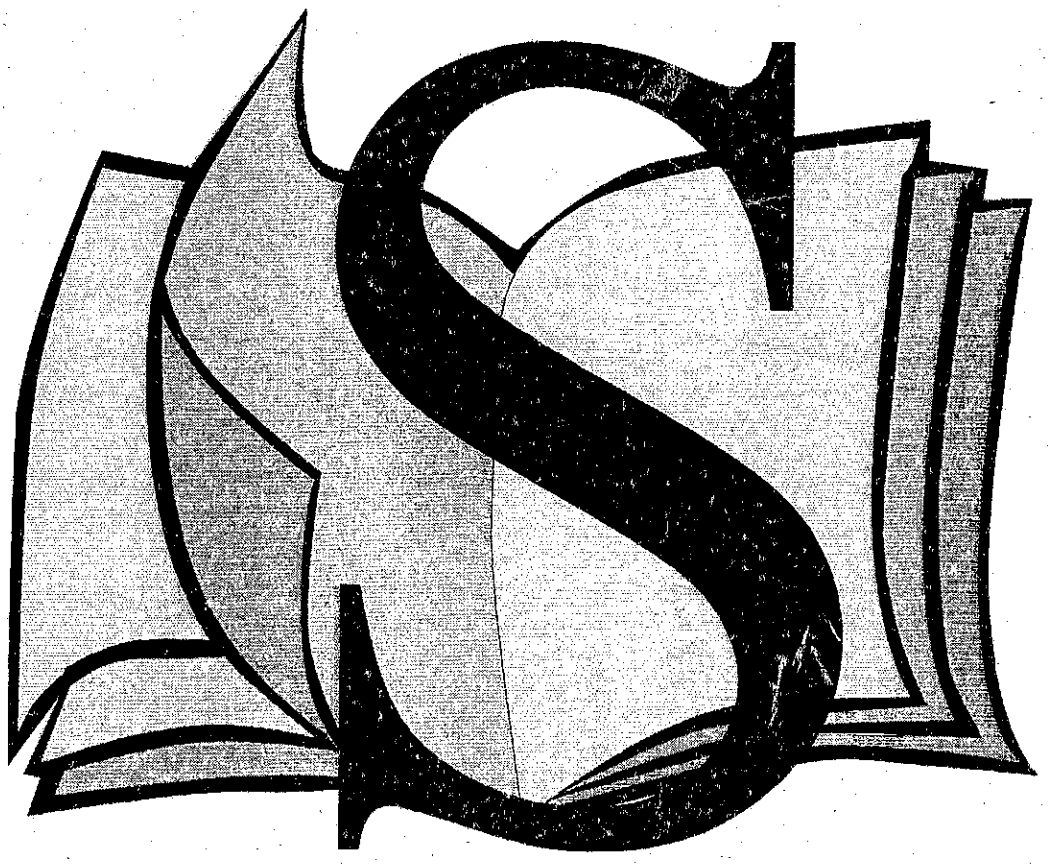

Family

The descendants of
Aaron and Regina Gescheit Steiner
Married 1879

Written by Alice Steiner Moss

Compiled by Rebecca Steiner Murray

June, 2000

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Preface

This labor of love was never quite completed. Alice Steiner Moss passed away on January 11, 2000. The completion of the research was a life's ambition of Alice … taking years and years just to compile the Aaron Steiner, her grandfather, and family's tree. She painstakingly typed and edited, and retyped and reedited working on compiling this history first on an old typewriter, then she challenged herself to learn to operate a computer with a printer attached in her 80's; and when it broke down, she continued with 20th century technology and mastered a word processor. She was an icon to each of us as she never stopped "moving and grooving". We always wondered what she was up to next.

At her funeral the following glowing remarks were made:

The eulogy by Ron Steiner:

I am honored to have been asked to say something about Alice, on behalf of family members. I am also very pleased that I can be with you to share our mutual grief and sadness, and also to celebrate her life in a special way.

What do we think about when we think of her? Here are some thoughts that may come to you mind, as they have come to mine in the past few days.

- *First, her music. Always eager to play and just as eager to listen and appreciate or encourage someone else to explore their talents.*
- *Her intellectual curiosity … to travel … reading … classes … elder hostel. Unless the teacher was below par and then she felt like she missed an opportunity to learn something new.*
- *I know that a lot of people will remember her as a teacher. She touched so many lives in that capacity. Her excellence as a teacher and compassion as a helper were always there to inspire her generation, our generation and our children's generation. Pursuit of excellence was always a hallmark of Alice's endeavors.*
- *Her generosity … done quietly, without fanfare and without seeking recognition.*
- *Her vivacious interest in others, always full of life and animation. Her interest in other people created this wonderful fondness for her. I have friends who may have only met her one time, years ago, that would ask about her.*
- *Alice was interesting and interested.*
- *Her laugh … it could fill a room and fill your heart.*
- *Her love of the arts … a play, a concert, an art exhibit, a movie, a recital or just a beautiful Arizona sunset … G-d's art. She was always appreciative.*
- *Her love and devotion to family. Oh, how she cared for her mother, my grandmother … what a terrific example for the rest of us. She was that special Aunt, that special cousin, and special relative to everyone … even some who were not blood relatives, but made to feel every bit as related.*
- *Her openness to all people. I never saw prejudice in this woman. Diversity was a spice for life and living.*
- *Alice was a rare blend of wisdom beyond her years, and the energy and enthusiasm of a person a fraction of her age.*
- *Her devotion to right and good. I knew her to be religious, yet even more; she was a spiritual person, in all respects.*
- *This was a woman who loved life and really lived it.*
- *All who knew her … knew that she loved to cook, and to eat. Life was a delicious meal to her. Food was a metaphor for life.*
- *The sweetness of having Alice in our lives is our everlasting dessert!*

May G-d bless her and rest her soul.

Rabbi Rick Sherwin had the following word to say:

RAHEL bat SHIM'ON u-MARGALEET
ALICE STEINER MOSS ***died 1/11/00***

When our matriarch Sara died, the Torah tells us that her life was 127 years. In the same style, we can say that Alice's life was 88 years, the number of keys on a piano. Her life was music, and her life was, itself, a composition of notes, which was both simple and elegant.

Music was certainly her trademark. Anyone who has ever seen Alice Steiner Moss behind the piano at choir rehearsals certainly understood the power of each note as her eyes sparkled, revealing the essence of this woman who loved life and people.

Alice was committed to education, even as she helped to bring herself and her students to new levels of joy and learning. It was laudable in itself for a woman to attend college during the depression, but how she made it through was an intense source of pride for Alice as she taught music in the settlement house in Pittsburgh. She touched the lives of those who had come to America to learn how to depend on themselves in a new country, and how to become a community. It was Alice who brought the individual notes of their lives together.

Alice continued to touch lives as a teacher, retiring in Pennsylvania and moving to Arizona in 1957 where she began a second career ... as a teacher. This time she would touch the lives of homebound students, quite often those who would not return to health. One can only imagine how she uplifted their lives with the attention and care she so freely shared with them.

Alice Steiner Moss was a fun person to be with, her friends – such as Rayetta – understanding just how special she was. It was a treat to be with her at the theater or wherever the arts were to be enjoyed. She loved to travel, creating memories wherever she went.

Alice was a strong woman who could take care of herself, yet loving whatever time she could spend with friends and with others who shared her passion for music, including the Beth El Choir and the music club.

Her three brothers knew how special their sister was: Emerich and William and Arnold who will continue to carry her memory as a source of inspiration. Aunt Alice – like her mother, Aunt Margaret – doted on her nieces and nephews and their children. The entire generation understood – and understands – that Aunt Alice will continue to touch their lives in a very special way as they tell her story, preferably set to a musical score.

Many have said that it was "bashert" that Alice could share happy years with Milton, the two of them waiting for the right person before getting married in the middle years of life.

The Rabbis of the Talmud teach us the power of music:

One note can uplift an entire soul

It is the truth conveyed by Alice's life, but the fact it that she was a note herself in the symphony of life. Her one note not only uplifted her own soul, but all those around her so that they could see the meaning and joy that came from her life as well.

How ironic it is that next Shabbat the Beth El Choir will be singing for the first time since the High Holy Days. There is no question that Alice's presence will be strongly felt. We will think of her when Brandeis Women gather, and we will think of her every time we here the notes of a piano and we feel a smile well up from within.

Zikhrona li-V'rakha: the memory of Alice Steiner Moss – RACHEL, the daughter of RAHEL bat SHIM'ON u-MARGALEET – will remain with us as a source of inspiration and uplift, blessing and comfort, for many years to come.

It is with joy and tears that I yet again retype the compilation of Aunt Alice's memoirs. I do this for her and all the surviving descendants of Aaron Steiner and Regina Gescheit Steiner. We owe this memoir to our children and their children and so on and so on for all of us to understand our heritage and remember when and how we all came to the land of the free.

Rebecca Steiner Murray

May 14, 2000

The Memoirs of Alice Steiner Moss

"What would man be without his capacity to remember? Memory is a passion no less powerful than love. What does it mean to remember? It is to live in more than one world, to prevent the past from fading and to call upon the future to illuminate it. It is to revise fragments of existence, to rescue lost beings, to cast harsh light on faces and events, to drive back the sands that cover the surface of things, to combat oblivion and to reject death."

This passage from the MEMOIRS of Elie Wiesel expresses well the strong feeling I have long held. I am almost duty-bound to record not only family stories I recollect, or have some scant record of, but to also record my memories of the small towns of Western Pennsylvania in which I grew up. If there is any central theme to my memoirs, it is the disintegration of a vibrant "*mishpochah*" (an extended and closely-knit family) as well as the disintegration of a way of life in the small industrial towns of New Kensington and Ford City. Their story tells a typical one of what happened during the first three-quarters of the Twentieth Century to the many industrial towns of the area and Jewish life therein.

My European roots, both paternal and maternal were in the Slovak region of Austria-Hungary, now known as the Republic of Slovakia. My grandparents, born in the late 1850's, grew up in a culture that was predominantly German. Their language in school and at home was German, not Yiddish. They lived among Hungarians and Slovaks, and those were the ethnic groups with whom they conducted their businesses. Hence they spoke those languages. The schools were forbidden to teach any language except German, and German pride was instilled. I remember Grandma Steiner reading the German Tageblatt and relating to her daughter-in-law the "romans", serial romances that were the soap operas of the day.

Hungary, which included Slovakia, attained autonomy in 1867; and Hungarian became the language of the schools. The 1870's through 1880's were a period of great growth in nationalism. When my parents went to school along with the Hungarian language was instilled Hungarian pride and love of Hungarian music (essentially Gypsy music). To the end of his life, when Dad wanted to count fast, he counted in Hungarian even through he spoke it infrequently in those later years. But the language in the home with their parents, even in America, was always German.

Their neighbors, the peasants on the farms around the small towns in which Jews had businesses, spoke only Slovak. They had very little schooling, which in any event was Hungarian. So, to deal with them, my parents spoke Slovak. They grew up trilingual, which was a great advantage when they came to America.

I do not know whether this discussion of languages in schools sheds any light on our present fervor over the teaching of English, but it does demonstrate that language has always been a dominant factor, perhaps THE dominant factor in national pride and loyalty. An incident from a part of my story to be told much later illustrates my point. In 1937 I took Mother to visit her family that had remained in what had become Czechoslovakia. We were all sitting around the table conversing in Hungarian and German (I could not converse in Hungarian but could imagine some German.) When my cousin, Pauli, nine years old, burst out, "*Why do you not speak Slovak? This is a Slovak country.*" Much good did his Slovak pride do him a few years later, but that story will unfold.

Dad was born in the small town of Klenocs in 1881, the second child of Aaron and Regina (Gescheit) Steiner. Aunt Linka preceded him, Uncle Julius followed in 1882, and Uncle Joe in 1884, a leap year child born on February 29th. I remember Dad, who loved any reason to organize a party, brought together the branches of the family growing in different directions for a quadrennial birthday party in the last sad phase of Uncle Joe's life.

Two more boys came along, Louis in 1885 and Alex in 1887. I imagine Grandma Steiner was especially happy when the string of five boys was broken by the birth of Aunt Rose in 1889. She always had a laughing, sunny personality; my guess is that she had no choice growing up among those fun loving, teasing brothers, who were always pulling practical jokes on one another. The last born was Emil in 1894, the gap of five years being caused by Grandpa's hunt for the pot of gold in Canada. Things must have been tough in the steel town of Nyusta, where he had been running a small store for several years. He went to work on the rails for the Trans-Canadian Railroad, but he was such a little guy that he couldn't swing the sledgehammer or whatever. He ended up in Winnipeg peddling for furs among the Indians. He returned with enough money to open a liquor store and tavern, with groceries on the side with Dad, who was now, eleven, as helper.

What about his education up to then? There were free government schools in Austria-Hungary for grades, but they had to be run by a religion. Obviously, there were not enough Jewish kids to have a school of their own, so his first two years were at a Lutheran school with some training from a Rabbi who came to the home. After two years at a Catholic school, he entered "gymnasium" (secondary school). According to the very sketchy account of his life he writes in 1912, he was too mischievous, did not pay much attention to learning, and flunked two subjects. I recently mentioned this to his grandson, Bill, and we both chuckled over the reappearance of non-diligence in school of my brother, Bill, and the grandson, Bill. And all three showed the same love of risk-taking, starting something new, and imaginative ideas in business.

