

You cannot imagine the culture shock my husband (who is from Brooklyn) experienced when he visited DuBois to meet my family. It was an enigma to him that Jews could survive in such an environment. We did more than survive, but I would not choose to raise a Jewish family in such a place. We, as Jews, must live among our own in order to sustain our community. Fortunately, the desire to maintain our heritage was nurtured in me by my parents. My husband and I are perpetuating these customs and traditions in our home with our children. We hope our children will continue to insure the proliferation of our rich heritage.

✦ CHARLOTTE HARRIS RUDEL—NEW BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA

I was born in 1933 in New Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in Clarion County. New Bethlehem had a total population of 1,652.

My dear mother, Sara Wein Harris, was born in New York City in 1902. She moved to Clarion with her family in 1912. Some of the Wein's are still in business there—accounting for a third generation of that family. Mother went off to college (as did her brothers and sister) and graduated in 1921. She returned to the town of Clarion and met my father, Morris L. Harris, who opened a store in New Bethlehem in 1921. We lived in this little town until 1954, when I was married to David Rudel, a native of Johnstown, Pennsylvania (I met my husband-to-be when we were students at Pennsylvania State University. I was majoring in child development, and David's major was business administration). When we moved to Johnstown, my parents moved there, also. The Jewish community was 2,400 individuals when we moved to Johnstown, but now has dwindled to about 450.

But back to New Bethlehem and my story. I ask myself if my story is different from others who have lived in a small town. I think not! It is merely the saga of a small town girl and our trials and tribulations in business while maintaining our involvement in Judaism.

I was the only Jewish student in the entire school system. In 1921 my mother and father were the only eligible single adults in the county. Their marriage was the result of an obvious match which proved to be a great one, for they were married fifty-three years before Dad passed away. We had a Hebrew teacher live in our home especially to help my brother prepare for his *Bar Mitzvah*.

In the 1920s and 1930s there were meetings of the Ku Klux Klan in New Bethlehem. Someone took my father to one of the meetings to verify the existence of the Ku Klux Klan.

Oh yes, we kept kosher, and that was before the days of freezers. The advantage of the small town was that we knew every Jewish person in all the small Pennsylvania towns within fifty miles.

We all went to Sunday School, and even moved for a time nearer the city to be closer to Jewish people. I, along with my siblings, can read Hebrew and know about the Jewish traditions. To celebrate the Jewish holidays, to participate in the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, to participate in services, and to express our Jewishness we had to travel miles to larger cities. Pittsburgh was near New Bethlehem.

There were very few Jews in New Bethlehem. In 1921 there were twenty families; in 1935 there were ten families; 1945 there were only four Jewish families; and in 1980, as in 1990, there was only one.

Some memories: When I was asked to read Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, my family encouraged the school to read other plays by Shakespeare as well. In 1915 my mother was not allowed to join the Campfire Girls because she was Jewish. *The Jewish Daily Forward* came to my grandmother in Clarion from 1912 to 1974. We are a four-generation B'nai B'rith family. My brother and I never lived in New Bethlehem after we graduated from college. It was our time to go elsewhere.

✦ IRWIN SEALFON—TYRONE, PENNSYLVANIA

My parents were born in Riga, Latvia. As far as I know, their parents were born there, too. My dad and three or more brothers came to the United States in the early 1880s, before Ellis Island. There were a total of eight brothers. As explained to me, soldiers came in the middle of the night and took three brothers away. The five brothers came to America, but two came in at another time and from another country, and the other three brothers came together (of whom my dad was one of three).

They arrived in Philadelphia, where a relative lived. My dad worked for his relative in a shoe store but he was unhappy in this work. With his two brothers, he became a peddler, and they purchased merchandise such as shoe laces, needles, thread, materials for sewing, etc. They became wandering peddlers and walked in 1905 from Philadelphia to Milwaukee, Wis-