943, 15 days before both of our boys left to join the armies of "Uncle Sam", our Jewish community gave them a farewell party at the Nixon Hotel. When I was called to make a few remarks I read a poem that I earlier composed expressing my feelings under these circumstances, here it is:

FAREWELL

Dedicated to both of my sons on their departure to join
the armed forces of our beloved country the U. S. A.

.....

No! I didn't raise as soldiers the two of my sons;
We are a peace loving race;
But to destroy the blood-thirsty huns
My boys are ready the battle to face.

We, the parents, have struggled to give them a career;
We molded two characters that no wealth can buy,
It wasn't for glory, nor praise or cheer,
We knew it will stay with them even after we die.

Now the time has come for their turn,
The duty for our country to perform;
The armed forces they are ready to join
And to proudly wear their uniform.

Yes, it hurts very deep when we have to part,
We hope it is Au Revoir not Goodbye, we now say
When funny feelings press and fill your heart,
So for their safe return we'll continue to pray.

Dad, and it goes for Mother, too.

Our daughter, after graduating from Normal School, obtained a teaching position in a country school in a nearby township. It was not exactly what we had hoped and wished for our only girl. We hoped and to some degree we were also promised, that our daughter would be given a chance to teach in one of our city schools. Before we decided which career to choose for our daughter and while she was still in Senior High School, I consulted both the principal and superintendent of our schools. Both advised and encouraged teaching as a career for our daughter because there is always a scarcity of teachers. Our daughter, in ample time before graduating from Normal School filed her application with the School Board, but she was never elected. A neighbor's girl was elected for the vacancy even though our daughter had graduated six months before her and the vacancy was then open. One Board member was a friend of our family, and when I pressed him for an explanation he readily admitted that our daughter's religion was against her. The policy of the School Board was to elect only a restricted number of Catholic and Jewish teachers and the quota for both was filled. My girl and a room-mate of hers, a Catholic girl, at Normal School were both elected as teachers in Summit Township near Butler.

Our daughter was never away from home except while she was at school, but there she stayed at a girl's dormitory. To get to her country school that was located off the main highway, our girl had to travel back and forth by automobile eight miles daily. Naturally she had to pack a lunch bucket for her meals. She had to teach all eight grades and the many subjects required for each grade. There was also the disciplining of the children of all ages, whereas in the city schools there is a principal who takes care of the disciplining of the pupils. Our daughter was terribly disappointed and unhappy. We were also unhappy. For two years she kept her job, and finally gave up teaching for a job as cashier and saleslady in one of the dress stores in Butler. The Superintendent of the county schools

Mr. Connell, also some members of the School Board, asked her to come back but she refused since she was happier at her new job. We were also happy because our child's happiness was uppermost in our hearts.

We Jews have a proverb "It is hard to be a Jew", and we felt it strongly at that time. We hoped to make our daughter happy by giving her a teacher's career, but we were disappointed when her application was refused by the Butler School Board, because we were of the Jewish faith.

As I write these lines, our daughter is happily married and has two daughters of her own. Her older daughter is attending the very same schools that her mother graduated from. I believe my daughter will think twice before she will select teaching as a profession for her daughter, when the time comes to choose a career for her.

The discrimination policy against prospective Jewish applicants for teaching jobs has since been abolished by the Butler School Board. When our younger son graduated from the University of Michigan and applied for a teacher's job he was elected without difficulty. He was even elected president of the Teacher's Organization one year after joining the faculty. I have previously mentioned that this boy of ours had taught school until he was drafted into the Armed Forces during the Second World War.