Since he showed no scholarly interests, at age ten, Dad was sent off to another town to become an apprentice in a prosperous grocery business of Uncle Schlesinger. Over the next several years, he worked for other relatives in other towns. I guess the stint, as his father's helper did not last long ... reaching jurisdiction (his word for that exalted position) over two younger clerks at the age of fifteen.

Before I continue with Dad's life and talk about Mother's background, here are some observations on education in Austria-Hungary during the late 19th century, particularly as it affected Jews. Of course there were restrictions and discrimination. For instance, Gustav Mahler had to convert to Catholicism before he could become the director of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Yet Jews could enter "*gymnasium*", colleges and universities, although there were restrictions as to how many. Do not forget that even here in the United States in many of our elite universities, that "*numerus clausus*" existed, albeit silently, until the last few decades. Yet opportunities for secular education of Jews were greater than those in Russia and Poland. There was also the added advantage that Jews were flocking from the provinces to Vienna, Budapest and Prague. Lawyers, doctors, journalists like Herzl, writers like Kafka, had a great influence on the intellectual and artistic life of the cities and Empire. Through access to business colleges, banking and commerce became open to Jews.

The Steiners produced no great scholars or artists; however, Julius and Joe, the second and third sons, illustrate the opportunities

opened up by a business education when they came to America. Unlike Dad, they were diligent students, finished *"gymnasium"* and went to Business College. In America, (Joe came in 1903 and Julius in 1905) they got jobs in foreign exchange banks because of their business training and ability to speak and write in three languages: German, Hungarian, and Slovak, the last of which gave access to the related Slav languages such as Russian, Croatian, and Serbian. This was in the Pittsburgh area just at the time the greatest wave of immigration from Eastern Europe was arriving to meet the labor demands of the rapidly growing steel mills. The men usually came alone, deposited money in these foreign exchange banks until they had enough accumulated to bring their families.

Uncle Joe's life took a very unfortunate turn some years later, but I will continue with Uncle Julius's life as a typical one in many small, industrial towns of western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, a corner of West Virginia, the so-called Tri-State area. From 1905 until 1911 he worked in Duquesne, a steel town near Pittsburgh at a bank owned by one of the extended Hungarian family, the Kleins, and in 1907 married Emma Friedman, a sister-in-law of one of the Kleins. This was so typical of how boy-meets-girl at that period. In 1911 Uncle Julius purchased a foreign exchange bank which was in bankruptcy in Ford City, fifty miles north of Pittsburgh, on the Allegheny River. Here was the original plant of Pittsburgh Plate Glass established in 1887.

Since this town was to become my home from 1923 to 1958, let me interrupt Uncle Julius's history to tell a bit about this town. It lies along a strip of land between the river and a rather steep cliff. The hilltop and surrounding farmland had originally been settled before the American Revolution mostly by German immigrants in the mid 19th century, and the Cambells and Baileys married the Heilmans. When John B. Ford started his glass plant, his first skilled workers were Belgians hired away from another glass plant in Charleroi, Pa. Hence, the Delcroix family from which my piano teacher came. But the majority of the glass workers before the turn of the century were from Germany. Until World War 1, German was the language of services in the Lutheran Church and the Catholic Grade School.

By 1911, Poles, Ukrainians, Slovaks were settling in the company houses built on that shelf of land from the river to the base of Ford Cliff, and they were saving their money in Uncle Julius's bank. When they had enough money to buy steamship passage for their families, he made all the necessary arrangements. Thus was born the Steiner Travel Agency, still in existence and run by the wife of the founder's grandson, though the banking business has long gone.

Uncle Julius became the mentor, the pipeline for the acculturation of these new Americans. He taught them the language; history and laws they needed to know to acquire citizenship took them to the courthouse in the neighboring town of Kittanning and acted as their interpreter when necessary. What was more natural than for him to be elected as Justice of the Peace? He had earned their trust in all matters; so when the company began to sell off the company houses, they naturally turned to the Squire for help. That was the Genesis of the Armstrong County Building and Loan Society. These homes had to be insured, so an insurance company agency came into being in that same, small office. For help there was only one secretary and later Leo Valasek, who became his trusted right hand and carried on with some of these businesses after Uncle Julius's death in 1960.

To sit in that office for a few hours, as I did occasionally to help out in an emergency, was to hear the heartbeat of a community, letters from the Old Country to be translated, family problems to be discussed when the kids got into trouble, community

affairs. This man of many affairs was a member of the School Board for many years as well as being a volunteer fireman and a board member of the People's Bank. Perhaps the vital role that he and his office played in Ford City could be compared to the services provided on a larger scale by settlement houses in the large cities like Hull House in Chicago and the Henry Street settlement in New York. A personal aside -- I have learned that the concept of a settlement house is no longer part of the knowledge of American History for even college graduates.

Here I go all the way to the present without bringing Mother into my story at all! She was born in 1884, the oldest child of six of Gabor and Lena (Roth) Brauer, who had a tavern in a very small town named Forgacsfalva. Mother's parents and two of her siblings never came to America. Her father died during World War 1 when contact was impossible and Mother didn't hear of it until some time later. The strongest impression I have of him from Mother's reminiscences is that he was a very musical, could play any instrument he picked up and loved to hang out with the Gypsies playing and singing. Maybe that wasn't so exceptional. I think I have never met anyone with a background in Hungary who didn't get a special gleam and that sing-a-long urge at the sound of Magyar (that meant Gypsy) music, more about Grandma Brauer and Mother's siblings later.

Mother's schooling was very unusual for someone from such a small village with the poorest of schools. Apparently her brightness was evident early on; and from the first grade on, she lived with a childless Aunt whose husband was a prosperous director of a lumber factory in Szalontai, a large town with a Hebrew public school. She went on to a Hochshule, a high school for girls.
I have her original report cards form those years, so bear with me while I list their contents because I think the curriculum is most revealing about what European education was a hundred years ago. *"1891", "Hebrew reading good", Hungarian reading excellent, Hungarian writing good, math excellent, behavior exemplary, diligence praiseworthy. "1892", "Religion, Hebrew Reading, Hungarian Grammar, Hungarian Writing, German Reading, German Writing, Math, Expressing Herself"*, all with good or excellent grades. 1893 is missing, but those for 1894 and 1895 include all of the subjects for 1892 with the addition of Bible studies, Geography, History, Dialogue Discussions and Writing Compositions, every subject with the grade of "Excellent". (My translator, "Abe Meth" and his Wife, who were products of Budapest Schools, were most impressed. Compare that curriculum with the curriculum of a ten-year-old child in any school of today.

I have no record of where she attended the two years of Hochshule, but I do know that at some point she lived in what is now Rumania. There was much emphasis on fine needlework. I have a sampler done in school of the alphabet with birds and flowers all in exquisite tiny cross-stitches. I have other examples that were part of her trousseau of fine drawnwork with tucks, tiny buttons covered with thread. To the end of her life her hands had to be busy with knitting, crocheting or embroidery. We once counted that during her years in Phoenix (1958 – 1970) she had embroidered twenty banquet size tablecloths for family and friends. From my German piano teacher, Zachy, she learned a special way to crochet heavy kitchen mitts. I would not venture a guess as to how many kitchens were enlivened by their bright colors. I have friends here in Phoenix who have not used theirs because Mother made them and are so pretty that they did not want usage to damage them!

I have often heard people who are not of Hungarian background express the opinion that Hungarian cuisine is the best! So perhaps my bias is not misplaced, and Mother's excellence in that department was

widely known well beyond the family. Basically her pastries were of the Viennese school, though she was always ready to try new recipes. I wonder if the art of cutting fine noodles survives anywhere. To watch that sharp knife move so fast and so close to the fingers is one of my sharpest memories – no pun intended. That skill must have been honed at a very early age by the aunt with whom she lived during school months. I recall her telling me that when she was eight years old this Aunt Friedman was very ill; so Mother had to roll out the dough and cut those fine noodles when she was barely tall enough to reach across the table. I am sure there was a maid in the house, but Uncle Friedman was too particular to have anyone else do this. The strictness and discipline of that household might have accounted for Mother's absolute standards in neatness. To the end of her life she would never emerge from her bedroom unless fully dressed. No robe or housecoat for her, and for many years that meant a tightly laced corset and long braids coiled high on her head. Repeated admonitions to sloppy me that the beautiful appearance of food was just as important as the taste I remember well, but alas my interests were elsewhere.

Let us return to Dad's progress in learning to be an entrepreneur in food marketing. From 1896 to 1899, he worked as a clerk for several establishments, and then he went into business for himself in the town of Tisolc where his family then lived. This was a grocery and drink shop, which he ran until 1902 when he was drafted in the Austria-Hungarian army. I will quote from his account. "I was very proud to be inducted a Hussar (crack light cavalry). I was stationed for a year in the city of Klagenfurt in the lower part of Austria, a wonderful country near the Alps. Rookie life was miserable. By 1903 army life became a little easier; the captain was nice to me, promoted me an advancement."

Again it occurs to my mind the sharp contrast between Dad's attitude and that of most Russian and Polish Jews who came to America to escape the draft.

That same year Dad entered the army, 1902, his father went to Pittsburgh, PA, probably because his brother-in-law, Uncle Gescheit, was there working for Westinghouse in East Pittsburgh. The rest of the family followed in 1903, except for Uncle Julius, who by that time had a government job as a railroad clerk, and Dad, who that year was transferred to regimental headquarters, promoted to corporal and "*was very proud of two stars on my collar.*" He was on the verge of becoming engaged to a Rabbi's daughter when he went on a furlough for the Christmas holiday of 1904 to visit an Uncle Schlesinger. On New Year's Day Mother and her father visited Uncle Schlesinger and so entered Dad's life Margit Brauer who he described as *"a charming blonde."* According to Dad's account "the deal was closed" two weeks later on another furlough ... though I have a formal announcement of their engagement dated October 1905.

Dad was honorably discharged at the end of that year. There was some talk of setting him up in a business, perhaps because the aunt and uncle, who had been so involved in Mother's education and were so proud of her, were adamantly opposed to the emigration of the young couple to America. But upon hearing from Uncle Julius that he was giving up his government job and was leaving for Pittsburgh, Dad applied for passports. Mother's aunt and uncle never forgave them for the apparent desertion, held back half of an elaborate trousseau and did not tell Mother's friends where she was. Apparently emigration was considered definitely below the social status of the friends of her school years.

Dad's account of the wedding on March 20, 1906 says it was happy but also with many tears, because they were leaving in a short time, but (again, quoting dad) "*Everyone cheered up when the Gypsy music started for the dancing which lasted until ten the*

next morning." They left within two days, had a stop in Berlin where they went to the famous Berlin Circus. I wonder if that is why Mother always loved to go to the circus. Leaving from Bremen the trip took twelve days, "*crowded like herrings*"; men and women assigned to separate compartments, though Dad says he sneaked in two nights until the steward caught him.

There was no delay in Ellis Island, and the day after landing they arrived by train in Pittsburgh at Grandpa's home over Klein's Bank at 14th Street and Penn Avenue. "*The great smoke and a thousand wires over the sidewalk was novelty.*" After a short stint at Ward's bakery shoveling bread into huge ovens, Dad had a job with a grocery store, soliciting and delivering grocery orders with a horse and wagon. The $9.00 per week salary included cleaning the horse and stable.

Within a couple of months, Dad bought a half interest in a meat and grocery store in New Kensington, a town twenty-five miles north of Pittsburgh along the Allegheny River. Grandpa was struggling to earn a bit by traveling up the Allegheny Valley via train, stopping at the small towns along the way and buying and selling old jewelry. He heard that one of the owners of a flourishing market along the railroad tracks at 5th Avenue and 14th Street wanted to return to Europe. Thus the Steiner clan became established in the town that was the original home of Alcoa. What I have already told about the influx of Eastern Europeans to the glass town of Ford City applies as well to New Kensington.

Within two months Dad bought out the other owner of the store. Mother worked in the store as well as doing the cooking for the growing household, for Aunt Rose as cashier, Uncle Louie and Uncle Alex as helpers joined them before the end of that first year. In 1907 the oldest of the Gescheit cousins from East Pittsburgh came to work and live. The next year two young immigrants from Hungary as apprentices became part of the household and remained for six years. In 1909 cousin Arpad Steiner arrived from Hungary, and of course became part of the gang. Are you readers getting dizzy trying to keep track of all these people and wondering, as I am, of how many rooms were over that store? Wait, I'm not through the list Mother compiled shortly before her death.

But before I continue with the list of live-in help, I must tell you that babies were arriving. Sadly the first birth in February of 1907 was a stillborn girl, Emery came in January of 1908, Bill in July of 1909, I followed in May of 1911, and Arnold in December of 1913. Can you comprehend how Mother gave birth five times within a span of seven years, worked in the store, taught a succession of maids fresh off the boat how to keep a kosher kitchen, and participated in the social affairs of the growing Jewish community? From where came the strength? This highly educated equivalent of what we call a Jewish princess, who had worn only custom made shoes and never washed or braided that waist-long hair without the help of a maid, was very happy, from all the evidence and accounts I have. The resulting ingrown toenails caused cruel suffering for the next fifty years until she had the nails surgically removed. As for the hair problem – there were no beauty parlors as yet in New Kensington – a neighboring barber washed Mother's hair in the evening with the shades pulled down.

