MY FAMILY CHRONICLE

By Irene Roth-Pipes

Introduction

Dedicated to my sons and their children so they would not be ignorant the way so many natives born Americans are about their origin and background. I hope I did not wait too long with writing it all down, but I have taken notes over the years and shall try to put it all down as accurately as I possibly can.

I will end it in 1946, the year we married. After that we led "a normal American life." This is what I wrote before starting work on this *Chronicle*:

> I shall do all I can to find out more about what our life was like in pre-war Poland. I was 14 when the war broke out and am trying to make up for the fact that my parents are now dead and left me with many unanswered questions. Why didn't I sit down with them and record all those stories they loved to tell? Much of the time I did not properly listen, thought I knew it all and would hear it again.
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> How could I have known that I would lose them so very soon –they were all too young to die. When people offered me their condolences I often heard the phrase, "consider yourself lucky you had them for longer than most". Is dying of a stroke at 81 and of cancer at 75 considered a full life? Yes, we could have all ended in a gas chamber if my father had not had the international connections and my mother the guts to squeeze us all into a small car in the middle of the night. We fled on the sixth day of the German attack on Poland. Four months later the Statue of Liberty greeted us. (How glad I was to be able to contribute to the fund for the restoration of Ellis Island and made sure that our names were inscribed on the wall with those that passed through it before us.)
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> I want to know more and am ready to travel and talk to all that could help me find those details. Please be patient with me, for I am not an experienced writer. I shall now try to write down all I remember and what I managed to find out by talking to relatives and friends, so that all of you, children, grandchildren, cousins, uncles and aunts will know more of their background.

Acknowledgments: I thank my husband, Richard, and my granddaughter Sarah Marysia for being the first to read this *Chronicle*. Sonia Landes, Antony Polonsky, and Catherine Rosen went to a lot of trouble to correct my English and especially my punctuation. Daniel Picard contributed information I lacked. My sister Hanna, inspired by my chronicle, wrote her own memoir; I quote from it some of her recollections. Ola Hawiger deserves a special mention for spending endless hours scanning and printing my old photographs.

I: Grandparents

1. MOTHER'S SIDE OF THE FAMILY

Sarah Papierbuch, my grandmother, born December 24, 1885 was the oldest of six brothers and four sisters. Next was Paula Honigstein, who lived in Wroclawek. Inka Reichman, who immigrated to Israel with one son. Fela Kaczor, mother of Reginka and Henryk, who escaped to Chile and raised their families there. Edzia, the youngest, had two children, died during the war. David had four children and Aaron had two sons.

Mordekhai (Markus Judah) Pajewski, my grandfather, born in March 1875, was the third child of four. Jozef Pajewski, his father was born in 1804, and died in 1916. At 60 he divorced his wife and married her younger sister, creating a scandal. Markus and one sister Fidler remained in Poland. The others went to Canada and changed their name to Pines.

Sarah and Markus met and married in Warsaw on April 24, 1902, when that part of Poland belonged to Russia (since the partition of 1772). They had three children: Maria (also known as Maryla), my mother, born on February 18, 1904, died on November 2, 1980; Henryk, born on August 24, 1907, died in 1948; and Jozef, born March 13, 1917, died in April 2000 in his house in Andrews, NC.

Markus and Sarah were quite well to do until the First World War, which brought inflation and made their money worthless. It was said they could use the money to paper their house with.

It was at that time that they opened a store on Szpitalna Street, one of three stores near the corner of Chmielna St where they sold leather goods (such as purses, suitcases, wallets and slippers). This is the only building standing today which I associate with my childhood in Warsaw; I visit it every time I am in Warsaw.

Their apartment was in the same building around the corner from the store on Chmielna 20, on the third floor, in the right side entrance off the courtyard. There was the main room, which served as dining room, living room and bedroom for the children, my grandparent's room, small kitchen and toilet. The kitchen sink served for both washing and kitchen uses. There was a free standing tub in the hall and the toilet was outside on the stair landing between floors. They would go to the bathhouse on Chmielna Street, a short walk, once a week.

Until my mother married in 1923 and my uncle Henryk moved out in 1926 all three children lived in that small space. My uncle Jozio lived there until the outbreak of the war. I remember the place as warm and most pleasant with tall palms in the corner of the dining room near the windows. There was a large table, chairs and sofas that somehow accommodated all of us for family Friday night dinners, Seders and all other occasions. The Seders were particularly festive and the excitement of asking the four questions and getting a present for "selling" the hidden matzos.

Quote from Hanna

> *Mother inherited her father's profile, a shapely, fairly large nose that started straight out from the forehead. I often see this classic profile in paintings and Greek and Egyptian statues. Grandfather's hair was prematurely white, shiny and straight. He had blue eyes like Mother's. He was distinguished looking, and more quiet than his active wife.*

My grandparents kept an Orthodox home and observed the prescribed rituals. My grandfather, who was blond and blue eyed, "sinned" occasionally by sneaking to "A la Fourchette," a Jewish delicatessen where he would eat a ham sandwich. I was sometimes included in those outings and was sworn to secrecy. I really believed that my grandmother did not know since she made believe she was not aware of it. Unlike her husband she was Semitic looking. She was tall, with black hair (about that time she discarded

wearing the wig and let her hair grow) a strong character. She ruled the house and the business.

What follows is a quote from Jozio's letter written to me after he read what I had written about his parents and shortly before he died:

> *What surprised me most is that you never asked why we lived in such a small apartment.*
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> *After all, my parents were neither rich nor poor. They sent all three of us to private Gymnasiums, which were very expensive. Henio was sent to study in Paris and I to Vienna. They belonged to a Jewish private club where they used to play bingo and attended parties. Father used to go to Marienbad to drink the healing waters, Mother to Ciechocinek. Occasionally I went with her. I spent two summers with you [my mother, Hanna and I], one in Zopot and another in Skolimow.*
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> *We were born in an apartment on Widok Street, a short street between Bracka and Marszalkowska, two blocks from the store. According to Maryla, it was a simple apartment with three bedrooms and all facilities.*
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> *Around 1920 we moved to a very large apartment on Bagno 2 together with my mother's younger sister. It is here that your parents were married. By 1929 a break occurred in the relations between the sisters and she demanded that my parents move out, which they had to do since the apartments was in the sister's name. It was extremely difficult to find another and to get one they had to bribe the owner to rent the small place on Chmielna Street. If they had waited until after the crash of 1929 they could have gotten any apartment for far less money.*

From another interview with Jozio in April 1985

> *I was helping the pole bearer under the canopy at your mother's wedding. There were a lot of people, many from Vienna, all enjoyed good food and drink. After the wedding, Marcell and Maryla left for their honeymoon and I was looking through the window crying that Marcell took my sister away. Marcell used to come to the apartment and listen to Maryla play the piano.*
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> *My sister used to tell me about our grandfather who lived to be 112; he was born in 1804 and died in 1916 when she was twelve years old. He told her stories of seeing Napoleon in Warsaw when he was eight years old. He drank a shot of vodka for breakfast. He was quite a character. I was named after him.*
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> *By total coincidence when I looked for a tailor in Montreal in 1941, I was introduced to a man by the name of Pines. After a lot of conversation, we discovered that he was a son of Jozef Pajewski's first marriage. He was divorced at the age of 60 and married his wife's younger sister with whom he had four children. My father was the third child of that marriage. He left Poland because it all created a scandal.*

It seems strange to me now that I never heard any of that from my own mother. I was quite sure that they were married in the Nozyk Synagogue, the only one in Warsaw that was still possible to save and recondition after the war.

2. FATHER'S SIDE OF THE FAMILY

I will start with the information I received from Jaffa Margulies, my grandmother's niece, who survived the war in Poland and lived in Israel until her death. This is what she writes of the Roth family background.

> *Wilhelm and his brothers and sisters were grandchildren of Josef and Miriam Danziger.*

Miriam was born Wiener. They lived in Busk, Galicia (a small town 80 kilometers from Lwow) in a beautiful house. They were in the banking and investment business and were very well to do. They had nine children, four sons: Itzak, Jacob, Wolf and Moishe and five daughters: Esther (who married Roth) my grandmother, Yita married Parnas (Jaffa's mother), Blima married Weiss (Jacob's and Joe's mother), Chana married Grunberg and Lea married Fellig.

Your uncle Wilhelm married a woman from Sanok, had a daughter Miriam (Maria). They separated after thirteen years but were never divorced. Wilhelm became wealthy, always took good care of his siblings, helped Moishe and Lea's orphaned children. He also helped Jacob Weiss to continue his studies. He gave generously to charities and philanthropic causes.

My grandfather, **Shulem Shahne Roth**, was born in Cieszanow on July 8, 1866. His father Zev Yekutiel was a scholar and merchant. His mother Bina Rachel was the daughter of Reb Mordehai Wolf. Shulem Shahne received a traditional education in Cheder and Yeshivas. He was a landowner and at the same time was active in cultural affairs and business circles.

In 1886 at the age of 18 he married **Esther** age 16, daughter of Emanuel Joseph Danziger (Norbert's son Emanuel was named after him) who was in the real estate business with mostly Jewish clients from Busk. He was a stern and rigid man who domineered his wife, a frail, soft-spoken woman always afraid of her husband.

They lived in Busk until Wilhelm brought them to Vienna and via Italy to Palestine after the Anschluss in 1938. Esther died in Tel Aviv on November 11, 1941. Shulem Shahne devoted himself to traditional Jewish studies and to communal affairs. He was known as a charitable person without claims of glory for himself. He remarried after the death of Esther. In traditional Roth ways of secrecy, I learned of this quite accidentally much later. Even now most of the family is not aware of this and I have not been able to find out the name of the lady. He died September 20. 1944. Both Esther and Shulem Shahne are buried in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives.

Next is my interview with Norbert Roth, father's youngest brother, in Long Island in the fall of 1984. It is not necessarily in chronological order and much of what he told me I repeat again later on but I shall keep to his story. He was the only one left alive of that generation who could enlighten me of many details.

***Sarah Danziger** had six brothers and three sisters. They lived in Busk and were a well-established family. I knew and loved those grandparents. I often went to synagogue with grandfather, who was in the real estate business (which meant selling land). He did business with Shulem Shahne. He lost his father when he was 12 years old so I never knew those grandparents. Since he was the eldest son, he had to take care of his sister and brother Moses. Moses was the father of Bina and Mary Roth. Sarah Danziger was 16 when she married Shulem Shahne Roth, who was born on July 6, 1865 in Cieszanow. They met and married in 1883 in Busk. They spoke mostly Yiddish and German since that part of Poland was under Austrian rule.*

They had seven children of whom six survived. Zev Yekutiel (Wilhelm nicknamed Wolwish) born September 1, 1888; Mordekhai (Marcell), born December 15, 1892; Shaindel (Salomea known as Sala), born November 20, 1898; Adolf-Abraham Jacob (Adolf) born in 1895); Nahum Dov (Norbert) born September 10,1903); and Bina (Rosa) born in 1909).

My father, Shulem Shahne, established a small bank of which he was director and at the same time he owned a lumber yard with Adolf the manager. He was basically a businessman who bought and sold land. He was knowledgeable in Jewish religion and the Torah and was

often called a rabbi. He was known to be wise, honest and well educated in the Talmud.

My mother, who wore a wig symbolizing her dedication to religion, stayed very much in the background. She was, as was expected of her, very busy with the responsibilities of the house, the garden and all six children. We lived on a farm outside of Busk with only three other Jewish families in the neighborhood among them one Mr. Weingart the butcher. They had no time to "associate" since it took all their time and energy to make a living.

The house had no running water or electricity. There was the dining room and a number of bedrooms. We children all slept in one room. Compared to others, we were well off. We had our own milk (my mother milked the cows) and eggs. The barn was connected to the house and we had help in the stable. Our fields of wheat and corn extended for three or four kilometers.

I went to the Cheder. Busk itself had a Jewish population of 10,000 but we lived in the outskirts where there were many Ukrainians and Germans, and that is the reason why this part was called "Niemiecki" (German). The Poles were the postmaster, police commissioner and the tax collector, but basically it was a Jewish town. The nearest railroad station was in Krasne-Busk six miles away.

Count Badeni, the premier of Austria-Hungary, had a palace in Busk and did not allow a train station there so as not to be disturbed. I never tried to find family records. I have no interest in Busk at all on account of the continuous persecution. [Strange that Norbert would add this but did not elaborate.]

The environment in our house was a very healthy one. We took care of one another. The elder took care of the younger. The eldest brother Wilhelm took care of Marcell, Marcell of Adolf, and Adolf of myself and so on down the line. The same was true of the girls. It was implanted into us that whenever we are together we should do all we can for one another before we were even asked. I went to school in Busk, and once when some boys beat me up, Wilhelm came to my aid and the boy was expelled from school.

Both parents came from Chassidic families, which meant that Jewish law came before secular law, but the children were brought up in a very liberal way. My father said to me when I was a boy, "You must learn languages." We spoke Yiddish at home; I learned Hebrew, Polish, and Ukrainian later. Wilhelm and Marcell attended a Handelsschule (business school) in Sambor, Austria, a German school in Polish Austria.

In 1914 we fled from Busk to Hungary. There were no borders to cross since we were part of the same Austrian-Hungarian Empire and could travel freely. What we dreaded was a Russian attack. It was on Oneg Shabbat that my father decided we must flee from the Russians even though we never traveled on Shabbat, for he worried about the fate of the Jews. We left the house leaving everything behind hoping the war would end in a few weeks and we would return. [IP: When the Pajewski and Roth families left Warsaw on September 6-7, 1939, we thought exactly the same way and left the same way.] My parents buried all the jewelry and other valuables, but found nothing when they returned.

We started from Krasne. Our first stop was Bergson-Miklosh, where we spent several weeks sleeping on the floor. Then we traveled to Miskos, Batiu and ended up in Vienna. We stayed in Vienna until the end of the war in 1918. We knew no one there and our father did not try to earn money. He studied and attended the Nestroygasse Congregation in the second district.

Wilhelm got a job in a chemical factory on

Diefenbachstrasse in the 14th district; Marcell worked in a glove factory until Wilhelm arranged for a job for him in his factory as bookkeeper. Adolf worked in a chocolate factory; Sala studied at the university. I, at the age of 8 was the food provider who stood in lines for hours for bread, butter etc. I tried to study whenever I could spare the time. This was the most difficult time of my youth.

When the war ended, I went back to Busk with my parents, to help them while my brothers stayed in Vienna. When we returned we found everything gone out of the house. We had to start from scratch. First of all, my father opened his bank and paid back all his old customers' savings.

It was a short visit, for I too, went to Vienna to study. At first, all six of us lived together but later the girls and I moved in with Wilhelm, while Marcell and Adolf lived by themselves. The school I attended was also in the second district. I spoke only Yiddish at that time.

It was at that time that Wilhelm's connection with IG Farben (a large German concern doing business in mostly chemical products) started. I never asked for details but I was very proud of him. He, a Polish Jew, a Chassid, follower of the renowned Belzer Rabbi in Belz, a village not far from Busk, became the general representative of IG Farben for Austria. Later on he took charge of Middle Europe: Romania, Hungary, Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Turkey. He then arranged for Marcell to be in charge of Poland. Before the merger of IG Farben he worked with Dobrowolski and Fulde.

It was through Fulde's connections that you, Irene, and Hanna were admitted to the Protestant school. When Wilhelm returned to Vienna he opened his own office, and not unlike Bernard Baruch in the USA he became the financial advisor to I.G Farben. He was in charge of sales to all those middle European countries and often traveled there.

I represented Radocha, a Swedish match company with a factory in Sosnowiec. I moved to Warsaw in 1923 to continue working for them. I moved in with Marcell who settled in Warsaw in 1921 and had a house and housekeeper on Leszno 66.

The chairman of Agfa, also part of IG Farben, approached Wilhelm to suggest someone for the sales of their photographic supplies for the whole country. Wilhelm suggested me. They trained me in photographic school for a whole year in Berlin. I traveled all over Germany and had a thorough German training. When I returned to Warsaw I hired a teacher to improve my Polish. Marcell and Maryla applied pressure for me to employ Henry Pajewski, Maryla's brother, as bookkeeper. He was a playboy who spent a lot of his time in night clubs, and could not find work without his sister's help. I traveled most of the time, often to Berlin.

My office was separate from Marcell's who had one on Krakowskie Przedmiescie. I was never introduced to his partner Fulde, but did meet Dobrowolski. The company Marcell and Fulde ran before he joined IG Farben was Griesheim Elektron.

I continued working for Agfa until they wanted me to fire the Jews to make room for Poles of German descent. I refused to do so on the ground that I hire people according to their qualifications and not by nationality or religion.

Soon after that your father met your mother. He bought the building on Zurawia 23 and I moved to "kawalerka" (bachelor apartment) in the same house on the same floor. When I was away it was used by your mother as a hospital room when you or Hanna was sick or as a meeting place for Henry and Ala before they were married".

I will quote here a passage from the *History of the Jews of Busk* by N. M. Gelber, dedicated to the memory of Shulem Shahne and Esther Roth, published in 1962 by the Ilamenu Press in Tel Aviv.

> *Shulem Shahne was a member of the Jewish Community Council in 1911. Among natives of Busk that performed an important part in the life of Busk one has to mention the sons of Shulem Shahne: Dr. William Roth and two of his brothers. For many years they were in the chemical business. After the Nazi conquest, they fled to America.*

Interview with Maria Roth Picard.

> *My mother's name was Frieda Osterjung, she was born in Sanok, Poland on August 23, 1889. My father's name was Wilhelm Roth, born in Busk on September 1, 1888. The marriage was an arranged one, as so many were at that time and most succeeded.*
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> *They were married in Poland and lived there for a few months, but at the threat of the Russian Army's approach they moved to Vienna where I was born on January 29, 1916. I know little of my maternal grandparents except that their names were Regina and Samuel Osterjung.*
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> *My parents did all they could to stay married but my father grew and my mother could not keep up with his lifestyle, his travels, his friends, his business and all. He was also a womanizer. They separated when I was twelve years old in 1928. He did all he could to keep me away from my mother who was a good, kind Jewish housewife. She could not keep up with the life of her husband who shot up both mentally and physically. To keep me away, he would call and ask, "Do you want to go to Budapest? Be ready in twenty minutes", and of course I was. I felt guilty towards my mother, who on the other hand was in awe of her educated daughter.*
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> *My grandparents lived off Holandgasse in the Jewish neighborhood of Vienna. It was very dark and small and smelled badly. We could not flash the toilet or ring the bell on Sabbath. We would leave the car around the corner when visiting them on Saturday. Shalom Shahne claimed to be a descendant of the revered Shalom Shahne, prayed all day long, while his wife worked hard.*
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> *Norbert, he saw everything in black and white, as for instance with Henry Pajewski whom he saw all black and I thought he was a very nice man with a lovely character. Norbert was not popular with the ladies. People thought he was intelligent because he never responded until he called my father and asked what he should do or say before giving an answer.*
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> *Sala and Salo Unterberg had another child, Manfred. The woman who took care of the child dropped him while the parents went out and put him back in the crib without saying anything. I woke up, heard Sala screaming, "I want my baby," but by then the baby was dead. Sala would not handle Walter or even change his diaper after that she did not get over this until much later when she came to help me with Cathy.*

II: Marcell Moves to Warsaw

1. IG FARBEN

My father moved to Warsaw in 1920. He was a well-established and well-to-do bachelor. He rented a spacious villa on Leszno 66 and hired a housekeeper who catered to all his needs. His main business was representing IG Farben in Poland and some other surrounding Eastern European countries.

Interview with Stefan Fulde in 1994:

My memory reaches back to around 1930 when my father became partner of Mr. Marcell Roth. Those were difficult days for a chemical company and it had various names but Dobrowolski, Fulde and Co was the one that lasted. My father and yours were equal partners but because he was Jewish his name did not appear in the firm's name. They started on Bielanska St 16, and as the business grew they needed more space and moved to Trembacka 4 and finally to Kredytowa 6. They mainly sold heavy chemicals. At that time many of the companies merged to have more of the market. Mr. Roth had his own connections that helped them to merge with IG Farben.

I heard only complimentary things at home about the relationship of our fathers. On the gold cigarette case your father gave to mine the engraved inscription in your father's handwriting read "To a good friend who was always helpful". Besides the cigarette case your father gave mine an oil painting by Cieslewski with a dedication on the back. When Mr. Roth had to go to Vienna for an operation my father took over his clients, for each had their own.

The relationship was very good even though there was no social life between the two families. We had mostly family visiting, it was not customary to meet business acquaintances socially. From 1938 on there was pressure from the Germans to remove Jews who held high positions, true not just in the chemical business. In Germany they could do as they saw fit, it was different in other countries such as Poland, but the pressure was such that they had to part after IG paid compensation to the Jewish partners. This did not occur before 1938 as you can see on the photograph taken in 1938 at my father's 25th anniversary of working together. The firm's name continued to be Dobrowolski, Fulde and Co.

it lasted until January 1942 when Mr. Schwab applied more pressure on my father who at that time had heart problems. They took over the management and offered to all to leave but where could they go so most of them stayed on. The firm under the name of my mother's father, F. Schneider lasted through the war. Among the products they sold were paints, lacquers, organic dyes for textile and leather industries and other chemical products. Much of it was smuggled East to the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia after the German invasion of the Soviet Union. There was lot of bribery involved. They had contracts with the Wehrmacht and such. They kept the names of Bayer, Agfa and others for the different products like cosmetics, foods etc.