Our oldest son graduated from Butler High School at the age of sixteen and one-half, and he was a student with second honors all through his scholastic days. To choose a career for him, we consulted our son for his opinion and all of us agreed on dentistry as the profession. Dentistry was selected because it would be less expensive than medicine. Also considered was the fact that it wasn't quite as hard as medicine, and it took less time for the course. The University of Pittsburgh is the nearest college to Butler, so our son filed his application to be admitted there. Our son was 17 years old when in the fall of 1927, he started the first term of his pre-dental course. Since our son's grades were above average he was admitted without difficulty. At that particular time, one year was added to the dental course so instead of spending four years in college, he spent five. Our boy was a slenderly built young fellow and he looked very boyish among the college students with whom he had to associate. During the school week he stayed in a rooming house a short distance from the campus but would come home for week-ends. Since he had never been away from home, he was very homesick and even became very ill so we had to bring him home. He returned to school in several weeks and continued at his studies until he graduated as a D.D.S. in June, 1933. He was not quite 23 years old at graduation and he had to wait until the 27th day of August, his birthday, before he was eligible for his license to practice as a dentist.

The question arises, how did I, a wage earner, manage to send our boy to college taking into consideration the expenses involved for tuition, books, instruments, clothing and board.

It was a very difficult task indeed, but we pulled through somehow. A \$1000.00 Metropolitan Life Insurance policy became due within that time and it helped the situation along considerably. The problem was still unsolved with our son's graduation as to where we would go from there. I turned for advice to an old practicing dentist, a friend of ours, and he suggested that our boy should temporarily obtain a position with an established dentist. It would be advantageous for our son since he would receive a salary and at the same time would be getting the practice and experience to conduct an office of his own in the future. The advice of our friend was very logical taking into consideration that the year was 1933 and in the midst of our worst depression. I felt differently about it. My belief was that the sooner my boy was out on his own, the sooner he would acquire a practice of his own.

With this thought in mind we began a search for a desirable location in which to establish an office. I must admit that luck played right into our hands. A prominent dentist in our town, Dr. Mays, met with a fatal accident a short time before our son's graduation. Dr. Franklin, also a dentist and a brother-in-law of Dr. Mays, had his office in a suburb of Butler. Dr. Franklin took over the practice of his deceased brother-in-law and also retained his own office. It was too hard for Dr. Franklin to take care of both offices and the Butler office was put up for sale. Through a friend of ours we contacted Dr. Franklin and we bought Dr. Mays' office in its entirety. It was with the help of my brother who signed a note and we obtained a loan from a local bank to transact the deal. In November 1933, our son hung our his shingle on Main Street, in Butler, and began his practice as a D.D.S.

Times were very hard then. The 1929 financial crash had not cleared up as yet, still our son covered all his expenses from the very beginning. He had quite a few boyhood friends who patronized him as soon as he opened his office. Gradually his practice increased and times also improved considerably. Like most dentists in our community our son did not become wealthy but he developed a nice practice and above all a good name, and soon became independent. We were very happy with the results. In June, 1937 he married a girl from a nice Pittsburgh family. Now they have a son and are conducting a very happy home life. In August, 1943, our son got his commission as Captain in the Air Force. Three and one-half years later he was honorably discharged with the rank of Major. During his entire time with the Armed Forces he was stationed at the same air base at Herrington, Kansas. He was one of the first dentists at this new air base and was essential to the staff there, therefore, he wasn't sent overseas. His wife stayed with him at Herrington throughout the entire time. The house-hold goods were put into storage, but his office was kept intact in order to enable him to resume his practice upon his return home. For a short time after he came home he did practice in his old office. Now he has moved to a more desirable location and his office equipment has been modernized. Most of his patients have come back to him and his practice has even increased. He bought a home under the G.I. Bill of Rights and his home life began to flow in its usual channels, to the happiness of us all. We pray that it may so continue.

Our younger boy graduated from Senior High School at the age of 18, and he also was a student with second honors. His ambition was to become an M.D., but taking into consideration that our economical situation was strained, he realized the impossibility of such an undertaking. He applied and was admitted to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. He took a general course there, but majored in biology. To help defray his expenses he worked in his spare time. In 1938 he graduated from the University and upon his return home he applied for a teaching position in the schools at Butler. I already mentioned earlier in my writing that he was elected as a science instructor and in that capacity he taught school until he was drafted into the armed forces.