And now let Dad have center stage. The business came with a horse and wagon. Dad drove to neighboring towns where there was no meat market, blew a bugle in the center of town to announce his arrival, and sold meat from the wagon. On a family picture of a Fourth of July celebration, he is on that horse with that bugle so proudly raised. After all, he had been a Hussar! Language wasn't a problem with the customers, since most of them couldn't speak much English either, but ordering

from salesmen who spoke only English, that was sometimes a problem. He solved that by pointing to parts of his body to order the cuts of meat he wanted but says he was puzzled how to order ox tails. That story is probably one of the apocryphal jokes that come with the butcher business. One of my favorite Dad stories of this period exhibits his love of do-it-yourself. He installed a bathtub by himself and upon its completion called everyone in to witness him luxuriating in that tub. Emery heard the story some forty years later from a woman in New Kensington, who as a young girl had worked in Dad's store and remembered her embarrassment. But I think nothing embarrassed Dad as long as there was a good laugh.

The year Bill was born, 1909, the household was also augmented by the Brauer side of the family. Mother's sister Kornel had come to New York. I do not know just when, and was engaged to Sziga (Sigmond) Klein, whose brother was married to Aunt Ethel, the Brauer sister who had remained with the parents in Europe. Grandma Brauer wrote to Mother that the engagement was in trouble, Dad went to New York, brought the couple to New Kensington, Mother made the wedding, and they stayed with us for a year. I do not know what Uncle Sziga did for a living before that, but his livelihood from then on was something connected with the meat business. Their first child, Arthur, was born two months after me, their second, Lew, soon after Arnold; and though their third, Lil, born several years later, had no counterpart in our lineup, our childhoods were very much intertwined. They were part of the Steiner cousinhood that soon grew mightily.

Another Brauer came to live with us the year I was born, brother Zoly. Dad's cousin Arpad (who by the way continued to live with us until he married in 1915 and really was considered a seventh Steiner brother in Dad's grandiose dreams of Steiner clan stores) went to visit his family in Europe and brought Zoly back with him. He became another apprentice and household member, of course, who added a glorious singing voice to the gatherings. In fact he had been sent as a child to the home of a cantor in Budapest for cantorial training, but he was always an untamed spirit. He roamed the streets instead of attending classes. He did break in to vaudeville in New York for a period before 1920 – I think in the Al Jolson style – but that too ended in disaster. He became addicted to drugs, came back to New Kensington where Aunt Kornel nursed him back to health and worked as a butcher for the rest of his life. But my memory of his singing to me songs he made up about Alice are the earliest tunes I can recall.

I mentioned a bit ago that Arpad lived with us until 1915. That is when he married a cousin of Mothers, Ray Hertz, who came to us two years earlier. So you see how many marriages came about in that period with a large mishpochah (extended family) as an introduction service. And the Steiner family furnished several more examples. An aunt of Mother's had come to New York with three children, and perhaps on that trip to New York to get Kornel and Sziga, Dad looked them up and came back with a report on the beauty of Mother's cousin Helen Ledner. Uncle Louie checked her out, liked what he saw, and they were soon married. That was in 1908, and by 1910 Helen's brother, Eugene, was married to Aunt Rose.

This is as good a time as any to tell of the marriages of the other Steiner siblings. When Uncle Julius worked at the Klein Bank in Duquesne, he met a sister-in-law of one of the Kleins, Emma Friedman, from New York. They were married in 1907: Uncle Alex married a cousin of Emma's in 1913, Helen Ellenbogen; in 1916 the youngest of the Steiners, Uncle Emil, married Gizella Klein, Emma's niece. The third son, Uncle Joe, found his bride also through his work at a foreign exchange bank, which sent him to New York to escort to Pittsburgh a Mrs. Newman and her two daughters, Jennie and Sophie. Joe and Jennie married in 1905.

Thus entered our extended family the beloved Aunt Sophie who brought to our childhood the vicarious thrill of faraway places. She married an engineer who worked for an American steel company that built projects in Japan, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and I don't know where all. On her periodic visits to Aunt Jenny, accompanied by her Pekinese dog that responded to her commands in Chinese, English, Hungarian or German; she brought embroided satin kimonos, jade jewelry, fans, all the exotic Chinoiserie that was the rage of the early decades of this century. Family and friends in New Kensington were eager customers and eager listeners to her vivid tales of a lavish life style, told in a unique "Aunt Sophie" style, regal yet warm and funny.

This was quite a contrast to another aunt by marriage who was a fixture of our childhood, Aunt Tillie. She was the never-married sister of Aunt Helen and Uncle Eugene, who I will remind you had married the Steiner siblings Louie and Rose. The proverbial unattractive maiden aunt who lived with Helen and Louie, did all the cooking – her culinary art probably was the only one that matched Mother's – bossed around and teased unmercifully by her nephews and nieces, Aunt Tillie is also an enduring picture in my childhood memories.

I do not know exact dates but soon after Dad became established in New Kensington in 1905, the rest of the family followed, except for Uncle Julius, whose career I have already related. Dad set Grandpa up in a small grocery store in Arnold, an adjoining town. I am not certain that this is the same place that is in my memory for I only knew his "business" as a small room where the neighborhood kids came in for penny candy and stale cookies. There was a table and chairs in the style of the old ice cream parlor, so perhaps ice cream was dispensed. I can only picture Grandpa in his later years with an extremely pendulous hernia that made walking difficult. But the earlier years he would walk to our place, gather whatever grandchildren there were around (there were nineteen by 1914), and take us all for a streetcar ride on his nickel fare.

How can I convey the aura of Grandma Steiner? Always happy and smiling, in fancy aprons to which she pinned a glittering brooch. Never any in-law problems! She adored each of her beautiful daughters-in-law; their names were always prefaced with "*meine*" as were those of the grandchildren. I can only recall them living in two rooms, a large kitchen and a living room which had a huge high bed in one corner. The stairs to the bedroom above had become too difficult. And yet that living room was the scene of large family gatherings, Seders, etc. Can you imagine how she turned out those huge feasts without any of the conveniences we so take for granted? They had a garden that I remember chiefly for wonderful radishes and kohlrabi, and I cannot recall ever seeing any help in that kitchen. One of the sources of Grandma's stamina must have been her daily afternoon nap for which she would disrobe completely, and that meant getting out of and back into a tightly laced corset. She loved to relate the "*romans*", serial stories much like our soap operas, she read in the German paper, the **Tageblatt**. She loved to sing. I wonder how old I was when I learned from her "*Du, du, liebst meir in Herzen*"? Maybe I was three or four. All the grandchildren loved going there, which brings to mind an attitude I frequently met among my homebound students (I skip back and forth over the years many times in these pages, don't I?). They told me they are uncomfortable with old people, actually dislike them. Their grandparents probably live in some distant place or in a retirement community; I am glad that we did not suffer from the generation gap. The frequent family parties were fun for old and young together.

Grandma Steiner died in 1937 (and I will refer to the day of her funeral later on in the

memoirs) from pneumonia. I am convinced she would have lived for many more years if penicillin had been around. She was in her 70's with the skin of a young woman, just a little gray in her black hair, and no heart or any other serious problems. Grandpa survived her by only two years, passing away in the Jewish home in Pittsburgh.

Dad's market flourished, as did one he set up around 1910 for Uncle Louie about six blocks away, and this brings to mind another story of Dad's penchant for do-it-yourself. I heard this story from Cousin Jessie, Louie's son, about fifty years after the store opened. Dad installed all the equipment and did all the wiring. Many years later electrical inspectors came around and wanted to know who had installed that cockamamie wiring. But it worked okay, and that market became the busiest one in New Kensington, as that block became the center of business activity. Meanwhile Dad was busy drawing plans for a tremendous building in the center of the same block as his first store; sure that it would be the same gold mine. And for a while it was, until bigger dreams took over. Everything about this building was big. It had a dining room and kitchen behind the store, eight large rooms above, a brick-paved yard with a smoke house for making kohlbasi, sausages, etc., and a stable, later to be a garage. He bought his first car probably in 1912 or 1913, of course, a black Ford - What else was there? - He purchased it in Pittsburgh, drove it along the 25 miles to New Kensington without any driving lesson or experience beyond whatever the salesman must have shown him. Of course, it helped that most likely he did not encounter any other vehicle, so he could take the middle of the road, which he usually did for the rest of his life. He remained an enthusiastic but lousy driver.

But let me back up a bit before the move to the new building. With that first business came a cow. Mother was to have all the money from the milk sold if she milked that cow. Book learning she had and wonderful skills in embroidery, crocheting, knitting; but she could never get the hang of milking that cow. So she propositioned a neighbor to milk the cow in return for a pail of milk, saved the milk money for a trip "home" to see her family and show off her two beautiful sons, Emery, a bit over two years old and Bill, not quite one year old. No steerage on this trip, and Grandma Steiner was taken along to help with the babies. This was the summer of 1910. Emery was just starting to talk; consequently during the several months of the visit he really learned to speak in German before he learned English.

Here is some proof of the power of early use of language. Although, until Emery went to college, his only use of German was with Grandma and Grandpa Steiner; his German instructor at Pitt was impressed with his conversational ability.

A more unfortunate consequence of that visit "home" in 1910 was that Bill contracted polio, then called infantile paralysis, on the return voyage. I am not certain of the severity of his case, but I do know that he wore a brace on one leg until he started school and for the rest of his life would limp slightly when he got very tired. The wondrous thing about this particular family chronicle was the common sense shown by Mother. With the advice of an old family doctor, she massaged that leg every day, bribed the neighbor kids with nickels to include him in their running games, throw him the ball, etc. This was many years before the Australian Sister Kenny received world acclaim for her recommendation of the massage technique.

Business flourished at the new location, 1257 Fifth Avenue, with STEINER BROS emblazoned above the huge front windows, for this was intended as the flagship of a chain of markets run by brothers, cousins, and in-laws. This dream was some time before Piggly-Wiggly started the first chain markets and was not abandoned for a long time in spite of the intervening failures.

Whether to show that for him the streets in America were really paved with gold or out of genuine nostalgia for his homeland, in the spring of 1914 he visited Austria-Hungary. I have a studio picture he had taken in Prague with cane and straw boater, looking more like a Parisian boulevardier or Beau Brummel than the butcher he was. I have another picture postcard mailed back from the trip of considerably more historical significance, of the Archduke Rudolph in his carriage in Sarajevo the moment before his assassination. For those of you who are hazy about the history of World War I, this event touched it off, though not immediately. In fact there must not have been much alarm, for Dad continued with his visit until ultimatum started to fly back and forth, and he realized his precarious situation. He was an American citizen with a wife and four children in America, but by the Austria-Hungarian government, he was still considered in their reserves!

As Dad was hurriedly making his departure from the Brauer home, Grandma Brauer thrust her youngest, sixteen year old Ben (Bela), at him and said, "Here, take him along", or some such words. She already had a son and son-in-law in the Army. Without any papers of any kind, Dad got Ben across the border into Germany by telling him to say "*American*" and pretend he didn't understand the language whenever he was questioned. Perhaps the situation was so hectic by then that it worked. They made the last ship to sail for America from Hamburg before World War 1 started. This was the Kaiser Wilhelm, which was interned upon arrival in New York and became an American ship when we entered the war in 1916.

I mentioned four children a bit ago; perhaps I should have said five, for Cousin Elsie became a part of our immediate family in 1913 when the husband of Dad's oldest sister walked out and was never heard from again. Aunt Linka had three daughters, Elsie, Jean, Violet, who were parceled out to live with family members, while their Mother worked as a housekeeper for a prominent merchant family in Pittsburgh. Elsie lived with us until we moved to Ford City in 1923 as did Uncle Ben, who of course, learned the butcher business and eventually became a successful meat salesman for various large companies.

Again, let me say, how it boggles the mind to think of the skills and strengths of running such a household. I am not just thinking of cooking and baking for all those who lived with us but also the Sunday gatherings of the entire clan always at our home. Remember this was long before any such thing as laundry or diaper service. All those Butcher coats and aprons along with the diapers were boiled in large vats in the basement laundry. The maids must have done most of the heavy lifting, but Mother supervised it all, and I well remember her dictum that you couldn't teach anyone how to do all those things unless you knew how to do them yourself. Those maids must have learned well – one of them kept separate *milchig* and *fleishig* dishes in her Catholic household when she married. I think she was the same one who came to Mother's funeral in 1970. All that hard work did not shorten her life or the enjoyment of living.

The sequences of events in the period from 1915-1919 are difficult for me to put together. I have no written records and I cannot remember hearing some of the disasters discussed. Dad conceived the idea of a meat concession in McCrory's Five-& Dime on Market Street in Pittsburgh, then the busiest shopping street in roaring Pittsburgh. Think of what the war in Europe in 1915 was doing for the steel mills. Dad's idea must have been immediately very successful. We moved to a beautiful large home on Eveline Street in Pittsburgh, the area where the prosperous Jewish merchants of that period lived. The store in New Kensington had been taken over by those two young men who had been with us since their arrival as apprentices in 1908.