Yes, my father helped to gey you and your sister accepted at the Anna Wazowna Gymnasium. There was no official rule about religion of the students, but I know since I was at Reya that in my class of 35 students there were about 20 Catholic boys, 8 to 10 Protestants and 3 or 4 Jews. The Protestant church was its main supporter. It felt that they had to be tolerant towards all religions and that was an important part of the teaching. There was a general understanding among all whom I knew in my school never

to differentiate between people of different religions.

2. MEETING MARIA

Marcell's life as a bachelor officially ended with a visit to the jewelry store across the street from my grandparent's house, which belonged to their friends, the Sterns. He went there one day to buy some jewelry (*I never heard or found out who he was buying this for)* but did not notice a young, blond beautiful girl sitting below counter level. My future mother who graduated in 1922 from the Hewelka high school (which was later renamed Hoffmanowa), was 18 years old, 5'7 inches tall (very tall at the time), with long wavy blond hair and blue eyes. Some called her "the beauty of Warsaw."

A close friend of my mother's who attended the same school, Mrs. Aniela Borowik recollects that Marysia Pajewska, as she was called in school, played the piano every morning for the morning assembly to accompany the singing of a song to God that was acceptable to all religions "Kiedy ranne wstaja zorze".

From where my future mother sat, she only noticed his hands and fell in love with them. When the owner of those hands came back on that wintry day in 1922 to pick up the jewelery, she persuaded the Sterns to introduce her to him, for she had a passion for beautiful hands. My future father was 32 years old, not at all a good-looking young man, but did have beautiful hands. He was 5'10 inches tall, had reddish-brown wavy hair, an athletic figure and was a gentleman. They had a brief courtship – it was love at first sight. For their engagement he gave her a diamond ring (which she gave me to pass on to Daniel's wife Paula).

3. WEDDING

They actually had no common language for Marcell spoke German and Yiddish and she Polish and some Russian. In spite of this minor difficulty, for they soon learned each other's languages, they were married on May 3, 1923, a national holiday celebrating the Polish constitution, in the apartment of my grandparents on Bagno 2 by Rabbi Samuel Poznanski. The wedding was small and modest for her parents were proud and would only do what they could afford, which was little at that time. She was not quite nineteen and he thirty-two. This was considered the right difference in age if a man was to support his wife in style. And that he did.

4. VISIT TO VIENNA

For their honeymoon they first went to Vienna to meet the Roth in-laws, the brothers and sisters. Wilhelm lived in a modern apartment on Modenagasse 8, and the parents in a more Jewish neighborhood of the city, on Skodagasse.

This was the only time my mother met Wilhelm's wife Frieda who soon afterwards returned to Busk. She was basically a small-town housewife who felt uncomfortable and did not fit into her husband's lifestyle. They never got divorced and neither re-married, but they never lived together again. Their daughter Maria stayed most of the time with her father and never got to know her mother really well. She was murdered in Auschwitz by the Germans. We do not know the date and assume Wilhelm could not find her or get in touch with her to save her.

5. HONEYMOON

Maria and Marcell spent their honeymoon in Paris. Like all young people and especially those in Paris for the first time, they fell in love with the city. Years later, in 1956 when Dick and I lived in Paris for a year and my parents came to visit they reminisced about it. How shocked they were when an almost naked waitress sat on my father's lap in the Lido in 1923! The performers were in various stages of nudity. Lido was famous for staging and lush costumes. In 1956 the similar show was no longer shocking, for nudity had become commonplace.

III: Marcell and Maria Start a Family

1. GETTING RID OF THE HOUSEKEEPER

On their return to Warsaw my mother moved into Marcell's bachelor quarters and had constant fights with the housekeeper who was set in her ways and used to running the house. The bride, nineteen years old, thought she knew better and after a time managed to convince her husband to fire the lady.

2. MOVE TO ZURAWIA 23

It was in those years that both Wilhelm and my father started buying properties in Poland. The first house was in Warsaw on Zurawia 23, where the newlyweds moved. They took the only unoccupied apartment on the third floor. The building was of brick, built to last, five stories high, with balconies and a courtyard in the center of which a cupid spouted water.

3.BIRTH OF TWO DAUGHTERS

I, Eugenia Irena was born on November 28, 1924, while my parents were entertaining some friends. The birth was very easy and I was born even before the family doctor arrived. My father was somewhat disappointed that I was not a boy, but once he saw me he threw me up high in the air and declared he wanted a dozen more just like me! It was noticed very early that I was born left-handed, something not acceptable at the time. To make me “normal” my left hand was tied to the crib so I would have to use my right hand.

When I was two years and two months old, on January 28, 1927, my sister Hanna Lucy, was born. Unfortunately, I was too young to remember that event.

4. MOVE TO FIRST FLOOR

Around that time a much more spacious and beautiful apartment became available (after paying what was called *odstepne* or key money) on the first floor of our building. Since a single man, who never threw out a newspaper or a string, occupied the apartment for a long time, they had to totally renovate and decorate.

But after all, the whole building belonged to us, as everyone could tell since the owner's name was well illuminated under the number sign, in a box like fixture that hung over the main entrance of the building. There was a large, heavy entrance door always locked at night and carefully watched all the time by the concierge who lived in a small flat on that level. The entrance door led to the main stair on the right and to the courtyard straight ahead with doors on all sides leading to the apartments.

Ours, which I remember as though I had left it only yesterday, was reached from the main stair that was wide and curved. There were two apartments per floor, ours on the right on the first floor (second by American counting). You entered into a long and wide hall about 10 by 40 feet (maybe because of the similarity, I liked the Berkeley St. house in Cambridge so much from the moment I stepped inside). On the right there were three rooms, first the green room with its piano and comfortable furniture, second, a small guest room with a large sofa/bed and desk (where I was allowed to sleep when either my sister or I were sick), the room that was mine a few years later something I very much wanted; third, the children’s room, large and sunny. In the corner, there was a tall white tiled coal stove, as in all the rooms. The stoves had an opening in the hall so that in the winter months the maid could light them in the early morning hours without waking us up, so by the time we got up the rooms were warm.

On the left side, off the hall, there was just one door leading to my father's *gabinet* or office/living room furnished with heavy brown leather sofa and chairs, large desk, and a huge gilded wooden chandelier. The balcony looked out on the street. There was a connecting door to my parents' bedroom that could also be reached

from the dining room, was done in the style of Louis XIV. This room, which was originally two rooms, was divided into two parts separated by a transparent blue curtain from floor to ceiling, one for the bed, night tables and on the other the boudoir with the beautiful chaise longue, the armoire and the dressing table with mirrors all around.

Straight on, across the hall, was the dining room with its heavy sideboards, table and chairs. On the side, a small dresser-like cabinet with all its drawers filled with dozens of silver flatware. There was a curved balcony looking out on the courtyard.

A not-too-long corridor connected the dining room with the kitchen and from where you entered the toilet and bathroom, the only bathroom and toilet shared by all. The bathroom had a separate heater to heat the bath water as it was being filled. We were impressed by this novelty. The kitchen was both kitchen and sleeping quarters for the maid and cook. There was a two-level alcove off it where the cook and maid slept.

Under the window (*pod oknem*) was a cabinet with a screen to let in the cold air, where food was kept cold and fresh. The stove was coal operated, with gas burners at one end. The sink was large and old fashioned, and a rectangular table was used for all the food preparation. A door opened to the back stairs, used for all deliveries and by the servants, for they were not allowed to come through the front door.

Farmers brought fresh eggs, milk and vegetables. The cook bought all the other foods daily in the market or neighborhood stores. I especially remember the fruit store on the corner of Zurawia and Krucza where we could buy bananas, pineapples and sweets. It was there too one brought the empty soda water syphon to be replaced by a full one.

We always had a Viennese governess. There was a cook and a maid and the janitor of the house who kept the building clean, swept the staircases and watched who was coming in and out. Since the house belonged to us, he was given other chores such as brushing our dog Roy who came to us in 1937 by plane from London, an event I will describe later.

It was in those surroundings that our lives went on, peacefully and happily. Money was a subject never mentioned in front of us.

IV: Earliest Memories

1. SEAT ON THE CARRIAGE

I can still see myself sitting on a wooden homemade seat across the baby carriage, to save me the walking, where my baby sister lay in comfort. I remember being quite unhappy about it, since I felt that she had deprived me of the comfortable place inside the carriage. Neither my mother nor the governess, a Freulein Krauss, knew of Dr. Spock and little attention was paid to child psychology. The governess took us to the park even in the coldest weather, for fresh air was considered important and good for one's health.

My mother would occasionally drop by to see us in the park, but not for long. A lot of the time she was busy meeting friends in cafes and restaurants! I am sure it had no long-term effect on our relationship. My sister and I accepted it as normal behavior since the governess was there to take care of us. I have no recollection of ever playing games, reading or any other activity that we now consider normal to share, with my parents.

2. TRIP TO BUSK

I was about four years old when I was taken on the first train trip that I remember. I, the older child went with my parents to visit the Roth grandparents in Busk. I did not know then that it would be my only visit to my father's birth place until 1986, when I re-visited Busk (but more on that later).

My grandparents lived in a spacious farmhouse surrounded by fields. At that time, it was quite rare for Jews to own a farm. The atmosphere was much different from what I was used to. My grandfather, a tall man, had a long reddish beard, wore a skull cap, spoke little, and when he did it was in Yiddish.

My grandmother was a small frail woman who wore a wig and spent all her time either in the kitchen or taking care of the needs of her husband and children. I remember little of the visit except for the walk with my father through fields of wheat, and making a bouquet of the various kinds of stocks and flowers. My father put the precious bouquet on top of a tall armoire and to my regret we forgot it there.

I remember little of my paternal grandparents. We did not speak the same language and our worlds were far apart. We were very assimilated and they were orthodox Jews. I did not have that problem with my maternal grandparents even though they too kept a kosher house and observed all the Jewish laws. They lived in Warsaw and I saw them every day.

The other memory I have of that visit is the overnight stop in Lwow on the way back. We stayed in the George Hotel and had dinner in the grand dining room. I was wearing my little white fur coat and hat. The orchestra was playing on a balcony high above us and the conductor gave me a special salute and played a piece in my honor. When I was there in 1986, I checked the place out, and there still is a balcony in what is now a measly-looking cafeteria. The old doorman remembered the music and elegant atmosphere.

3. RETURN TO BUSK IN 1986

I decided to visit Busk while in Krakow in the summer of 1986. I expected it to be an easy trip. I took a Polish train east to Przemysl, the border town in Poland close to the Soviet Union. There, I had to change trains, for the Soviet track is wider than in the rest of Europe. Crossing into the U.S.S.R., I found myself in a dirty empty compartment, in a dirty train, with two suspicious KGB agents waiting for me, on the way to Lwow (Lviv).

For more than half an hour, they went through all my belongings and asked me endless questions about why I was going to Lwow, the largest city in western Ukraine. They refused to believe me that it was just a sentimental journey on my part to see where my father and his family came from. They examined my address book and when they found two addresses of professors in

Lwow matters got worse. But at the end they let me go.

I stayed in a decent Soviet-style hotel in Lwow and spent the next two days trying to get permission and a car to take me further east to Busk. Again, they found every possible excuse to keep me from going. I asked for a car and driver who spoke Polish, as I do not speak Ukrainian, and finally got a small truck with a young Ukrainian, who only spoke Ukrainian. Fortunately, the two languages are similar enough that we could understand each other. He was intelligent and did not think me crazy for wanting to see Busk.

We drove around and around trying to find someone who remembered the old days, before 1939 and the war, and who was Polish. We did find an old man who showed us where the Danziger farm and house once stood, presently an area with small suburban-like cottages. Busk was then a pretty typical Soviet middle-size industrial town with practically no traces of its once being Polish and largely populated by Jews. Our informant told us that one of the Danzigers was a barber where he used to have his haircut. We ended our visit with my taking the two men to dinner in what was considered the best hotel in town. I was glad to have seen the place but depressed by what I saw.

V: Childhood Memories

1. GRANDMOTHER'S VISITS

My maternal grandmother, who lived in Warsaw a short distance from us, played an especially important role in my childhood.

It was she who was immediately called to come when we had even the slightest ailment. Her usual first remedy was to put *bankis* on our backs. They were small round heavy glass cups into which she would put a cloth drenched in alcohol, light it up, put it inside one *banka* after another and stick it on my back. They were left on for fifteen or twenty minutes and when removed would leave a deep reddish brownish ring. She could tell how bad the cold or grippe was by the color of the rings!

The next remedy cancelled out the first unpleasant one. She would mix a few egg yolks with lots of sugar into a glass, stir it well for quite a while and produce a delicious concoction called *gogel mogel*. And after all that, she would spend endless hours sitting on the edge of my bed playing cards. It was she who taught me how to play different versions of gin rummy. I looked forward to those sick days at home with my grandmother and never had enough of them. I was sorry when I got well and had to go back to school. She always had time for me and never criticized. She was just what a grandmother should be, generous, accepting, and there.

Quote from Hanna:

> *I remember my grandmother's care when I had whooping cough. One of the accepted treatments for that illness was to inhale the fumes of fresh tar that had been laid on the street. In order to do this, she would wrap me up, hail a* doroszka *(a horse-drawn cab) and take me to a street where fresh tar was being poured.*

2. *KOMPLETY* AT HOME

We continued to have the Austrian governess, so spoke mostly German at home especially since my father was just learning to speak Polish for he did not speak it at all before his move to Warsaw. My mother, at the same time, learned German to be able to communicate with his family.

It was fashionable among well-to-do families not to send their children to school at a young age. My mother went to a lot of trouble to hire teachers, to find a few "suitable" children to have a *komplet* (home school). We met in our dining room and followed the same curriculum we would have had in a regular school.

I entered school only in the fourth grade where I had an instant disadvantage, for my Polish was poor and I was the new girl. The others knew each other well by then. I gained the respect of my classmates when on the first day I fought a bully and because of my height and strength, won the fight.

3. HOME SHOWS

Until my sister and I were nine and eleven, respectively, we put on performances in honor of our parents' birthdays or anniversaries. We had one particularly talented, even if unpleasant governess, a Freulein Stein who organized them. She made elaborate costumes, stage sets and all. She was a short, ugly woman with lots of ideas and a flair for theatricals. The only actors were Hanna and I. We rehearsed for weeks. The large living room was divided into a stage and seating for the guests. Hanna and I performed in three languages, Polish, German and French.

Hanna Piarro, serenading under Pierrette's window on her violin until I came out to dance. I was Hansel lost in the woods with the witch Gretel walking on a stick. We were two dancing balloons, two Old Dutch women knitting, or two elegant French women having tea and conversing in French. The stage was decorated appropriately for each of these acts.

Our parents' friends such as the Grunblatts, the

Honigszteins and of course our grandparents, uncles and aunts were the audience. My uncle Henryk, the photographer, high up on a ladder took movies of it all (what I would give to have those films!). When the performance was over and we were put to bed, the rest of the company would move to the dining room and have a noisy and fun celebration. Even though our room was quite far away I could hear the merriment.

On the occasions of our own birthdays we had children's parties and usually played games like musical chairs, blind man's bluff, and such, besides the cakes, chocolate, balloons and all that went with it. We were unashamedly children; no one rushed us to grow up. I wore a bottoms only bathing suit until the age of twelve, why wear a top when you are flat chested? I developed quite late, played with boys and their games, wore short *leder hosen* (leather pants), and wore my hair cut short. May be I was trying unconsciously to be the boy my father wanted so badly.

4. OUR ROOM ARRANGEMENT

My mother was no psychiatrist, and made many mistakes in the way she brought us up. She really cannot be blamed for there were no books for parents to read with instructions or guidelines to follow. She thought it was nice for her two girls to share a room. From my earliest childhood, I well remember how I hated that arrangement.

The room we shared had two specially designed beds with a partition and an opening through which we hit and threw pillows at each other. There were shelves for books and toys, a round table at which we ate our meals with the governess and were only allowed to join our parents in the dining room when they felt we were old enough, our table manners acceptable, and did not make too much noise, or interrupted the adult conversation. We were thrilled when that moment came. They applied the old rule, that children be seen and not heard.

One subject never mentioned was money. Not until I was a lot older did I realize that it was part of normal life.

5. RELATIONS WITH MY SISTER

My sister and I were only two years apart in age, but I was always treated far above my actual age since I was the more serious of the two. Hanna always had a good sense of humor and tried to get attention by being funny. She would mimic, make funny faces etc. Our governesses usually favored me for I was more obedient and therefore easier to manage. We shared a room even though there was plenty of space. It was not until I was twelve, that I was given the middle room where I had a desk I could lock.

Hanna wanted to be with my friends and me. Often on orders from mother, I had to take her with me where I was going, which I did not like. None of us wanted to have a younger sister along, regardless how sweet and pleasant she was. I had to walk to school with her when we were old enough, not to have a governess take us.

A quote from Hanna:

In my child's mind, Irene was perfect. I idolized her. I wanted to be like she was. It wasn't an unusual way for a younger sister to feel, however my needs, personality, and talents being so different from hers made it that much harder for both of us. At that time in her life Irene wanted little to do with me, and I wanted the opposite to be so. It was all painful and difficult for me to understand.

One afternoon, Irene and her friend Ala were going to the opera to hear and see a performance of Mozart's Don Giovanni. *Mother insisted that they take me with them. Had she been more familiar with the story of the licentious Don, and his horrific end she might have thought better of sending me along with them. I was an impressionable 10-year old and I know that Irene and Ala would have preferred to go by themselves. I was very excited at the prospect of this first-time experience, and I knew that being on my best behavior was very important that evening.*

The Opera House was gorgeous, the music marvelous, and I was totally engrossed until the last act. When the statue came to life, the flames of hell erupted, and an invisible, offstage choir began screaming. I started to cry, and then began to scream myself, overshadowing those on stage. My sister and Ala were embarrassed and furious with me, and it took many days before they would talk to me.

She wanted to wear the same clothes, for her two daughters looked cute (another mistake mother made). She would bring these beautiful clothes from Vienna or Paris, as they were unavailable in Warsaw. They were always identical. When the time came to go out, my sister would wait to see what I put on and wear the same. I would then rush back and change. This would sometimes go on two or three times until we had to leave.

Another of my earliest memories is the competition between Hanna and me for the silver spoon. There was one particular spoon, of a different pattern from all the rest that we both wanted. We would race home from school trying to get to it first to use it at dinner. I sigh for Dr. Spock, once more. I will never know why that spoon was not removed.

6. LEARNING TO SWIM

I have a most clear picture of my swimming lessons in the Vistula River, a fifteen-minute walk from our house. Along its bank, there were primitive wooden swimming establishments. One could change one's clothes and dive into the polluted river (no one paid any attention to the dirty water).

The one we patronized belonged to a Mrs. Kozlowska, a large woman with strong arms who introduced me to swimming. She would tie a rubber belt around my waist, attach a rope to it, and tie that to a long wooden rod, which she held up high. I must have looked like a fish just caught. I was held on the surface of the water in this fashion and told to move my arms and legs to her loud count of ONE, TWO, THREE. Primitive as it sounds, I learned to swim quickly, and had no fear of the water.

I never swam without the rope until the Italian instructor who did not know of the rope method, threw me from a boat into the deep sea far away from land. I was, too proud to show how scared I was and have been swimming ever since. Today they would say I was traumatized and would never swim again, but it became my favorite sport.

7. SUMMER VACATIONS

The next summer in Viareggio, Italy, my parents, Hanna, I, and the governess stayed in a beautiful hotel by the sea. I saw netting for the first time around the beds to keep the insects out. Wilhelm used to visit from Vienna, driven in his Daimler Benz car by his chauffeur, Latchenberger. (The same man, whom we all liked, later turned out to be a Nazi sympathizer and turned against our family).

Maria Roth Picard remembers spending some time with us that same summer in Viareggio. I quote her:

There was this handsome young man who was to teach you to swim but who was absolutely worshipping your mother. She kept telling him that she was a happily married woman with her children here. Your father must have been very sure of himself. All this amused him and it did not bother him at all. Your mother had a stature and coloring that was most appealing to Italians and all heads turned when she walked by. And I was miserable. I was sixteen and no one ever gave me a second look.

We all stayed there for two months and your father stayed for two weeks only. He hired a fortdancer for your mother so she would have a good time. He was always very considerate and never came home from a trip for instance

without first calling her for he did not want to surprise her.

Another summer I remember well was in Bled, Yugoslavia, on a beautiful lake with an island in the middle, which one reached by a rowboat and made a wish while pulling the rope of the church bell. (We spent a week there in the fall of 2002 and all was just as I remembered it - even the hotel where we stayed. Little changed except that the town is now part of Slovenia).

When quite young we spent a summer in Marienbad where we walked all dressed up with crystal glasses and glass straws, drinking the mineral water. The attendants who filled the glasses dressed in white, stood in a sunken well, making us feel that the water came directly out of the ground.

After visiting the family in Vienna, we went with both cousins, Walter Unterberg, Sala's son, and Bianca Roth, Adolf's daughter, to a camp in Velden.

During some winter school holidays we would ski in Zakopane, a rustic but quite beautiful ski resort, where our Viennese cousins would meet us.

Just before the outbreak of the war we spent most of the summer holiday (that is until we left for Warsaw for war was imminent) in Druskieniki.

8. VISITS TO VIENNA

Since my father's whole family had by now moved to Vienna, we often treaveled there. It was most exciting to go to the railroad station in Warsaw in the early evening, board the Wagon Lits Cook sleeper and watch the outskirts of the city go by. We did not get ready for bed until reaching the Czech border and once over the passport controls and inside Czechoslovakia the awaited moment came when one of our parents reached out of the train window to buy those fantastically long *Wurst* (frankfurters) served with mustard on a roll.

