

Ma

LIONEL/LINDA-MELANIE/PAUL

Zelda? She should tell the story of his heritage? AS if she knows. How would Zelda know? Zelda knows she had an Auntie Leah. What does Zelda know?

Morry - Who told you about that, Ma?

Zelda told me she got a letter - he wants to know something about -- to me he didn't write - to Esther, with Sid's Esther he corresponds.

Morry - Boomie? Boomie, yeh. But Sylvia says she doesn't hear from him. She hears nothing, she says. He doesn't write and she doesn't hear from him.

Morry - Esther might tell him stories about Bobbe, and this and that. I suppose Sylvia probably doesn't tell. It's not talked about.

Sonya didn't know about such things, and I believe Zelda also didn't know. Zelda didn't know anything about what went on there- how her mother came and from where she came. I know a lot because Pa , may he rest in peace, and Ma, used to talk about what happened in the old country. One time, there arrived - it appeared in the paper, that they are seartching for the Dvochbovna. A general died, and they are looking for the Dvochbovna family. If anyone of that name should read this, they should respond. And Uncle Laizer - his name was Dvochbovna- Ma's brother - sorry, her Uncle, not a brother. Mother had 2 Uncles, and 4 brothers of grandfather's. 2 of them were caught when they were 8 years old and taken to the Army. One of the two became a General. He didn't know where he came from - he was only 8 years old then- but he thaouht there must have been something, a fight. But he didn't know what. But he knew that his name was Dvochbovna. So Laizer went looking but couldn'g find anything. If there had been money to pay a lawyer, they would have searched and found who he is. There were those that were actually found, and it turned out they left a great fortune.

But our bunch didn't know. Two brothers were left, and when they died, it was difficult to have them buried, because they weren't registered. At that time, people were afraid to register boys; girls were registered, but not boys. Because they were caught as children and taken to the army.

What year was that, Ma? I don't know, it wasn't during my time. I'm telling you, it was Grandpa's brother, my Mother's father's brother, so you can figure out when that must have been. I suppose, maybe in the 1800s, or maybe the 1700s. I remember the other Uncle, but he was an old man, and when we came he used to tell -- What will be, he used to say, when I will die? What will they do with me? I remember when he died. Ma went and Pa went. I don't know what they did, whether they paid someone or what. They weren't registered at birth, so there was no proof they had lived. So they couldn't die. In Yiddish, at the Rabbi's, he was registered. In the small towns it was done. Buried and finished.

Weren't there those who went to tell? Nonsense, they never went out of the house. What did he do? He taught, he had a Cheder there, and that's the way it was.

So, there was a General, and he died. His name was different, Russian, but they looked for the Dvochbovna family. A lawyer would have cost a great deal.

And the Dvochbovna was????

He was a brother to my Mother's father, Moishe. You were named after him. Bobbe's name was Dvochbovna? Yes. When Laizer came to America, he was called Bobbin. From Dvochbovna. Could they say Dvochbovna? So he said Bobbin.

When Isaac came over here he was about 18 years old. He came to the States. My father had a sister in Philadelphia. So he went straight there and he was at the Aunts' 2 years. Until he had to appear before the draft, when he had to go to the army.

Pa would have to pay \$500 if he didn't show up, and Pa didn't have any \$500 to pay. So he came home. He was altogether two years in the States. He saved \$500 there and came back to Russia with the money. But he didn't want to give up the money. He was short, not tall enough, so he thought they wouldn't take him. He came home, and MOther tried to make him fat, so that in the end he was wider than tall. She fed him butter and milk. So they examined him and let him go. He was with us about 6 months, and then he went back. After 6 months there, he sent for Pa. He was 21 when he went back; it was the time the Titanic went down, you remember? He was supposed to go on the Titanic, but it was over-reserved. He couldn't get on it, so he took another boat. When this boat got to the place where the Titanic went down, they could still see the iceberg. He wrote us that it was very cold, but the Captain asked everybody to go up on deck, and they could see the iceberg in the distance. They were dressed in readiness to jump into the sea should anything happen. It was a few months later, but the iceberg was still on the water.

6 months after Pa left, we sold the house. Where we worked, was also like a small house, so we made two rooms out of it and sold it, too. And with this money, the whole family started out. Moiseh, Sid, Shy, I and Mother. Mother had two sisters, and since their Mother was in America, they had no money for the trip. Mother wouldn't leave her sisters behind., and she had enough money from the sale of the house to take them along. In the end, they went and we were turned back. The Mime Manya and the Mime Esther. Manya you remember, but not Esther. They turned us back because of Sherman - they wouldn't let him on the ship. Pa was in America with Isaac, so we couldn't do anything about it.

They wouldn't let us on the boat because America wouldn't take in a blind person, so the Captain wouldn't let him on the ship. Mother wanted Moishe to go, but he said, who would stay here with us? Sherman was only 6 years old, and Sid was 8 years old.(It took another 9 years) And then, the war and the revolution broke out. We couldn't receive any letters. We didn't have anything to live on.

About two years after we were turned back, Morris went. He managed to get out just before the war started. If he hadn't left, he would also have been in the army. He said that the three in America, Pa, Isaac, and he, would then be able to send for the rest of the family. They managed to work something out - they got an affidavit from the government that although he, Sherman, was blind, as long as he had no disease in his eyes, they would let him come in.

All the papers arrived, and we could have gone, but the revolution had started and no one could leave. Money we didn't have; they didn't know where we were, and we didn't know where they were. But somehow, I remembered the address. Actually, it was on all the mail, but when the bandits came in, they tore up all the cushions looking for money. Everything was torn up and thrown out and I had nothing to show. When we came to the boat we had nothing to show, but they examined Sherman. I guess it must have been luck. The doctors that examined Sherman were very nice. They sat and talked to him. Whatever they asked him, he asked back. So they said he was an exceptional boy. He won't get lost even if he's blind.

What happened during the time when you first couldn't get on the ship because of Sherman, and the time you did manage to get on?

It took 9 whole years! When Sherman came here he was 14 years old.

So what year was it when you all came over here?

1921. In 1913, just before the war, we returned to Russia, to Korsun. We were supposed to take the ship in Germany, in Hamburg. If we had gone as we should have, it would have been from Hamburg, in Misslevitch, I remember. From there to England, where we would take the large ship to America, to Canada.

Did you get to Hamburg? The first time, sure, we even got to Berlin. There was a committee there, and we thought maybe they could do something for us, but they couldn't. So we returned to Russia, to Oshana, but we stopped in Korsun where Mime Chai Feige lived.

Ah, so before you started coming here, you live in Oshana? Ya.