The business in Pittsburgh was going so well that a similar concession was started in New York with Mother's brother, Zoly, in charge. I have already told you how unfortunately that turned out.

My memories of that year in Pittsburgh are a jumble of highs and lows. I went to kindergarten at the Friendship School and loved it and must have been spoiled rotten by being the only little girl on the block where there were other boys in addition to my three brothers. The baby grand piano and massive leather livingroom furniture were a reminder of that affluent period through many years and moves. A more vivid memory is of the scarlet fever that struck four of us children at the same time. Nursing help was impossible to obtain because of an epidemic, hence another example of Mother's incredible stamina. Her burden was probably aggravated by the loss of many books she treasured that had been brought from Europe. In those days fumigation of disease-stricken houses included the burning of books. I do not recall any complaints of this or other hardships, but I do recall her telling me years later that she always used to sing while working around the house (she had a lovely voice), but never after that year.

I have very little knowledge of the tragic events that brought about the crash of Dad's business in Pittsburgh and the high-flying dreams. He was involved in a car accident in which a prominent Pittsburgh native was either badly injured or killed. I do not know what the insurance situation was, but Dad must have been declared liable. The markets in Pittsburgh and New York, the beautiful house on Eveline Street had to be given up. Back we moved to those rooms over the store at 1257 Fifth Avenue in New Kensington. That must have been in 1917 for I attended first grade there.

The year of 1919 was a sad one for the Steiner family. Aunt Linka, the oldest sister who had been deserted by her husband, died in our home after a lingering illness. Stella, the oldest child of Julius and Emma, died at the age of eleven from an allergic reaction to a medication.

From that period until his death in 1953, Dad's life was a constant effort to make some new idea or enterprise work. He tried a wholesale butcher paper supply business – I recall our playing among those huge rolls of paper in the store rooms, and Arnold remembers that we rolled right through one of the large front windows. There was an attempt at a near-beer business when Prohibition came in. The last business attempt in New Kensington was a men's clothing store in what had become the downtown.

And yet I do not think we ever felt poor. Certainly there was never any scrimping on food. The family gatherings with lavish pastries were always at our home; and we generally had a live-in maid. Emery and I had piano lessons, and Bill had violin lessons. We were well-dressed kids and seemed to have whatever the other kids had. Could this be a reflection on what kids expect to have today as compared to then? Our games were hopscotch, hide and seek out on the street, a set of jacks and ball, and a set of cards for a game called Flinch. Somehow we always had books to read, although there was not yet a town library. There must have been a circulation among the many kids in our block, and I bet I read every one of the long-lived Rover Boys and Tom Swift series. If I had dolls, their heads were soon broken off by the boys.

Another unfortunate Steiner episode occurred in 1922. Like Uncle Julius in Ford City, Uncle Joe had a foreign exchange bank in New Kensington that had prospered mightily. He and Aunt Jenny had five children and a beautiful home on Charles Avenue, the most exclusive address in town, and they followed a fairly lavish life style. But this all came crashing down in 1922 with his indictment and subsequent imprisonment for using bank funds to cover

failing investments in German marks. I hope some of you may know enough about post-World I to realize what speculative craze had been going on and the crash in Germany.

Uncle Joe's family faced their difficulties in various directions. George, the oldest, went to Chicago to live with relatives of his mother, learned the restaurant business and eventually had a restaurant of his own in Chicago. Aunt Jenny moved the rest of them to a small apartment in Pittsburgh and went to work at a bakery in Squirrel Hill. The second oldest, Elinor, went to work at a dress shop, I think, married and had two children who were never told about their grandfather's disgrace until around 1995 when Elinor knew she had not long to live and decided she had to get this off her chest.

Elinor's children then researched the newspaper and county records and learned that not a great sum was involved, that the Steiner brothers had paid off the amount involved, and that some of the victims themselves had volunteered to testify as to Uncle Joe's good character. I only remember Uncle Joe as the broken sick man who rejoined his family sometime in the 1930's in a crowded dismal apartment where Aunt Jenny and Aunt Sophie were already caring for their bedridden mother. Aunt Sophie's glamorous life in China had also crashed when her husband deserted her. The gallantry and courage of these two sisters with their heads held high and a smile and hardy laugh at a joke have always been an inspiration.

The only occasion I saw Aunt Jennie break her composure and wail about her fate in life was when Mother, Dad, and I rushed to see her upon hearing of the sudden death of Aunt Sophie. Aunt Jennie had endured the runaway of her third child, Lily, who eventually did reestablish contact with her mother, the disappearance of her fourth child, Richard, who never did turn up, the death of Uncle Joe in 1947. However, her zest for life and independence was still strong. Later after years of working at Rosenbloom's Bakery, she moved to Miami Beach. There, she got a job at Lerner's Dress Shop, took lessons in Spanish so that she could deal with the growing Cuban trade, and had to be almost forcibly made to quit working by her daughter and come back to Pennsylvania when she was in her eighties.

The part that German marks played in Uncle Joe's life leads me to think of the awful turmoil, displacement, and utter confusion the aftermath of World War I brought to Mother's family in Europe. Mother's father had died during the war, as I mentioned earlier, Her sister Ethel's husband was taken prisoner in the first year of the war and was never accounted for. She was left with two daughters whose identity papers were always in question by the government of Czechoslovakia. Mother's brother, Vilus, had been gassed in the war and had ensuing health problems for the rest of his life. There was a Communist government for a while in Hungary; and I am guessing, that the license for a tavern, which had been a family possession for perhaps several generations, was gone. As usually happens in time of European instability, Anti-Semitism added to their woes. During the period that Czechoslovakia was being created, communication was difficult, and I do not think Mother knew where they were, perhaps hiding in a forest somewhere. Eventually Mother must have had an address for them and sent them supplies, including bolts of material to make clothes or perhaps sell. It was not until Mother and I went to visit them in 1937 that we learned the denouncement of that. They asked us then why we had sent them boxes of rags! I leave you to conclude what had happened to whatever Mother had sent. I will pick up their story when I get to 1937.

To return to the chronicle of my immediate family, in 1923 came the move to Ford City, the town I have previously written about in

connection with Uncle Julius. Dad started a small market; with the kind of luck pursuing him for the previous six years, an A&P Market opened up two doors away shortly after. Somehow he hung on, managing to feed and clothe us, extending credit beyond what could be paid to several families with lots of kids, always a large box of food for Aunt Jennie on his weekly trips to Pittsburgh to do his buying, always a handout to Nick the Bum and other hardship cases after the Depression hit in 1929. He hung on to the market in Ford City until 1935. The next move must have been to try his luck on the North side of Pittsburgh; my memory places him there during the big flood of 1936, as I recall the frantic worry of Mother and me about not hearing from him for a couple of days. I know he worked as a butcher for a market in Aliquippa at one point and for a market in Kittanning during World War II, I think.

Dad's final endeavor to start a business was a small men's shirt shop in the town where he had started out, New Kensington. He and Mother commuted daily by car from Ford City, Mother stayed in the shop while he peddled shirts in the neighboring towns, mainly among market owners and butchers who all knew Simon Steiner from years back. The shirt shop did not last long, but Dad continued to peddle those shirts from shelves in our garage until the day early in 1953, when he had a massive stroke shortly after a day on the road and died the next morning.

I cannot leave my memories of my father on that poignant note. Looming larger than his lack of business success was his lively curiosity about everything, people, places, how things work. He drew plans for turn signals and back up lights on cars long before any car had them. He drew up plans for a parking garage based o the idea of a Ferris wheel, and many years later such were built. He loved to browse through our set of encyclopedias, interested in any kind of information, just for the fun of knowing. Above all was his love of having fun with children, especially when the grandchildren came along. He never lost the capacity to enjoy his wife's wonderful cooking and praise her, to surprise her with a gift, to enjoy poker and pinochle

I have already rattled some skeletons in the family closet, so I guess I will let it all hang out with the life of Uncle Emil, the youngest. Allen Secher, who had long conversations with Uncle Emil toward the end of his life and delivered his eulogy in 1977, used the Hungarian word for rascal to characterize him. Since Allen does not know Hungarian, I suspect Uncle Emil must have bestowed that description upon himself. And a handsome likeable rascal he was. Eight years old when he came to America, he was a product of American schools and culture, was on the football team in high school. In no way was he going to follow his brothers into the hard work of the meat business. I suppose he had some kind of job when he married Gizella Klein in 1916, and a charming couple they were, always ready for the fast lane. This was another example of finding your mate through a family connection – she was a niece of Uncle Julius's wife Emma. When Prohibition came in, I think he may have been a near-beer distributor but soon was involved in the real stuff, a bootlegger. This was the Roaring Twenties, the Jazz Age, and they were a part of the scene at the nightclubs of Pittsburgh. By the 1930's he was involved in the numbers racket (remember there were not legal lotteries then, and satisfying people's urge to gamble was easy and richly rewarded.) He became the head honcho of Pittsburgh. They had three daughters: Rita, Patsy, and Mitzi, a lovely home, summers in Atlantic City, and glamorous show business friends. I do not know the gritty messy details of how it all came crashing down. They moved to Los Angeles where Rita's two daughters have married into families of movie producers, and Mitzi has been a standup comedienne under the name of Mitzi McCall along with her husband, Charlie Brill.

Now that I have given you some sense of my sprawling family background, the rest of my memoirs will tell mostly of my siblings and me. Several pages back, I got us moved to Ford City; and our teen years there were mostly happy ones in spite of Dad's lack of financial success. This town had probably the best high school in the area, because the mostly first generation Americans had absorbed from their parents a great respect for learning and teachers. We did have some excellent teachers. We were all involved in many activities, including the plays and operettas. Emery was a cheerleader. Bill was the concertmaster of the orchestra. Arnold had the lead in plays and operettas; and I took part in every kind of musical activity, held a class office every year; and by my senior year, I played with the orchestra, accompanied all the choruses and operettas, as well as played for various town programs. Oh, and the boys had to help in the store after school; and I clerked Saturdays in a clothing store and taught Sunday school.

Yet we seemed to have plenty of time for fun. I hope I am not sounding too idyllic. I know that many years later when kids in my classes in that very same school were whining about nothing to do in that town, and I described to them our summer days lazily spent swimming from the island opposite the upper end of town; they exclaimed, "What! You swam in that polluted river?" When I told them about how our crowd loved to gather around the piano and sing (almost every home in Ford City had a piano in those days.), a student piped up, "*We cannot have a gang in our living room, because my Dad wants to watch television.*" Anecdotal evidence of changed life for teenagers from the 1920's to the 1950's! I am happy to report that recent efforts to clean up rivers have made it possible to swim in the Allegheny River again. I bet kids now wouldn't consider it the fun we did to spend hours on that island hiking out to Crooked Creek or to farms to pick berries, or the wiener roasts we had in each other's backyard or meeting the gang or the current boyfriend in that little park in the center of town.

And everywhere we sang. I do not know whether music was more important to the community spirit of Ford City than it was to other small towns. The evening gathering on the steps of the bank in the center of town of fellas watching all the girls go by excelled in the barber shop style; community singing was part of our weekly school assemblies. In addition to the annual school operettas, the American Legion put on a musical in which adults as well as school kids participated. I already mentioned that almost every home had a piano; and I have a lasting image as evidence of that burned in my mind. When I enter the long school hall in the morning of the devastating flood of 1936, the place was filled with pianos, as the school was situated on just a little higher ground than the rest of the town. The piano must have been considered a precious possession. And Miss Victoria Delcroix, the piano teacher of the town, was an important link in that musical tradition. Several of her students went on as piano majors at what was then Carnegie Tech. At the dedication of a new school grand piano in my sophomore year, three of us played Beethoven Sonatas for an assembly, and the knowledgeable level of taste among those students was high enough for many of them to comment on which they liked the best. Perhaps that could happen now at a magnet school for music, but this was a working class town of about 5,000 population.

Above all this was a basketball town with a hoop in the alley behind almost every house. Invariably our town won the WPIAL district championship with the attendant playoffs in Pittsburgh. The town literally was deserted as everyone would crowd on to special train coaches. In my high school days, we had a tiny caged type, and the lineup with much pushing and shoving would start right after school was let out to get a seat for THE GAME with our arch

rival, Kittanning. A jump ahead to 1948, when I was teaching in that same school, we went all the way to the state finals in Philadelphia, lost that game; but it is still a highlight in the annals of the town and part of the tie that binds. Recently, I received an invitation to the 50th reunion of that class as well as a video of the dinner where four of that team passed a basketball around to their coach Hube Rupert, who was a classmate of mine. Perhaps that adds a touch to my nostalgia!

Probably I am casting too rosy a glow over those high school days in Ford City. Certainly our rented house was awful, with a tiny living room in which the grand piano took up half the space. I had to go through either the one bathroom or the boys' bedroom to get to my own room. The town was wedged between the river and a steep hill and had no houses available when we moved there in 1923. In fact for several months we roomed in what was called "*The Commercial Hotel*" – some hotel! – Mother prepared meals on a hot plate in back of the store. This house was grabbed when it became available, and there we stayed until 1940 when I built a house on the hill for Mother, Dad and myself. But that house on Sixth Avenue always seemed to be the gathering place for something: Dad's poker and pinochle games, Mother's bridge games and mine, and the gatherings of the brothers' friends together with mine. The grape arbor in the back was a popular smooching place as well as that big old leather couch that dated back to that elegant Pittsburgh year.