In Vienna we would usually stay in Wilhelm's apartment on Modenagasse 8. It was a newly constructed building and we were impressed by all the modern innovations. Wilhelm was rarely there, for he traveled all over Europe on business. We would spend our days with our cousins Walter and his sister Renee, children of my father's sister Salomea, and her husband Salo Unterberg, and Bianca, daughter of my father's brother Adolf and his wife Mary.

My favorite outing was to the world-famous Lunapark Prater (amusement park) and particularly to the Liliputenland, a whole village inhabited by dwarfs who lived in tiny houses and everything around them was built in proportion to their height. The other was a ride on the huge Ferris wheel, later made famous in the post war film *The Third Man*. Another treat, which I did not have in Warsaw, was the artificial skating rink open in the hot summer months.

My school friends did not believe that was possible when I told them about the wonders of Vienna. I was quite envious of the Austrian children who did not have to wear any kind of uniform, did not go to school on Saturdays, and in many ways were better off than we were. During each trip I was handed down a pair of *Lederhosen* (short leather pants) too small for my cousin Walter which I later handed down to my sister. I liked them a lot for it made me feel tough and ready to play knives and other games with the boys. I was not one who liked dolls and so-called girl's games.

My paternal grandparents were very orthodox, they spoke Yiddish at home, and even though we could all speak German, we had little to say to one another. I recollect some meals in their Skodagasse apartment, which seemed very gloomy and dark. Since the whole building belonged to Wilhelm and my father, the Unterberg family lived there rent-free. Wilhelm moved out when he got the new luxury apartment on Modenagasse 8 since he was doing well and could afford it.

VI: School Years, 1931-1939

1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

We wore uniforms to school so it was only on Sundays or after school that we could dress as individuals. I hated the uniform and all that went with it. In retrospect I realize that I went to a very good school, Krolewny Anny Wazowny, for girls, and Reya for boys, which maintained the highest academic standards. It was the only Protestant school in Warsaw.

My father, with the help of his partner Fulde, who was active in the Protestant community, got us into that school, for there were nearly 50% of each of Protestants and Catholics, as well as 2 or 3 Jews per class.

Again in retrospect, why did my parents not send us to one of the excellent Jewish schools with the same Polish curriculum? In the period between the two wars it was almost impossible for a Jewish child to get into a Polish public school, which, on the whole, had a high academic standard. Christian children who had problems getting in would be sent to private schools. They took us in for we paid full tuition.

We not only had prescribed skirts and blouses, but also hats of different shape and coats. It was obligatory to have a blue and silver shield sewn on the left sleeve of the coat, with the number of the school. Mine was 145, which told the world which school we attended. In this manner we could be identified and reported to the authorities if we misbehaved.

I suppose I would not have objected so much to the uniform if I liked the school. But all the girls and I hated school. School was an enemy camp and the only pleasure one had was to break some silly rule. The teachers were there not to teach you but to catch you when you did not do your homework or learn the poem by heart. They were there at eight in the morning, standing at the entrance of the school to catch you wearing silk stockings, which were not allowed. Mother went to a lot of trouble to find lisle ones that looked like silk! They would also check that the hated shield was properly sewn on and not masterfully pinned to look sewn to be able to remove it when out of sight. A lot of effort was wasted on these matters. Once in the classroom we would wear a black smock over the uniform so as not to get it dirty.

2. TEACHING METHODS

It was no better in the classroom. We had assigned rooms, a desk, and a class teacher. The other teachers came to us, and each time one came in we had to stand at attention. When called on we also had to stand up. When we misbehaved we were told to “stand in the corner".

In a little school calendar that I still own I found the names of all my teachers: Janina Schonbrenner was our class teacher and taught history; Mrs. Borkowska, math; Mrs. Jaroszewska, Polish; Mrs. Zbijewska, Latin; Miss Schmidt, biology; Mrs. Lyzwiak, handiwork; Mrs. Markowska, geography; Miss Bemowna, physics; Mrs. Horowitz, Jewish religion.

On the whole I was a pretty lousy student. I liked geography, math and French (the choice was either French or German) did well in those, but Latin, Polish history, Polish literature, were my undoing. I just could not memorize all I was assigned. I even had a tutor come to the house to help with the homework but he helped little, for I felt I was wasting time better spent on a more pleasant occupation such as skating.

We were graded four times a year and had a little notebook where the teachers entered the grades in each subject and we had to take it home for a parent to sign. I walked home shaking with fear for my parents to see my poor grades, but they did not make too much fuss but were not happy about them either. I was often told, “Why aren’t you more like your cousin Walter who is a super student and remembers everything?” What I enjoyed a lot were

classes in handiwork such as knitting or carpentry.

I became aware of being Jewish when I was seven or eight. We always celebrated Passover, lit candles at Chanukah and got geld, usually a gold coin. We observed the High Holidays when I was allowed to join my mother upstairs in the synagogue. Because of the separation from the men and little knowledge of religion, and the Jewish rituals among the woman of the assimilated middle class to which we belonged, the women spent the time gossiping and looking down and observing their men. (When in Warsaw recently during the High holidays I saw once more the same scene in the only synagogue that somehow survived the bombing and the Germans and was rebuilt after the war).

I had no idea I would be discriminated against until I applied with many of my schoolmates to join the girl scouts at the age of about ten. Since I always liked sports and the outdoors my heart was set on joining the scouts. I had the necessary parental permission and was all set to go. Weeks passed and all around me the other girls were told if they were accepted or not. I became anxious. Finally, my home-room teacher, Miss Schonbrenner, who was a nice and understanding person, took me aside and was very embarrassed to have to explain to me that I was not accepted because I was Jewish. I was in shock and most unhappy. That was probably the one of the two incidents that made me hate the school and my surroundings. The other was the religion class.

Religion was a compulsory subject in pre-war Poland and there were regular classes twice a week for the Protestants and Catholics students. During those periods, we the Jewish girls had to sit in the dark corridor with nothing to do, for there was no library or room where we could read or do homework. And to make up for it, for a there were so few of us, two or three grades were bunched together and we had our religion class after regular school hours when all the others could leave at two in the afternoon. That, of course, made us try to do everything to get out of it. Because it was compulsory we had to attend, so we took revenge and never prepared, (not realizing at the time that it was our loss). We knew that our teacher would come in just once a week for that class and would give all of us good grades no matter what since she did not want to admit our ignorance to the school authorities. I have often felt guilty later in life about how we treated that poor woman who was trying to make a living. But we were only children and wanted to leave school as early as possible and not to have to stay behind when everyone else left.

Quote from Hanna

> *Only three Jewish girls were allowed per class at the Anna Wazowna Evangelist School which Irene and I attended. Even though, I was the one chosen to be the main angel in the Christmas pageant. I guess my long curly blond hair did it; also I could stay in tune when we sang carols. I was put in the middle to help keep others on pitch. I wore wings, a wand, stars on my tiara, the works. My father's Orthodox parents were obviously not informed of this "privilege."*

3. NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

But, after all, school was not completely bad. I was good in math and geography. I liked all the non-academic classes, such as learning how to knit, sew, or do woodworking. I liked gymnastics and dancing classes. We danced with each other until we were old enough to think that boys would be preferable partners. In good weather we went to the Saski gardens and played volleyball. I was on the school swimming team. We practiced and competed in the YMCA pool. (A skill that was most helpful when I entered the university and found that I was one of the best swimmers. I was put on the college swimming team, a surprise to me, since I thought everything and everyone in America was much better than we in Poland).

My school owned a country property where each class went for a week twice a year. It was similar to camp-life. We had classes,

but more time was devoted to sports and fun. When we were older, the big treat was the dance at the end of the week with the boys from Reya who had their own camp next door.

My geography teacher asked us to keep a diary of our summer holidays. I was passionate about keeping that since we traveled to different places and I had a lot to write about. My grades were best for that project.

Friendships, when I was a girl in Poland, were rare and precious. We made friends for life. It was a slow process even when very young. I was more limited than most, because we really had no contact with the Christian girls outside of school. I don't ever remember being in one of their houses and can't remember one visiting me.

(When I had a class reunion in Warsaw in 1959, twenty years after we left Poland Irena Krauze organized the meeting. It was a most touching and memorable occasion. Thirteen of the 25 girls of my class came to a café and I was to recognize them, by their maiden names, as they came in. I did identify each one and found very soon that I liked and disliked the same ones as I did when in school more than twenty years previously).

We were friends on school grounds and got along fine with few exceptions. After this reunion I was to meet Irena Krauze often both in Warsaw and in Paris. It was hard for us both to understand why we were not closer as girls.

My choice of a "real" friend had to be one of the two other Jewish girls in my class. I actually liked both. They were very different and my "best friend" after a time was Ala Schlager. We could not have been more different. To begin with she had polio as a small child and was left partially crippled. She had thin weak legs, walked with difficulty and fell easily. Of course she could not participate in any sports, but made up with her intellect. She read all the time and was a top student. She often helped me with my homework and cheated for me in Latin exams. I, on the other hand, helped her walk and taught her the one sport we could do together which was bicycling. We used to go on bicycle trips in good weather, but usually we just sat around in her house or mine, talked, played games and made fun of our teachers.

I shall now summarize an interview I had with Ala's mother the last time I saw her in November of 1993 in Geneva. Ala worked as an architect but was never well and died there at the age of 53 in 1977.

A teacher stood at the entrance of your school to check that you were dressed alike, wore the uniform dress, coat with the shield and hat. No silk stockings. This was a fine idea for no one could brag since there were some very poor girls. I know, for I belonged to the parent's organization and remember the girls who could not even afford to buy the books. You were told to collect orange peels later dried and sold to a bakery, the income used to help feed the poor girls. You brought breakfast for yourself and another for those who were poor and did not bring their own. The food was laid out and no one knew who brought what. This was a well-guarded secret and was well done. One was not allowed to come to school by car or have a car waiting.

You and Ala talked endlessly. You had to take your sister Hanka with you to the movies and such places and that infuriated both you and Ala. This was not a good idea and Hanka because of that had no friends. I rarely met your mother without you. When I occasionally stopped at your grandfather's store and she would be there and we talked about our daughters.

During the war your school was fantastic. The principal Miss Helena Bursche helped the Jews to the end. She died in 1975. They kept the Volksdeutche apart so they would not tell on the Jews. They organized small groups in private homes and the teachers would come once or twice a week, among them "Mandarynka" as you called Miss

Schonbrenner, your class teacher. The school building was closed and later totally destroyed.

Ala at that time used to carry underground newspapers. One day she was going to Mandarynka to return some books and get new ones that she hid in her shoes, when she overheard two soldiers saying, "this girl we shall take with us". She kept on walking with one on each side of her, they made her cross the street and miraculously let her go and told her to be more careful next time. This was the time when the Germans caught people on the street for hard labor. As it turned out the two soldiers saved her life by walking with her and not letting her be caught.

The Germans took our apartment on Krolewska Street, we moved in with my parents and from there to the ghetto. I saw your grandmother a few times in the ghetto walking with a little girl (I guess that was Rosa Cukierman's child). The conditions in the ghetto were terrible with naked children in the streets, dirt and disease. Ala saw a German officer walking with your dog Roy; she could not have made a mistake for that was the only chow in Warsaw. But there were still cafes and we tried to live a "normal" life. Conditions for work were terrible everyone was desperate to work. We were sewing German uniforms.

We managed to bribe the police and got through their building which had doors on both sides and out of the ghetto to Szymanska Street and then an old friend, Mrs. Grodeska, took us to Mokotow and hid us until the uprising.

The other Jewish girl was Krysia Mendelssohn. She was good looking, flighty and was always "running after boys". When I visited her we passed the time dressing up in her mother's clothes since she was rarely at home. Hers was considered an odd household in those days. Her parents were divorced. When her mother married again, it was to the well-known psychiatrist Gustaw Bychowski, who was famous for having studied with Freud. Krysia rarely saw her father. My mother thought Mrs. Maria Bychowska was brainless; she did not like her and carried this with her even to New York where we all ended up. From a conversation with Mrs. Osnos in New York I got a very different impression of Maryla Bychowski who had no education of any kind since she fled to Russia with her parents during World War I. But she had a native intelligence, was a snob and even though not very attractive, was always surrounded by men.

The three of us were rarely together; I was either with one or the other. Since Ala was crippled I had no choice but spend more time with Krysia, who had a wonderful sense of humor. My father liked her visits, for she made him laugh. Once in the United States, Krysia was most eager to leave her family. She, like her mother, never even finished high school. She worked as waitress in a summer camp and met Louis Earles with whom she had no common language and married him on the spot and moved to his house in Richmond, Virginia. It turned out to be a happy marriage; she had children before the age of twenty and grandchildren around forty. She died young of cancer when not even sixty.

I walked to school a distance of about two or three miles. The walk was strictly enforced and we were given money for the bus or streetcar only in very bad weather. We had no money to spend unless it was for a specific cause. Ordinary snow or rain was not considered bad enough. We wore heavy woolen *rajtuzy* over stockings, heavy waterproof boots and winter coat and hat. On top of all that we carried our books in a *tornister*, a sort of backpack

The occasional days when my mother would come to pick me up from school by car were a big treat. We owned a medium size Ford. She got her driver's license only a few years before the war, a real achievement, for to pass the exam one had to practically know how to take the car apart and put it together again and be familiar with the names of the parts. My father got his license a year

or so earlier and then got rid of the chauffeur.

When she came to meet me she would park a couple of blocks away so that no one from school saw us. There were few private cars around and she was very conscious of not rubbing anyone the wrong way. She would take me to a café, her dressmaker, glove maker or hat maker. I loved those expeditions. Those were the only times that I visited the Jewish part of town. It was an experience to see how poor most of those Jews were and realize the contrast to our standard of life. We were in the minority, we were assimilated, spoke Polish at home, traveled all over Europe, but were still quite separate from Polish society and kept pretty much among Jewish friends and family except for business occasions.

Mother made sure that we got ordinary food on our lunch sandwiches we took to school. She knew we often looked into each other's sandwiches or exchanged them. She did not want me to feel different or better off than the other girls, if I were given some more expensive food that I was used to getting at home. My favorite sandwich was a roll with butter and chocolate. My mother made sure that the fabric of our school uniforms, which were custom made from good quality fabric, did not look different from the ready-made ones which you could buy in the one large department store in Warsaw, Bracia Jablkowski (Jablkowski Brothers) across the street from my grandparents' store. A dressmaker came to the house for a few days each month to sew, alter and repair our clothes and underwear.

Among the most pleasant memories are the rare trips with my father to the circus. He had little time for us and it was not considered a father's role to amuse his children. But he did take me sometimes to the circus. I will never forget the performance of Blakaman (he must have been an American black, a rare sight for me since there were no blacks in Poland. The only one I remember seeing was walking the streets on stilts advertising some American product). He was placed in a casket nailed to the floor, closed up with no air for an hour and came out smiling.

VII: Most Memorable Pre-War Impressions

1. VISITS TO GRANDPARENTS' STORE

In the morning I tried to get to school as fast as I could since it was usually cold and dark. But the walk home from school was something I looked forward to and sometimes entreated a friend to come with me. I would always stop at my grandparent's store, which was about half way to my house.

My grandmother was waiting, always with a treat. Some little present from their store such as a wallet, a purse or an umbrella but even more often we would walk across the street to the café Szwajcarska where I could pick any pastry to my liking followed by a cup of rich hot chocolate. For a change, we would go the other way to the Wedel cafe again to have sweets and chocolate. I also loved to watch the goings on in the store and when older, pretended to be the cashier. What a treat to play store in a real store! My grandmother was always patient and understanding.

2. ANTI-SEMITIC RULES

The pleasant atmosphere of my childhood was definitely spoiled by the new laws passed by the Polish government, under the influence of Hitler's rules in Germany, concerning store signs and regulations when stores are to open and close for business. There was a ruling that all stores had to be open on Saturday and closed on Sunday.

The rule that affected us most, though, was the order to have to spell out the full first and last name of the owner on the sign over his store. My grandfather's name was Mordekhai Pajewski. The sign until the new regulations read "M. Pajewski". We knew that if he were to put up his Jewish sounding name, it would be the end of his business. As it was, he already had his storefront broken a few times, for some knew the store had a Jewish owner. The solution found was to "sell" his business to his son Jozef and that way avoid putting up the name Mordekhai.

4. PIANO LESSONS

My Mother's cousin Franka Wachtel was a student at the musical conservatory and needed additional funds to live on. Instead of my parents giving her money outright, she gave me piano lessons for which she got paid and this way everyone was satisfied. At the same time Hanna took violin lessons and was given a beautiful child-sized violin. She had real musical talent and for that reason in my mother's imagination she saw the two of us playing duets and being admired by her friends. In truth, I never liked playing the piano. I had long fingers that could span an octave but that was not enough to make me play well. I had little ear for music and no inclination to play. The war saved me from going on with piano lessons. Both of us had to be bribed in various ways to practice.

Quote from Hanna:

> *One of the most important events of my early life occurred in 1934, Irene, unwillingly, was taking piano lessons. I listened from behind closed doors, and after her teacher left, I would sneak into the music room and pick out by ear the melodies I heard. No matter how much I begged, mother said "No, I was too young for lessons and anyway, I always wanted to do and be like Irene." Even though this was usually true, in this case it was only the music that attracted me.*

Franka was our only relative who survived the war and still lived in Warsaw. I visited her and recorded her memories in September 1986. What follows is an abbreviated version since she was not comfortable about talking of the war years and preferred to

play the piano for me and reminisce about the good days before the war.

When very young I loved to visit your grandparents. I was always received royally. Your grandfather looked like a szlachcic *with his blond hair, mustache and gentle manner. Your uncle Henio was nice and kind. I knew him well. He fell in love with the nice looking Ala. Your grandparents were not happy about this but could do nothing.*

My passion even then was going to concerts. Your mother was very beautiful and your father fell in love with her. He came from Vienna. She barely finished school when she got married. She was fantastic, she learned how to drive a car, she administered the building, and she was most hospitable and entertained in great style. She tried to help me and was most kind to me. My brother Grinblatt, father of Yola, often told me of the elegant parties in your house, with silver trays, etc. Your mother suggested to me at that time to give you piano lessons, I was proud to be asked and did not mind earning some money. You did your homework well. You mother also arranged for me to play for Mrs. Prusicka who was your ballet teacher. That started my musical career.

Until 1941 it was still bearable and we moved to Sienna St. The catching of people started. The Germans would enter into an apartment and take whoever they could catch to send to hard labor or to murder. Soon the ghetto was created and we had to move there. We had to wear armbands with a yellow Star of David. Diseases and misery followed. Bodies were lying on the streets covered with newspapers. Some were starving. Others who had some money tried to help. I do not remember the address of the nice woman or where I met her but I remember she had a sack of rice on which we survived. It was difficult to be clean for all was dirt around us and that is why typhoid was rampant. The Germans were scared of typhoid but they still took people off the streets and did nothing to prevent the disease.

It was then that they established two German factories, Szulc and Gebert, where we sewed German uniforms, sewed on buttons, sat like in school. I sat near your grandmother and we talked. She tried to convince me to get out of the ghetto. One day a German unit came in, one of them came over to me and told me to leave, that they would let me go. I went and met an armed soldier and I was sure he would shoot me but he did not and I found myself alone. I went into the first house, there were a lot of people around, and I sat down and fell asleep. It was at that time that the horrendous sending of people started.

We were ordered to the Umschlagplatz in the summer of 1942, I went with my sister-in-law and her daughter and my father behind me. We had no idea what it was about. They counted us, and let us go but all behind me were sent out to Treblinka or to Auschwitz, we do not know to this day where. It was at that moment that I decided I had to get out. It was still possible to make telephone calls and I did to the laundry in the neighborhood of our pre-war house. The first question the owner, Stanislawa Krajewska asked was where my father was and when I told her that he was no longer with me she sent a truck to bring me to the laundry where I spent the night. I found out then that she and her sons were helping Jews. That was March 1943.

She was aghast at the way I looked and the fear in my eyes. After she fed me two women came, it turned out that they occupied themselves with lodging people. One of them a small modest person who looked more scared than I, told me that she went to church that morning and St. Antony smiled at her which meant she could take me, which

she did. We went to her apartment by a horse-drawn carriage and I stayed there for a year and a half until the liberation of Praga, a part of greater Warsaw. I did nothing. She brought food and all to me. A friend of mine managed to get some of my things from the old apartment and she gradually sold them.

I had a lot of luck with people. It was not until the end that I found out that the owner, who was a journalist and knew languages, had a hidden prohibited radio in her basement and sent out bulletins of world news to us. There were other people hidden in her building, including two French women who were as French as I was. In April 1943 the liquidation of the ghetto started and I knew nothing of my family and don't to this day. We had no way of communicating since all telephones and other means were cut off. When the bombing and fires started we all took refuge in basements but I had to stay on the second floor not to be seen even though most of the people were very decent. By August the uprising of Warsaw started and we saw the whole city burning from across the river. I must tell you all this, for that is how I was saved. It was the most horrible time but when it all ended I made a career. It seemed peaceful for there were no Germans but the bombs were flying.

We spent time looking for relatives, I did mostly for the Roth family. I found out soon through the Lublin radio that you were in America and our regular correspondence started. I too tried to find Rosa's daughter, but to no avail even though we were convinced she was alive. Rosa married Cukierman, who was too handsome for her and who, it was said, married her for her money. I knew her well; she was not happy. She was not good looking but had a lot of charm. The pharmacist Czynski, your father's childhood non-Jewish friend, tried to help them. He was the one who buried her silver and other valuables.

*(*My father invited him to New York after the war and he brought Rosa's silver flatware that Hanna has now. He also brought the large silver Chanukah candelabra which now belongs to me).