It was as a buck private that our son joined that great branch of the armed forces, the Infantry, in August, 1943, and he started his training at Camp Croft, South Carolina. Being a teacher, he was given the opportunity to take some exams for becoming an officer and he passed his tests with high grades. He was never given an officer's job though, for the war was then in its full fury and they needed privates to fill the gaps of the depleted ranks on the battle lines. This boy of ours was married and had a baby boy, seven months old, at the time he was drafted. At Christmas time of that year our boy had completed his basic training and was given an eleven day furlough. He naturally came home to spend those few days with us, his parents, his wife and baby.

I will always remember the few days of our son's furlough. He came home with the thought that this might be the last time that he would see his loved ones. He did not know to what field of operation he would be assigned. However, he was sure to be shipped overseas after the few days at home. I will never forget the forlorn look in our son's eyes. One could read his mind and the question, "Will I return alive?" Yes, the atmosphere was tense and each one of us acted like a clown. We laughed and joked, though our hearts were broken and aching for the fate of our child.

On January 6th, our son left for Camp Meade and it wasn't very long after that that we received a letter from him with an APO address. He was shipped overseas. The first mail that we received from him after his departure was in the form of a sketched Valentine. He and his buddies sketched valentines as a pass time aboard the vessel that was transporting them to the battlefield across the Atlantic. The second letter was in V-mail from North Africa where he claimed he was enjoying himself in the shade of the African trees in his spare time. He wanted us to feel good and to make us believe that he was still far away from the dangers of the battlefield. We knew differently though, from letters written by other Butler boys who were in his company. Our armies were in the Battle of Anzio, and to hold this beachhead they needed plenty of men. Upon the arrival of our son's company, they were immediately put into the battle. Everyone knows how bitter a fight the Anzio Beachhead was and that the allies tried to hold it at any cost.

Knowing where our boy was fighting, we, like most parents whose sons were in the battlefronts, suffered plenty of agony. My wife and I tried to console each other but now can one be consoled under such trying conditions? Many a night my wife would awaken from her sleep and groan and moan and cry quietly. I didn't have to ask what was ailing for for I, too, cried secretly very often and pray for the safety of our boy.

About the 15th of May, 1944, we received a V-mail letter with good news. I call it good news for it eventually turned out to be good news. I will return to this particular incident later, for now I wish to go back a little in order to relate the conditions that prevailed prior to and at the time that this happened. When our son was inducted into the Army his wife gave up their apartment in Butler and moved in with her parents. The latter owned a hotel in a town near Butler so they gave their daughter the use of three rooms, enough for her entire household goods. On that particular day when the V-mail arrived with the good news, my son's wife and baby were at our home in Butler.

In this letter our son cautioned us at the start not to get alarmed. He hoped, he said, that his letter would reach us before the War Department notified us. He wrote that a minor accident happened to him and his legs were injured. The letter was barely legible for it must have been written in haste, we assumed, the moment he came out of the anesthetic, and he was able to write. This minor accident was that a s hrapnel exploded over the foxhole and both he and his buddy were wounded. Our son was writing from an Army hospital in Naples, Italy.

The task that I was confronted with was not an easy one. I had to break this news to both women, my wife and my son's wife, who came for a visit. I did my best in trying to console both of them when I read the letter. I reasoned with them and told them that we have to be thankful that only his legs were hurt and the wounds might not be serious and he would come out alright. Deep down in my heart I didn't feel so good myself, though I tried to console everybody else. It naturally grieved me very much that my son had been wounded, but I hoped that he wasn't too seriously hurt. I wished, though, that his wounds were serious enough that he wouldn't have to return to the battlefield. I wanted our boy to come back alive to us, his parents, and to his family, even if our son would be crippled. It is cruel for a father to wish that upon his son, but as we were not sure of the extent of his injury our thoughts ran away with us and I felt this desire to be the best solution. I wrote a letter to his brother who was stationed at Herrington, Kansas, and told him about his brother being wounded. I also told him that in my opinion his brother could bear the pains of his injuries easier than the agony he very likely felt facing death every minute while in the front lines of battle. Now, at least he had hopes of seeing his loved ones again, if his legs that had been wounded should keep him away from the battle fields. A few days later, after receiving our son's letter, we were also notified by the War Department that our boy was wounded on the Anzio Beachhead, but not seriously.