Let us get beyond high school, first with a survey of Emery's life. He made his way through Pitt working part time in Kaufmann's shoe department, working Saturday nights as a busboy at Eddie Klein's nightclub, and getting his room and board at his fraternity by acting as house manager. That qualifies him as quite a hustler, doesn't it? The original hope had been for him to go to medical school, but graduating in 1929 put an end to that hope. I hope you readers know enough history to know that was the year of the Big Crash. Not that Dad had very far to crash, but I have already told you about that. Emery got a job sorting mail at the Ford City Post Office helping to support the household and did that until his marriage to Dorothy in 1935. He and two of Dorothy's brothers, Vic and Abe Averbach, went into the business of making soda fountain syrups, which became the quite successful **Flavoripe Corporation** still run by members of the Averbach Family.

Robert and Alan, Emery's sons, entered the Steiner saga in 1939 and 1941. Hope they have some warm memories of the Sunday gatherings in Ford City. Again Grandma had reason to indulge in her delight in feeding people their favorites, and Grandpa could again tease children with the same pranks, games and stories that had been a part of our childhood. He always delighted in being with children and now that most of my nieces and nephews are grandparents, I am sure they know what I am trying to express.

Someone recently asked me why Bill never went to college as the others did. Well, I really do not know whether he ever wanted to, nor do I remember any discussion of the subject. He ended up near the bottom of the class in 1926 mostly because he was too busy having fun and friends. Books just did not turn him on the way they did his siblings, although he became an avid reader in his late years. He was only sixteen when he graduated so he returned for a postgraduate year in business subjects and did very well. Then for a time he worked at a market in New Kensington. In 1931 Dad set him up in a market in the town of Indiana, Pennsylvania, and voila! It turned out just fine. Arnold graduated from high school in 1931 and went to the State Teachers' College in Indiana, and for three years Bill and Arnold lived at home and drove the 25 miles. A neat arrangement. Arnold helped in the store, and Bill had his crowd of Ford City friends. That was when the romance started with Alice Patrizio, our

girl's gym teacher; and they married in 1935.

Need I remind you that in 1935 marriage out of the faith was not the commonplace thing it now is. This marriage endured most happily for fifty years with complete acceptance on both sides. Oh, Dad huffed and puffed at first. I suspect because he felt it was expected of him, but he came to love and respect his Catholic daughter-in-law all the more because of the strength she displayed when Bill endured two life-threatening surgeries early in their marriage. One terrible night is etched in my memory. Mother and Dad were called to the hospital in Indiana because it was feared that Bill wouldn't survive until morning. When they came home the next day, as the immediate crisis was over, Dad was full of praise and gratitude for Pat, who was comforting THEM all during that awful night. There were no favoritisms or slighting between the Jewish and Catholic grandchildren. Pat insisted on Bill maintaining a membership in the Indiana synagogue, and it was she who attended the Bar Mitzvahs. Socially their close friends were totally ecumenical as were the friendships of their children: Bill, born in 1936; Ron, born in 1939; and Sue, born in 1942. Perhaps all this was made easier because they lived in Indiana, the town that received nationwide mention when Jimmy Stewart died.

One more anecdote about Bill. I had been teaching at Ford City High School for many years and never got summoned to the superintendent's office in the middle of a class. So when such a summons came, I rushed there full of fear that I had done something terribly wrong or something had happened at home. Sitting there with Mr. Marsh was a stranger who turned out to be a book salesman from Indiana and had been telling Mr. Marsh about how much everyone in that town loved Bill. Mr. Marsh, who had been the chemistry teacher of all four of us, and I am sure had struggled with Bill" proclivities to be involved with everything BUT study, wanted me to hear firsthand what this man had to say. Bill was president of the Lion's Club. Steiner's Market had become almost a town institution, as was the hardware store of Jimmy Stewart's father. I guess this anecdote has much to say about small towns like Ford City and Indiana where we were not faceless strangers to anyone.

Arnold graduated from Indiana in 1935 qualified to teach high school math; but like Ford City, towns were hiring their hometown people, and our town ruled out more than one from a family. I had been that one for two years. This was the era of the New Deal agencies, the only route to a job, and a fairly good one Arnold landed, County Administrator for the National Youth Administration. But he knew that was not a career and got a job as meat salesman with Hormel. He was at his first territory in Bluefield, West Virginia, when he was inducted into the service. However, he did not even go through basic training, as he got the job of helping to run the Post Exchange, which apparently was in a mess. His college degree and training with Hormel along with his confidence when he was asked if he could straighten out the mess got him the job. This was at Fort Meade near Washington, DC. Our cousin, Ruth, had a job at the Pentagon and was sharing an apartment with three girls from Omaha. That is how Arnold met Lil Jonisch. Incidentally, my vivid recollection of hearing the news of Pearl Harbor (and who does not remember where she was or what she was doing when that news hit?) was sitting in the living room of Ruth's parents whom she was visiting for the weekend along with Lil and Her sister, Sylvia. That was the first I met Lil and I do not think I was aware she and Arnold were dating. Soon he entered Officers' Candidate School, was commissioned in June of 1942, and married Lil in August of that year. He went overseas in December of 1943, served with an ARMY Engineers' Corps, returned with the rank of Captain on Thanksgiving of 1945.

To round out his working life before I get on to my own, he returned to selling meat for Hormel in a territory based in Greensburg (so handy to join in Sunday and holiday gatherings in Ford City); and with the adoption of Richard in 1949 and Rebecca in 1951 added to grandparents' delight as well as mine, by now the proverbial "maiden aunt". After a stint in Jacksonville, Florida, Arnold was put in charge of the Washington-Baltimore territory and really ended his career as a teacher after all as the company was assigning rookie salesmen to him to learn the ropes.

When I graduated from high school in 1928, I had my sight set on becoming a school music teacher, so off I went to West Chester State Teacher's College near Philadelphia, as that was the only one that offered such a course. I was passing up a scholarship for all of $150 a year (half of tuition costs), an award for achieving first place in academic contests Pitt used to hold annually for schools in Western Pennsylvania. You must put yourself in that time frame when there were no Pell grants, no scholarships of any kind, not even for valedictorians, which I was; so that scholarship was considered a big deal. Consider then how completely crushed I was when a couple weeks after getting settled at West Chester, the head of the music department told me that a tremolo or wobble in my voice made me unsuitable for a school music teacher, although he said my piano abilities were superior. The year's costs were not refundable, and it was too late to enter Pitt; so there I stayed for an unhappy boring year. The only happy memories of that homesick year are a few warm friendships, one of which I maintain to the present, and hearing the Philadelphia Symphony in that acoustically wonderful Academy of Music.

That year does not come near to the one that followed for boredom and unhappiness. It was clear that school anywhere was financially impossible. Emery's earnings at the Post Office were probably paying most of our household expenses. I got a job at Rosen's Shoe Store, although I do not know how Mr. Rosen could afford to pay me anything. There were many days that not a single customer came in; and Mr. Rosen would not allow me to read. Things became a bit more bearable when I switched to Friedland's dress shop, as there were two more clerks, Nate Friedland had me help with the books and window displays. Because my closest friends were away at school or had moved away, loneliness added to my self-pity. Many days I came home and wept because of the emptiness of those awful days.

I was saving all the paltry salary I earned, determined to somehow get to college in 1930. The registrar at Pitt agreed to reinstate the scholarship, though two years of it were considered gone. I commuted by train, two hours each way and then a streetcar ride from East Liberty Station. Since music was out, I was giving some thought to chemistry major and consulted Mr. Marsh, who had been my general science and chemistry teacher and was by then the principal. He told me that women never got jobs teaching chemistry because they could not set up the equipment. Imagine the ire that statement would raise among the feminists of today! He advised me that Latin teachers were more in demand; and, that is how I became a Latin teacher.

The following year I was rescued from that dreadful commute by obtaining a student residency at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement House, the "Ikes" as that memorable institution at 1835 Center Avenue was fondly called by all who had ever lived in the Hill District of Pittsburgh. I will interrupt my personal history to let the history teacher take over, because I have found out from conversations with young people, even college graduates and teachers themselves; they never heard of a settlement house. Places like Hull House in Chicago started by Jane Addams or the Henry Street House in New York, where the Americanization of those masses of immigrants from the 1880's

to the 1920's was made possible. The public schools were teaching English and American ways to children, but what about the parents? The settlement house not only taught language skills but also helped the newcomers through the naturalization process and provided most of the social services that government agencies do today. Just as Carnegie was providing public libraries from his vast steel fortune, philanthropists funded these institutions. All kinds of after-school activities were offered for all ages. Many a concert career was launched by the free or nominally priced music lessons.

The Hill District had been the home of most of the immigrant Jews. By the time I lived at the *"Ikes"* (1931-1933) the second generation had moved to Squirrel Hill or the East End but sent their kids to the "*Ikes*" for the activities they had grown up with. That was not the only reason. This place had the best-equipped little theater in town. It had an Olympic size swimming pool considered the most beautiful in town, because it was designed by Joseph Urban, the architect of the (then) William Penn Hotel and a suburb music school headed by Anna Perlow who somehow got some of the best instrumental teachers in town to volunteer their time. There was a wonderfully equipped gymnasium, a sewing school, a carpentry shop, a dance studio, and club meetings for any kind of special interest.

Perhaps the greatest influence on the residents of the Hill was Miss Held, the head of the Social Services department. Then in her seventies, a vigorous, decisive personality, she knew the financial situation, personal problems and health of every family and saw that they got the help needed. She decided how much each child could pay to go to Emma Kaufmann Camp. Her philosophy was that each must pay at least a nominal fee so that none could feel objects of charity. This summer camp at Harmony, Pennsylvania was an adjunct of the settlement house. The counselors at the camp were all volunteers; I was there six weeks of almost every summer from 1932 to 1939. During those Depression years, the purpose of the camp was as much to provide nourishing food (we weighed them on arrival and departure and cheered each pound gained) as well as usual camp activities. Recognition of what Miss Anna Held meant to Pittsburgh came when a street was named after her when she died.

For room and board at this remarkable place, I worked twenty-five hours a week, playing the piano for dancing classes, conducting a class in beginning piano, manning the desk in the office of Julia Teller, the wife of the director, Sidney Teller. She ran all the activities of women and girls as well as being the director of the Emma Kaufmann Camp. She had a remarkable personality. The Tellers had open house every Saturday evening for resident staff and students, sometimes guest artists in town or big donors like Edgar Kaufmann. The intellectual tone, the clashing opinions of the current play in town (this was a period of great experimentation in the theater) or the best selling books. All were heady experiences for this small town girl, probably shaping my interests and priorities more than my college classes. I realize now I was part of a "salon".

I was the first one to land a teaching job in the 1933 graduating class of the School of Education, because Ford City was hiring its hometown products, in some cases firing people to make room for them. No Tenure Act had yet been passed, and the minimum salary of $1200 set by the Pennsylvania legislature was permitted to be cut by twenty percent. My annual pay for the first two years was $960. My high school class, as well as the preceding class, had produced a bumper crop of men teachers partly because of Herb Patchin, a hometown athletic hero who had become the head trainer in the athletic department of the University of Illinois. He provided jobs for several boys who might not have made it through college otherwise, another of those

Ford City annals that made it such a close-knit entity. It is no doubt difficult for young people in today's job market and the flitting from job to job to comprehend how fortunate we coonsidered ourselves and hung on, some until retirement. (I for twenty-five years!)

Were those twenty-five years happy and satisfying? In some respects, very much so. I knew I was a good teacher, liked and respected by my students and colleagues, and certainly coming home to those meals prepared by Mother, not having household responsibilities beyond financial support must have had its appeal, though I may not have analyzed that aspect at the time. I was spending most weekends in Pittsburgh, visiting friends and attending plays and concerts. I returned to piano study with a fine teacher, Grete Zacharias, who had a studio in Pittsburgh but came to Ford City two days a week.

Was I unhappy that marriage and having children were passing me by? Yes, at times. But I guess I had enough activity and variety in my life that I cannot remember brooding about what I was missing too often. I escaped the burnout that plagues many teachers as I had considerable variety in my teaching schedule. As Latin was not a required subject, I usually had only the best and brightest - the high point of the day was the class of those five students - the class was more like a seminar in Humanities. In the beginning I also had an English class; but when our male American History teacher was drafted, I was drafted into teaching an American History class without having taken a course in history since high school. Within a couple of years I was assigned a class in world history instead of American history and that became my main interest so that when I decided to take a sabbatical year off to get a Master's degree, that was my field. By the way, I was the first one in that school system to ever take a sabbatical. Whether anyone has since, I have no idea.

But that sabbatical year at Columbia will be described later on in these memories, for long before that came my unforgettable summer of 1937 when I took Mother to see her family in Czechoslovakia. Grandma Steiner died in April of that year, and the day of her funeral I experienced what might be called an epiphany, the determination that I had to get Mother to see her mother as soon as possible. How? I certainly had not any savings, the brothers were in no position to help, and I think Dad had just called it quits on the store and was working as a butcher somewhere. I went to the bank, explained why I wanted to borrow money and without a bit of collateral got a loan.