Was that also in the Ukraine? Ya, in the Ukraine. And when you went back you stayed in Korsun? It's not far, about 25 miles from where we lived. Also a small town. And from Kiev it was overnight by train - not far from Kiev. So when the war started and we didn't have anything to show - no, wait, that was not the war, that was the revolution already. If it wasn't for the revolution, we wouldn't have been able to start out. We didn't have money; we didn't have anything to go by train with. When the revolution started, you could go anywhere. If the train ran, anyone could jump on and go. There were no bosses, no authority. Wherever there was a little band of soldiers, or bandits, so they started to run the train and you went wherever they wanted to go - the communists, sure, so they started to run the train. When we got on we rode for about 30 miles, and then it stopped. We were sitting on the platforms. It wasn't closed cars - the ones they run freight. We sat for about 10 days before they put another engine to it and they pulled us a little further. It took us a year to get to Moscow.

We got into Moscow. We didn't have anything and it was in December - very cold there - about 40 below. And I didn't have any shoes, and I made a pair from rags. With spools from cotton I made the heels. That's how I walked. We didn't have anything to eat so what could we do. So I went out to the market to see what I can try. So I bought some apples, and we were sitting near the barracks. We had a couch; the family had a couch. We were sleeping on that couch and eating on that couch. There were bandits in the barracks, not soldiers. But the Germans were still there. The Russians fought the Germans till they drove them out, and when they left, anybody who got hold of a gun became a big shot.

So we didn't have any papers. There was no place to go in and take a paper saying we were so many and who we were. So I made up a paper myself; Mother's age, my age, Shy's.

There was a set-up there already, so I went in, asked him to sign it, he put his stamp on it, and that was it. That's how we got out.

When we got to Moscow, they looked at the paper. "What have you got here? You have nothing here. Where are you from? Who are you? What are you? Where are you going?" "We are going to America." He laughed at me. "What are you going to do there?" "We have family there." Now, that's a different story. We'll see what we can do. They were the V.Cha.Ka - like the KGB. And once you were in there, you were afraid you would never get out of there.

Va.Cha.Ka is a Russian word? A Russian word - I don't recall what it meant, but it was the new leadership. If you can go into the VaChaKa you can get a visa. So how do you get into the VaChaKa? And I can see a mob of people standing there. We weren't the only ones who wanted to go; the whole world was running and travelling to hell and gone. This one was going to America, that one to wherever. We were 6 families from our town. There was a family that came back to visit their parents, got stuck there and couldn't go back. And there were families where the husbands were in America so that he shouldn't have to go to war. From the dowry and from the few dollars the bride had, he ran away and she remained behind. Those were the kind of couples - we were about 10 families travelling together, all sitting together at the station. We didn't know them, we simply gathered together. After all, I was alone with Mother and Sherman.

And with Sid?

No, Sid was here by then.

THen this was the second time?

Yes, the second time. Sid left just at the start of the revolution. We left later. We had to wait for the fare.

How did Sid get away?

Well, he was a barber. He learned the trade. He'll come here, what will he do? He'll be a barber, so he'll have something to do. And he was short; he couldn't reach the people to give the haircuts so he was standing on a chair. But he was a good barber, and all the big shots that were officers before the trouble, the revolution, they liked him and went to him for haircuts. Then he started working on them - he wants to go to America. How can you fix it for me to go? So they told him- Come, we'll get you onto the train, and you'll go. They actually gave him a pass, a pass he should be able to get to the border. After the border, he would be clear. So that's how he went. He came back - it didn't take him as long as it took us. He didn't travel alone, he went with Mime Manya, and with Sonya. (Esther went earlier, not Manya?)

Eizik had sent money to Sonya from America. In those times we were still getting money from America. With that money Sonya bought a ticket. Sid also got money, and they left on the train. They travelled through Japan. Sid and Sonya were in Japan. It took them about 5 months to get there.

But it took us 2 years. So we came to Moscow - Mother, Shy, and myself. The others, the 10 families, were also there, and none of us could get away. I was the first one to get a visa. I used to go every day, trying to get a pass to get out of there. I went in there; there were a few Jews sitting and writing. A Jew you could recognize. I looked at one I thought was Jewish, so I said something to him in Yiddish and saw that he understood what I said. Then I spoke to him in Russian, told him we were left all alone, the whole whole story, how it happened and what happened, that we're alone and we want to get accross, and all I have is this paper. That, he said, you can throw it away, that's nothing. But at least, I know their names, I said, and that's something. OK, he said, and wrote something on the paper. He said - if you can get into the VCHKA, try to see Madam Rabek. Go and see Madam Rabek. (I still remember the name!)

So I went there. There were armed soldiers at the entrance. One of them took a look at me, a girl barefoot and dressed in a sack, and said to me, where do you think you're going? I want to see Madam Rabek. What, you want to see Madam Rabek? I want to talk to her. He says No, and starts yelling at me. And I shout louder.

It so happened that she was sitting accross the hall, writing, and she heard us. In Russian, she said, WHat's the matter? Since I was already on the inside, I answered her directly. She told me to come in, so I felt relieved. If she asked me to come into the room?

Who are you, and where do you come from?

She was a Russian, and powerful. But a woman is different. Listen, she said to me, I'll give you my signature, but you still have to cross Finland. There are consuls that have to give you a transit visa. It's up to him. If he's a good man, he'll give it to you. I'll give you my signature.

I was told that her visa had to be the first one, and she gave it to me.

So I asked her where would I find the Latvian Consul. She gave me the address, and I went there. He was a Chalerieh, and anti'semite like you've never seen. As soon as he saw me come in, he said "Zhidovka? Where are you going?" I don't have a land, so where could I be going? So I answered, I'm going to America, and you have to give me a visa.

I don't have to, if I want to, I can give you a viza, he said. He held us up a whole year. If your not giving me the viza this time, I said, I'm bringing my mother and my brother here, and do whatever you want. You can feed us. You can see my position- how I am. And my mother, she's barefooted too, like I am, and if you don't want, you feed us. And I left. When I got home and they saw me, those that travelled with us, they asked- Where did you get those papers? There was one that had returned had an affidavit from the States; she didn't have to wait, but she didn't know. She said she had some papers from America. Give me the papers, I said, and we'll see what you have there. A man who was standing nearby said he could read English. I recognized the stamp. It was like the one we had from Sherman. I went with her and worked everything out for her. She left before me. She was travelling with 3 other girls. I believe one of them was American born, and that's why she had the paper. She had a child there, and so they couldn't keep her. They left. We all exchanged addresses, so that we could stay in contact with each other when necessary.