The shrapnel shot through and shattered all the bones in the instep of his left foot and pieces of the shell were imbedded in the muscles of both legs and all over his body. In the hospital, they cleaned out all the wounded places and administered plenty of penicillin. A short time after the treatment, the hospital staff was disappointed because our son's temperature had not subsided. The doctors figured that there was something wrong and they gave the boy another examination. Sure enough they discovered a piece of shoe leather imbedded in the wounded instep that hadn't shown in the first x-ray. After the wound was cleaned out this time our son's temperature became normal and he began improving. He wrote to us daily and reading between the lines we could notice a cheerful mood in his letters. We still didn't know the extent of his injury even when he sent us a picture of himself in a wheelchair. It so happened that his wounded leg was in the shadow of the photograph and wasn't clear or noticeable, so we were under the impression that he had lost one of his legs.

For three months he was confined to the Army Hospital at Naples and we received letters from him daily. All of a sudden his mail stopped coming and we were worrying as to the cause of this silence. We started to inquire and received the very encouraging news that our son was on his way back to the States. For security reasons they were not allowed to mention it in their letters and there was no way of corresponding while aboard the ship that was bringing him home. It naturally made us all very happy and we were patiently waiting for some more news from him personally. Indeed, we were all extremely happy and pleasantly surprised when the phone rang one day late in August and our boy's voice came to us over the wires from Charleston, South Carolina. He was in an Army hospital there. My wife, also his wife and I, were going to make plane reservations to fly there a few days later to see our son. We called him and told him of our intentions, but he told us that it would not be necessary for us to come to Charleston since he was going to be transferred to The Deshon Hospital in Butler.

One beautiful day, early in September, we were embracing our son on the lawn of the Deshon Hospital. He was on crutches but both of his legs were intact and not a limb of his body was missing. Tears of happiness came flowing from my eyes when I watched our boy embracing his mother, his wife and his son. I compared in my mind the forlorn look on my son's face during his furlough before his departure for overseas and his glowing happiness now, and it filled my heart with joy. I wish to state here that my son's injuries were serious enough and kept from returning to the battle lines.

In order to be closer to her husband, our daughter-in-law found an apartment and moved back to Butler. Our boy was in the hospital here over a year before he received his honorable discharge. It took that long before his wounds were completely healed, thanks to penicillin and other drugs. He was improving gradually.

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He finally gave up his crutches and began to wear shoes again. Since his wife had an apartment in town, he was permitted to go home nights, but had to return to the hospital every morning. The hospital needed help in the laboratory, and knowing that our son was a science teacher, they made good use of him as soon as he was well enough to go to work. It was very educational and it also was a good passtime for our son while he was there.

The time came when our son was eligible for his discharge so he applied for it. The administration at the Deshon refused to grant the discharge due to the inefficiency of the ward boy who improperly compiled the report on my son's application. Our son was transferred for duty again to Camp Story and the authorities there were quite amazed and annoyed that a man in our boy's condition was sent for duty. They, therefore, sent him to Camp Meade where he was finally given his honorable discharge. He didn't receive 100% disability because his limbs were intact. However, he is getting a small monthly pension for wounds sustained. His wounded legs were also the reason thy he refused to accept a teaching job from the Butler School Board even though they offered to let him choose his own subject. Our boy couldn't hold a position as a teacher where he would be required to be on his feet for a considerable length of time in a class room. Though he walked normally, he had to remove his left shoe quite often to relieve the pressure against his wounded instep.

When my boy was discharged in 1945, I already had been in business for myself for seven years. I offered my son a position in my business in which he had a good bit of experience, since he had helped me in his spare time during his teaching days. My son did not accept my proposition for reasons explained below.

His wife's parents who owned a hotel in a nearby town sold the property and moved to California. In Los Angeles, where they settled, they had three married children; two sons and a daughter who were all in the jewelry business there. The parents wanted to have their youngest daughter near them, so they wrote and persuaded the children to come to California. Naturally, there were some attractive promises for a bright future attached to the persuasion. When I was confronted by my son for advice, I didn't discourage him from the venture. I wanted him to try it so he wouldn't have any regrets. I told him that even though we didn't like the distance that would separate us, we would be happy here if they would be happy there. I also added that they would always be welcome home should they decide to return to Butler at any future time.