5. HOBBIES

What I did enjoy tremendously was ice-skating. I did it whenever I could get away from homework or other home studies. There were two places in Warsaw not far from our house. The Dolina Szwajcarsaka on Chopin Street, where the ice was artificially made where you paid an entrance fee and had a warm comfortable place to put on your skates. (I recently discovered that the place still exists, but it is just an empty space still called by its old name but no ice). The person with you, mother, governess, or aunt could sit in the cafe and have a good coffee while listening to the nice skater's waltzes and watch their darlings skate. My aunt Ala Pajewski is one of the people I remember taking me there.

The other place I used to go skating with my friends when the weather was good and the lake frozen was in the Lobdzowianka in the Ujazdowskie Park where the entrance was free but there were no facilities. We liked going there because there were many kids our age that we knew.

Attending ballet classes was another requirement for middle class girls of that period. Fortunately, I liked dancing – and ballet in particular. My sister and I went twice a week to the studio at Madame Prusicka, a well- known teacher and ex-dancer herself. As always we only got enough money for streetcar, but since we had the equivalent of two round trip fares, I made a deal with the *droshky* (horse and carriage) driver who was always waiting on our corner. He would drop us off and pick us up regularly for the price of two streetcar fares. I am not sure we told my mother about this until much later. Once a year we, the girls of the Prusicka dance school, performed in the great theater of Warsaw to the delight of

our parents and friends.

6. OTHER PLEASURES

My parents had the same seats reserved for the season at the Warsaw Philharmonic. I especially remember being there with my mother for the Chopin competition, which took place every year and pianists from all over the world participated. It was a very special occasion. The winner became world famous almost overnight.

One fine day in 1937 we had a call from Wilhelm from London that he was sending us a package. We went to the airport a few days later to pick up the "package". The present was a dog, whose name was Roy, a pedigreed Chow. We had never seen that breed of dog before. His fur was long and reddish brown, his tongue was dark blue and he was used to eating only certain kinds of food, mainly rice. He had to be brushed every day, a duty given to our janitor. I fell in love with him instantly and it just so happened that I had a fur coat almost the identical color as his fur. I used to parade with him whenever I could. We created quite a sensation on the streets for that breed was unknown. He was well behaved and walked right next to my side for father had him trained in the police school for dogs.

Besides my school friends, who were of course girls since I went to a girl's school, I had two male friends, whose names were Stefan Poborca and Stefan Sztyckgold. The three of us went for walks, ice creams, and played such games as "knives" where you competed in simply throwing the knife. Whoever threw it farther was the winner. They spent a lot of time in our house. I saw Stefan Poborca again in London after the war. He fought in the Polish army in Italy and stayed on in England. Stefan Sztyckgold did not survive the war.

Another of my fond memories are the times spent in Malkinia with my best friend Alina Schlager whose grandfather owned a wood mill (*tartak*) on the Bug River, not far from Warsaw. The house was very spacious but old fashioned. There was no electricity or running water, we had basins and jugs in each room. The maids brought hot water when one wanted to wash. Oil lamps and candles were used for illumination. The whole place had a special charm, for Mr. and Mrs. Frumkin, its owners, kept it in the old way.

There was a large staff of servants who prepared the meals and took care of the house with Mrs. Frumkin supervising the large household. Her husband spent most of his days taking photographs of us and then was occupied the rest of the time in the dark room printing them. He was lucky to die a normal death in his own home in 1942. For fun we would go on the barges that carried the wood down the river. We made friends with the children of the workers, spent time hunting for mushrooms and playing parlor games. I always hated the return to the city.

7. DRIVING LESSONS

When I was about twelve, my father thought he would give me my first driving lesson, on a road outside the city. Of course, I thought I was ready to take over and when he let me take the wheel I ended up in a ditch within seconds. It was a while before he let me sit in the driver's seat again. Driving in Poland was taken very seriously, the roads were terrible, usually paved with large stones (*kocielby*). There were chickens, dogs and children running all over, making driving difficult. It was often said that the peasants would push out on purpose a chicken or a dog so the car owner would have to pay him a good price for the dead or hurt animal.

8. NORBERT AND HALINA'S WEDDING

On October 10, 1937 we all went to Krakow for Norbert's wedding. The bride, whom we had not met before, was Halina Weinstein. Norbert met her two years earlier while vacationing in Zakopane. He asked her to dance at an afternoon tea, while she was being chaperoned by her mother Stefanie. He made sure she was

Jewish. They married in Halina's parents' home in Krakow. My sister and I were the bridesmaids; the wedding was Orthodox. After the wedding, we walked with my grandmother and others admiring the beauty of that ancient city.

VIII: Recollections of Life in Warsaw

1. MEAL SCHEDULE

The apartment was large and I will add, to what I wrote before, that life was well organized, with early breakfast served by the maid at a convenient time for each of us. It often consisted of hot chocolate, a roll with butter and cottage cheese or eggs. I also liked to have herring with it, no one approved of the combination of chocolate and herring but since I liked it so much I got it.

Dinner was around 3pm when my father would arrive home from the office and we would come from school. That was our main meal, consisting of soup, cooked meats, potatoes, vegetables and dessert. We were not allowed to drink with the food, as it was considered unhealthy. Only at the end of the meal was tea, chocolate milk, or coffee served. I always liked soda water; it was sold in green siphons that were refilled over and over again. For some reason my mother thought it was also unhealthy to drink too much of it, especially after eating fish, and I would sneak to the dining room when on one was around to have more of it, since it was always standing on a silver tray on the buffet.

Around 8pm we had a light meal, the equivalent of a sandwich except we did not eat sandwiches. We would have bread, cheese, fresh vegetables, pasta and fruit. The belief was that it was unhealthy to eat a heavy meal shortly before going to bed. (The similarity is striking with today's diets).

The cook, who also did the shopping for the foods that were not delivered, did all the cooking. My mother would have an early morning session with her to discuss the menu for the day. (The cook, Yustyna, who worked for us for many years until we left, was seen by friends wearing my mother's fur coat and parading with our dog, before the Germans took all of it away.) There was no refrigerator so the food had to be bought fresh every day. In the summer months an icebox was brought out and the contents kept cold by large hunks of ice delivered to the house by a peasant in a horse-drawn wagon.

2. FATHER'S LIFE

My father, who loved sports, managed most days either to swim in the Wisla River, even in the winter when the river was frozen, or to go riding early in the morning before going to the office. He owned and kept a horse in a stable some distance from Warsaw.

The amazing thing is, as I think of it now, that I never saw his office! He did a lot of traveling connected with his business, mostly to Austria and Germany. Since he did almost all of his business together with Wilhelm they were constantly on the telephone when not in the same town, and those conversations were unforgettable for they were shouting matches. It is hard to believe that two such different people could work so closely together. They looked at every problem from different points of view but at the end they did come to an agreement. Best proof of it is that they owned everything jointly without formal documents. It was only in New York in the 70's that the brothers decided to formally divide their holdings for the sake of their children and grandchildren.

Wilhelm was the one with new and imaginative ideas that were often not feasible, while my father was very realistic, systematic, and patient. He was the one who executed their joint projects. One could say that one was more aggressive and the other more down to earth.

They both worked for IG Farben and resigned their positions when Hitler came to power. (I still own a Folding pocket knife with the IG symbol that was given to clients and I had in my purse when we left). They bought a lot of buildings and land mostly in Poland (which we are now trying to recover since they were confiscated first by the Germans and later by the Communists) but also in Vienna and Berlin. They sold the buildings in Vienna themselves. The Berlin building on Warschauer Strasse 26 our

family claimed and got back in 1992.)

Quote from Hanna:

> *I looked forward to Uncle William's occasional visits to Warsaw. I liked listening to his deep voice with its distinctive accent. He had an elegant appearance, and a distinguished way of peering through his horn-rimmed glasses. I don't recall ever hearing him laugh, but he did smile and make funny faces. He liked to pinch my cheeks; sometimes it was too hard and hurt a little. He listened patiently to my stories, or perhaps he was just thinking of other things. Much later, when we all lived in New York, I liked visiting William at his Delmonico apartment. The apartment was rather small, and I was in awe of the huge painting by Titian that dominated the room. It depicted a naked woman, surrounded by fully dressed men.*

3. PARENTS SOCIAL LIFE

The children's room was not far from the dining room where a few times each month there was a dinner party and all I remember of them is that I could not go to sleep for they were noisy, eating and drinking with lots of laughter. The guest list consisted mostly of family members, very close friends, with whom they could relax and play.

I will never forget the nights my parents would come to our room to say good night before going to a ball, concert, or dinner. One of the balls I particularly remember was to benefit the orphanage of Janusz Korczak, called the Ball of White Beds (*bal bialych lozeczek*). Mother worked as a volunteer in the Korczak orphanage for they were always short of money and needed volunteers to help with taking care of the orphans.

They were often in evening clothes; my mother in a beautiful gown that she either brought from Vienna or had made by her dressmaker of fabrics and designs imported usually from France or Italy. My father would be in tails with a black fur lined coat (*pelisa*) and a silk top hat. I loved seeing them so dressed up for they made a tall, handsome couple.

Around that time, my mother cut off her long blond hair to be in fashion with the times. My father was heartbroken and threatened divorce but could not get the hair back.

Until mid-August 1939 we seemed to have led a charmed life. I was too young to see the poverty and if I did, I gave it little thought. I felt loved, even if sometimes scolded. Having my grandparents there was most important since my parents were young and busy with their own lives.

4. MY MOTHER'S DAY

My mother's life was quite varied. On the serious side she volunteered at the orphanage and was the administrator of all of their properties. She kept the books, collected the rents, and made sure all was in good repair, etc.

On the other hand it took a lot of time to have her hats, dresses, coats, gloves and shoes made to order. The fittings and shopping for the fabrics also took time. The rest of the time she played. She met friends in cafes or restaurants where they danced, ate, gossiped or played bridge.

She traveled a lot with or without my father who could not get away as easily as she could. Mrs. Osnos recollects my mother telling her that at one time when she was going to spend a few days in Zakopane, my father arranged for a gigolo (Sholem Asch translates gigolo into English as "lounge lizard") to dance with his wife so she would have a good time. Hard to believe that this man, who was thought of as quite rigid and unimaginative, would do this.

IX: Family Relations

Mother was the oldest of three. Henryk was next and then Jozio (Joseph in English), who was just seven years older than me. The story goes that when the news of my birth was brought to him, and he was told that he was an uncle now, he answered, "I am not an uncle, I am Jozio".

1. HENRYK AND ALINA PAJEWSKI

Henryk met and married Alina Nuss on February 29, 1934 against the wishes of his parents, who thought of her as brainless although quite beautiful. Since they were absolutely set to marry, my grandparents had no choice but to make the best of it, and, of course, accepted her into the family. I used to hear that all she liked was dancing and playing bridge. Their son Wiktor was born on March 9, 1936.

On arrival in the United States, he changed his name to Parker. His brother Joseph, after his discharge from the army, felt he had no choice, did not want to have another name, and changed it also to Parker.

Henryk died of a heart attack in New York on July 1,1948. I was not at his funeral for we were traveling in Switzerland when the news reached us. Ala remarried on August 24, 1950 an old friend of the family, Nathan Kleiman, who changed his name to Clay. The rest of his family in Israel did not change their name.

Excerpts from my interview with Alina Clay in 1984:

> *I met Henio and Norbert at the same time, in Adria, a nightclub. Both made a play for me, yes, Norbert too, but I liked Henio. We met again at Turka on New Years Eve of 1933 and saw each other often. I met your parents and found your mother to be gorgeous beyond description. We liked each other right away, even though our characters were very different. I also liked your father, for he was such a good person.*
>
> *The meeting with my future in-laws was good. Henio's father impressed me as being a small town person and selfish, while his wife was the best person I knew. She ran the store, liked to play cards, and above all was good to me. We were married a year later. We had dinner at my in-laws every Friday night and on Sunday they came to us and we played bridge after dinner.*
>
> *We played for money that we collected in a box that remained in Warsaw for we did not have a chance to spend it before the war broke out. We had fun. I lived like a princess. Our life was good in Poland despite the anti-Semitism, and I hoped to return there after the war.*

2. JOZIO IN VIENNA

Jozio, who could not get into the University in Warsaw because of the *numerus clausus* that limited the number of Jewish students admitted each year, went to Vienna instead, to study business administration. It was a good choice for him, since we had a lot of family there and he was not alone. He always talked of those two years there as the best of his life.

3. ROSA AND MARIAN CUKIERMAN

My father's youngest sister, Rosa spent a lot of time with us in Warsaw after she had graduated from school in Vienna. Her parents had moved to Palestine, so she was on her own, and the family thought it would be better if my parents kept an eye on her. The way I remember it, she met Marian Cukierman from Lodz around 1936-37 and she married him soon after. Again, the family was not too happy with her choice, but she was determined and the wedding took place in Warsaw. I do not recollect being present, even though it took place in our apartment and I have the invitation in my album.

They had a daughter a year or so before the war. From the letters my grandmother wrote to us in 1939 and 1940, I know that the Cukiermans were in Otwock before having to move to the ghetto and being deported and killed by the Germans. There was a reference she makes to the little girl and how adorable she was. We heard rumors after the war that she survived and that nuns possibly saved her. My mother tried hard but did not succeed in finding her through the Red Cross and other organizations. There was no way for us to find Rosa and her family and we never heard from them.

4. WILHELM'S PRIVATE LIFE

Wilhelm never got together with his wife, once she left Vienna. Throughout this whole time he had an affair with Hedda Von Mollendorf (1904-1977), the daughter of a German business associate of his. He would meet her on his frequent business trips in various Swiss resorts such as Locarno or in Germany. Later on, after the war Hedda visited him in New York. He also spent time with her in Germany while suing IG Farben for back wages and pension, which he won in German courts. He took care of her financially during his lifetime but left neither her nor her descendants anything in his will.

They had a daughter, Yutta born in 1934, who never left Switzerland and is still in Zurich, owns a small shop with wool and embroidery. She is very bitter about Wilhelm, who never acknowledged her to be his daughter. Once when she was about nine years old Wilhelm introduced her to my parents. She thought he would truthfully say who she was but instead introduced her as Hedda's daughter. Yutta has never forgiven him for that.

I remember meeting Hedda after the war in New York, when she came to visit Wilhelm in the Delmonico Hotel. At that point Wilhelm asked her to marry him, and she agreed. When she went back to her daughter who ate chalk to get sick and not to have to move to New York, she decided to take care of Yutta and abandoned the idea of marriage. Yutta has two daughters, Manuela Montaldo and Deborah Rohr. Dan Picard is close to them. When I went to see Yutta in Zurich and for the first time discussed with anyone the whole story about Wilhelm, I found her bitter and resentful.

Maria was close to Hedda and later "adopted" her daughter and grandchildren. I am proud to say here that they set up a fund for them and that Dan Picard and his sisters made up somewhat by giving her their share of the money we got for the sale of the house in Berlin.

5. SALA AND SALO UNTERBERG

Salomea or Sala as we all used to call her, was the older sister, third in line of descent. She lived in Vienna most of her life, married Salomon Unterberg a Viennese Jew, on October 22, 1922 in the Neudegger Tempel, Vienna 8, by Rabbi Dr. Moritz Bauer. They had two children, Walter, born on May 22, 1925 and Renee, born on June 5, 1930. They lived there until the Anschluss when Wilhelm arranged for them to move to England where they spent the war years. The British interned them as enemy aliens, even though it was clear they were Jews.

On July 27, 1946 they sailed on the *Gripsholm* from Liverpool and arrived in New York on August 5. All were at my wedding with Walter as an usher in top hat and his father's tuxedo jacket. They lived in Brooklyn. Theirs was not a happy marriage. Salo, who had the most incredible memory and though he had a degree in law, never really provided for his family, and depended on Wilhelm who felt he had to help his sister. We all remember his loud singing at the Seders while Sala was very quiet and subdued. In her years in New York,

Sala became passionate about sunbathing and did that all year round on the beaches in Brooklyn. She no longer really looked like a white person when she died of skin cancer. Salo then moved in with his sister, but also died of cancer not too long after his wife.

Walter married Elsie, had two children and moved to California after his divorce. Rene died young of cancer, and so did

her husband Kurt.

6. GRANDPARENTS ROTH AND ADOLF MOVE TO PALESTINE

After the Anschluss, Wilhelm managed to move his parents, his brother Adolf, his wife Maria and daughter Bianca from Vienna to Palestine. His sister Salomea, husband Salo and their children Walter and Rene to England. Both my grandparents died there, my grandmother first, after which Shalom Shahne remarried. I have no idea who the lady was. Shalom Shahne is buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

Bianca married a Jew from Poland who had an art shop in Tel Aviv. Bianca died young and they had a daughter Dafna who lives there but the only contact I had with her was to send her a wedding present some years ago.

7. NORBERT AND HALINA

Norbert decided he could stay in Poland no longer and managed to get emigration visas to Australia. All of us took him and Halina to the Warsaw Okencie airport on August 31, 1939. They were to stop over in Helsinki. They got stranded in Helsinki for the war broke out the next day, so they never left for Australia; later, we were all reunited in Stockholm. (I will recount this when telling about our departure from Poland).

8. BINA AND MARY ROTH

There were two more people who owed their lives in America to Wilhelm, two sisters Mary and Bina Roth, daughters of Shulem Shahne's brother. Bina was a pediatrician practicing in a New York hospital, and Mary was Wilhelm's secretary, and lived most of the time in his apartment in the Delmonico Hotel. For many years all was going well and there were no visible problems. But then Mary had a heart attack and died. Bina blamed Wilhelm and my father for her death, broke with the family and moved to Israel, where she practiced medicine and later retired.

The two women were small in stature and quite ugly. Mary had a fictitious marriage arranged by Wilhelm to bring her to the US and always referred to herself as Mrs. Roth after that. I had no idea there were all sorts of conflicts between her and her boss, for she was always pleasant and helpful to us.

Daniel Picard does not remember the sisters warmly;

> "*Mary came to Stamford to take care of Cathy, my sister and me, while my mother (Maria) was taken to the hospital for an operation, a repair of a poorly done hysterectomy. Mother almost died and was in the hospital for weeks. Cathy and I were not helpful to Mary, to say the least, but Mary was inept. We often had physical battles with scratches on my wrist from Mary's nails.*
>
> *Mary had a weak heart. Bina took Mary on a vacation to St. Moritz in Switzerland, where she insisted Mary would join her on walks. Climbing up a mountain on a hot day, Mary, who walked behind Bina fell and died of a heart attack".*
>
> *Bina was convinced that Wilhelm killed Mary by working her too hard. She wanted to bring Wilhelm before the "Sunhedrin" (Jewish talmudic court). Nothing ever came of the empty threats other than to torment my mother.*

9. JACOB AND JOSEPH WEISS

I got in touch with Evalee, widow of Joseph Weiss (or Joe, as he called himself in the United States). Here is information she found among his papers relating to their war experiences.

> *We are related to the Roth family through my mother, Blume Danziger, sister of the mother of Wilhelm, his sisters and his brothers.*

When Poland was invaded in 1939, Jacob, my older brother, was teaching in a school. My three sisters were married and had families of their own. My parents and my younger brothers lived in Narejev. I was in the Polish army. After three days the Polish Army was destroyed. I threw away my uniform and went home.

In the beginning we were able to survive. There were actions and Jews were rounded up. The Germans caught me but in the confusion of too many Jews and not enough of them I got away. There was a shortage of food in the Ghetto, I was able to come and go as I was blond and had blue eyes and did not look "Jewish". Until a former classmate recognized me I left the Ghetto without too much trouble and even got a job.

My mother died of typhoid just before Chanukah in 1941. Jacob and I carried her body to the cemetery. My father wrote down the date of her death on a piece of paper that I carried for the rest of my life.

My father and brother Beryl were alive when we left the Ghetto, I can only guess how they died. Emile and Joshua, my two younger brothers were killed by SS troopers. I was later able to witness against them at a trial in Stuttgart, Germany in May 1965.

Two years before the end of the war, Jacob and I hid in the woods. I worked in a lumberyard we lived on my salary. Sometime later the bookkeeper warned me that the SS was rounding up Jews in the area and that we better leave.

We then made a deal with a poor Polish farmer. We built a false ceiling in their barn, lay flat on our backs and survived by dolling out small sums of money to Mrs. Stefanowicz. We warned them not to say a word or act as though anything unusual was happening. We would not have survived without the help of this good hearted and courageous family. The father eked out a living by working on his small farm. The mother treated us as her own children. She would send up food to us on a pulley. Among the many worries were the visits of Bernhart, the German husband of their daughter. We also warned them not to show they had more money to spend so as not to arouse suspicion among the neighbors. When no one was around and it was safe we would climb down, take a walk or help Mr. Stefanowicz. To maintain our sanity, we would work on mathematical problems we remembered from school. Lack of hygiene, it being either too cold, too wet, or too hot made it all even harder.

We left the Stefanowiczes happy to be alive but not in good health. We survived, we were lucky, young and understood the system. When one deals with devils one must be a devil.

We decided to return to Narejev after the Russians liberated us. We found all our property looted, our lives in danger and could not stay there. We had no home or family. We decided to go west and ended up in Prague. We got Czech papers by bribing which was the only means to get along in Europe after the war. We lived by our wits until the Communists took over and we left for Vienna where I went to school.

By remembering the address of father's sister in the Bronx we hoped to go to the United States. By chance President Truman signed a document that allowed 5,000 stateless people to come to the United States. We applied and got the visas even before my aunt could be of help. We arrived in the United States in April 1946.

Of 11 siblings of my father only two survived, one in Palestine and the other in New York.

We owe the Roths a lot of gratitude for they helped us make a new start in America.