And that's the address my father found in the newspapers from New York, No-sorry, he saw it in the Yiddish paper. He used to read the Forwards. She placed the notice in the Forwards. "Anybody knowing the whereabouts of" -She didn't know if he was in Canada or where. When Pa saw it, he called all the kids together, and told them that Mother was in Moscow. By that time, we were in Petrograd.

And did you get the papers you needed in Latvia?

Sure. I said to him - why are you sitting here? I'm here for the people that want to go to Latvia. That's what I want. I dont want anything from you, I'm not going to stay in Latvia. I'm going past Latvia - just let me in thro Latvia. You've got to give me that, that's what you'r here for. If you don't give it to me, I said, you'r an antisemite. It's because I'm Jewish, thats why you don't want to give me a viza. If you don't, I'll bring you the family. So he did - To get rid of you I'll give you the viza.

And what to do now? How do we move from here? We get to the border, and

How did you get to Petrograd from there?

are turned back, with the paper and everything. And then I got a letter from Canada.

On the platforms- from one place to the other. It took months to get from Moscow to Petrograd. The whole trip should take about 2 hours travel time; it took us about 3-4 weeks.

There, I sold apples. We had to eat, too. My God, it's a long story! And then they caught me with the apples. We were ready to leave, had all the papers, everything was fine. I still had a few apples to sell at the market, although selling was forbidden. I'm caught and taken to jail. Soldiers are standing there. I had, I guess, about 6-7 apples with me, and I said - Boys, have an apple. By the time I came into the jail, I had an empty basket; no more apples. The first man inside asked me why I was brought in. I don't know, I said. I was walking in the market, looking for something to buy, when they picked me up. They picked you up with an empty basket, he laughed?

Of course, the soldiers were hungry, so they ate. I knew there would be no apples left, so why arrest me? The jail was full. On the walls was written "smiet, hebreyen speculantn" (Death to Jewish speculators).

I, of course, am a Yidisher speculant. I'm inside, locked in, and Mother is left outside. Once inside, the others told me - Sit down, make yourself comfortable, you'll be here a long time. And I said, no, we have to leave here. This one says she's been here 6 months, another a year. And why is she there? Who knows? They probably caught her with a bun or something. Why is she sitting such a long time? Because you have to send in a prozini - explaining why she was apprehended, what crime she committed. And that can take years! But I said, I've got to go, I can't sit here. I have travel papers; I've been on the move for 2 years. I'm supposed to leave tomorrow.

All right, we'll see what will be. Meanwhile, a soldier comes in and asks who is ready to clean the office. Right away, I said I would. He took a look at me, and said - you? You won't be able to pick up the

pail. I weighed all of 80 pounds then. Never you mind, I said, I'll pick up the pail all right. Nobody else offered to go and wash the floors. I went into the office and saw that it was empty. But I see a bunch of papers on the desk. What can we do with those papers? I also sent in a prozeni - a request- . I looked through the pile and saw that mine was on the bottom. I quickly turned over the pile, and lo and behold, mine was now on the top!. And I remain sitting; no washing the floor. Then the man came in and sat at the desk. He took a look at me, and smiled. He understood that I was Jewish. So was he. He was a commandant, an officer.

Why are you sitting, he asks me? Sure, I came here to clean, so why am I sitting? What do you think, I asked him; do you think I am capable of picking up this pale? Whether you can or not, I'll help you, and he carried the pale into the room I was supposed to mop. Do the best you can.

Where is your prozeni? I sent it in yesterday. When were you brought in? Yesterday. Where is it? Must be on the desk. That's funny, you only sent it in yesterday, and it's already on top of the pile. He laughed. Why did they bring you in, you must have done something? I was afraid to tell him about selling the apples; the punishment for that was terrible. I said that I had afew apples with me, the boys were hungry, so they ate them. And so, he said, when you came in, you had nothing on you? They saw nothing on you when you were brought in? No, they saw only an empty basket. Then I told him that we were due to leave the next day, and that my mother was waiting outside the prison. I also told him about SHerman.

I'll give you the permit, and tomorrow you'll be free to go. That's how I got out of there.

We get to the border, and back we go gain.

Back to Petrograd, and to the office. They sent me where the soldiers were, to the barracks. Go back there and wait. They thought we're coming back from America so they prepared a special dinner for us.

The kitchen crew made fresh buns with chicken - a banquet. They thought we had come from America! If we crossed the border, then we must have come from America. They were out to show us how wonderful it was in Russia, so they made us a feast. And Sherman, you can imagine ! When he heard that, he started working on all the soldiers. He presented himself as an American. Everything said would immediately be forwarded to AMerica, he told them. It was a regular picnic! By the second day, they found us out.

Now where was I? Oh yes. We got a letter from Morry that he is coming to get us.

Now, where was I ..... Oh yes. We got a letter from Morry that he's coming to get us. But we couldn't get out on account of Sherman. He couln't and we couldn't either. So I called him back and I told him - Don't you dare come into Russia. Stay there, because I have all my papers and I can get accross to Riga. How did you let him know?. I called, on the phone, from the office. I showed them his letter that he's there and he wants to come in. Did I have a time of it!What to do with Morry? Never mind, i told him, stay there. And he did. We went accross and he was right there, at the station. When the train came to the Riga border, Morry was there.

Did he come from the States to Riga? Sure. He came from Canada. So he was standing waiting for us, there was a gate there. They wouldn't let him go through to see us, but he managed to shove a few dollars into my hand. How did you get through, I asked him? He said he had a passport. Back we went by train, we went by first class, in a compartment special for us. In Latvia a Yid was not supposed to get out there. We were locked in from one train to the other. And that's how we got to London.

Once in London,We thoughtwe would be allowed to board the ship, but we were stopped on account of him,they wanted to examine Sherman. We didn't have any papers for him. So the doctors spoke to him, and they all gave him a pass. We waited in London 8 days until our ship was due to leave. We travelled first class!

I shared a room with Ma, and Shy with Morry. Shy used to knock on the door - Wake up! It's a holiday, and we have to go and eat. Of course, on the boat our health improved. They fed Ma bacon. She didn't know what it was. They told her it was Griveness. Morry told her it was kosher. See that man with the beard, he told her? He's a Rabbi. Since we were a large family, they sat us all at the same table, and Morry told her it was because they were feeding us kosher food. When we got to Winnipeg, she went looking for the Griveness. Then Morry told her there were no Griveness available here. She found out later, and berated Morry for the mamzer that he was. But she admitted that they were good.

Here, in Winnipeg, it was a different story. We had a house ready for us, and we began to live, really live. Sherman was sent to school in Brantford. It didn't take very long - a few months. He was very kosher, too, but there he was unkoshered.