They stored their furniture and left for Los Angeles. There they lived with his wife's parents who owned a two-story house. The upper floor was occupied by a tenant and the children would have the apartment as soon as the tenant would vacate it. One of the brothers-in-law gave my son a job in his jewelry store and a very substantial salary and treated him royally. Our boy was homesick and longed for Butler, the city where he was raised and had many friends and boyhood memories. The children stayed in Los Angeles for several months and already had ordered their furniture to be shipped to them. There was some delay by the storage house in forwarding the furniture because there were no empty vans available traveling westward.

It seemed that the delay was to our advantage because the children sent me word to stop shipment of their furniture since they had decided to come back to Butler. I hurriedly notified the transfer company about the latest decision.

Our son came back alone leaving his wife and son in California. I took my son into my business and naturally gave him as good a salary as he had been receiving in the jewelry business. The scrap iron business at that time took a turn for the better since the price ceiling prevailing during the war emergency had been lifted. My son had always liked the scrap iron business, and with his experience he was an asset to me. Here is another reason why my boy came in very useful to me now. Our family doctor ordered me to relax my activities in my business affairs because in one of his examinations he discovered that I had a coronary condition. I was told to take it easy so I was glad that I could turn the handling of my business over to two reliable young men. They were my son-in-law, Carl Teaman, who had been with me for several years, and my son, Hyman, who came back to the business he loved. Our boy stayed in our house while his wife was in Los Angeles but not for very long. She became lonely without her husband and she joined him at our house where we gave them the use of a spare room. Together they went searching for an apartment but couldn't find one. Finally they located and bought a house under the G.I. Bill of Rights. They refurnished the house and by now have another addition to the family, another little boy. They are very happy here and we are very happy for them and we only pray that they so continue.

At this point I would like to make a summary of the accomplishments to date of our three children. Our daughter, Bella, is married ten years and has two darling daughters; one eight years old and one four years old. My son-in-law is in the business with me. We bought a home in one of the finest residential sections of Butler and remodeled it into two apartments. We occupy the upstairs apartment and the children live downstairs. Our oldest son, Al, the dentist, has a beautiful and fully equipped office in the best location in our town. He has a good practice, but above all a good name. He has a lovely boy three years old and he owns a home under the G.I. Bill of Rights. The youngest son of ours has a home of his own also under the G.I. Bill of Rights. He has two boys; one seven and one-half years old and one two and one-half years old. He also is in the business with me. Our three children lead a happy family life and are liked by everyone in the community. We derive lots of pleasure seeing that the fruits of our endeavors were not in vain. It was hard, indeed, but how does the psalmist say, "He who soweth with tears will reap his harvest with happiness". That is exactly how we felt and still feel now that we watch our children and grandchildren and knowing the hardships we faced to accomplish what we did.

In the foregoing pages, I, as a Jewish immigrant, have tried to describe to date the moral accomplishments from the time I arrived in this blessed land of ours at the age of 16. It all happened between the years of 1903 and 1938, in which I was only a wage earner.

Yes, it can only happen in a democracy like ours, where each citizen has an equal opportunity to reach any goal he desires. One has to have the ability as well as an honest character. In the pages that follow I also wish to give a summary of my accomplishments in the economic field as well.

I started out as a tobacco-cigarette maker in New York City and lasted five months at this work earning \$6.00 per week, when I quit my first job. I tried my luck as a peddler of notions in Butler and its nearby towns and was not much of a success at it. I returned to New York and was changing jobs every few months. I was an errand boy, a button-hole maker, a knee pants operator, a reefer maker and a cloak maker. When in 1906 I married the girl of my dreams, I was learning the paper-hanging trade. I gave it up also a short time after my marriage and I became a street-car conductor for the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company. I stayed with this job for six years and gave it up for a Civil Service job. I was appointed as a letter carrier in New York, naturally, after I had passed the examination. I worked in the post-office from 1912 to 1917. In 1917 I resigned from the Post-office Department and assumed the job as a foreman in my brother's scrap yard in Butler. I started with a salary of \$27.00 per week which was a slight improvement over the pay I was getting at the post-office. Gradually my salary was increased and it ranged from \$35.00 to \$45.00 to \$65.00. Finally it went to \$75.00 per week when in 1930 my brother formed a partnership with the only other scrap yard in Butler. I will not go into details for the reasons of this partnership. I can only say that as foreman I continued until the middle of the year 1938.