This was long before transatlantic air travel, of course. Uncle Julius found a very cheap trip on a combination freight and passenger ship of the Arnold Bernstein Line that sailed out of Antwerp, so we all assumed it was a Belgian Line. When we got to the dock in New York and saw the German swastika, my first feeling was to turn around and run home. Remember this was 1937; how could we? We discovered that subterfuge had fooled other Jewish passengers among the one hundred one-class passengers. The week's voyage gave me a chance to practice the little German I knew on the waiters. The only remembrance I have of Antwerp is that we went into a store where the salesclerk whom Mother addressed in German became frozen and would not wait on us.

This was the legacy of WWI the Germans left in Belgium and my first encounter of many this trip brought of ethnic tensions that I was vaguely aware of in 1937 mostly from reading and not personal experience. We had a day of sightseeing in Brussels with its lovely center square, and then a long train ride to Prague through the beautiful Rhine Valley with its terraced vineyards. In spite of my sort of queasy feeling of being in Germany, I could not help but enjoy the beauty of the countryside. I think it was on this leg of the journey that we shared a

compartment with a couple on their way to volunteer in the Spanish Civil War. Prague remains indelible in my memory over these more than sixty years, and as I write this, I am trying to analyze why I have a special feeling for that city, rather than Vienna or Budapest where we spent more time on our return trip. Whatever the reason, any time I read about Prague or talk to someone who had been there, I recall its timeless grace and beauty.

Rozomberok, a market town in eastern Slovakia, was our destination. There lived Grandma Brauer, seventy-five at that time and still running a tavern. With her lived her daughter, Ethel, whose husband had been declared missing in action in the first encounter of WWI and had never been accounted for. Aunt Ethel had two daughters also living in that household. The younger one was married to someone from Vienna; although the German takeover of Austria did not occur until the following year, they felt the necessity of getting out with their three-year old daughter. In Rozomberoik also lived Mother's brother, Vilus, his wife, and a nine-year old son, Pauli. Uncle Vilus had a prosperous beer distributing business, which occupied a large building on the main street of the town and had a beautiful spacious apartment on the second floor where they lived.

The approaching Holocaust was slightly evident to me during those several weeks in that town. The Jewish community, middle class and fairly prosperous, was harboring a few who had fled from Germany, but I was not aware of any feeling of panic or plans to leave. There were here and there in Czechoslovakia some Zionist training camps for those planning to go to Palestine, but I only knew about those because Dad had asked Mother to look up a friend of his who belonged to such a group. Dad was totally shocked to hear this for all the young men of his time were ardent Hungarian patriots as well as being great admirers of German culture, and Zionism had not been the growing force that it was in Russia and Poland at the turn of the century.

Strange to me was the sight of uniforms everywhere, hearing about the maneuvers going on. I heard about the dissatisfaction of the Slovaks with their Czech partners, claiming that they were discriminated against in getting educational opportunities and government jobs. Ruzomberok was the home of Father Hlinka, the leader of the separatist group sympathetic to the Nazis. The persistence of these ethnic hatreds and jealousies accounts for the breakoff of Slovakia in recent years as well as the tragedy of Yugoslavia.

The ethnic blend in Ford City had always seemed to be a harmonious one, at least to me, in spite of the fact that there were separate German, Polish, and Ukrainian Catholic churches. However, I was made aware of the spillover from the ethnic strife in Europe to Ford City soon after my trip. I was asked to accompany a choir organized by the Slovak priest, the choir group sang in Kennywood Park in Pittsburgh for Slovak Day when several impassioned speeches were delivered in favor of Father Hlinka and his Iron Guard, including one by our Ford City priest. I felt uncomfortable, to say the least. This occurred in 1938, the year before WWII started.

But, let me get us home from Rozomberok. A few days in Budapest remain vivid after all these years. The elegance of the late afternoon promenades on the Corso with gypsy music being played outside the lovely hotels intoxicated me. I swam in the famous pool with its artificial waves on the Margit Sziget, the island in the Danube. A dinner boat ride on the Danube forced me to concede to Mother that she and Dad had been right when they insisted that nowhere were peaches as luscious as they were in Hungary. Although I have traveled in Europe several times in later years, I have never returned to Budapest or Vienna where we stayed a week at a pension (somewhat like a bed and breakfast) on the

Ringstrasse. In spite of being impressed, even awed, by the royal residences and remember with pleasure "***The Merry Widow***" performed in a park, I had a feeling of disappointment and sadness about Vienna. Maybe this is hindsight as so much about that trip comes through the filter of the horrendous events that came so soon after. Anschluss, the takeover of Austria by the Nazis, happened in early 1938. That summer in New York I saw a luminous performance of highlights from Viennese operettas done by refugees from Vienna, and I cried all through it, to the amazement of the Gentile friend with me.

We took a day's stopover on the train ride from Vienna to Paris in Salzberg, especially meaningful to me; for to this day in spite of arthritic fingers playing Mozart sonatas helps to keep me going. Paris! I do not have delightful memories of that place. Quite the opposite, I have almost nightmarish ones. I ran out of money! I thought I had it all carefully figured out, but Mother had insisted she had to buy a set of silverware for the family we were leaving behind, not to speak of the hand-embroidered tablecloths she was buying as gifts for the family to which we were returning. We had a week to put in before the ship's departure from Antwerp; a week spent hunting the American Express office waiting for money from Dad and Arnold. I have a dreary impression of battling crowds in the rain at the World's Fair. The one bright spot was the Louvre.

Mother was wretchedly seasick during the entire boat trip home, I think because of the emotional reaction to being with her family after so may years and realizing that she would never see them again. Her brother, Vilus, and sister, Ethel, died within the next two years. That much we heard and then complete silence after the onset of war. After the war we tried through every agency possible to find out what had happened to the others. There was no record of them in any of the camps to which the Jews of Slovakia had been sent. Many years later through someone, who returned for a visit, we learned that when the roundup started, friendly neighbors hid them in the forest, but other neighbors not among the "*righteous Gentiles*" revealed their hiding place, and so they were slaughtered there in the forest.

Two final closures to the Rozomberok connection. Late in the 1960's Mother, as well as her sister and brother, received notice that from the family property there was some money but it could not be taken out of the country. From an acquaintance in Phoenix who was supporting a surviving nephew in Czechoslovakia, Mother got her share while the others made arrangements through some going there on a trip. The other closure happened to Emery and Dorothy, who traveled to Europe after his retirement in the 1970's. Emery was so eager to see Rozomberok, but when he asked about Grandma's house and Uncle Vilus's building, he became so emotionally upset at the hostility shown by the townspeople that they left at once and spent more time in Hungary instead.

To more backward looks on the 1937 trip before I get on with the next chapter of my life. During the years when the Holocaust horrors were revealed, I often thought it would have been easier for me to accept if I had not been there and got to know those relatives. Up to that time, they had not been real people to me. I never put that question to Mother, so I have no clue as to how she felt about our having been there. In 1945 when Arnold's wrenchingly descriptive letter about what he saw at Dachau – his unit was among the first to arrive there – the reality of what had happened hit. It was one of the few times I saw my father openly weep as he said, "*Now, I have to believe it*". Up to that time his reverence for the lofty German culture of his youth had kept him from fully accepting what had happened.

The other aspect of that trip apparent to me as I write this is the most of you who may read this are so inured to foreign travel – it is no big deal to anyone now – that you may

not realize that at that time I was doing something very unusual. Shortly after that trip Ford City High was going though an evaluation for accreditation, and I got extra rating for having done foreign travel, the only one in the system who had done so.

The next milestone in my life was building a house. From 1923 to 1940 we had continued to rent that wretched place on Sixth Avenue, albeit full of mostly happy memories earlier described. When that devilish coal furnace blew up, it was up to me to do something. I had a hard time convincing the FHA agent in Pittsburgh that a single female was a suitable candidate for a loan but convince him I did. We rented a place temporarily up on the hill and by the beginning of 1942 were in the house in Ford View that you of the next generation associate with your grandparents or your Uncle Simon and Aunt Margaret, for it carried on the tradition of being the counterpoint of the "*mishpochah*", fragmented and scattered though it was by that time.

The war years were for me drab and undramatic. Travel was difficult, though I managed to get by train to New York for almost every Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter break for shows and concerts. I had renewed a close friendship with Beulah Hirchberg Ginsburg, originally from Ford City and then living in Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey. Her home became my home away from home, and I became the proverbial maiden aunt to her two daughters as I was to my own nephews and nieces.

The next milestone in my life was a sabbatical year at Columbia from 1948-1949, made possible financially from two summers of selling encyclopedias, first Compton's and the World Book. I had sort of stumbled into that endeavor and to the amazement of my family and myself, I was quite good at it. At Columbia I lived at Johnson Hall, the residence for graduate women, and like my years at the settlement house, I made several stimulating and long-lasting friendships. I was determined to get away from teachers and courses in how to teach, hence enrolled in the Graduate Faculty of Political Science in the history department. I arrived at the topic for my thesis as a result of a talk with my advisor, Dr. Brebner, whose main interest was in the British Industrial Revolution. When I told him I was from the coal mining area of western Pennsylvania and I had students from a town started by Welsh miners (Cadogan), he suggested that I study the social forces that led to the Mining Act of 1842 which forbid underground labor in mines to all women and boys under the age of ten. It turned out to be a fascinating subject of research for me.

It was a heady and exciting year in many aspects. Student tickets for the Friday afternoon Philharmonic concerts put me among the serious music students who were following from their scores. That was the year Horowitz emerged from years of silence and gave three concerts in New York, and I managed to get to all three. I rationed myself to one play a week. Never before or since have I felt so caught up in the excitement of the1948 election when Truman beat Dewey. A friend was a graduate journalism student and was assigned to Dewey's hotel apartment for that night and described what the night long scene of descending spirits was when I saw her the next day. It was the year of the Communist takeover in China; one of my hall mates had just returned from years of working there and was able to give me a perspective not otherwise attainable. Another of my crowd was a brilliant young woman from Prague who told me much of what had happened during the Communist takeover and the tragic death of Jan Masaryk. Another of my table mates and crowd was the only African-American (a term not used at all at that time.) living at Johnson Hall, a graduate student in Library Science, a charming and dignified personality who had much to tell us of life we knew nothing of in 1948. Yes, it was quite a place to be just then, particularly

with the faculty whose writings have since become preeminent in social studies. I recall the exciting bull sessions stirred up by lectures of such people as presidential candidate, Henry Wallace, accused of Communist sympathies, and James Mitchener, telling how he came to write the Pulitzer Prize winning "Tales of the South Pacific", the start of his remarkable career of best selling novels.

The mention of Mitchener's first success brings to mind another enduring memory. I have attended many performances of "South Pacific", which is based on those stories, but none have come near that original cast of Enzio Pinza, Mary Martin, and that unforgettable throaty voice of Juanita Hall as Bloody Mary. Yes, I repeat, the school year of 1948-1949 in New York was an exciting and heady experience.

More than ever Ford City was a dead end after that. I made a few feeble inquiries about teaching at the college level, but the salaries were abysmally low compared to what I was making by that time, and I did have financial responsibilities at home with a mortgage on the house and the depletion of funds incurred by the sabbatical. An echo of getting home from Europe twelve years earlier – I had trouble scraping up enough money for my train fare home from New York.

In 1951 an added dimension came into our lives with the arrival of Paul and Barbara Roth from Germany. When the war ended Mother was anxious to find out about any relatives that might have survived and somehow learned that a first cousin, an attorney in Budapest, and his wife, were in Budapest, but that their only child, Paul, was in Hanover, Germany, and had married a German girl. A correspondence between Mother and Paul's mother ensued. Paul's uncle, (a doctor who had specialized in treating syphilis, which may have accounted for the survival of the two Roth brothers and their spouses because he treated the German officers in his specialty), emigrated to Australia after the war. When Paul's mother wrote that Paul and Barbara were thinking of going to Australia, Mother wrote, "Why not America?" That is how my sponsorship of their coming to us came about.

I added Paul and Barbara's story to the Steiner saga for two reasons, the first being that I am the only link their four children have to their paternal Jewish background – Paul died a few years ago and Barbara died in 1999. My mother was Grandma to those children, and I am their Aunt Alice. The other reason is that these children were told very little about their parents' experiences during those war years. Barbara particularly had a hard time facing any unhappy or difficult situation involving her children. Now these children are parents and in case they want to pass on some knowledge of their Roth background, their story is part of my family story.

When Paul came to our home early in 1951, he was most reluctant to relive the horrors of his life in those war years. After much prodding from Dad he agreed to tell us with the stipulation that he would never talk about it again – as far as I know, he never did. He was taken in a slave labor camp to work in the mines in Yugoslavia. When the Russians were approaching this area, the Germans marched the slave gang on foot back to Budapest. I vividly recall Paul's relating this part of the story as though every stop was indelibly engraved in his brain. They had nothing to eat but the grass along the road, and he remembered exactly how many kilos his weight was down to. I must take back what I said about his never talking about this again. On what was probably his last visit to me in Phoenix, and I do not recall how the subject came up, he mentioned that he later learned the Russians were at one point just hours away from them. Then he smiled and said, "*Just think – if I had been taken by them, I would never have met this beautiful wife of mine.*" And he most likely would never have been

brought to the United States by us. What a difference a few hours make.