Where did you live in Winnipeg when you got there. I remember - we lived on Selkirk Ave. With the veranda.

Esther It's not where uncle Isaac lived tho?

No, he lived on Manitoba.

Do your remeber where we lived at Tessler's? It was on Stella, but I don't recall the corner. Selkirk and McKenzie! Now I remember. From there we moved to .....something like here in Kensington...it's on the tip of my tongue..... But we had a nice house - 5 rooms. It was a pleasure. You entered and there was a chair to sit on - that was already a pleasure. It was a rocking chair. When I sat on it, it was like sitting in the Kaiser's palace.

This is the end of the first part of Ma's recording of her experiences getting out of Russia. Now she's going to tell us about the town that they lived in in Russia.

It was a small town, about 50-60 families. My mother and my father were born - Father was from Uman and mother was from Tolna. They got married in Tolna, and when they got married they moved to Oshana. My father worked there, he had a little factory. He had about 4-5 people working for him. He used to go to the forest, bring wood, and bring them home and make barrels. But my mother had two sisters and two brothers from a second marriage. She died early, and the kids were left alone. Mother was the oldest of the family. She took the two girls with her, and also the two boys. The boys worked with my father. She had another sister, and after she married she came also to Oshana. But she didn't want to know about the other kids. They were not her~~s~~ sisters and brothers and she didn't want anything to do with them- she didn't want to know about them. Mother kept the two girls in the house. Whatever out children did, they did too. Until they got married. The Mima Mania was married before, but she lived in Uman after she got married. She didn't live in our town. And the other one lived in Shpola. Also a little town. And she lived there until she had her first and second baby. And then they heard that we were going to go to America, they came to say gooobye to us. And my mother at the same time sold both houses. For that money that she sold the houses she said she would take her sister with her. The younger one, because the younger one was sick. And Manya's (the older one) husband went away when we were turned back. Because he went with us. So she thought she would wait until he sends her money and go by herself. And this, she took the whole family, Fetter Yosel un zi and the two kids - I remember we walked the border, we didn't go by pass, so we had to steal into Germany - to Islovits. I carried on my back the little girl because she was too small - we walked in water. The little boy was already 5 years old, so he went with Moishe and the others carried him up and they walked through. THIS meant that when we were turned back her sisters went to America, and we came back.

What was the house like? THe house was one big room - it was called a stolero - a big room, everybody slept in that room. There was one

bedroom - father and mother slept in that bedroom. And whoever worked for my father, everybody slept in that room. But on different cots. The house was like this, a cot here ~~and~~<sup>left</sup> cot here, and a cot there. At the side of the room. 2 boys ~~selpt~~ on one place. The girls no - we had another place, it was just a kitchen and one room, so the girls slept in that room. When I was a little girl I also slept in that room. As a matter of fact, on Saturday mornings, the boys used to fight among themselves - Rochele, kim zu mir in bet. I was about 3-4 years old and everybody wanted me with him. But after when I got bigger, naturally, it was a different story. But we slept in one room, I on one cot, and Moishe un Sidney on another. That's how it was. When we sold, that's all I remember from that. Anything else I don't remember.

There was a stove? Of course, there was a kitchen, and a stove. The ovens were built in. On top was a place where we could sleep. In the winter time, when it was cold, we used to sleep on top of the oven. Two kids could sleep there-it was called "ariber". You would put in wood or straw, make a fire and then close it up - there was a chimney on top - we used to close the chimney and the heat kept warm the whole house. When we were kids we used to sit near the wall, because it was hot.

What was the house built of? The house was built of wood, and with lime, like clay, with straw they used to mix - like bricks. And then they used to break it up and put on Kolach, like you have in your house - whitewash, on the inside, and on the outside they put a little color in. The walls were the same thing on the inside and on the outside.

So it wasn't wood? I guess wood was only the frame, and they filled it in with those bricks. And it was warm, it wasn't like big houses, it was warm inside. The roof was covered with straw, and whenever the roof started to leak through, they took off that piece and put on another piece of straw, in the rain and snow and everything. They laid them one on top of the other, like a tile, and the rain could not go through. It was all from the straw they took from the fields

But later, before we went, they started to put on tin. At that time I was about 10 years old already. I remember, accross our street, somebody built a house. I saw they way they built it. They built a nice real big house. Ours just had a bedroom, a front room and a kitchen.

How did they get the two houses? Most likely they bought it. Father must have bought it, he didn't build it. I don't remember how, I just remember that I was born there.

And all the years there he was a barrel maker. He was a barrel maker and he worked in that other little house. It was like a workshop, a place to work in. There was no stove there, no windows, just a place where the people used to work.

And the workers used to sleep there? No, that was a different one. This was attached to the house - In the back like was a little house, one big room and a kitchen,- we used to keep that for Pesach. My mother kept it just for Pesach, it was a Pesachdiker kitchen. She didn't touch it all year. The other one was just like a barn, it was closed in, and when father went away, and there was nobody there working, we sold it, and the people that bought it made it like a house. We sold it with the ground naturally, it was a big place with apples and cherries and whatever not - everything. Vegetables and everything. Whenever mother was going to cook she would send out the kids to go and bring in potatos or anything. I remember once I went out and I broke the knife and I was afraid to go into the house, but to father I ran, into the place where he worked and I said I broke the knife. Sit here and wait until dinner time. By the time we have to go in to eat, Ma will forget about it. But I was afraid to go in. She didn't forget. When I came in she said Where have you been hiding?

What kind of games did the kids play? The kids played with a ball,

like baseball. I remember the first time Moishe and I went on a train. When we came back, the whole town was in our yard. And Morry showed them how the train ran on the rails. And you sit here and you didn't even know that you were driving. There were people sitting there - "It's like a house - you don't even feel that you're moving!"

I was about 6 years old at the time that happened. I was after a sickness - we went to a wedding. That neice of my mothers was married at the time, and my head was shaved off, I had typhoid fever - or whatever. Who knew what we had. I couldn't walk for months after that. They cut my hair off with a razor, they shaved my hair off. So they put a big hat on me I shouldn't go with a bare head. That's the way it was.