My brother died in 1935, and in 1936 the partnership was dissolved. My brother's children stepped back into their father's business at the old place. I was left behind and having no alternative, I remained working for the other scrap yard. My weekly salary remained the same and I was getting along nicely. In the preceding time of my life, and though working for a salary, we gave our children the careers they acquired. We spent every cent I earned to reach the goal we strived for. We were naturally happy that we were not disappointed in our efforts.

In 1938 all our children were married, already had families of their own and were independent. In the very same year, I was forced to become independent and come out on my own also.

The firm for which I had been working, slashed my wages to such an extent that I couldn't get along on what I was earning. They told me that it was the best they could do and I could either take what they offered or do the next best thing. At my age to find another job to my liking was out of the question so I was thinking of venturing out on my own into business for myself. The only business that I had twenty-one years' experience in was, naturally, the scrap-iron business. With this thought in mind and with a very small amount of cash at my disposal, I began to make plans and try to find a way to get started on my own. I based my hopes of success on my experiences, but mostly on the number of friends that I had made amongst the scrap men whose merchandise I had handled. I was liked and trusted by the trade and it helped me in the days ahead.

The scrap-iron business is peculiar in many a way. You have to have cash to pay for the merchandise as it comes in. The peddler has to have the cash to buy up the merchandise from his customers. Farmers also are paid in cash as they bring in their farm scrap. So do the oil well men and the mine owners. The above mentioned channels are the sources where the influx of scrap iron comes from. This merchandise has to be prepared or put in charging-box or cupola sizes so it can be used by the consuming mill or foundry. Therefore, cash is needed to purchase the merchandise and it takes time and expenses to prepare it for shipment, and it takes at least thirty days before you get paid for the merchandise shipped. Therefore, a person in the scrap business has to have a fair amount of capital on hand to conduct such an undertaking. I was lacking the necessary capital so I tried my luck to borrow from friends and relatives. I am very happy to state that I encountered no difficulties in getting cash. Money was flowing my way wherever I turned or from whomever I approached for financial help.

At the end of May, 1938, I quit my job at the scrap yard and in June of the same year I leased a piece of ground on the outskirts of town. I purchased some equipment needed in handling a scrap yard, and put the yard in operating shape. In a couple of months I was established in the scrap-iron business.

The news that I started in business for myself spread like wildfire. The oil well men, the farmers and the mine owners for a radius of about fifty miles from Butler to whom I had catered for the past twenty-one years, all flocked my way. Merchandise was coming in faster than I could handle it, and naturally my small capital was being exhausted rapidly. I wish to say again that I had no trouble in getting money. My neighbors, the grocer, my insurance agent, and all my friends would give me any amount that I asked for and as often as I approached them without their even asking for collateral or charging me interest on the borrowed money. Yes, it made me very happy, realizing how wonderful people were to me and I asked "Why?" One and only one answer could be given and it was that fairness and honesty had been my motto all through my lifetime and my friends and neighbors knew about it and it paid dividends.

I had no trouble in getting money, but it became increasingly unpleasant to keep approaching the same friends over and over again. I felt like a pest. I approached the officials at the bank where I had been doing business and asked to be advanced a working capital. I gave them the reasons why I needed money and I also furnished a statement of my assets. I already had a fair stock of merchandise in my yard and some equipment. This bank refused my request, giving a funny excuse, so I withdrew my account from this bank and started one in a different bank.