X: Prewar Preparations

1. MY PARENTS' TRIPS TO ENGLAND

After the Anschluss of Austria in 1938 by the Germans, we realized the danger of being Jewish in Poland. But it was only after the German army occupied Czechoslovakia that my parents started seriously thinking of leaving Poland. It was a regular topic of conversation during dinner but no definite decision was taken. They made two or three trips to England to see how we could arrange our life there.

They visited Sala and Salo Unterberg who, by then, were settled in Manchester. They returned to Warsaw each time not impressed. It was not possible for them to make any definite decisions mainly because of the monetary restrictions of not taking money out of Poland. That was the reason why all the properties in Poland owned jointly by Wilhelm and my father were in Wilhelm's name and those in Austria and Germany in my father's. That made taking out some money possible and sending some funds out of the country.

They must have realized how serious it was since German Jews with Polish citizenship started arriving in Poland without their possessions or money. There were appeals to help these people. My Father gave one of our houses in Jaroslaw rent-free to a large family. They still lived there when the Germans invaded Poland and I can only guess what their fate was.

Quote from Maria's diary:

> *"When Mr. Hitler wrote in his horrible book* Mein Kampf*, what he planned to do, people were laughing at him and saying, hah, he is never going to do it, he's only bluffing, what's he going to do? Everybody could have read* Mein Kampf *and gotten the same ideas out of it. The politicians in England and France should have read it. Hitler wrote exactly what he was going to do.*
>
> *But my father believed him. He believed every word Hitler said and thought we better watch this man he is very dangerous. My father then started preparations to get out of Austria by sending every penny he did not need for food and shelter to America. When World War II broke out, the banks froze all foreign accounts that were opened in 1938 or 1939. Ours was not frozen for we had had it since 1928 and it was considered an old account. So you can see how brilliant Papi was. There was money in the United States and it made more money. He never touched it, making it possible for all of us to live well once in America".*

2. SWISS BOARDING SCHOOL FOR ME

Enrolling me in a Swiss boarding school was part of my parents' wartime plan. I was to go to Lausanne in September 1939. I was not told much about it, and I worried that my school French would not be adequate, but it never materialized.

3. SUMMER IN DRUSKIENIKI

It was decided because times were too uncertain, that we would not leave Poland, but spend the summer of 1939 not too far from home in Druskieniki. This is a resort town on the Baltic coast, a short distance from the port city of Gdynia. While there, we learned of the German Russian pact and knew war was imminent. We packed up quickly and returned to Warsaw wanting to be in our home, but had we stayed, we would have been a lot closer to Wilno (Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania) where we returned a few weeks later. We not only would have had more clothes, money, and other possessions, but also would have been spared the flight, prison for father, and all that I later describe connected with our escape from Warsaw.

4. WAR PREPARATIONS

We knew war was to come soon, but still led normal lives except for some necessary preparations. I remember getting together with my friend Ala and digging trenches near the Bagatela Café while our mothers were chatting and having coffee. We did not do very much but felt we were helping the war effort.

The other thing we were told to do was to put up paper strips on all the windows in case of bombardment so the glass would not shatter. We also put up dark paper on the inside of the windows so light would not shine through. But while doing all this we still did not believe war would or could happen until we heard that Poland was invaded and the bombardment had started on September 1. On the radio Chopin's Polonaise was broadcast day and night.

5. WILHELM LEAVES FOR NEW YORK

On August 31, 1939 we were notified that Wilhelm left Southampton on the Queen Mary for New York. His idea was to get all papers ready for the family to emigrate as soon as possible. We did not know whether he arrived in the United States and what he was able to arrange, until we got in touch with him many weeks later.

6. NORBERT AND HALINA LEAVE FOR AUSTRALIA

On the same day Wilhelm left for the United States, that is on August 31,1939, all of us went to the Warsaw Okencie airport to see Norbert and Halina off. Norbert felt that the future ahead was hopeless when he decided to leave the country. Australia was the only safe country where a visa was easy to get without waiting for years. We said many good-byes and had no idea when, if ever, we would see them again. The war broke out on the next day, so we did not know until much later that they got as far as Helsinki, Finland, and no further.

XI: War Breaks Out

1. FIRST AIR RAID SIRENS

The sound of bombing and air raid sirens woke us up on the morning of September 1. What we were dreading had happened. Hitler in his speeches announced the invasion of Poland while already on that first day parts of southern Poland were occupied by his troops. Immediately the blackout went into effect and it was dangerous to walk in town.

That was the day my childhood ended.

2. FATHER'S ARREST

On the second day after the German invasion in the late evening, two Polish policemen came to arrest my father. He took with him only a small bundle, his pajamas and a shirt. We did not know where he was taken.

I should explain that we had German passports. When the Roth family lived in Busk before the end of World War I, it was in the part of Poland occupied by the Austrians. When Poland gained its independence in 1918, all those in Galicia had a choice of becoming Polish citizens or remaining Austrians. The family decided on the latter since they had close ties with Vienna, spoke German, and it seemed the right decision to make. After the Germans annexed Austria in 1938, all its citizens became German citizens and the Jews among them had a large letter “J” printed on the first page of their passports. My mother, after her marriage, and later, Hanna and I were automatically German citizens. I was not aware of this until my father's arrest. My parents thought it was not necessary for us to know. When they tried to change it to a Polish one it was no longer possible. At the time of my father’s arrest the Polish authorities did not distinguish between Germans and German Jews.

My mother spent the next three days trying to find out where father was taken and to get enough gasoline for us to be able to leave Warsaw which we did on September 6. Because of her connections, she was able to discover that he was taken to one of the worst concentration camps in Poland, Bereza Kartuska. The prisoners could be sent there without court justice, but were victims of a decision of ministers of internal affairs who could send anyone there for three months.

3. DEPARTURE SEPTEMBER 6-7,1939

My grandparents, parents, Henryk, Ala, Jozio, Hanna and I were sitting around for the last time in our beautiful apartment number 3, Zurawia 23. The trunk of the car was loaded with cans of gasoline.

My mother to the last minute tried to convince her parents to come with us. She had another car at our disposal, but they absolutely refused. My grandfather, who remembered the Germans from the last war, felt that they did not harm them then and would not this time either. No matter what their children told them, that these were different times, that Hitler had the Jews pinpointed, they would not leave. When we were ready to go, my Grandmother stood by our car crying, my Grandfather was not present to prove to us how much he was opposed to our leaving.

We planned to leave at 4 AM, September 7, but we had to depart at 10 PM the night before because we heard the Kerbedzia Bridge was going to be blown up. While getting ready, we heard anti-Semitic shouts from neighbors. We took nothing with us for the trunk was quite small and there was no room for anything other than the cans with gasoline. We each wore a winter coat and hat. We took only the most necessary toiletries and fortunately all the valuables my parents had at home. We had no idea that we would never again see our house or lose all.

We still believed that the Polish army would fight and that we would come back in a few weeks. The radio announcers told us that the Germans occupied more and more of Poland, were also

saying that all young men of military age should leave and join the newly forming Polish army East of Warsaw to fight the invading German army. That was the main reason why my mother insisted on taking her two brothers with us.

A quote from Hanna:

> *When it all began in 1939, I was a twelve-year old and Irene was a "grown up for her age" fourteen years.*
>
> *That fateful night my beloved grandmother took the violin case as well as the leash that held Roy out of my hands. "You are just going on a trip, there is no room for a dog in your small car, and the violin is too valuable to risk it being damaged. I will take good care of them for you. You will be back soon," she said. Here I am 65 years later, and I still hear her words and see her face, and the unresolved memories and losses are triggered off as if it had all just happened.*

XII: The Escape

1. THE DRIVE OUT OF WARSAW

We drove in total darkness through very crowded streets. People were leaving in horse drawn wagons filled with their few possessions, on bicycles, motorcycles or on foot. One could see only a short distance ahead for the blackout was total. The only lights we had were the stars and the moon. Among those escaping were motorized army vehicles with officers going east. It looked as though the army was in flight, and as it turned out, it was.

2. STOP AT A JEWISH PENSION

Our first stop was at a pension owned by Mr. Kaweberg, who knew us from better days. We were given two out of his three rooms and a good meal that turned out to be the last one, for in the morning there was no food to be had. Both the army and the people, including the Kawebergs were hoarding whatever food they had or could still buy. It became obvious that this was war and it was not the end of it.

3. DRIVE TO BEREZA KARTUSKA

We heard rumors that Bereza Kartuska had been blown up, but we kept on driving since we left Warsaw to find my father, and to escape the Germans, and we would not let them catch us here. My mother and her brother Henryk were the drivers and they changed places when tired, but we never stopped. It was as though my mother was obsessed. She would only stop when we had to relieve ourselves and a wooded place could be found.

There was a terrible moment when we were driving through a field and planes were flying above us. We jumped out of the car and ran a distance away from it, for we knew that the Germans usually bombed cars. We lay on the bare ground, which shook under our bodies. One of the pilots took a good look at us.

The Warszawski and Kaczor families, my mother's first cousins, passed us on the way, and we only said a brief hello, for they too were in a hurry to get as far away from the Germans as possible. (We did not see any of them again until they visited my parents in New York some years later. They settled in Santiago, Chile where they opened a haberdashery store in a fashionable district of the city and did well).

When we approached the prison, we parked in the near-by woods. My mother gave her brother a small bag with a sweater and some food to take to father. We were in agony while we waited for him to return, for she only realized once he left, what danger she exposed him to. What if the prison authorities don't let him go back? What if he gets lost? But after some hours, which seemed like an eternity, he did come back and reported that the guards took the bag from him and promised to give it to the prisoner, Marcell Roth.

4. TIME IN KOWEL

We finally decided to stop for the night and sleep in beds. We found rooms in Kowel, a small town, where it all still seemed peaceful. In the middle of the night we heard sirens and were told to leave town and go into the forest for the Germans warned they would bomb the town. We did, as did everyone there. We drove out of town and tried to hide in the woods. No sooner did we get there, that the bombs started falling all around us. We barely escaped with our lives; one fell very near where we were lying on the ground.

It turned out that it was a trick of the Germans to scare and kill as many of the population as possible and at the same time not to destroy the town, which they knew they would soon occupy.

5. THE RUSSIANS CONFISCATE OUR CAR

We continued our journey east away from the invading German army. We did not get far when, on September 21, we met the Russian army invading from the east in a small town, Maniszewicz.

The first encounter was with some very young Russian soldiers with whom my mother spoke in Russian, which she had some knowledge of, since Warsaw was under Russian occupation when she was a schoolgirl. They told her that they were going to Berlin. They obviously had no knowledge of the Ribbentropp-Molotov pact that was signed in August 1939, and were under the impression that they are fighting the Germans and would soon occupy Berlin.

The next thing they did with smiles and in all friendliness, but on orders, was to confiscate our car, still full of gasoline that was to take us much further. They made sure that Henio fixed the broken spring. The Russian soldiers gave us a receipt on a scrap of newspaper assuring us that we can claim it after the war. It was at that moment that we felt we lost our last valuable possession.

6. THE PRICE OF BREAD

The weather turned cold when we found ourselves with no means of transport and no food. Fortunately, my parents had a safe in the wall of their bedroom in Warsaw not visible for it was covered with the same wallpaper as the rest of the room. Before we left the apartment, mother took out everything that was in it: money in large bills in Polish zlotys, some gold coins and her jewelry. Unfortunately, all her most valuable jewelry she kept in the bank vault, which she could not retrieve for the banks never reopened once the war broke out. We had not a clue what the Polish Zloty was worth. She would pay 1000 zlotys for a loaf of bread, officially worth $200, since the peasants we bought it from, had no change for such a large bill and were quite suspicious, never having seen one of that high denomination.

7. CONTINUATION OF JOURNEY TO WILNO

We still tried to get as far as possible from the approaching German army. There were no train or bus schedules, and one had to be at the train station and wait. When a train approached it was hard to find out where and in what direction it was going.

We finally did manage to get on a freight train that was going in the direction of Sarna. The train had holes from gunshots. It was cold; we kept each other warm by cuddling together. The train stopped every few minutes but finally we reached Baranowicze. There we jammed onto another train with hundreds of other people. After a few more days we arrived in Sarna, and then, on October 2 in Wilno.

Whenever possible throughout our wondering and to those who would listen, we would say that if they met a Marcell Roth to tell him that his family was in Wilno. The saying was JPP, which in Polish meant, “one woman said to another (*Jedna Pani powiedziala*).

XIII: Life in Wilno

1. FIRST APARTMENT

Since Wilno was already under Soviet occupation, well-to-do people who had large houses or apartments were willing to rent rooms to people like ourselves since the choice was to have us or some Russian soldiers move in. There were seven of us. We found two rooms, one decent size and one tiny, at the Milejkowskis, one of the wealthiest Jewish families in town, who were willing to rent to us.

They rationed the use of hot water so we could only have a bath every few days; they did not share any of their large supply of food, such as sugar, rice, flour etc. They were unpleasant people without foresight, imagining that they were safe. I hate to think of what happened to them as Jews later on, when the Germans occupied this part of Poland.

2. LIFE UNDER SOVIET RULE

We spent most of our time waiting in lines for whatever food we could find. We managed to get bread and a sort of hard honey, carrots, and potatoes. I do not remember what we drank. When it really got very bad with our food supply, we would go to the American Joint Distribution Committee's kitchen, where dinners were free and wholesome. It was there we met a few of our Warsaw friends including the Bychowskis and the Szatensztajns.

The only time we would laugh was when it got cold and my mother had to wear her only coat, a fancy seal fur coat, with the lining inside out. She would be possibly arrested or certainly made fun of as a bourgeois if seen in a good fur coat.

The Russian soldiers looted all they could find in the stores. I saw with my own eyes women soldiers wearing nightgowns thinking they were evening gowns.

3. GOING TO SCHOOL

My sister and I were enrolled in school not to learn but to get us out of the crowded two rooms the seven of us lived in. We found a co-educational Jewish school called Epsteina & Szpeizera. We didn't have to pay since we were refugees and Hanna and I started attending regularly on October 8th. The school day lasted only until noon, and there was no set curriculum because the war had disrupted it. I had no books but those that I could borrow, and other school supplies were sparse.

Soon after our arrival the official language of the school was changed from Polish to Russian. I say official because the teachers did not know Russian and could not teach in that language.

I found many good books in Polish at the nearby Jewish library. I met a few of my Warsaw friends there and was especially delighted to see Krysia Mendelssohn, my close friend, and one of the three Jewish girls in my class at Anna Wazowna Gymnazium. In the fourth year of gymnasium (we had six grades of primary school, then four years of gymnasium and two years of lyceum), when I was 14, there was a whole group of us refugees from Warsaw. We spent a lot of time together and hardly studied at all.

One day while in the school in Wilno, I met a tall, handsome boy who paid a lot attention to me. He would pick me up and walk with me to and from school. We had an occasional romantic walk in the local cemetery. His name was Borys Trocki and he was full of socialist and leftist ideals. I do not remember paying much attention to them, but I liked him very much.

Again I have no idea what happened to him once the Germans occupied Wilno and murdered most of its Jewish population. Wilno was known for its Jewish scholars and was a center of Jewish learning for many centuries.

4. FATHER ARRIVES WITH A POT OF FLOWERS

On October 14, 1939 father walked in carrying a pot with tulips for Mother and Ala. The kissing and hugging was endless. A gentleman

told us on October 12 that father was in Siemiatycze. Henio went there immediately to find him. We learned later that the man knew where to find father, for he was surprised to hear that Mr. Roth was asking to borrow money. He mentioned this to many people around.

Father looked horrible. His head was shaven, he was terribly thin and worn out since he walked all the way from the prison. He was wearing the sweater that Henryk brought him. It was a miracle of sorts that he actually got it.

At first he said little but with time more and more of the horrors of prison life were revealed. One of his major problems was that he was circumcised and instead of that helping him with the Polish guards it was held against him as a Jew and at the same time had a certain amount of respect for the Germans. Father was acquainted with some of the German prisoners since he did a lot of business with Germany at the time he was working for IG Farben. Most of them were Germans who lived in Poland for generations, did not share the Nazi views, and thought of themselves as Poles. It was to them that father owed a lot for they protected him as one of their own. Such are the vagaries of war.

XIV: The Lithuanians Occupy Wilno

1. WELCOME IN THE STREETS

On October 28, 1939, we heard that the Russians had decided to "give" Wilno back to Lithuania. This city had been a sore point between the Poles and the Lithuanians for centuries. But while the Russians left the town itself, they kept their army stationed on the outskirts. The Russian soldiers were not seen for they were under orders to stay in the barracks. We all went out to greet them on the day that the three Lithuanian tanks, two planes, and some dozens of soldiers on motorcycles in plumed hats and fancy uniforms, entered the city. It was a great moment for us. Overnight we found ourselves in a free country.

2. LIVING IN A FREE COUNTRY

Overnight the shops opened and one could buy food and other necessities, and most importantly, the telephone and telegraph worked again.

On October 31, barely three days after we were "liberated", the Poles organized a pogrom of the Jews during which Jozio was attacked while shopping with Mother in the market. She was pushed out of the way by a man who said, "She's one of us." (She was blonde with blue eyes.) It took us several days to have him released from the police station. Jozio had a deep head wound that did not properly heal for the rest of his life.

Quote from interview with Jozio:

I went shopping with Maryla and there was some kind of pogrom. Lucky for me I was hit in front of a police station. They took me inside. I had a big hole on top of my head. They bandaged it and kept me in jail for three or four days to question me if I was a communist. When they were convinced I was not they released me.

Wilno had been kept separate from the rest of Lithuania at this point, so one had to get a pass to go to Kaunas, the capital. On November 2, a friend of ours, Mr. Luboscki, got a pass to go to Kaunas. Father asked him to telephone Mary Roth in Zurich, hoping to find out about our whole family, and especially his brother Wilhelm, who had left New York for England on August 31, 1939, on the Queen Mary. The next day Mr. Luboscki came back with the message. He told us that Wilhelm was in New York at the Delmonico Hotel since September, and was most anxious to learn where we were and what happened to us. Adolf and Bianca, as well as Father's parents, were in Palestine. He also told us that Norbert and Halina, who left Warsaw on August 31 for Australia, never got there and were still in Helsinki. Their flight to Australia was cancelled because of the outbreak of the war on September 1st.

A few days later Father went to Kaunas to get in touch with his brother in New York who had earlier started procedures for our eventual departure. Wilhelm, of course, was overjoyed with the news that we were out of reach of the Germans and relatively safe.

3. MOVE TO A BETTER APARTMENT

We were now eight people and life became quite unbearable with our landlords. On November 9th, the four of us moved to an apartment where we rented two rooms at the Wazynskas, on Wiwulskiego 6 where we were welcomed and given kitchen and bathroom privileges. There was a bedroom for our parents and one for Hanna and me, furnished with two beds and a desk. We felt we had a lot of room since Henio, Jozio, Ala and Witus decided to stay with the Milejkowskis.

The Wazynskas were an amusing couple. He was an old soldier who was cross-eyed and stuttered, yet I remember him to be a lady's man. His wife was still very much in love with him. He had no job and that why they rented part of their apartment and provided

us with meals that were of great help to my mother. My mother in a little school calendar noted that we received a letter from Norbert on November 16 and one through Zurich from my grandparents on November 20. She noted that Marcell went to Kaunas on December 5 and then again on December 18 when mother, Hanna and I got transit visas for the United States. We had to be present when receiving the visas.

This is when my parents organized a birthday party for me. I turned fifteen on November 28, 1939. My mother baked a cake out of carrots, a thing unknown at that time. I invited some of my new school friends: Borys Trocki, Adasia Bursztejn, Lilka Rudnicka, Leon Szapiro and, of course Krysia Mendelssohn, and Alek Szatenstajn (they changed the name to Shatton in the US). We had a good time, danced to music on the radio, ate the cake and did not remember there was a war going on.

Life was beginning to be more normal and settled. I started French lessons in anticipation of our move to Montreal. It was easier to obtain food especially with the introduction of ration books. At the same time, we continued to have some of our meals at the Joint Distribution Committee, where we would meet friends from Warsaw.

Most conversations were on the one subject that was on everyone's mind-how to get out. We were living in a sort of island, surrounded by Soviet troops. We worried about our family in Warsaw who were living under German occupation. At that time the borders between Russian and German occupied Poland were not as yet well-guarded or totally closed. It was possible to get through a so-called green border, through which thousands of refugees from Russia and Germany were crossing over.

My mother found a man who, for a fee, would go to Warsaw and bring people out. She gave him a letter and all the necessary instructions on how to get to her parents and promised to pay him a lot more if he brought them to Wilno. Unfortunately, some days later he came back with a note from my grandmother saying they did not want to leave. Mother knew the letter was authentic and did not blame the man who tried his best. Some weeks later, she once more attempted to do the same, with the same results. They would not leave their house. They still lived in it, but as we know now that was not true much longer for they had to move to the ghetto and eventually ended up in Treblinka. My mother never got over that loss especially since she knew that if they had listened to her she could have saved them.

3.PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE

While waiting to hear from us Wilhelm had started the necessary procedures to arrange for visas for us to leave Europe. He told my father he would soon send the necessary papers, visas to Canada, and boat tickets. He decided that Canada would be a better country for us to live in than the United States. He thought it would be more European and easier for us to adapt to. My mother argued with him about the class we would travel in on the boat. He insisted on first class but she felt that since we had no proper clothes we would be better off in second or third class. She lost the argument. We were told not to talk about our plans for departure, so as not to create envy among the other refugees. We were very excited.

From then on we lived quite well knowing that this was only temporary, and we would soon leave. As for me, the only thing I was sorry about, was to part from Borys. He was my first love.