Then as you know we came back to Korsun. We didn't go there on account of we had Sonya's mother there, Sonya's family. Mother didn't want to go because she didn't have anybody there. "My sister is here, so we'll live here." We rented a house by ourselves. Korsun was about 5 times as big as Oshana - also a big city! But it was considered a big town. There were a couple of big drug stores, and quite afew doctors, and there were very rich people. And I remember we used to go past, - a piano was playing - and Sherman wouldn't leave. If he heard a piano, he stayed there until they finished. It was a big town compared to the one we lived in before. It was a very big city. We moved in there. We lived with a family, the husband made wheels, - for wagons. And they were very well to do. They had two rooms separate from their house - it was like an attachment. It was empty when we rented it. And we paid \$10 a month for 6 months. Father used to send us money. We used to get \$50 every month - it was a lot of money. We saved up quite a bit. Until the war broke out. When the war broke out and everything stopped, we couldn't get anything. So I started to do my own work. I went into a store and I asked them to give me wool and I'll make them croche'd shawls. They used to sell to the peasant women little shawls that they would wear under their big shawl. I went and I got that wool and I came

home and I didn't know how to start. How do I make a beginning. So Sherman was beside me and he said - so make a finish. And you think I didn't? I made a finish. Where there was supposed to be a cross, I made a bendele, and started working from there. I understood that here I had to darfn aropgein mit a shpitz, un ich bob gekrift un dcgekrift, un ich hob geton azoi vi er hot gehaisn. Understand? How do I start to make it? My mother used to say that she used to make all kinds of things, but to tell me how, she couldn't. She didn't work for years and years, so she forgot. And I fought with her like anything. How could you forget? If you knew how to do it - unless you didn't know how. How can you forget? Now I know only too well how one can forget. I didn't forget yet, mind you, but I can't work it. I tried to make a little hat for the baby - you remember the hats I used to make? You don't remember. You had a hat like that, and Larry, and Zelda had a hat like that. I made for everybody. Suits and everything. But she said she forgot how to start. She can't show me how to start. So at the finish I started.

I used to work and make \$7 a week. 7 Ruble. And with this \$7 a week we had enough to live on. And I bought myself clothes. I remember the first blouse I got. I paid about \$3 for the blouse. Mother was mad like anything. Three Kerbl you spent on a blouse? How could you! And I worked like that for a long time. Until the revolution came.

In the revolution they took everything away and the stores were closed. Everything was closed. The fellow I got the wool from in the first place - they broke up the store, they had to move away, they took away everything that they had, and they went away to Moscow. They were very rich. They managed to get away with money, but everything was broken up. The fellow that came back, there was a woman - the husband who made wheels - she had two sons. One was a fardoznik(?) a painter of pictures. He used to do some wonderful things - and one was a scuptor. And when I came in there, I saw her, the old woman, her name was Yontesits on the table. It was a sculpture. I said, Yonte it looks like you. She said - My crazy son, he made me out of clay. She called him

her crazy son. The other son, she said, made a mess of the whole house. He messed up the walls and the furniture. I take a look and I see a little table standing in the corner. Actually, it was a picture of a table, and on the table was a live chicken. You could actually see the chicken breathing. My son, she said, no sooner did I bring the chicken into the house, and it lay breathing with its tongue hanging out, than he painted it just as it was.

"You realize that we met in Moscow", he said. I didn't remember, but he spoke of Korsun as I knew it. They wouldn't let him into Moscow, but he went there to paint the Czar's palace. He made a plan of the building and he painted everyone there. He became very rich, but they took it all away from him, everything. When I saw him there, I didn't know who he was, so I didn't recognize him. But as we talked, he asked where I was from, and I told him - from Korsun. Did you ever hear of Yente, the blacksmith's wife? When I told him we used to live there, he told me who he was.

And you are selling cigarettes here? Here in Moscow, he said, I and thousands of others are all peasants. We are nothing.

We went into a house they told us we could live in. It's true there was a toilet, but neither the plumbing nor the electricity worked. There was only one empty room. We slept on the floor.

We came into one place, - there was a lady there, and I understood that she was one of the rich ones - George Borman's daughter. George Borman was one of the wealthy ones, he made cocoa - Borman's Cocoa. They lived in Moscow. The house was very tall, with beautiful rooms, but no furniture. They had ruined everythign like after a program. Nothing was left, only the frame of the building. The Jewish factories, all of them were broken up to pieces. There wasn't one left.

The lady told me to clean up the place, and she would give me bread; she had no money. A big ladder was brought in, Ma stood and held the ladder, and I climbed up and washed the room. My God, what I went through! It's impossible to tell you everything.

Afterwards, in Perograd, we were housed in the Barracks, in section

eleven. We were given a bed with nothing on it but boards, and told that this was ours. "That's yours. Whoever comes in will get another one for himself. This is yours." The three of us slept on it.

Soldiers going by used to burn an apple. It wasn't allowed, and if an officer came along, they had to hide the apple. And that's how we lived. They used to cook everything there, outside, in a big pot. Who knows what was in there; they would put in anything they could get their hands on. Either herring, or a horse that they brought in, even if it was green. When they brought in a bit of soup, it was green on top. We used to take it off and throw it away. When we caught a piece of meat, Sherman used to neigh like a horse. The soldiers would gather around Sherman - Sherman what have you got there? He would tell them stories and they would listen to whatever he told them.

Tell us about the program when he played the violin.

The program was in Korsun; after a fire. They burnt up the house where we lived. We lived with somebody else, it wasn't our house. The fire started in the middle of the night, and we had to run out into the middle of the street. About two or three houses further, there was one that wasn't burning, so we ran in there and we were there during the night. They gave us another place, also one where the people had run away. Jewish fellows, they ran away. They had a few dollars, so they ran on. We couldn't run anyplace, so we were there. They, the goyim, gave us a place. They said they were poor like we were; they were good people. If they saw a rich place, they would take whatever they could, but in our case, there was nothing, so they gave us a place to stay. It was a beautiful home, but it was empty, without even a place to sleep. There was an old woman there, very rich, who sold flowers. They were all rich, but their children, the young people, used what money they had and ran away, some to Kiev, some to Moscow. The old woman was left alone. She wouldn't move.

She said she wouldn't leave, so she was there when we came in. So she

told us - it's her place, her home, but the kids all left and went away and she was left all alone. We stayed there for a little while, not very long. Then the Cossacks came in. After they came in they killed what was in sight. They shot from both sides, and young kids walking down the street were killed.

They came into our place and I didn't have sense enough to say the old women should go with them. They wanted to see the whole thing but it was locked, so I had to go and open up so they could go in. They went in there, tore up everything, our cushions and whatever - we didn't have anything, just the cushions that we had with us. They tore the place to pieces and whatever was in it they burnt up. Mattresses, letters from Canada, it was all burnt up. But luck was, I remembered the address on one of the letters. The other side was in Russian - . I could see it read "Shtandard" Cooperage. That's how they got my letters, - I wrote Shtandard, and they read it Standard. Otherwise they wouldn't have known where we were. Everybody sent a letter to the paper, and that's how my father got it, from the Forwards he got it.