To continue his story – From Budapest he was taken to Germany in a cattle car to work in a munitions factory where he said much sabotage was done. Thus the end of the war found him in the British zone of occupied Germany, working for the British Army interviewing concentration camp survivors, as he spoke several languages. That is how he met Barbara, whose entire family – she was one of about thirteen children – had been in a concentration camp because of Jewish blood although they were raised as Catholics. Her parents and several of the children too young to work did not survive. Paul and Barbara had been scrounging out a miserable existence in Hanover, Germany, until they arrived in America. Unforgettable to me is the look on their faces the first time they were taken to an A&P Supermarket! This was a nothing store in 1951 compared to the supermarkets we take so for granted today. Mother was having the time of her life satisfying their seemingly insatiable appetites. Another bit of evidence of what life must have been like in Germany from 1945 until they came in 1951 was their amazement that we had a bedroom that actually was not being used by anyone else.

After a few weeks Dad found a job for Paul slinging boxes in the market in Pittsburgh, and another relative found a job for Barbara as a nursemaid for the young son of Dr. Gig Krause, the job included a third floor apartment for them. Paul soon quit that job, found office work, enrolled in evening classes at Pitt, became office manager for a firm that imported shiploads of meat from new Zealand and eventually established such a business on his own.

They bought their first home soon after Dad died in 1953 when Chuckie was born, followed by Thomas, David and Ava. Chuckie is now a financial analyst for the Post Office and is happily married and has two daughters. Thomas is a doctor in charge of a hospital emergency room, David is a doctor with an HMO in Atlanta, and Ava has her broker's license and a challenging job with the investment branch of General Electric. At this writing she is awaiting the birth of her first child and just sent me pictures of a lovely home she and her husband recently bought in Fairfield, Connecticut. Paul died a few years ago, and Barbara passed away after struggling with severe health problems in 1999. I am the only link their children have with their paternal family. They have linked up, however, with Barbara's surviving siblings in Germany, two brothers and a sister, I believe, and with their children, and have made several trips to Germany. I have no idea whether they discuss the Nazi past with each other.

And now to resume my personal story. Dad's death in 1953 from a massive stoke pushed me again to think of making some effort to break away from Ford City. Mother and I spent some time in Florida but I disliked everything about the place. A visit to Phoenix over a Christmas vacation gave me an entirely different feeling. I was immediately comfortable with everything about the place. We were visiting Mother's sister, Kornel. She and Uncle Sziga had retired to Phoenix because their son, Lew, had come here after the war due to arthritis. By the time of our visit, he was a very well known personality in town for his program Lew King's Rangers, first as a Saturday morning event at a movie house and then as a TV program, giving a start to several successful people in show business, among them Wayne Newton. Aunt Kornel, always a gregarious lady, already had a wide circle of card-playing friends.

During that trip, I barged into the office of the superintendent of the Phoenix Union High Schools and asked about job possibilities. He was not very encouraging, said people were applying from everywhere because Phoenix was such a good place to live, even though the salary schedules were

lower. Nevertheless I applied. Mother, who had been wearing a neck brace to help severe arthritic pain due to a car accident, remained in Phoenix for two months. When I picked her up at the Pittsburgh airport and she walked jauntily toward me without that neck brace, more than ever I was determined to make the move, job or no job. The first step was selling the house, no great problem as I had had offers after Dad died, and we needed a place to live before moving to Phoenix. Sammy Friedland was running the dress shop where I had worked for his father during that awful year before going to Pitt. He had been keeping the apartment over the store just as it had been, as the shrine to his beloved mother. He heard about our situation and offered us the apartment, so that problem was solved.

Word got around that I was thinking of resigning when my old mentor, Mr. Marsh, the one who had advised me to major in Latin and was now the superintendent of schools, called me out of a class one day to show me figures he had taken the time to work up, to explain the thousands of dollars I would give up, based on my life expectancy, if I did not stay on for another three years until I had put in twenty-five years. Then I would be eligible for a pension rather than just the amount I had put into the retirement system. Well, thank you Mr. Marsh! He died before I left Ford City. I have endured far longer than that life expectancy was projected and that first monthly pension of about $75 had increased about sixfold over these forty years.

Ironically I did have a job offer to teach Latin at Central High in Phoenix the year before I could make the move but had no job when we came in September of 1958. Mother and I rented half of a duplex. I went to employment agencies (a new experience for me) airily thinking I would like library work, only to be informed that people who were trained in library science were applying from all over. I did some substitute teaching, worked in the dress department at Diamond's for the Christmas season and continued there any day that I was not called for substitute teaching. I was very dissatisfied with both jobs and getting panicky about my dwindling bank account.

An opportunity to teach full time with the Phoenix Union High School District in the home-bound program not only restored my sense of financial security but provided the challenge of an entirely different kind of teaching, thus putting away any doubts about whether I had done the right thing in leaving Ford City. The one-on-one situation, the stimulus of teaching any subject in the curriculum from freshman to senior, from any of the ten schools in the district sure provided a change from those twenty-five years. The down side was the emotional involvement with the terminally ill and their families, yet I felt I had found a niche that I was able to handle. Gratification came when students who were able to return to campus told me how much better they were doing because of me. Most satisfying were the courses I worked up in Music Appreciation and Art Appreciation, often bringing a whole New World to bedridden kids. I did this for fifteen years until retirement in 1973.

An even greater change in life came shortly after I started homebound teaching – Milton and marriage. We met by accident, not pre-arrangement, at the home of his cousin, Charlie Lefkowitz, whom we knew from New Kensington. Charlie's original drugstore, which had grown into a very successful chain of Central Drugs, was in New Kensington. In fact, cousin Elsie who had grown up in our home had married another cousin of Charlie's, Ben Middleman, who had been a pharmacist in that New Kensington store. Ben started his own store in McKees Rocks and that is where Milton or Buck, as all his family and friends still called him by his childhood nickname, grew up. His closest childhood friend was Harold Middleman, Ben's brother, and Buck had worked at the drugstore as a kid. I guess this was another example of meeting your

"*beshert*" (the one whom fate had destined for you) through "*mishpochah*" as had happened with so many of the Steiner marriages of my parents' generation. At least that word "*beshert*" was used by many of Mother's large circle of friends who were clucking over the growing romance. Milton had finished high school right into that Depression with no possibility for college but with great manual dexterity and a penchant for figuring out how things were put together – golden hands, as his sisters described him. So he went to welding school and became an ironworker, certainly an oddity in the Steiner clan, wouldn't you say? He loved fishing and hunting! But luckily he also enjoyed reading, plays, and music. By the time we met, I was already very much involved with the Beth El choir, not only singing weekly but also accompanying for rehearsals and social occasions. That choir group became a close-knit social entity, as did a music listening group, consisting of a different set of friends, both of which Buck enjoyed and blended into.

There was never any doubt that Mother would be a part of our household. Buck also had never married and lived with an adored mother until she died. His father had died many years before. It was only when she died that he came to Phoenix. And in the first few years of our marriage, Mother knew that she was really needed, especially when Buck had rather serious surgeries within the first two years and Milton's jobs often took him to far corners of Arizona when he was home only weekends. She had a home to have those lunches and card games for her circle of "the girls" and our bridge friends overlapped the generations. Milton only learned the game after we were married and soon became a good and avid player. And, of course, mother gloried in the occasions to bake for music club meetings or choir sing-along parties. She was always included in the family celebrations of our circle of friends.

Since Milton worked out of a union hall, and he could choose to not work for several weeks, we did much traveling during the summers. I am not sure how many times we drove across country, several I know, but most memorable in 1964 to celebrate Mother's 80th birthday at a big bash given by Emory and Dorothy. How that tiny bundle of energy that was Dorothy loved to entertain! And again the next summer we drove east when we left mother to visit family while we went to Israel. We both felt so keenly about the country that we promised ourselves then that we would return in ten years, which we did. And what changes those ten years had brought! In 1965 we took a picture at the Mandelbaum Gate that was the symbol of a divided Jerusalem; in 1975 we were able to be at the Wall. Both times we spent a weekend at a kibbutz, Gan Shmuel, of which a cousin of Buck's had been one of the founders sometime before Israel had been established in 1948. The cousin had died before our first visit but being with his widow and two children as well as her mother gave us a view of three generations of kibbutz life. And a sparse, hard life it was. The economic progress by 1975 was startlingly evident.

As part of the first trip we visited Rome where I was very impressed with myself by being able to ask the guide when we were going to see this and that in the Forum and at the Vatican Museum. We also had a couple of days in Paris and I was not any happier with the city than in 1937 when I ran out of money. This time it rained.

Epilogue

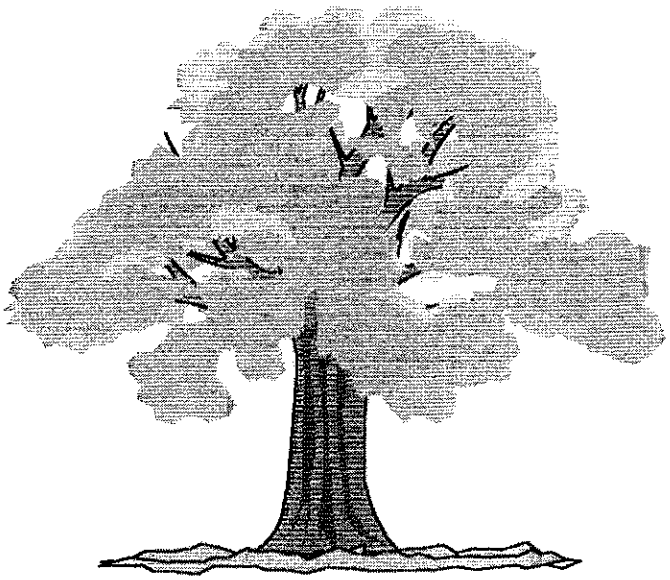
Alice's memoirs suddenly ended —— as abruptly as did her beautiful life. But this labor of love, this recording of family history needs to be completed. I, Arnold, the last survivor of the progeny of Simon and Margaret will attempt to do justice to what has been written previously. My fund of family lore is meager, and my literary talents are limited, so I will just talk about Alice.

Buck's demise in 1977, sad as are all deaths, was not the end of the world for Alice. She wisely moved from a larger home to a charming compact unit and continued her active social, musical, and intellectual activities vigorously. She was a fixture in the Beth El choir well into her eighties and maintained her series tickets for the Phoenix Symphony and the Phoenix Opera. Her participation in the book review program of the Brandeis University National Women's Committee was continuing mental stimulus as were her many years of attending elder hostels. She was not an intellectual snob — enjoyed a good party especially with a song fest and a "wee bit of the sauce" to help liven things up — and did not look down her nose about watching a good baseball or basketball game!

Alice traveled far and wide — the Orient, Scandinavian countries, Australia, Yugoslavia and Russia, London and the British Isles. She clicked extremely well on many of these trips with a charming companion, Rayetta Kadet, who for the past ten years has been Rayetta Kadet Steiner, my favorite travel companion.

All this that is being written now, and that has been written and rewritten by Alice over the years, compiled and edited by my daughter, Rebecca, can be titled "FAMILY". Alice has been the strong thread that has kept this widespread network of cousins, nephews, nieces and their offspring from unraveling. So many of these items now in print, those tales of family gatherings when the entire clan lived in New Kensington some 80 or 85 years ago, life in Ford City, all the intrigues, successes, and failures have been told and retold by Alice with love and nostalgia. I write this with that same feeling.