XV: Departure from Wilno

1. PACKING

We owned so little that one suitcase was all we had for the four of us. It did not matter since we had ahead of us the prospect of going to America.

2. PARTING FROM OUR FAMILY

When Wilhelm arranged for our departure he did not know that we were with both my mother's brothers, Ala and Wiktor, my little cousin. It was hard for us to leave them, but again there was no choice. My parents assured them that as soon as we land in America, they would do all to arrange for them to join us.

I quote Jozio:

After you left we stayed in Wilno for another year. The Russians came back. The Japanese consul Sugihara functioned a while longer. He saved many lives by stamping all passports with a transit visa. Wilhelm paid for our trip. We left in September 1940. We first stopped for a day in Minsk, then Moscow, where we stayed for three days at the Metropol. We were well treated for we had tickets.

The Russians took us to agricultural exhibits and nightclubs to show us how well they lived but outside the exhibit a babushka was selling rotten apples. Henio was approached to spy for them.

The seven-day trip on the Trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok was strange. The food was not bad and there was endless tea. The farther we got from Moscow the more people on the stops tried to buy whatever we had. We saw nothing of Birobidjan. After three days in Vladivostok we left for Suruga, a small port in Japan where it was clean, the food fresh and available. We stayed a month in Kobe where we boarded a Japanese ship for Vancouver and soon after joined the Roth family in Montreal.

3. TRAIN FROM WILNO TO RIGA

On January 6 we boarded the train from Wilno to Kaunas and on to Riga. The trip took seven hours and was uneventful. On the way to a small hotel we could not help noticing how neat everything was. The buildings, windows, and streets were sparkling. The scene was peaceful and prosperous.

Our hotel for one night was just as pleasant and warm. The beds in our rooms were high up and one had to use a small ladder to climb into bed. The bedding seemed luxurious after the months of living in very poor circumstances.

4. FLIGHT FROM RIGA TO STOCKHOLM

On January 8, we flew to Stockholm, my first flight ever. The plane, and the short time it took to reach Stockholm impressed me most.

It was four months since we took Norbert and Halina to the airport in Warsaw, and it was wonderful to see familiar faces on our arrival in Stockholm. We moved into the same pension they were living in since September. It was bright and agreeable.

The best part were the meals, which seemed to us the height of luxury. We were introduced to the Swedish-style smorgasbord. The big center table in the dining room was set up with all possible variety of herrings, cheeses, salamis, their hard breads and pitchers of milk. That was just the first course, followed by meat dishes, salads and vegetables.

What I remember of our walks in the city were the large department stores and the escalators. The PUB Department store was the first to introduce them and since we had never seen them before we were enchanted, rode them up and down like little children.

The city itself, even in the winter, was beautiful with its

many levels. In the port there were numerous boats waiting to sail to all the neighboring Scandinavian countries. The royal castle and of course the old city with its narrow streets and interesting stores was a delight to visit. We spent ten days there before our departure on January 16, 1940, for Göteborg (Gothenburg) and New York.

XV: At Sea on the S.S Drotningholm

1. DAYS ON BOARD SHIP

On January 17 we boarded the S.S. Drotningholm for New York. Since Wilhelm insisted on booking us in first class we had elegant staterooms. I very much wanted to go to America but at the same time was leaving heartbroken for I had experienced my first feelings of love while in Wilno.

I remember the atmosphere on the ship as festive and carefree, for most of the passengers were Americans caught by the war in Europe and happy to be returning home.

My mother stayed in her stateroom almost throughout the trip claiming to be seasick. I have never figured out whether she was really seasick or having just one dress and coat she preferred not to appear among fashionably dressed passengers. The rest of us had no such problem; caring much less about clothing than about the five fabulous meals served each day.

We eagerly counted the days of the journey. German submarines were on the lookout for enemy ships on the Atlantic route. They stopped us twice to see the list of passenger. The Swedes protected all the “enemies of Germany” by keeping our names off the manifest.

Besides us there was another Polish Jew on board, Jozef Bernstein, a Warsaw furrier, where my mother had all her fur coats made. He hoped to land in the US but unlike us, who had all our papers in order, he did not. We had valid immigration visas to Canada with US transit visas. We had money in the bank so we would not be a burden to society. Bernstein had a fake visa to a South American republic. All during the voyage he briefed my father on whom to contact in New York and how to help prevent the authorities from sending him back to Poland. My father promised to help.

Much later in New York, he made my first fur coat, a graduation present.

XVII: Arrival in New York

1. FIRST VIEW OF NEW YORK

Ten days later we were up early on deck to see the Statue of Liberty. We admired some handsome buildings with green roofs and were told that it was a prison called Ellis Island, used mostly for criminals, and only, in one section, for illegal immigrants.

As we approached the New York pier, my sister and I were all excited and ready to be the first ones to disembark. I could see my Uncle Wilhelm and some cousins waving to us. The rope was lifted but the Swedish officer did not let us pass, for we did not know we had to show landing cards. We were told to step to the side and wait in the salon. Dumbfounded, we stared at the passengers going down the gangplank and among them our fellow refugee Mr. Bernstein who just grinned and waved to us as he walked off free.

Wilhelm came aboard and assured us we have nothing to worry about. All our documents, visas, medical certificates, and bank accounts were in order but because it was a Friday afternoon, the banks were closed. The immigration authorities decided to check up on us since we had immigration visas to Canada, a rare thing at the time. We had no choice – we had to wait until Monday and the place to wait was Ellis Island.

2. THREE DAYS IN PRISON

Contrary to my parents, I was excited and most curious. We were driven from the Swedish America dock to a smaller one. A motorboat took us to Ellis Island, the buildings with the beautiful green roofs that we admired that morning. Of course we did not know that was Ellis Island, the place where for decades illegal immigrants were detained. It was a short trip and we had a chance to see the New York skyline.

Upon arrival, we were counted: Roth family 1,2,3,4,5,6 a procedure repeated many times during our stay there. The men were separated from the women, and we were taken to our “rooms” with six or eight beds per room. My mother, Halina, Hanna and I were told to unpack but we had little to fill the available closet and shelves.

Soon afterwards, the door was unlocked and we walked along long corridors, met father and Norbert on the way and headed for the dining hall. The gate was huge, or so it seemed to me. The guards watched us approach. When ready to enter we were surprised by the question in Polish the policeman on duty asked: “Would you like kosher or non-kosher food”? We chose Kosher purely out of curiosity and proceeded to sit at a long narrow table. In the center were pitchers with milk, tea and coffee, large trays with bread and butter all there for us to eat. Soup, meat dish and dessert were brought. When we were done, the attendant scooped up the paper tablecloth with all on it and threw it in a trashcan. We could not help but wonder at the waste of food especially having just come from war torn Europe where getting enough to eat was a real problem.

Next morning, we were again led to the dining room and after breakfast, taken to the large room, with probably a fifty-foot ceiling. There were comfortable sofas, easy chairs, Ping-Pong table and lots of books and magazines. This is where the "prisoners" spent their days talking, gossiping, and meeting friends and family from the old country.

We, the children, were taken to a classroom and were given our first English lesson. The idea behind it was not to waste time since they did do not know how long we would stay here! Many of the others we met there had been on Ellis Island for many weeks or months not knowing if they would be deported back to their native countries or allowed to stay in the US.

After the lessons we played cards, Ping-Pong, and

altogether had a wonderful time. For the daily outdoor walk we were taken to a courtyard. We then saw that there was another part to Ellis Island where the convicts were kept. We observed them walking in circles in prison uniforms. Our Ellis Island life continued until Monday morning, January 29, when the family Roth, one, two three, four, five, six were told that we are free to leave. The same motorboat took us back to the pier and we were free.

4. DELMONICO HOTEL

We took a taxi to the Delmonico Hotel where William (as he was to be called from now on in America) lived and had an apartment. He had made reservations for us and we happily moved in. The hotel was on the corner of Park Avenue and 59th Street. We were to stay in New York for ten days for we had transit visas only. Our immigration visas were to Canada. We were delighted and happy with everything.

Next day we went shopping and our first stop was in a lingerie store on 59th Street and Madison Avenue. We were shown the available underwear and nothing pleased my mother. She said that we couldn't wear them since they were of poor quality and not acceptable. She was used to having everything made to order. She soon realized that we were to wear machine made clothes from now on. There was no choice and we ended up a few days later buying some underwear and dresses.

XVIII: Montreal

1. MOUNT ROYAL HOTEL

The train ride from New York to Montreal on February 7 was uneventful. We checked into the Mount Royal Hotel on Drummond Street, right in the center of town. We soon had visits from distant relatives who had been in Canada for many years. My mother had heard of a drink called Coca-Cola and asked me to go to a store and buy one bottle. She served it to our guests treating it like syrup and added soda water to it. Everyone was amused. I managed to get around speaking French, which then, was not the official language, and few people spoke it or understood it.

2. APARTMENT ON DRUMMOND STREET

Our first task was to find a place to live and that was not difficult. We found a nice large apartment on 146 Drummond Street where we moved in on February 20. It was empty and it took some doing to furnish it with the bare essentials. We hired a maid who only spoke English and was not a good worker, but pleasant. I remember her telling us that she was a cocktail, since her ancestors came from many countries in Europe.

She did the housework but mother was in charge of the kitchen for the first time. She had never really cooked before, but knew well how to tell the cook what to prepare, and what foods to buy. It was fun being the guinea pigs. She was like a new bride at the age of 35 with daughters 15 and 13 years old. We had many burned or undercooked meals, but soon she was able to produce a few decent dinners and we were proud of her. My father would never even think of helping in the kitchen, it was not something a European man would do. On the other hand, he was a great eater but always insisted that he only liked simple foods. She soon found that it was hardest to prepare simple food well. None of us liked spicy foods, much easier to do since the spices dulled most of the taste.

3. ENROLLING IN SCHOOL

It was January; the new term had just started. We walked over to Montreal High, a short distance from our apartment. We met with the principal, a Miss McKenzie, an older lady, short, with gray hair and full of smiles. We spoke no English and she little French. She had no experience dealing with refugees, but did have a very good idea about what to do with the two of us. She suggested that we sit in on classes of English in low-grade, which we did to the amusement of the little children. The benches were low and small but I quickly started speaking English. For classes in French, math, and such we attended our proper grades. We had a tutor at home, a lovely young woman who taught us while taking walks and showing us the city.

All my free time, I spent on going to triple feature movies, which was approved off since it would help with learning the language. In between, at least once a day, I would go to the drugstore and eat huge portions of banana splits and ice cream sodas. This too was a novelty since we only ate ice cream in the summer.

My sister and I spent our one summer in Canada at a YWCA camp for girls in the Laurentian Mountains. It was a new and strange experience to live in quite primitive tents, surrounded by other bunks, with poor toilet facilities. But I liked the sports program and the lake was a pleasure to swim in.

4. PAJEWSKI FAMILY ARRIVES IN CANADA

True to my parents' promise, all arrangements were made for the Pajewskis to join us in Canada. It all depended on their getting a Soviet Exit visa to leave. They were lucky to be among the 300

refugee families who were helped by Consul General of Japan, Chiune and Yukiko Sugihara who took office in Kaunas in March 1939. Risking their own lives and career, and against the wishes of the Foreign Office wrote by hand over 300 visas between July 31 and August 28, 1940. Even when forced to leave for Berlin on September 1, 1940 they continued giving out visas and the consular stamp from the train. (In Yad Vashem there is a tree honoring the Sugiharas and a park in Jerusalem in their name).

The family Pajewski traveled by train from Kaunas to Moscow, then on the trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok and on to Kobe and Vancouver. Our reunion on their arrival in Montreal was exciting. Wiktor who was five years old was right away enrolled in our school and I used to take him there by hand.

5. BUSINESS POSSIBILITIES

To get immigration visas to Canada, William had to transfer a considerable sum of money to a Canadian Bank. They imagined Canada would be more like Europe to do business in. At that time it had no real immigration policy and it was more or less closed to immigrants. Father and William's plan was to start a business and settle in Canada. William came every few weeks to discuss those possibilities. But things did not work out their way. The Canadian government did not want them to go into business, but offered land in Northern Canada start farming on a large scale.

Since their plans did not work out they decided to apply for United States visas. Zbigniew Brzezinski's father was then the Polish consul in Montreal and helped us get our Polish passports and later US immigration visas. We were fortunate to have our birth certificates on which basis the Polish passports were issued. The average time it took to get immigration visas for Polish-born people was up to twelve years. At that time the quotas were assigned by the place of birth only, but since the beginning of the war, it was almost impossible for previous applicants to leave Poland. This left the Polish quota wide open and we did not have to wait at all. It was only a little more than one year that we lived in Canada. It took a long time to recover the blocked funds but eventually we did receive them.

XIX: We Move to New York

1. FIRST WEEKS IN NEW YORK

On arrival in New York, we moved to the Hotel Buckingham on 57th Street between 6th and 7th avenues. It was a pleasant family hotel: its outstanding feature was that Ignacy Paderewski, the Polish pianist, lived there and we could hear him play. Across the street was the Horne and Hardart automat where we often had our breakfast or lunch. The novelty of this restaurant was that on the main wall there were shelves with glass fronts where you could see the dish you wanted. After choosing one, inserted the necessary coin and the door would automatically open, and you could take out your food. There were quite of few of those in New York at the time and it was a favorite place with many newcomers, for it was truly something we had not seen before.

On the first Sunday, we were driven to Coney Island. It was a hot and sunny day and the beach was very crowded. We promptly got bad sunburns and I do remember lying on my bed in the hotel with all sorts of ointments, promising myself not to sit in the sun again.

2. APARTMENT SEARCH

It was important for us to find a permanent place to live in after almost two years of being unsettled. It was the end of the summer, the weather still very warm so we had a chance to walk around Manhattan and see where we would like to live. We liked to have a view of the park so it had to be either Fifth Avenue or Central Park West. At that time the West Side was the more fashionable and more to our liking. We visited every building on Central Park West from 65th to 85th street and decided on an apartment on the 9th floor of the Kenilsworth at 151 Central Park West. We liked the view on the park with its lake, constant activity of rowboats, riders on horseback and across the lights of Fifth Avenue.

We signed a lease for two years which gave us two free months as a reward. The building was half empty as people could afford to pay the rent, which at the time was around $200 per month. We had six rooms of which the living room and the master bedroom faced the park. There was a maid's room with its own bath and a back service elevator to the kitchen for deliveries, trash pick-up and such. We had to totally furnish our new residence for the furniture bought in Montreal was sold with the apartment; my mother started her many trips to auction houses and furniture stores. Since we decided to settle in New York she bought good furniture, rugs and paintings at Parke-Bernet, which later became Sotheby's. She also bought dishes, flatware and crystal, which my sister and I now own and are happy with.

After living there for some ten years the building became a cooperative and those who lived there were able to buy their apartments at a very reasonable price, which for my parents was around $7,000. The monthly maintenance charges were also low. They lived there until their death: my father in 1978 and my mother in 1981. We then rented it for two years and found we had to sell it because you were not allowed to rent cooperatives indefinitely. (We sold it in 1984 for about $400,000. If we had held on we could have sold it for a much larger amount.

3. NORBERT IN FOREST HILLS

At the same time Norbert and Halina rented a modest two-bedroom apartment in Forest Hills. When it was sold as condominium they bought it. They stayed there until Norbert died and Halina moved to Atlanta to be near her son Emanuel, his wife Peggy, and their three children.

4. WILLIAM IN THE DELMONICO HOTEL

Since William was used to living in the Delmonico Hotel, he

decided to stay there permanently. He rented a larger suite consisting of two bedrooms, one to be used as office, a large living room and small kitchen. Mary Roth, his secretary, did not live there except at times. She was a quiet, reserved person whose presence was hardly felt, but it was not evident how she really felt until much later.

Her sister Bina who was a pediatrician practiced medicine and lived near her hospital.

William continued a life of study until the end. Hedda came to visit him a few times but there was no talk of her staying permanently with him or marrying him.

5. MARIA AND JEAN PICARD IN STAMFORD

During the winter when we were still in Wilno Maria, William's daughter married a Swiss Jew, Jean Jacques Picard at a civil marriage on March 30, 1939, and on April 2 at a religious marriage which they considered their real date, both in Zurich. We met Jean upon arrival in New York, a good-looking and charming man. Maria arrived in New York highly pregnant and gave birth to Catherine on January 8, 1940. Soon after they moved to Montreal where they lived for several months. Unhappy with Montreal they returned to New York and Stamford, Connecticut where in 1946 they bought a home on Trinity Pass Road. They lived there until Maria’s death. Over the years the Picards made many changes and additions including a swimming pool. In most years many of us would be with them for the second Seder. Maria was an excellent cook who enjoyed doing it. Her other two children were Daniel born November 5, 1942, and Yvonne born April 15, 1946.

6. JOZIO IN THE ARMY

Soon after Jozio arrived in Canada, he returned to Europe and enlisted in the Polish army in England. His main motive was to be able to get to Poland and try to save his parents. Unfortunately, he was never able to do that but instead went through training in Scotland and fought in Italy. He only came back to the US when the war ended.

He stayed in New York for some time and found life there not to his liking. He and another refugee from Poland, Eric Reichman, formed a partnership and bought a small chicken farm in Andrews, North Carolina. They started with little and over the years made it into a very profitable business. Unfortunately, the two did not get along but continued together until Jozio sold his share of the business to Eric's son. He donated most of his money to Ben-Gurion University's Department of Agriculture in memory of his parents, Sarah and Mordekhai Pajewski. It was at this time that he went back to his former name and changed it to Parker-Pajewski. He died in March of 2000 in the same small, modest house he had bought a long time ago.

The only change in his life was some twenty years earlier when he visited Poland and met a woman he married and brought to Andrews. She and her daughter found life in a small American town not to their liking and Jozio found out too late, that she married him only to get away from the man she really wanted to marry. After her brief stay in America that man let her know that he would marry her and she promptly divorced Jozio and left. This was the only short period in his life that he was married and he considered it an unfortunate mistake.

XX: American Schools

1. JULIA RICHMOND

Not knowing anything at all about the American school system I followed the first advice given to us, and enrolled in Julia Richmond. The term had already started and all the students were settled in their classes. I recollect how lost I felt in that gigantic building with endless stairs and classrooms. The system was new to me, we had to go to different classrooms for each subject, and even though I spoke decent English by then I had a hard time adjusting. I struggled through to the end of the term but decided to go to another school in the fall.

2. RIVERSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

It was Irka Krieger, whose family my family knew from Poland, who suggested the Riverside High School for girls. The school was located in a former three-story residence very near us, on Riverside Drive and 78th Street. The decision to attend Riverside High School was taken the way we did everything those days. Not knowing much about this country we did not investigate properly and listened to the advice of others. This school turned out to be just about the opposite of Julia Richmond. There were seven girls in my graduating class; it was all very private with individual attention given to each of us. That was what I needed at that time, starting life in a strange country with strange people and customs. I graduated in June, wore a pretty dress, and became an American high school graduate.

3. CORNELL UNIVERSITY

We had little knowledge of American universities but someone told us that since I was good in mathematics, Cornell University would be right for me. I had no interest in majoring in math, and decided to apply to the school of architecture. It was the only college I applied to and was accepted. I have no idea if I got in because it was wartime and there were few male applicants or because we paid full tuition.

It was an exciting moment when my parents took me to Pennsylvania Station where I boarded a special train of Cornell students to Ithaca. I had a large steamer trunk, as did the other girls. The trip took most of the day and we had a chance to meet some of our classmates. I knew no one since I came from a small high school and none of the other six girls I graduated with went to Cornell.

Upon arrival in Ithaca, a bus took us to our various pre-assigned dormitories. I asked for a single room and found myself at 4 The Circle in a small room not knowing what was expected of me. We took our meals in Sage Hall, walked there, in the winter, usually through the snow. It was then that I met Ruth Markus, an English major, who roomed next door with Grace Gales. Ruth and I became best friends and in our sophomore year roomed together in College Town, where we were allowed to eat on our own.

Ruth recollects:

> *"That was the year we shared the bathroom with the house mother who thought you never changed your towels! We also cooked occasionally on a hot plate ad were worried that she would smell the food because cooking was not permitted. We had a piano in the living room; you worked at the school of architecture often through the evening. We roomed together for the next four years."*

Her father was an immigrant from Poland, whose English was poor and had a menial job in a leather factory. I could not understand at the time why Ruth was ashamed of him and I had a hard time convincing her to get him together with my parents when they all came up some months later for parents' week.

It took me some time to get used to dormitory life, the late night peanut butter and jelly on crackers, the endless bull sessions where the subject was mostly about boys and dates, and the worry if one did not have a Saturday night date by Wednesday.

My curriculum was all set from the beginning. Almost all my classes were in White Hall with the drafting room on the top floor. Most of my time was spent there since we had projects to design and had to learn drafting, lettering, and perspectives. We were given specific projects such as a school building, hospital, or residence. There was little we freshmen were told (we were two girls per class) and basically learned from the older students. I befriended a Haitian graduate student named Albert Mangones. I had a teenage crush on him, but, as he told me years later, he never asked me out for he felt I was an innocent girl and he did not want to take advantage of me.

Most of my social life was with other students of architecture, and particularly Harold Diamond who was not drafted for he had asthma. Most of the civilian male students were foreigners for all the American boys on campus were in uniform either in the Army or Navy. I joined the International Club where I met students from many parts of the world. I became friendly with a fellow from Trinidad. When home in New York once for a vacation I invited him to dinner. It was new to me to find that in our building black people were not let in the front door and had to go through the 75th Street entrance, used for deliveries and help. When the doorman informed us that this black man wanted to come in, I had to go down and explain at great length that he was our guest and to let him up the front elevator.