Go back to where you were. Ya, so where was I ? ya, so they came into the house. They started to ask for money and for firearms. Yes, he (Shya) said, I have one - a rifle. All right, give me the rifle. He took ahold of him by the arm, and he said you don't have to drag me, I'll give it to you. He crawled under the couch and he took out a rifle, he made himself a rifle from wood. He made it with a knife, blinder as he was, and he showed them the rifle. They gave him a few cents for the rifle. They thought it was very smart. The next time, a couple of hours later, another bandit came in. Sherman was sitting and playing on the violin. played them a few pieces on the violin and they left us.

But one time, I and mother were alone in the house. When we saw them coming through the front door, we ran out through the back. We hid in the grass. Sherman didn't want to go. He said they wouldn't touch him. You go, and I'll stay here. He was left with three-four men, who were stood up to be shot. Sherman saw that the rifle was sticking in

the front of him. He took hold of the rifle and pulled it down, so it hit one of the men in the foot, and they ran away. They were afraid if someone heard a shot, somebody else would come in and they would shoot him. The Cossacks themselves were afraid of everybody else.

(When it happened with me, if Sherman hadn't run outside and bang on the window, they wouldn't have let me go yet. He banged on the window and broke the glass, so they thought someone else was coming and they ran away.)

That's how it happened, they hit one in the foot and they ran away. If not for Sherman they would have killed him there. They asked him - How did you do that? He said, I have nothing to lose. He always said that. He sang a Russian song, or he told them a story, and that's how he always got out. He was smart, even as a little boy. He must have been about 5-6 years old.

When we went away he was 7. When Morry was home, he bought a Mandolin. He was afraid Sherman would break it, so he put it up near the ceiling, and he went away. What did Sherman do? Ray, where is the Mandolin. I was afraid to tell him where it is. I said - I don't know, Morry put it away someplace. He took the broom and went around the room with it. He banged on on the table, and the Mandolin sounded. So he put a chair on the table, got from the table to the chair, and took down the mandolin. By the time Morry came home he could play 3 tunes on it. And then he showed Morry how to play it. "Watch how I hold my fingers, one here and one there." He later got a Balalaika, which is played in a different way. The mandolin you play with a pick. Shy didn't have a pick, so he played with his fingers. When Morry saw that he could play it, he got him a pick. The Balalaika is played without a pick. He played everything.

When Morry came to pick us up in Riga, he bought him a guitar. When the doctors examined him in London, he had a guitar. The guitar was easy for him. They wanted him to play for them, so he did, and they

talked to him. They said he was marvelous, and gave him a paper saying he's an exceptional child. He'll never get lost. And that's the way it was wherever we went and whatever happened. He always managed to get out of a tough situation with a story or a joke.

We moved to a different place. Here there was man, must have been about 25-26, who always wanted Sherman around him. If anything happened, "bring me SHerman; if Sherman will come, he will help. There were Ukrainians boarding there, where we stayed. The man's mother had boarders. One of the boarders was a boy who came in from a little village to the city to go to school.

But that's a whole story - the father of this man was a buyer of cattle. He always used to go to the country to buy cattle and all the men there knew him. But when they started to kill Jews, they killed him, too. Another two men were with him, and none of them came back. On the third day, they brought in the people - the dead people. There was was a convert there, a yiddisher man that had married a non-Jew many years before. He had married children by that time. When he heard that the 3 Jews had been killled, he went and stayed in the forest with the dead bodies to make sure that the wild animals wouldn't desecrate the bodies.

Before it started to get light, he brought them into town. They asked him, how did you do that? He said "if my boys had known, they would have killed me too. But they didn't know where he was; he said he was going to town. They would have killed their own father had they known where he was all night. He wanted them to have a Jewish burial.

What was school like? School was all right at the begining before the banditn came in. When the Bolsheviks were in power, it was all right. That was at the beginning of the revolution, with Kerensky, and that Jewish one they were after all the time, the one they killed - I forgot his name. Why do I remember Kerensky? Because there were notes, money, with his name. He was the one that dethroned the Kaiser.  
But what was I telling you? Oh yes, about school. At that time,

everybody could go to school, so I registered, too.

But what did you do before that? Before that, I forgot to tell you. In Oshana. Father worked for the (pritsim), the important ones, the teachers, a doctor. When they would put up watermelons, pickles, and so on, to sour, they used to call him. They liked my father. Whoever he wants to send to school, they'll take in. I was the one they could send to school, because the boys worked with my father. They didn't go to the regular school, they went to Cheder. Moishe went to Cheder and he knew more than those who went to school. Isaac too, but he wasn't as good a student. Before you could turn around, Moishe already knew everything. The Rebbe came to see my father; if Moishe would only want to, he could become a great Rabbi. But Moishe did NOT want. He read the material once and knew better than all the others. He said he knew it all, and didn't want to sit and learn with the others kids.

When he used to travel from one town to another, and there were some old men on the wagon who spoke Hebrew, he would mix in. He would give them a speech and an entire page of the GEMORAH by heart. He was something else. But he didn't go to school - I went to school.

I was in grade 5, and had to write exams. When do you write exams? On Shabbat. The Rabbi's daughter was a classmate of mine. He was a great Rabbi, and he wanted his daughter to be educated as well. I told him that my father wouldn't let me go on Shabat - it was not allowed.. He said - if you want to go, don't ask your father and go. I understood what he meant. If you ask, then it is not permitted; if you don't ask, do what you think is right. So, on Shabbes, we had to write exams, and I told my father that I wanted to do what the Rabbi's daughter will do. He said that if the Rabbi lets her go, then I can go too. And that's how it was. We went together, and we both passed. The few other Jewish kids had to stop because they wouldn't write on Shabat.

I went to school till the fourth grade. Then the bandits came in, and no more teaching, no more school. By the way, you remember when I came to Israel by boat and met the insurance man and his wife? She took courses, which means that she went to school in the evening. It was

special for those who came in from the villages and wanted to learn. Anybody who wanted to could learn. They went in the evening, but I learned during the day. There were those who completed the course, and since there were no higher grades in Korsun, they went to gemnazium. She was one of them.

In Korsun there was only up to 6th grade. I was in the fourth when the bandits came, and that was the end of my schooling. No one else in the family went to school. Both Isaac and Moishe knew what they knew from the Heder. Isaac used to work very hard, but Moishe was a better student. Sherman learned from me. He was always with me, and knew before I did what was going on. If I had to learn something by heart for school, by the time I had read it through, he already knew it. I used to study at night. If I got up in the middle of the night and studied for an hour in bed, then go to sleep, when I woke up in the morning I would know everything. But not otherwise.