The latter bank authorities cooperated with me and advanced me the working capital I asked for. From that time on my money problems were solved and whenever I did need money this bank would always go along with me. Things did not happen as fast as I am writing them down on paper. It took a couple of years before this episode I related took place. My first two and one-half years in business were extremely wonderful with reference to the influx of merchandise from all avenues. Times were abnormal then; Hitler was

on the rampage in Europe; the atmosphere was tense; war was in the making. Our government took over, to some extent, the control of the junk business, it being one of the most essential ones under such conditions. We were sending lend-lease merchandise to the enemies of Hitler. The capacity of my business had increased considerably, and the prices had also advanced on all the items that I carried.

In 1941 when our country entered into the world conflict, I already had paid off some of my indebtedness. Under the war emergency our industry was under complete government control. A ceiling price was set on every article we handled for they were the most essential commodities to the war effort. The margin of profit was so low that I felt satisfied when at the end of the year I had covered all expenses. Merchandise was coming in at a good pace and I had no trouble in selling it. The government would requisition our shipments and we had to sell and ship our merchandise to whom they would designate. I did a large volume of business but the profit was very small.

Eventually the war came to an end but controls were not lifted until the middle of 1946. About that time the demand for post-war construction and the lifting of price controls boosted the prices to higher levels on all articles we handled. I wish to say that the years that followed, 1947 and 1948, were the best years in my entire lifetime. It did require a lot of hustling and one had to be on the alert all the time, but I was content. I did not have any financial worries then what I had experienced while educating my children. The dollar worry did not annoy me anymore for I always had a little money ahead. No, I wasn't greedy, I was contented and happy knowing that I had just a little more than I ever had before. Most of all I was happy with the knowledge that I had something that I hoped to derive a livelihood from in my old age.

In the first eight years of my business venture, I succeeded in paying off all my indebtedness, even the working capital I had borrowed from the bank. I was turning over enough of a volume of merchandise that brought me sufficient cash to do business with. The years 1948 and 1949 were exceptionally good and though the government took a good slice from the profit in taxes there was still a good bit of profit left for myself.

The year is 1949 when I am writing this autobiography of mine. It is forty-six years since I, a boy of sixteen years of age, reached these blessed shores. Looking back to the time that had passed and to the results of my accomplishments in both the moral and economic fields, I can only marvel at it. I, an ordinary human being, have done an outstanding job considering the circumstances. The moral accomplishments were in raising and educating my three children and molding them into characters, which no money on this earth could produce. Three children that any parent could be proud of. They have brought us five grandchildren who have given us pleasure watching them grow that no wealth can furnish. What other moral accomplishments can any parent wish for?

On the economic end of my accomplishments I am and will be happy to wind up my days in the condition I am in today. I have established a small respectable business where I gainfully employ between fifteen and twenty of my neighbors, who consider me not only as an employer, but also as a friend. My son-in-law, my son and myself are deriving a nice income from the business. My son-in-law and I own a home in one of the nicest locations in Butler. Yes, this is the first home I can really call my own in the thirty-two years I have lived in Butler. It is now three years since our family physician told me that I had to relax my activities in my business. I will have to take it easy for the engine (my heart) cannot carry the load it had taken care of for almost sixty years. I wasn't pleased to hear my doctor's findings, but I was very happy knowing that I am in a position financially to obey my doctors orders. I have my two children in the business with me and they can take care of it under my guidance so I don't have to bear the hard knocks. I naturally have the income from the business to fall back on for my necessary expenses. I feel that I am entitled to some relaxation after thirty-two years of hustle and bustle. I am on the job, though, every day and the children seek my consent and advise in everything pertaining to the business. I am taking it easy and hope to continue this way for a long time to come.

I am sixty-two years old; my wife is three years younger. We both feel that we have had a full and happy life together. Now, in our old age, we have it much better than we ever dreamed possible. We can only hope and pray that our state of health will continue to be good. Yes, there does come a time when we all have to say good-bye to everything we have ever cherished and everyone we have loved.

How does Jacob Gordon, the prominent Jewish playwright say, "Everything that lives and breathes must die, life itself, though, is eternal".

That is how I wish to conclude my autobiography,

I am,

Joseph, the son of Zelig, the Levy.