Since we had to spend a lot of the evening hours in the drafting room, we, the women, were excused from the very strict hours when we had to be back in the dorm: 9:30 for freshmen, 10:30 for sophomores, and 11:30 for juniors and seniors, except for special nights on weekends when there was a big dance. When I told my parents about these rules, they were quite surprised. They thought a university student was a grown person and did not need to be watched at all times. My mother believed that one did not need late hours to do what was “improper”. Instead of having to write a note in English (which I had to write and she copied) every time I wanted permission to go away or stay out late, she wrote a letter to my housemother giving me permission to go away or stay out any time I wanted to.

Twice during a term we had a grand ball, where some of the best-known bands played, such as Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman or Gene Krupa. If we did not have a date and receive a gardenia corsage to pin on our long gowns it was a terrible blow and one did not want to admit to it. I was lucky, for I do not think I missed a single dance during my four years in Cornell.

It was in November of 1943 that Cas Krol, a soldier in the Russian language program, called me to ask for a blind date. Prof. Charles Malamuth, one of the teachers in the Russian ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program), played a record to his class of soldiers of poems by Adam Mickiewicz, a well-known Polish poet, read in Polish by a woman. Cas and another fellow from Poland, Richard Pipes (born July 11, 1923), wanted to know who the reader was. When they found out that there were two girls from Poland on campus, they decided to call us, and since Cas was the taller of the two, he called me and Dick called Jasia Spiro. I was quite hesitant to go out with Cas for I was determined not to have anything to do with Poles; I wanted to be totally American. But Jasia who wanted the date, changed my mind and a few days later, the four of us went to a movie and sodas. When I got back to my dorm, I wrote in my diary that I was not impressed with either of the two soldiers, but “I had the better one of the two”.

I met Dick in the music room of Willard Straight some weeks later and we started talking and found we had lots in common. He was tall, with a swarthy complexion and handsome, the type of a man I liked. When younger I used to think the dark-skinned Bedouins on their camels were for me. He was serious, a

great reader. I took advantage of him and asked him to write my paper on “The role of ghosts in Shakespeare’s plays”. I asked him to make it a B paper since no one would believe I wrote it, if I got an A. This is how our friendship started. Our first date was to a Serkin concert: Dick to this day complains that instead of listening attentively to the music I wrote him little notes and comments on the concert’s program. He complained that all the American girls he dated more than once, talked about getting married, what he liked about me was that I did not. Even though we were very different, we had a good time, especially since we came from almost identical backgrounds and it was easier for us to speak Polish than English at the time.

Soon afterwards, Dick invited Cas, Jasia and me to visit his parents who lived in nearby Elmira. I must admit I was neither diplomatic nor polite, but agreed to go provided Jasia was not invited, for I never liked her and wanted to have nothing to do with her even though she, like myself was Jewish and from Poland. Dick agreed (something he has always regretted) and the three of us took the bus to Elmira.

Emmy and Ossi Burger were their old friends from Warsaw. They originally came from Vienna, but moved to Warsaw when Ossi was made director of Daimler-Steyr-Puch auto agency. The Burgers left Poland just a few months before the war broke out and settled in Averill Park, NY, where they bought a farm. When the Pipes family arrived in the US on July 11, 1940, (Dick’s seventeenth birthday) they went straight to the Burgers and spent the summer there. That fall Dick went to Muskingum College in Ohio, and his parents looked around for a place where they could start a chocolate factory. Elmira, NY was where they got a good deal on a store in a central location, and an apartment for little rent. In 1942 they bought the house on West Third Street where the Burgers soon followed since they could not make a go of the farm.

It is there that I met my future in-laws. Both parents greeted me warmly since they did not have many occasions to speak Polish and meet a young woman who was enchanted to be in a home, with familiar food and surroundings.

My four years in Cornell were a happy time, even though I realize now, those were the years of the worst atrocities committed by the Germans on Jews including my family. We were young, had no TV or even radio, and hardly read the newspapers. I was busy with my courses, spending time with girls in the dorm, going out on dates to dances, movies and walks. I spent all vacations with my parents in New York, and there too I was not aware of what is happening outside my small world. I cared about the length of my skirts, which changed every year, so one was busy shortening or lengthening them, with getting shoes (which were rationed during the war) my size and hard to find, and of course, boys.

XXI: My Parents' Life in New York

1. POLISH FRIENDS

The wonderful thing about life for refugees in New York was that there were others who came from the same city, similar background, and had the same taste in food and style of life. My parents knew five or six couples from Warsaw whom they saw often. Mrs. Aniela Borowik was a classmate of my mother's, and her husband Ludwig did business with my father. There were the Lehrers, the Steins, the Solowiejczyks, and our own family, which was quite extensive considering we were all newcomers. My parents belonged to a Polish Jewish club where they often held parties and dances. Because of that, they did not have to learn formal English as well as they should have, but they were fluent enough and had no difficulties communicating with the outside world.

They met in cafes on 72nd Street where the pastries were baked to their taste. The shopping on Columbus Avenue was also easy, for they even had soda water in siphons that one returned. The groceries were delivered to the apartment within minutes of purchase. They had a maid-cook who came in every day in the afternoon and stayed through dinner, both to clean house, and help clean up the kitchen. For a time, they had a live-in maid, for there was a maid's room and bath off the kitchen. They found, after a while, that they did not need that much help and liked their privacy. They owned a Chrysler Imperial, which was garaged on 73rd Street and delivered to the house when telephoned half an hour before.

2. FATHER'S BUSINESSES

The first business my father got into was The Old Dutch Mustard Co. in Brooklyn. He had two partners, Sternberg and Schancer. He drove to Brooklyn every day for about two years until he got tired of the commute and of the business itself (which did not bring much profit). He sold his share to his partners.

Next he became a partner of the Fisher Publishing Co. with Mr. Kaufman. That too did not do well and he soon pulled out of it. The business he did best in was building low price houses on Long Island. This he did together with Mr. Borowik. When that project was completed my father decided he was not born to do business in the US. His old fashioned Old World ways just did not work. He often lost out when trusting on a handshake and not making sure it was all signed and sealed on paper.

Another attempt was in partnership with Lucjan Borowik, husband of Aniela Borowik, with whom he already had dealings in Poland before the war in 1936. Mr. Gepner, Lucjan's father in law, bought some land from my father outside of Warsaw in Zeranow. The deal was that Gepner would build the rail siding, which my father could use in the future if he needed to. He never did.

In the US Borowik and a Mr. Lubowicz and my father invested in land in New Jersey, built factory buildings and started running a quite successful chemical business, Woodbridge Chemical. It was interesting to hear from Borowik about my father. They met in the Delmonico Hotel with Wilhelm helping make the final decision. He described my father as deeply religious, quiet, very secretive, thoughtful, and elegant. When the previous Italian owner of the land saw the land values going up, both on what he still owned and what he sold, it was believed that he set fire to the factory to collect the insurance.

Both partners were heartbroken for they lost most of their investment and wasted a lot of time in trying to rescue what they could. They were not familiar with the American way of doing business but became friends.

Mrs. Borowik when talking of my mother recalled:

> "*I could never find fault with her. She combined practicality with a realistic view of life. I always consulted her and trusted her judgment. She never gossiped, was beautiful,*

and elegant".

Father tried one more time, when he bought around 400 acres of land in Kent in Duchess County, about 1½ hours from New York City. He was most excited about that purchase, the price was good and he thought he would develop the land. They found a large deposit of humus in the lake and thought of selling it, but this also did not work out. He built one small model house where we all spent one summer. There were no buyers and for he tried for years to sell the whole property, which we have now sold. By that time he was in his 60's and concluded that he would do better taking care of his investments at home.

My mother had to get used to his being around the house all the time. He spent a lot of time going over his holdings and trying to recover some of his properties in Austria when the war ended. It never occurred to him to think of the Berlin property that we sold some years ago, or of the many properties in Poland that we are still trying to recover.

XXII: My Wedding

In my last term at Cornell Richard and I decided we would marry. Marek and Zosia gave us an engagement party at the Mark Twain Hotel in Elmira. My parents, Hanna, and other members of my family came to Elmira.

It was on this occasion that our parents met and almost at once found how much they liked each other and how much they had in common. My father chidingly called Marek Pan Olszewski, his name while serving in the Polish Legion under Marshall Pilsudski, fighting for Polish independence during World War I from 1914 to 1918. On the other hand Marek jokingly made fun of my father's becoming religious.

On comparing notes they discovered that Dick and I met as children at birthday parties at Hanka Frohman. They found a photograph of my uncle Norbert in the Pipes' album taken at some party at the Austrian Club in Warsaw. (I must mention here that the Pipes family left in very different circumstances from us and were able to take with them many trunks with their most precious possessions, including their dog Coco and photographs.)

It was then decided that the wedding would take place in the Delmonico Hotel in New York on September first, 1946. That date was chosen because it was a Sunday of Labor Day weekend when it would be easier for out of town guests to travel. It was also the day that the Germans invaded Poland and William's birthday.

Mother and I had a busy summer preparing for the wedding. She took charge of the caterers, flowers, and my gown, which was made to order by her dressmaker. Attention was paid to the fabric, lace, veil, shoes, stockings and even underwear. All had to be perfect and I agreed to whatever my mother thought was the right thing.

I spent many a sleepless night wondering if I had picked the right man. Basically I was the one who created the conditions while sitting in m parent's living room on a date that spring for Dick to ask me to marry him. I also convinced him that he had to formally ask my parents for my hand.

Next time Dick was on leave from the Army, he asked to talk to my parents. They accepted him, even though they thought he was too young, was not earning a living, and could not support me in the style I was used to.

He then gave me a very nice diamond ring, which he really could not afford. Pretending to be surprised, they produced previously cooled champagne to toast our future together. My future in-laws gave me a pearl necklace that I wore at the wedding.

I asked my sister to be my maid of honor, Ruth Marcus and Hilda Spodheim, to be the bridesmaids. They wore their own gowns for I did not know of the American custom for them to be dressed alike. Dick chose Johnny Burger (his childhood friend and like a brother) to be his best man, Walter Unterberg (the Unterberg family arrived in New York just in time for the wedding) and an army buddy of his, Bill Smith, to be the ushers.

The Delmonico ballroom was beautifully decorated with flowers and lights. Rabbi De Sola Pool officiated and later blessed the chala before dinner. Among the hundred or so guests was Jozio who had just arrived from the war in Europe, the Roth family members and their children, the Pajewski family, Jacob and Joseph Weiss who survived the war in Europe and had recently arrived in the US. Among others who came to the wedding were my parents' Polish born friends and some of my friends including Harold Diamond, who wanted to marry me. Cathy was my flower girl. She pulled the long train of my dress so it looks on the photographs as if I was wearing pants!

The festivities, dinner and dancing went on until late. Around 11 PM my mother thought it would be time for the newlyweds to retire, at least do so before the guests started leaving. Dick and I went upstairs to a suite of rooms rented earlier for the women to dress before the wedding, and them for us to spend the

wedding night. Dick had a problem undoing the dozen or so little buttons on the back of my dress.

Next morning, we drove up in our brand new maroon Dodge, a wedding present from uncle William, to my parent's apartment on 151 Central Park West to collect my things. The car was decorated so all would know we were just married. We drove off without a destination, infatuated with each other and the new car. Childishly we counted the hours and the minutes each of us drove. Dick was an experienced driver but I had just gotten my license a few weeks earlier. We covered a large area of New England as far as Canada usually staying in motels, never more than one night each.

At the end of ten days we arrived in Boston. A few weeks before the wedding Dick and I traveled with my mother to Boston's Copley Plaza Hotel to find us a place to live. She rented a furnished apartment at 210 Riverway, for $90 per month including maid service and all utilities. My mother believed it was important to start married life in a good and pleasant atmosphere.

Irene's Wartime Diary
Sep. 1 to Nov. 15, 1939
(Translated from the Polish)

TRANSLATION OF MY DIARY FROM SEPT 1 TO NOV. 15, 1939

September 1
War broke out between the Germans and the French and English on the other side. God, what a horrible moment that was. I did not at all believe that something like that is possible. That first evening my sweet Roy was cuddling me for he too understood what is going on. There was bombing from the morning on. Halina and Norbert left yesterday for Australia by the last plane. Norbert felt that something awful is going to happen and could not stop himself from crying when saying goodbye.
After dinner we lived through the most horrible moment of our lives. They took my father from us to intern him. All he took with him was a small bag with a shirt and pajamas.

Sept 2
From 5 in the morning nothing but planes, bombs were falling all over. All day I ran around looking for medicines and anti gas masks. We were putting up paper stripes on the windows to prevent the glass from shuttering. Grandma was with us in total despair about Dad's fate. We somehow hoped to find him. Mother spent her day looking for him in the vasrious ministries and prisons, but to no avail.
In the evening Mr. Margolis came and we were shocked at the way he looked. A bomb fell on his house in Grochowo, which he built with hard work. He and his son were not there and when he returned he thought his wife was buried under the house. Fortunately she managed to run away in time.

Sept 3
We got up under the impression of Mr. Margolis who advised us to leave the city as quickly as possible. His employers paid him for a few months ahead of time so he could leave. We thought of father and departure. All day bombs fell. From the newspapers we knew that the Germans are rapidly occupying more of Poland. There was no thought given of attendig school. People were coming back from their summer holidays, the city was going mad. All order broke down and everyone did what they wanted. The army and police were fleeing. Justyna, our cook came back and stayed with us. I like her.

Sept 4
War, war. All the time war and we the unarmed wait for the result. We, the civilians were not even equipped with gas masks. Mr. Kanarek who lived in our building asked mother to take his wife and son with us. Mother was beside herself and realized that she has to start thinking of us and do something.
In the ministry they told her that nothing could be cone for everyone was leaving. She called her brother Henryk and discussed with him the idea of leaving, but he would not hear of it and wanted us to spend the war in Jaroslaw, where we owned two houses. Mother did not consider that at all.

Sept 5
The thought of leaving never left us and each thought of it in his own way. Mother notified Mr. Kanarek that she is obligated to think of her children and brothers and would take them first. We

sat in total darkness and listened to one air raid alarm after another. In the evening Hanna went to sleep and mother and I started packing. Went to bed at 1AM, but mother did no sleep at all.

Sept 6
Mother got up at 5AM and went to her parents to prepare them of the plan to leave. She first talked to her brother Jozio who too was horrified. They all came to our house at 8PM. Henio only that morning went to get Witek and Ala from the country. Mother was still looking for gasoline but all for nothing. There is no gasoline and we give up the idea of leaving. At 7 o'clock the lawyer Kanarek promised to get us gas and we were to leave at 4 in the morning. Henio went out of town and got some too. We still went to sleep for a short time.

Sept 7
The plan was changed - a call came at 10pm with the news that the bridge is to be blown up. We call Jozio, Heniek, Witek and Ala to come instantly. We parted from our grandmother who took it all with tears in her eyes. Grandfather did not come for he did not want us to leave at all. Mother wanted to go back once more to get a few more things when some guy yelled, "so you are fleeing instead of going to work" and ran to get a policeman. So we don't wait another minute and leave into the dark night towards the Kerbedzia Bridge, the mob is such that we hardly move. The air is full of gasoline but we slowly try to make our way toward Brzesc Nad Bugiem where the Bereza prison is and where we now know father is.

Sept 8
After driving through the night and half of the next day we arrived in Kowel. Mr. Kaweberg who offered us two rooms out of his three met us. We slept two in each bed. Witek made a terrible scene that he wanted to go home, it did not help that we told him the car broke down. We all had a good cry with him. He understood that it would be a long time before he could return home. We sent a telegram to Wilhelm to American but were sure it would not reach him.

Sept 9
I went with Mrs. Kaweberg to the market the first thing in the morning. I could buy everything and at low prices. A real Polish village. We bought a lot so all could satisfy their appetite.
In the meantime the army was regrouping. We met different people all the time. All were still in a good mood; we did not yet understand the danger. Wasagowie were also there. Besides we went to some people to listen to the radio. All were planning to go to Romania by way of Leszczyki. We would have done the same but could not because of my father. We were going in one direction only to Brzesc. But since we left and there was no hope of getting him out of prison we sat with folded arms.

Sept 10
Shortages developed. There was nothing to buy. Either the army took all or people were hoarding. At once hunger started. We stood in line for hours for some sugar or salt. We got bread through protection. It started being awful, for a few days we forgot about the bombers but they appeared again. We cooked what we could find. For Victor we tried to get an egg. Mrs. Kaweberg became less and less pleasant. We were afraid they would take our car away and we hid it in the barn of our Ukrainian host. He was an awful type.

Sept 11
The idea occurred for Henio to go to Bereza and take a sweater to father, which by chance we had with us. He went by train that was still running. It was only after he left that mother realized what danger she has exposed him to, how long the time seemed until his return. We did not know what to do and there was practically

no food left. One could not sleep, it was truly awful. Mr. Bernheim lived next door and often came to see us.

Sept 12
We are waiting to Henio to return. Mother is beside herself. She had no understanding what danger lies ahead for her husband, she was naïve. We just started realizing what we took from Warsaw – absolutely nothing. Ala left without a coat, we in our winter coats and mother by some miracle took two fur coats. Looking back at Sept 6 when we were packing we took things in and out of two bags and ended up with one suitcase to make room for the containers with gasoline.
Henio arrived at night to our great relief. He told us that they held him prisoner for a few hours, for no one was allowed to come close to the prison. They accepted the package for father but we were sure he will not get it.

Sept 13
The day passed without any change. At night, while already in bed we heard knocking on our window and shouts of "get up", escape for the town is burning. In seconds we were dressed and packed and ready to leave, for the little we had we would not leave behind. We left town for the woods in the wagon of our unpleasant Ukrainian. The whole town was on the road with all their possessions. Some with cows, pigs, horses and all they could carry. We were shaken up for an hour and landed in a little wood. Our host was kind enough to give us some bread and milk.

Sept 14
The same thing happened as yesterday except that we had to beg our unpleasant Ukrainian to take us with the promise of paying him 50 zlotys. Another family was with us. This time we went further to another awful village. The local peasants insisted that we were responsible for bringing the bombs. We sat under the trees and were afraid to move. When darkness fell we went back to Mrs. Kaweberg, Mickiewicza 3a. We found out later that all this was a German plot. They created a panic, sent the whole town to the woods which were sparse anyway, and knowing where we all were they shot at us. And the town was quiet.

Sept 15
We decided to go to the woods no more. They were not bombing the town but the following incident took place. There was an ammunition factory in Kowel but just before the war started the Poles moved it to another place. The Germans knew where to find it all. The soldiers had no arms, but the ammunition depots were full. The population had little to eat but there was plenty of food stored away. In Kowel a bomb fell on the building where the ammunition factory used to be. What barbarians the Germans are. They even bombed churches and other objects to get the civilian population out of their houses.

Sept 16
The weather was wonderful, like in July. I walked around in my peasant dress and sandals. We sunbathed. Witus was adorable. In the evening we listened to the radio next door where Mr. Bernheim lived. We began thinking of leaving Kowel for the Germans were getting close for they already reached Brzesc. We also heard that Bereza Kartuska, the prison where my father was held, was blown up. We did not know what to do, this news was most depressing for us, but we decided to move on since we left Warsaw to escape from the Germans and we would not let them catch us here.

Sept 17
We leave Kowel. We arranged with the Bernheim to meet on the eighth mile. Those first miles were awful for we were driving on a bridge that was supposed to be blown up any moment. There were hundreds of vehicles abandoned on the road either for lack

of gasoline or broken down. We met our friends as arranged and turned off on a side road. Planes were flying constantly in all directions. We had a terrible moment while crossing a white field. We jumped out of the car and ran some distance from it, for they always bombed cars. We lay on the bare ground, which shook under our bodies. One of the pilots took a good look at us.

Sept 18
We arrived in Maniewicz. No trace of the war. We arrived to a nice pension and arranged for a price of 5 zl per person. They greeted us with a wonderful breakfast. What wasn't there? Cream, eggs, ham, sugar, coffee. All together like in the best of times. They gave us three beautiful rooms with bedding, water, etc. We were enchanted. The sun was shining and everybody was sunbathing. For dinner we got chulent. For dinner everything disappeared. Wherever we arrived hunger started. It was here the same way as in Kowel. In one afternoon everything changed. We met a lot of friends from Warsaw and Lodz.

September 19
There was nothing to be found in the village. Long lines in front of every little store. The army occupied the rooms in the pension. We stayed on in two rooms without bedding and without warm water. The men had to work all day long to pump the water or chop the wood. All of us had to stand in line for bread from 4 am and often one returned without any, frozen and hungry. That's how life was. For a piece of soap, one had to wait an hour.

September 20
One day passed just like another. New people were arriving all the time. The owner of the pension was after money. He raised the price to 10 zl per day, despite the fact that we only got potatoes twice a day. In that pension there were about 50 men, us and 6 women. Most arrived without wives. Everybody envied Henry. Ala did not understand this. The Bernheims had a weak and sickly boy who had a crush on me and showed it by constantly bringing me bobby pins. (What else could he give me during the war when even those were of value?)

September 21
The Russians entered Poland. We thanked God for that, for we preferred to be less well fed and dressed by the Russians than to be persecuted by the Germans. The Russian entrance to the villages was quite amusing. Their planes first circled around the villages. The Polish communists were let out of jail into command. Everywhere there were red flags to show solidarity. At last we could take off the black papers from the windows and there was light. The police enforced an evening curfew so people couldn't go out on the streets at night. Everybody was wearing kerchiefs and poor clothing, so as not to look like a bourgeoisie.