You used to tell us that when we studied when we were kids. Do you remember? Got to sleep, and in the morning you'll know it. That's what I used to do. He would say to me: Let me hear if you know it. You made a mistake, it's not right. He knew everything - he didn't have to go to school. It was the same with Arithmetic. I would sit and calculate, add, subtract, and he would sit there - you remember - as if he was asleep, and 5 minutes later, if he heard that I made a mistake, he would stop me. Its not right, its got to be like this. Go over it again and you'll see that you made a mistake. Every song he knew. Whenever I had to read a poem in school, I read it once, and he knew it right off.

When he was among the soldiers, and they asked him how come he knew such a good Russian, he said - You don't have to go to school to know how to talk, I have ears, and I listen. They wanted to send him to Moscow. Where there was a bright child, they would take him away from the parents to teach them. The parents had nothing to do with them then. But that was after the revolution, in Moscow and Petrograd. The idea was that the children should not be aware of the earlier times;

that this was a new beginning - nove stroi - everything new. They wanted to take Sherman, but he said No, he has to go with his family, his brothers. I used to take him with me - maybe they would give us a visa on account of him, but it didn't help. They said they had a good place for him here, and he doesn't have to go anywhere.

But we were hungry, and there was nothing to eat. They would give a piece of bread, some Kashe, and we would cook it. A half pound of bread for each person, not fresh bread, and it was heavy like a rock.

I used to walk among the peasants to see if I could get bread. I forgot to tell you that. In Moscow there were little children amongst our bunch. They were crying, they wanted to eat. The big ones ate what they could, but the young ones cried they were hungry. So I and another woman, there were two of us, we went out into the country - we had a piece of soap with us. If you had a piece of soap... So we went into a peasant's house and asked if we could get some bread. Ourselves we have no bread. How about we give you a piece of soap? O ya, for a piece of soap they'll find bread. What kind of bread did they find?

They used to rebake the bread that was old and in crumbs, they used to rebake it. They put some butter into it, and whatever else, soften it up and bake it. That's the bread that I got. I came home and it was fine, and I even got some breadcrumbs too, in a bag. When we came home and put hot water on it, whatever came up on top- dirt - we used to take it off, and eat the soft crumbs. Because there was nothing to eat. I used to get a turnip, cut it in 3 pieces - this for breakfast, this for dinner, this for supper. Sherman used to get twice. Everything double portions. Because he was a child. He was sick, more at the hospital than at home. I used to slice off half my piece of bread and bring it to him to the hospital. Mother used to cut off from her piece and from mine, and take it to him. THen they started to sell in the street - how can I describe it like kreplach. They were bigger, some had rice in them, and some had potatos. Sometimes, at the market, I used to catch them just as they were brought out fresh, I would pay a thousand ruble and buy a fresh Knish for him. I had so much paper money - carried it in a bag. You counted in the thousands. I would start counting from the end - 1000, 999, 998, and so on. That way I used to save afew ruble. He would get confused and say you've paid enough. Well - if you say so.

Later there were chocolates and candies, a thousand a piece. When there was a larger piece, I would cut some off and bring it to Sherman at the hospital. He would ask me - How big was the piece before you cut it?. And I would say, What's the difference, as long as you have some.

And that's how we lived. It was a miracle that we got here. That's why I said that if God will help me to bring Mother and Shy over, then my job will be done.

What did you do when you got to Winnipeg? I didn't go to work, I coudn't go to work, I was sick. My teeth bothered me, I wheezed always, I coudln't talk, especially in the wintertime. I contracted Pluresy in Moscow before we left. There were no medicines; you had to manage without. At night, in the dark, we were blind. Shaya use d to lead us. Neither I nor Mother could see. When it started to get dark, we were absolutely blind. Sherman would hear us coming - Wait, I'll come down and bring you up. It was most likely because of the poor diet. On the ship, Morry saw

to it that we had good food-we travelled first class. But it took along time, about 3-4 years. Even after I got married I would get dizzy, and hold onto the sink.

Then I went to school, and I finished public school. But I couldn't talk.

Was it a special school? A special school, just for Greene. There was Shirley Cohen's mother, and about another 25 girls and boys. We spoke Russian amongst ourselves. The teacher knew Russian, but we knew no English. But I could write, so the teacher would say to me - Ray, how could you write a paper without being able to talk? Why don't you say it, talk to me. I was afraid to commit myself, that was the trouble. But when I came to the store, then I had to talk, because they were all English people around there, and there was nobody there I could speak Jewish to-- or Russian. So I had to start talking. And Esther used to say when she found something I didn't know. Ma, what does it mean? I don't know. What do you mean you don't know? How can a mother not know?

When I finally learned, I spoke a good English. I didn't have an accent when I left Higgins avenue, but we moved into the Jewish district, and that killed my accent. When the women talked to me, I would mimic them, like Esther does, and it stuck with me. The last store finished me off completely. On Sherbrooke St. I was not bad. It's not good to mimic; you mimic so long until you're finally stuck with it.

How did I meet your father? Abie had a match for your father. Abie wanted to be a matchmaker to make a few dollars. He knew that with someone like your father - someone who had a store, a business, the bride's family would pay well. So he brought Jake and the woman to his house, and he was to take her to a movie. I didn't know that he had someone there. I was green myself, with no friends, but I had Sonya, so I went to see her. I came in and saw a man and a woman. The man asked Abie, in Yiddish, who is this? And Abie introduced me, his recently arrived cousin. Why be in a hurry, you can sit with us too, said the man. Should I have run away? So I stayed for awhile and then left. Then your father said he didn't want to go to a show that night, maybe some other time. Later he called Abie and said that he preferred me. Abie thought he would earn a few dollars. He wouldn't take anything from me, but he was sure your father would pay him

handsomely. But your father refused to pay. He said I was Abie's cousin, and anyway he brought another woman to the meeting. Abie was angry - he didn't want to come to the wedding. You know how Abie was.

But that doesn't sound like Pa, I would have expected him to pay! No. A cousin? He should be paid only when he makes the match. I entered the room, he saw me, and that was that! He didn't take me to a show, he didn't take me anywhere. Afterwards he called me at home, and asked if I was home. That's all he had to know.

He came one time, and I said I didn't want to go anywhere, and I didn't go. Sometime later, I went for a walk with Sonya - Zelda was in the carriage- near Higgins Ave. I'm not sure that Sonya didn't go that way on purpose, probably she did. Let's go in and have a Coca Cola. It was Pa's store. He saw us come in, gave us drinks and made a whole picnic there. I'll come down to see you, Rachel. He came afew times. I wanted him to know my whole story. I could see that he was the kind that would want a Kosher wife. Otherwise, it would be no good. And his mother? She would have to come and inspect the sheets. So I figured it was best to tell what had happened. I already had his ring, but I returned it, and told him to think it over. I told you the whole story, and I never want to hear of it again, I never want to be reminded of it by you.