Aaron Steiner Family



Aaron Steiner *1860-1940* married 1879 to Regina Gescheit *1861-1937*

Lena *1880-1919* married 1901 to **Leopold Walleck** (disappeared 1913)

Elsie *1903-1996* married 1924 to **Ben Middleman** *?-1966*
Lenore *1925-* married 1946 to **Ben Hyatt** *?-1995*
Robert married to **Victoria**

Jean *1904-1950* married shortly before her death

Violet *1908-1994* married 1931 to **Martin Gartner** *?-1978*
Donald (three marriages and divorces, two adopted children from first marriage)

Simon *1881-1953* married 1906 to **Margaret Brauer** *1884-1970*

Emerich *1908-1991* married 1935 to **Dorothy Averbach** *1907-1994*
Robert *1939-* married 1965 to **Penny Green** *1942-*
Andrew *1967-* married 1994 **Lori** *1967-*
Allison *1998*
Ethan *1998*
Robin *1969-* **married 1992** to Allen Fox *1967-*
Corey Matthew *1996*, **Samantha Danielle** *1998*

Alan ***1942-*** married 1970 to **Judy Binus** (divorced)
married 1989 to **Barbara Erwin**

William ***1909-1985*** married 1935 to **Alice Patrizio** ***1906-***

William Ray ***1936-*** married 1958 to **Jean Secosky**

(4 adopted children)

Bill (divorced)

Tod

Mark

Joe

Christina

Canon ***1997***

Melissa married 1994 to **Rob Robinson**

Mitchell ***1996***

Ronald ***1939-*** married 1968 to **Cynthia Brown** (divorced in 1994)

Michael ***1970-*** married 1995 to **Beril Ulku**

Amy ***1972-***

Sue ***1942-*** married 1966 to **Thomas Terpak** (divorced in 1996)

Krista ***1969-*** married 1996 to **Brent Showalter**

Jacqueline ***1971-***

Stefan ***1974-***

Karen ***1982-***

Alice ***1911-2000*** married 1960 to **Milton Moss** ***1913-1977***

Arnold ***1913-*** married 1942 to **Ruth Lillian Jonisch** ***1911-1990***
Married 1990 to **Rayetta Kadet** ***1915-***

(2 adopted children with Lillian)

Richard ***1949-1972*** (died in helicopter crash in Germany)

Rebecca ***1951-*** married 1981 to **Peter Joseph Duffy** ***1937-*** (divorced)
Married 1996 to **Brian Murray** ***1949-***

(4 step children)

Jim ***1970-*** (divorced with 3 children)

Eric ***1975-***

Anthony ***1980-*** married 1999 to **Jennifer Thompson**

Andrea ***1990-***

Julius ***1882-1960*** married 1907 to **Emma Freidman** ***?-1959***

Stella ***1908-1919***

Edward ***1911-*** married 1938 to **Kay Bandell** ***1916-***

Steven *1940-* married 1965 to **Merle Boriskin**
Laurie *1965-* married 1994 to John O'Neill
Catlin Marie *1997-*
Eric *1967-*
Jeffrey *1970-*
Jack *1946-* married 1968 to **Ruth Block** (divorced in 1980)
Married 1982 to **Kris** (and adopted her daughter, **Julie**)
Jodie *1970-* married in 1998
Barbara *1974-*
Sally *1949-* married 1975 to **Steve Rosner**
Jessica *1980 (adopted)*
Heather *1984*

Ruth *1916-* married 1945 to **Harry Hardy**
Timothy *1947-* married 1972 to **Melody**
James *1976-*
Robert *1979-*
Sean *1982*
Christine *1951-* married **Steven Block** (divorced)
married 1992 to **William Howe**

Joseph *1884-1947* married 1905 to **Jennie Newman** *1887-1971*
George *1906-1980* married 1935 to **Anne**
Barry ? (two children)

Elinor *1908-1998* married 1932 to **Jack Secher**
Judith (died in infancy)
Allen *1935-* married 1965 to **Nancy** (divorced in 1988)
Married 1988 to **Ina**
Judith *1963-* (adopted) married 1997
Deborah *1968-*
Adam *1970-*

Linda *1938-* married 1960 to **Larry Heilprin** (divorced in 1982)
Terri *1963-*
J.D. *1965-*
Danny *1967-* married 1995
Andy *1970-*

Lillian *1910-1987* married **Henry**

Richard ***1911-?*** Married with children (disappeared in the mid-1940's)

Edythe ***1916-*** married 1939 to **Earl Monroe** ***1915-1994***

Married 1997 to **John Logan**

Suzie ***1943-*** married to **Tom Forgrave**

Reid

Jill

Louis ***1885-1943*** married 1908 to **Helen Ledner** (cousin of Simon's wife)

Jessie ***1909-1973*** married twice briefly 1949 to **Ada** (adopted two children)

Eleanor ***1911-*** married twice with a daughter from the first marriage

Kathleen ***1916-1980*** married and had a daughter

Alex ***1887-1975*** married 1913 to **Helen Ellenbogen** (cousin of Julius's wife)

Miriam ***1913-1948?***

Joseph **1915-**

(two or three more children. Facts are unknown. Divorced.

Rose ***1889-1949*** married 1910 to **Eugene Ledner** (Louis's brother-in-law)

Alfred ***1911-*** married twice briefly (**Jean** and adopted 2 children)

Kathleen ***1915-1985*** married **Hy Mandell** (one daughter)

Married **Bob Fisher** (one daughter)

Emil ***1894-1977*** married 1916 to **Gizella Klein** ***1898-1985?*** (niece of Julius's wife)

Rita ***1918-*** married 1937 to **Jack Gold** (divorced)

Married **Sylvan Howard**

Wendy ***1940-*** married 1962 to **Mirisch** (divorced)

Married **Leonard Goldberg**

Amanda

Toni Howard ***1947-*** married

Patsy ***1925-*** married **Perry Paul**

Mitzi ***1930-*** (stage name Mitzi McCall) - married **Charlie Brill**

Jennifer

Dear Patrick,

My Aunt Sophie always reminded me of your "Auntie Mame" because her life was so interesting and exciting. I even thought that they might have somewhere along the way but doubt that their travels took them in the same direction at the same time. Aunt Sophie was Chinese!

Basically, I think I always knew that she was an American, but since she lived in the Orient even before I was born, I always thought of her as Chinese, although she was my mother's sister. Before she came to live with us, when I was about twelve, I only saw her every couple of years when she took a hiatus from her fascinating life. Her travels through the Orient were extensive, and as a child, I could rattle off all kinds of exotic places and spoke knowingly of China, Japan, Peking, Hong Kong, Yokahama, which were all in the same place as far as I was concerned.

I have no idea where she met her husband, and remember meeting him only once. His name was Bela. BELA! The only other Bela I had ever heard of was Bela Lugosi, and he played very sinister roles in the movies. It never occurred to me that he was only role playing, so my Uncle Bela had to be sinister, too, or at least very mysterious. My imagination led me to believe that my Uncle was an opium dealer and lived in a tent in the desert with Rudolph Valentino. Wasn't the Sahara in China? In later years I learned he was an engineer and set up offices all through the Orient for a very prestigious American Engineering firm. What a disappointment!

In anticipation of Aunt Sophie's visit, the house was scrubbed until it gleamed. The children were scrubbed until they gleamed, too. Surely many of her stories were exaggerations, but I even believed the heavy breathing that accompanied many of her frightening tales. Like the time she fell into a crocodile infested river, along with her driver, rickshaw and horse. The horse's leg was bitten off. A rickshaw driver leading a horse? In Singapore, who am I to doubt, even now?

A really funny story concerned her return to China after WWI. During her absence a beautiful hotel had been built, and their suite contained a lovely bathroom with a commode, a fairly new conception in 1920. While sitting thereon she had the distinct feeling of being watched, but could see no one. As she got up to search for the concealed flusher, two coolies, who had been watching through peep holes, came in and carried the commode outside for emptying.

Aunt Sophie was always very generous to her nieces and nephews and brought us many gifts. We wore toe-thongs long before they became fashionable, with which we wore white sox with one toe; our thongs were made of straw. I also was given a beautiful pink and white kimono with a pink satin obi, but it did not look very authentic with my braids, freckles, and dirty tennis shoes. We each had a wooden Buddha, too, and we were told to rub its belly for good luck. Mine was rubbed until the varnish wore off, but I can not remember any Buddha prayers being answered, except perhaps the

one about growing up, but that may have happened anyway. I was thrilled to take my Buddha to first grade, but it was not accepted well and I hid it from view.

In high school all my themes were written about Aunt Sophie's exploits, the only problem being that I would write down her thoughts exactly as she related them. Can you imagine a 15-year-old American girl prefacing her remarks with "I can jolly well assure you". My teachers were not overly impressed either.

If you did not experience the depression, it is a hard thing to explain, so I will just say that Aunt Sophie's life changed dramatically, as did everyone else's. She came back to the states in 1928 while Uncle Bela went to the Philippines; he promised to follow as soon as possible. Alas, she never saw him again. As their separation lengthened, their letters became fewer and farther between. She never gave up hope that someday she would again set up housekeeping with her beloved.

She lived with us for years, and even after her husband's death maintained the thought that she would return to a life of her own. For at least twenty-five years, we had two of her barrels, still crated, in our basement. Even though she told us they contained only household goods, I never believed that they didn't hold untold treasures. When she died in the early 1950's, we opened her barrels and I was deeply disappointed to find that they contained only linens, blankets and pots and pans, just as she said they did. The only valuable piece was a miniature ivory replica of the Taj Mahal, with all the top turrets broken. We could never find an artisan to repair or replace them.

Like your "Aunt Mame", my Aunt Sophie was quite a gal, who even now I think of with sadness and respect. Tell me, Patrick, was your "Aunt Mame" real?

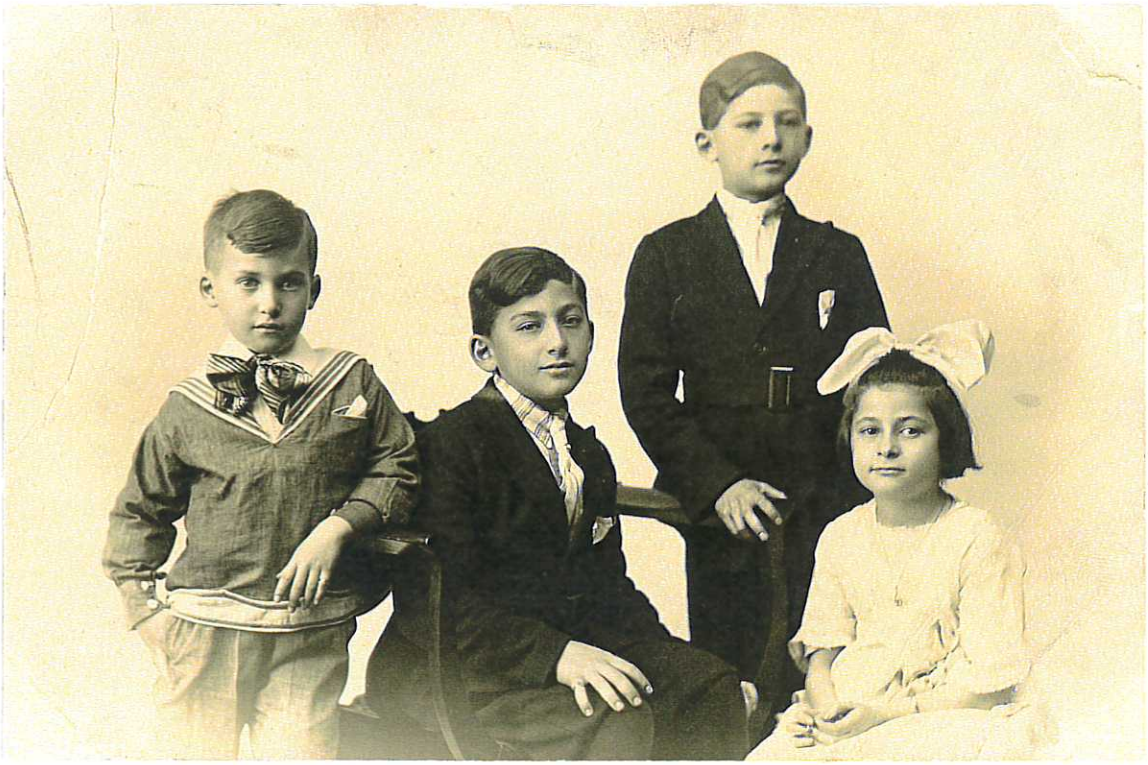
Sincerely,

Edie

Front Row, left to right: Jean Walleck, George Steiner (son of Joe and Jennie) and Elise Walleck
Second Row: Emma Freidman Steiner; Margaret Brauer Steiner (son Emerich in her lap); Regina Gescheit Steiner (matriarch); Aaron Steiner (patriarch); Lena Steiner Walleck; Jenny Newman Steiner (married to Joe, daughter Elinor is in her lap)
Third Row: Julius Steiner (born 1982, husband of Emma); Simon Steiner (born 1881, husband of Margaret); Rose Steiner (born 1889, later married Eugene Ledner, not pictured); Louis Steiner (born 1885, later married Helen Ledner, sister of Eugene, not pictured); Emil Steiner (born 1894, youngest of clan, later married Gizella Klein, a niece of Emma, not pictured); Alex Steiner (born 1887, later married Helen Ellenbogen, not pictured); Leopold Wallech (husband of Lena); Joseph Steiner (born 1884, husband of Jenny)

July 4, 1908 (left to right and front to back)
Probably a maid (standing), unknown - possibly her daughter (seated), Alex Steiner, Julius Steiner, Unknown, Leopold Walleck, Aaron Steiner (seated in the cart), Elsie Walleck, Regina Steiner, Sophie Newman, George Steiner, unknown, unknown, unknown, Simon Steiner (seated on a horse holding a bugle), unknown, unknown, Joe Steiner, Margaret Brauer Steiner, Lena Walleck, Jenny Steiner, Emma Steiner, Emil Steiner, unknown, Lewis Steiner, Elinor Steiner, Jean Steiner, Rose Steiner

Grandma & Grandpa Steiner with their seventeen grandchildren Spring, 1914 (Ten more were born after this picture) (Name of parent in parenthesis)
(Left to right) Top row: Jean (Lena), George(Joe), Emerich(Simon), Elsie(Lena)
Second Row: Elinor(Joe), Richard(Joe), Grandpa – in his lap Miriam(Alex), Stella(Julius), Grandma – in lap Arnold(Simon), Jessie(Louis)
Third Row: Willlim (Simon, Lillian(Joe), Alfred(rose), Edward(Julius), Eleanor(Louis), Alice(Simon), Violet(Lena)



Simon and Margaret's children around 1918
(Left to Right) Arnold, Emerich, Bill, Alice