September 22
One praised the communist system. Individuals appeared spreading Socialist propaganda in Polish. They were written in poor Polish, but a lot of people let themselves be convinced. The soldiers were asked many questions to which they gave long and detailed answers. Each one of them was good at propaganda. They talked about equality and doing away with the middle class. (It sounds good but awful to live with.)

September 23
Our car, after having gone on the bad roads, had a broken undercarriage and a broken brake. Henry found a blacksmith who copied the undercarriage. He lay under the car all day long attaching it. After a few hours the Russians came and took away all cars. It was a terrible blow to us for they had taken away the last roof over our heads. They admired the beauty of our car, they had never seen one like it in their lives. My mother was standing in line for bread when she saw a Russian driving away our car. One can imagine how she felt.

September 24
Witus was most unhappy about the loss of the car. What a sweet boy. He well understood what it meant to lose the car. But we soon forget about it because we had so many other problems. All day we walked around the streets looking to buy something warm to wear. All the refugees were looking for warm shirts and hats and other clothing. One couldn't wash anything, there was no soap. From one day to the next everybody looked poor from lack of food and from worries. The only one who was well off was the landlord who was sitting on his stack of salt, sugar and flour.

September 25
Slowly people are beginning to leave this godforsaken village. The trains began to run. There were no tickets to be bought. One did not know when and in what direction the train would go. The good news arrived that Praga would belong the Russians and we were already all ready to back to our jaroslaw. My mother already rented all the rooms in our houses. A lot of commotion, everyday is getting ready to go. People have found new energy. But all that was just illusion.

September 26
We decided to leave the village. We went to the railroad station to find out if there are any trains going in the direction of Sarna. Nobody knows anything. We just waited around. At 10 the train left. We all jammed ourselves into it and traveled day and night. The train looked awful, it was full of holes from gunshots. It was very cold because there was no glass in the windows and no light.

September 27
Were dragging and dragging and dragging. The train stops every few minutes. It stopped for seven hours. We met the brothers called Kakanow. They left, like everyone else, with knapsacks on their back. They gave us bread and meat. It was green old horsemeat and we ate it. We even gave it Witus. They also gave us some raw vegetables. They were wonderful people and even though they left their wives and children behind, they didn't give up hope. My schoolteacher always used to say that those alive don't give up hope.

September 28
We traveled through the night and arrived in Baranowicz. They told us to get out of the train. In the waiting rooms we saw many disarmed polish soldiers who slept on benches and the floor. We hardly found a place to sit. We spent the night never talking to one another, and everyone was quietly crying. Hard to imagine this sight without having seen it.

September 29
What joy! In the morning there was another train leaving. Thousands of people jammed into it. At the end of the day we reached Sarna. The train did not run at night and they didn't let anyone go out into the station or the city so they put us on the sidetrack. We were freezing, we had no food and somehow we lasted that way until the morning.

September 30
We got out of the train and boarded the one that was going to Wilno. We saw a train standing at the station marked "for Warsaw." WE were tempted to get into it but we boarded the one for Wilno. Here (Sarna) the Russians were distributing bread and tea. Finally the train started. There was no question of coach class for there were only freight trains, meant to carry coal. As long as it was daytime we could stand it but once it got dark it was terribly cold. The train the stopped and we didn't know what was to happen next.

October 1
We arrived in Wilno early in the morning. It was so pleasant to see normal life (if it's possible to have normal life with the

Russians). Children were going to school and it was hard to believe wit my own eyes that people looked more of less normal. After everything we'd been through I didn't believe that it was possible to lead a normal life. We went for dinner across from the station and paid 24 zl for a poor dinner which to us seemed royal. We couldn't find an apartment but Henial found his old friends the Rabinowiczes, who took us in.

October 2

After the first decent night of sleep we got up refreshed and started looking for a place to live. They had a beautiful apartment but everything was hidden away from the Russians. One could tell ever without the paintings, rugs and crystals. They were very hospitable.

October 3

Mother and Henial spent the whole day looking for a place o live, I went for a walk with Jozio and we only realized that we were in Wilno when we saw a painting of the Virgin Mary from Ostrobrama. We remembered we were in a city full of historical treasures, but no passersby took their hats off because Russians did not allow it. In the evening Mother came with the news that she found a place to life, far away in the Jewish neighborhood. The apartment was very dirty but the people decided to rent it to us because otherwise the Russians would requisition part of it (it was quite big).

October 4

With our two bags we moved to the new place. It was a tiring walk and we finally arrived. It was terrible. We go through three courtyards and we almost break our legs on the stones. Once in the apartment we found the people quite pleasant but everything dirty, all around. We rented two rooms, one decent size, and one tiny, with seven of us to live there. At night we were sitting around two beds and one sofa with out any bedding.

October 5

We get up after a sleepless night and go searching for beds. We remembered Mrs. Vobruckies, who we stayed with in the summer at Druskieniki and thought she might have a bed. This poor woman really saved our lives because she gave us a few pillows and sheets. Others gave us folding beds and blankets. In other words we begged for all this. All of us are tall so everything we got was too short.

October 6

We managed to arrange ourselves in the two rooms and the Milejkw had the rest. Dirt everywhere, no toilets but boxes which one had to take out. Since 11 people were using it this was not a simple matter. In the kitchen it was very dirty and very tight. The building belonged to 13 families. Mr. Milejkw was one of the richest Jews in town. He had his own tile factory and some houses. I couldn't understand why they lived the way they did.

October 7

It was decided that Hanna and I would go to school. We chose the Jewish school called Epsteina and Szpeizera. We went there in the morning with Mother and were well received. We had no papers to show but they accepted us and put us in the appropriate grades. We didn't have to pay because refugees were freed from it. Mr. Morgenstain came for me and took me to the classroom and the first girl I met was Adasia Burszctean. It is a co-ed school, it is amusing, and I'll have to get used to it.

October 8

I went dutifully to school in the morning but it wasn't quite normal because it lasted only 'til noon. There was no set curriculum, for the war disrupted it. There were arguments when Germans were coming in and then the Russians changed things, but I got out of the habit of studying and could only think of having my father here. In the afternoon I joined the Jewish library

where I found a lot of good books in Polish.

October 9
I go to school as usual, try to learn with all of them but have not been able to buy the books and there was no one to borrow from. At the end one of the higher level students lent me some books. There were hardly any notebooks and we had to be very economical with the few we had. In the afternoons, almost everyday, I went to do some homework with my friends. I caught up with Algebra, but I couldn't catch up with Latin. They were in a very high level and I never lived in peace with Latin. And all the translations and words just wouldn't go into my head. In Polish we were studying Proust and Orzeszekowa.

October 10
The question arises in my mind of what is new at home. Everything is the same but that does not mean it is good. There is next to nothing to eat, no sugar, only black bread that we get through connections without having to wait in line. The Milekowskis had all the food. They had hoarded sacks of sugar, flour, salt and potatoes. What more could they want? The old one baked white rolls every week, and the children ate it with lots of lots of sugar. That is life! We had nothing and they were swimming in everything. I am not envious of them but every now and then I really longed for the food they had.

October 11
School is okay. New things happen all the time and I can't say myself if I prefer a coeducation school, but one thing I can say that I became more natural. I was not shy but it helped being together with boys that I didn't care whether I was talking to either boys or girls. Boys in my class (4^{th} year of gymnasium) are terribly childish in comparison to the girls. I noticed in the school there were two levels depending on the subject. The boys were raising the level in subjects like math and Latin, and the girls in Polish and history.

October 12
I'm in school and to my surprise arrives Alek Szatensztajn. He tells me that Krysia Bychowska is in Wilno. I had a hard time believing him, but after all a lot of people left the way we did. After school I went to the address given and found her. It was the whole Bychowska family without Richard, with Monika, the Bychowska and Krysia. When we met we were kissing and hugging. It was wonderful to see someone from Warsaw. They like us came without anything.

October 13
I met Krysia after school and we decided she would come to the same school. She was delight d at the thought of a co-ed school. When I came home it was like always - potato soup or cabbage soup, without meat. My mother and Ala alternated cooking and cleaning up. The Milekowskis were awful. She was mad at me if I helped my mother. In general she didn't like us because Hanna and I were tall, and her bastards were small fat and ugly.

October 14
A new plan developed. Henial and Jozo decided to travel to Bialystok to shop. They returned at night with a few loaves of bread, butter, a bit of cheese. Butter was worth its weight in gold. Besides that they bought some fabric to invest a bit of money, hoping when the value would stabilize they could sell it. The material was very ugly and they paid 16 zl for a meter. They didn't get any potatoes. In Bialystok he met Reginka Warszawski (my mother's cousin), who has a bad scar on her face that she got on the way. We got the first news that our house in Warsaw is standing.

October 15
Sine they couldn't buy everything they wanted in Bialystok so

they went to Bruskieniki today. The brought a sack of potatoes from there and this way we had a supply for three or four weeks. Everyone lived just with the though of tomorrow because one couldn't think ahead of time. When they arrive there was great joy in the house and we through ourselves at the bread like wild men. We were satisfied with everything except for missing father. There was no news of what could have happened to him. He could have just gone to Lwow. We wrote to some relatives of his there but they had no news of him, but invited us to come and stay with them.

October 16
We found out that there was a woman in Wilno who was in the Bereza Kartuska. Of course mother went there right away and found out that the woman was imprisoned because she sat on a telephone. She doubts that we will get help from the English. To our joy she told us that everybody was let out of the prison when the Russians were coming close. She though that all the Jews went towards Wilno and the Germans to Warsaw. We were terribly afraid that my father went to Warsaw. Maybe he didn't get the package. We told each and everyone we met that if they ever meet a Mr. Roth to tell him that his family is in Wilno.

October 17
In school I meet more and more girls in boys in my class. In the fourth year there was a whole group of us refugees from Warsaw who spent a lot of time together and did not study much. I tried hard but couldn't. Actually the real reason I went to school was to somehow spend the time and not be in the apartment. It was impossible for everyone to be there at the same time. Even after dinner I would go out not to take up space.

October 18
More and more we felt the lack of clothes. I really was cold and put on all the sweaters and underwear I had. It was only the middle of October. I was not only cold because of the temperature but because of the poor diet. Mother and Ala worked terribly hard, they looked awful. They slaved like horses all day for nothing. The cooking of the dinner was mainly hours of peeling potatoes, which were our basic food. I don't know why I'm writing so much about food but that was our main thought and subject of conversation.

October 19
Ala wanted to go back to Warsaw all the time and she couldn't get used to the hard work, she wasn't used to taking care of Witus and since she had no one to help her, she had to learn. Witus became more and more attached to her and forgot Stefcia (the woman who took care of him in Warsaw). He is a sweet child and even the Milekowskis liked him and supplemented his diet with additional food. This was important to him because he was very thin.

October 20
From time to time were would hear from Warsaw. When the first postcard arrived we jumped for joy and tore it out of each other's hands. Unfortunately the correspondence in that part of Poland was very laconic. There was no news, so the only thing it brought was a sign of life and recognition of handwriting. The only entertainment was listening to he 9 o' clock news in Polish from London. They had a box where you advertised if you were looking for any one, we also wrote there to let all our relatives know where we were. We had no idea where Norbert, Hala, William or our grandparents were.

October 21
In those days there were constant rumors and gossips. People were finding each other with the help of what they called the shoe post office or one lady said so. But somehow even the smallest rumor came true, sometimes partly true, but there was always some truth in it. Now there were rumors that the Lithuanians are supposed to

come to Wilno. They even mentioned this on the radio. That would be wonderful news if true. The whole world would be available to us. We could communicate and correspond because here with the Bolshevicks one wasn't allowed to put one's head out into the world. We hope to meet with our father, but we worried that he might have going in the other direction, and that would terrible.

October 22
More and more one hears the rumors about the Lithuanians, and it was confirmed by the London radio. From that moment the Russians started looting and taking everything out of the city. From the smallest items to the largest factories. They sent everything right away into the depths of Russia. People had to give up everything unless they managed to hide it. In school there was a lot of commotion. The language taught changed so there was no real question of studying. The main problem was that there was no fuel, so there was not school for almost two weeks.

October 23
Thank God this day came. It was probably the best day that we could have. I came home from school and I see all smiling and happy faces. What happened? We had my father. One gentleman came in the morning and gave us the address of where my father was. Jozio was afraid to tell it to his sister because he was afraid she would faint. But he came into the room with such a change of expression that she right away knew. He was in Siemiatycze, almost on the border of Germany and Russia. It was wonderful that he's alive but we wanted him here right away.

October 24
Hanio left for Siemiatycze in the morning and we expected him back in four or five days. We were very worried that in meantime they would close border. We sat at home and waited. Every day was as long as a year. Trains were not running normally, and we didn't know if any were going to Siemiatycze. Maybe Hanio will have to go by foot. We gave him a supply of food, in case.

October 25
The next day I went to school while Ala and Mother took care of the cooking, etc. Came back from school and it was all quiet when all of a sudden the doorbell rang and here came in my father. Everybody started crying when we actually saw him. He looked awful but that is nothing, he will get better. He greeted us very elegantly with flowers for my mother and Ala. First thing we did was pack him away in bed, knowing what he went through.

October 26
First day together with him after almost two months of separation. Mother didn't know what was happening to her. Father told us that he wrote to a man he know in Brzcez asking him for a loan and that man right away started telling everyone that Mr. Roth has no money and is asking for some from him. This is how the friend who came to notify us knew where he was. He told us now that he did receive the sweater that Hanio brought him but he never suspected or guessed that we were nearby. After he left the prison, he went towards Warsaw and even contacted my grandparents. He went together with the German prisoners but didn't get far because they did not want to take a Jew.

October 27
He even told us that he sent a messenger to my grandmother but she refused to give him anything. He sent him out a second time but he didn't come back, so probably the Germans caught him. He told us about the torture s he went through, but on the whole but on the whole preferred not to talk or think about it. He has a very good nature; he forgives everything and tries to forget. He pays back everybody who did him wrong with good. Maybe that is why God watched over him. But he looked awful, the hair started growing back on his head. His toes were wounded and so were his

knees, for they had to exercise in the Bereza for endless hours. A lot of innocent people were imprisoned and the spies went free.

October 28
Happy day has arrived. The Lithuanians are entering. Everybody is openly happy except for a few communists. Early in the morning I went out with some friends to greet them. We were standing out on the main street, Mickiewicza, where they were supposed to come through. At 10 o'clock the first soldiers appeared (of the brave and heroic army). Everybody was shouting and throwing flowers at the soldiers. On the other side the Russians were leaving with load of everything they took away. Many people were meeting their families. It lasted about an hour, for three tanks and a few machine guns and 20 motorcyclists.

October 29
We were getting up lightheaded with lots of plans. We were getting letters and cards but right away on this first day the Poles organized a progrom of the Jews. The Lithuanians were not yet organized ad the police were not stationed around. I returned home the back way because awful characters were standing around. Mother with Jozio went to the market, When I came home they hadn't returned yet. While they were in the market, they attacked Jozio. He started running and they took him to the police. The same thing would have happened to her if a Polish man hadn't pushed her into a house gate saying, "she's ours" (they thought she wasn't Jewish).

October 30
She started looking for him in all the various offices because she knew that he was wounded. Finally she found him in one of the police stations and he was being held as a prisoner. She went to every acquaintance trying to get help. Finally she went to a lawyer who didn't help much but paved the way to the chief and there mother arranged it by herself. He promised to let him out the next morning. We felt that all the time we had to get somebody out of prison.

October 31
At 8 o'clock Jozio came back with a head wound. He looked terrible. His wound was treated. We hope it will heal soon. Jozio told us that the prison, called Lukiszki, was a beautiful modern prison built on the American model, for all the cells faced into one huge hall. He felt a lot better after he was washed and spent a few days in bed.

November 1
Father was getting better, slowly. We had more and more food available. The Lithuanian promised to supply us with everything, but we didn't have enough clothes. Father didn't even have pajamas, but he accepted everything, he was so happy to be with his family. Mother was very much changed, she was constantly worried about her parents. We get unsatisfactory news every now and then. There are people who go over the so-called green border with messages and whenever we get an answer from Warsaw, one can see they are afraid to write. Everything is censored.

November 2
Things were improving, we had a problem getting used to the lits. So far Wilno was separated from the rest of Lithuania and one had to get a pass to go to Kaunas (the capital). Mr. Luboscki received a pass to go there and father gave him the telephone number of Mary Roth in Zurich to call her. We were hoping to find out about our whole family, where they are and what they're doing. The post should be working soon. We tried to get our janitor in Warsaw to bring our things, but to no avail. We cannot hope to get our things.

November 3
Mr. Luboscki came back with the following news for us: Wilhem,

since September, is in America. My paternal grandparents, Adolf and Bianca, are in Palestine. Halla and Norbert are in Finland because on the way they canceled their visas to Australia. All good news. They all were terribly worried about us because they didn't hear from us for such a long time. Today I went, for the first time, to the theater to see a play called "Let's Be Happy About Life." I was happy together with the performers.

November 4
I continue to go to school. I met more and more girls and boys, not only in my class. Now I can think about pleasant things. I had no choice of clothes. I was very popular with the boys because in the school of Epstein one girl was more ugly than the next. When I appeared everything changed. I know that I'm no beauty but not bad looking and shapely. I, in my one old worn out dress, look better than they. They are dressed without much style or taste. The boys were better. They didn't look different from boys in Warsaw.

November 5
Fewer problems with food, they instituted ration cards, but really only to have some order. The only problem we had was with lits. We were one of the first to have them because we are getting dollars from Switzerland, and it is easy to exchange. We were beginning to think about moving out from the Milekowskis. We were terribly crowded and on top of it they were expecting their future son-in-law. They were trying to make the place neat but it was too dirty. Mother started looking for another place.

November 6
In school there are constant changes and rumors bout the official language we are to be taught in. Some say the school will be closed. There are no regular classes and we really just go to school to amuse ourselves. Hardly anyone looks at a book. Krysia spends her whole day walking around the streets with boys.

November 7
Good news. Mother found a new apartment. I don't know where it is but I'm happy to get out of all this dirt. The main problem was the heating and we have to take care of that ourselves. We did manage to get some coal, and with our baggage, which consisted of one suitcase, we moved in the morning. It was wonderful feeling the previous night to look forward to the move.

November 8
In the morning I went there with mother. It was wonderful to see two nice clean rooms. There was a bedroom, which was nicely furnished, and a room for my sister and me, with two beds and a desk. Besides it was very warm. For dinner we went to a hotel, Vessalu. It wasn't bad. Hanio, Jozio, Halla and Witus stayed on with Milejkowskis, because they were used to them and they were very nice to Witus and gave him extra privileges. We were getting lots of mail from our family, who were very worried about us.

November 9
Mother was awfully tired and worn out. We didn't want her to cook. Mrs. Wazynska, our landlady, proposed that she will cook for us for a reasonable price, and we agreed. The Wazynkas were very amusing people. He an old soldiers, cross-eyed and stuttering, and at the same, a ladies man. She a good woman, very much in love with him. "Up to the ears" (a Polish saying). He was now out of work, so they had little to live on. They rented two out of the four rooms to us, and she, to increase her income, was selling food. She stared with us and was hoping it would develop into more of a business.

November 10
I met in school a terribly handsome boy from the 8th year. He came up to me a few hours later and asked me to go to the theatre with him. He saw that I was very hesitant because it seemed too fast, so he proposed very properly that I take a friend and he take a

friend. He would bring somebody called to Lonka Szapiro and I would bring Krysia. We made a date for tomorrow. Krysia was very glad to come with me and she was eager to meet these boys.

November 11
I dressed as well as I could. They came for me and then we went to go pick up Krysia. The boys were very amusing and had a good sense of humor. We picked up Krysia and I would have never recognized her. That was Krysia all right. Her mother was not at home and she was in her mother's clothes and make-up. She was all painted up. We went to the theater and saw a play called, "It's Time for a Waltz." It was very nice and they took me back home afterwards.

November 12
We were beginning to lead a normal life, and decided to learn new languages, because we go nothing out of the school. I went to Mrs. Krasmy, who was supposed to be the best English and French teacher in town. Since we were thinking of going to Canada it would be good to learn English, but I already knew some French, so I continued with that. I made strides in French. I had lessons very often for we decided that if I improve my French quickly I would then start in English. So life under the Lithuanians became very different from that under the Communists.

November 13
That's life. It goes quickly forward and waits for no one. Some get rich on war and others lose everything. In October all we wished for was to find my father before my birthday. That's the one present I wanted to have. And now we wanted to leave before his birthday comes (December 15). In Wilno there are an awful lot of refugees. Almost all of Jewish Warsaw you can meet here. People are badly dressed and look terrible. The only thing that saves them all is the America JOINT. They dispensed breakfast and dinner for free. They arranged rations for underwear and organized a clubroom where you could read the latest newspapers and find out the news of the world.

November 14
We were constantly meeting new refugees who are crossing the green border, all from either Russia or Germany. Ala still was hoping to go back to Warsaw but at the end she decided not to do it. She even had false papers, but at the end the coward in her won out. Too bad she didn't go. She would have come back with a lot of our things. We all together gave up on seeing our house the way we left it. It's really better not to think about it especially since we're all together and in better circumstances. We are in a warm place and we should not complain since we are one of the few that have enough money.

November 15
The hope is the mother of the stupid (Polish saying), but it's not really proven. One has to have hope to live. You have to have hope to balance your life and the want to life. I'm always full of hope but even I sometimes lose it. We are constantly getting letters and telegrams. Father works full-time on possibilities of leaving. We had great hopes because Willham started preparation before the war and he in happily now in America. We are trying to get passes to Kowel because there are all the consulates and offices that we need. All the ship lines, banks, etc. Maybe in a short time father with have a reason to go there. We are never sure of anything with the Russians on our necks.