He went away, and after about 3-4 days he called to say he wanted to see me. It's all right, he doesn't care, and that's all. But he always made me miserable because of it. Very miserable. And he made my life bitter. I was foolish; I thought here it would be different. In the old country it was like that. My mother said we should go to the Rabbi. He would give me a "ksoreh" - what had happened to me. Then I would give it to the Groom under the Chupa; he would know, and all would be well. But I didn't want to go the Rabbi. I went to a doctor to be sure I didn't have an infection. But he hurt me terribly. And don't think he didn't love me. He loved me, but he had to dig at me.

It wasn't only the dig. He didn't know how to handle the situation. He was very jealous, and was hurt as well. If somebody said something to me in the store, it was terrible. Then I would remember what my mother-in-law told me: Because of that God will give you good children. And he has. That's the end of the nice story, my son. You'll have to rework it, what

came before, and what came after. Will you be able to put it all together?

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That was before the pogrom, before the kozaks came. After that, no one could escape. But there were those who knew. Near us was a little town called Stablov. There, all the young boys got together and got hold of arms. They stood at the entrance to town, and didn't let them in. As soon as they heard them approaching, they started shooting, and they ran away. After that, they put bands on their arms, and it was known that they were those who were taking care of the city. Nobody touched them. Even when they came into our town, at the beginning, they brought some food and some medicine into the houses, and treated the wounded. They were Jewish boys, they took care of the city, and nobobdy touched them.

My Uncle took his three girls and went to that town. By the time he returned, things were quieter. Those Bandkits left, and others came in. These were different, they didn't go killing from house to house. But even so, when it suited them, they would start shooting in the streets. Whoever passed would be shot.

THat's when he came back. If he would have come and said, come with us....People travelled by wagon there, so one more would have gotten on the wagon, so what? But they weren't like my mother. Whatever affected the sisters, affected her. If a sister had a row with a husband, she ran to us, and remained until he came to get her. We remained behind, and she had everything. He worked and made a living. We didn't have anything - she knew we didn't have a piece of bread in the house. She never came down or sent anybody to bring something. She knew that we were all sick, and she didn't send anybody down. Once Sherman wrote a song about it. She had one son. He wasn't very bright, but he was a nice boy. He used to come to friends. When the girls came, they would come to us. There was a youg girl - Sonya's sister used to go with her. So she came and she invited her Purim for homentashn. Sherman sits in the kitchen and hears everything. You should come, he said. Mother is making homentashen and we'll have lots of fun. She left, and he ran after her. "Sorkele, maybe you'll bring me a homentash? "Mother didn't say I could, but we have many chickens, with alot of fat, and we'll make a big party." So Sherman said,

if you have so many chickens, maybe you'll send us one? Then he came into the house and recites - Pini has a Nippi (laughter). There goes Pini, wearing a Nippi with nie. And the ni is clucking like a hen. We never did see the nie. Sherman always had something to say, and we laughed, -from pain.

And Mother would take a bag and go to get bread. Bread was baked on Tuesdays and Fridays. The two of us would sit on the oven and sing. Hungry, but we sang. Mother went to the Shochet where Aunt Chaya Feige lived. She went into the backyard to the shochet's wife to ask for some bread, so she cut off 2 or 3 pieces of freshly baked chaleh for her. Just as Mother went out of the house, the door opposite opened and Auntie came out. When she saw Mother, she immediately closed the door. Sisters. - She said she had nothing to do with her sisters, and didn't want to know about them. But my mother took care of all of them.

When the oldest one got married, Father took Mother's gold necklace and hocked it. He paid the 50 ruble he got as a dowry to the groom. Before the CHupa, the groom said he had no money for a suit, so father loaned more money, and bought him a suit. It was a great wedding. It was a small town, and everybody was there. When Father paid off the necklace, he had to buy the husband a machine for making socks, so he went to another town and bought a machine. She made socks and sold them. Father didn't take any money from them.

Meanwhile, the other sister came of marriageable age. She too needed a dress, a dowry, so father hocked the necklace once more, and married her off, too. And when she got sick, she came to Mother for help.

And Mother sent me, by wagon, to take care of her. How old was I at the time? 10 years old. I remember arriving there, she lived in one room, and cooked together with the landlady. She had kidney trouble, but wouldn't go to see a doctor. She eventually came over here, but died soon after, leaving two children..

Whevenever something had to be done, Mother sent me. I was the apple of her eye, you should understand. She thought she wasn't able to give birth to a girl, so she made a deal with the Aunt. If the Aunt had a boy, and

Mother a girl, then Mother would make the Bris. She wanted a girl more than anything.

So she sent me to be with the Aunt until she got well. I washed diapers cleaned the rooms, and did the wash. Ten years old. The Landlady wanted me to help her in the kitchen as well. I took the child and sat with him on the oven. He was in swaddling clothes. That's the way it was done there. You would stretch the child out straight, and wrap him around with his hands at his side- like this.

Father had \$600 in a trust, and the trust went broke, so he lost the \$600. Isaac lost a similar amount. He would say, o my, I wanted to have the money as a dowry for Rochele when she gets here. He figured I must be 23, 24 years old. Father knew. Mother never knew how old we were; before Purim, or before Pesach. There were no dates, and no birthday parties. They knew the boy's birthdays, because they had to go the Army.

Isaac went to America 2 years before, to New York - Philadelphia. He was 18 at the time. He was there 2 years, and when it came time for the draft, he came home. Father had to pay 500\$ which he didn't have. So Mother fed him until he became wider than tall. That got him out of the Army, and he returned to America. He was supposed to be on the Titanic. He left 6 months after his 21st birthday. He told me that I would be 15 years old when he gets there. That I remember. At 15 I could go to work. That was the second time he went to America.

So Isaac was seven years older than you? Ye. But there were 2 kids after him, a girl and a boy. Mother used to say that the girl was 5 years old when she died. Diphteria. There were no doctors. The little boy was 2 when he died. Two children in one year. Mother almost went off her mind. She used to say that actually 3 children died after Azzi and before me, but I really don't know. There was a difference of 2 years between each child, she used to say. She used to talk about it, so that's how I know.

We had heard about the disaster to the Titanic, and when we didn't hear from Isaac, Mother was sure he was gone. But when his letter came from America that he had missed the boat, there was a celebration. He wrote, that he went on the second boat, and that it was so cold that it was

impossible to warm up. They went up on the deck and saw the iceberg. Mother was beside herself at that time.

Tell me again about the family, Faige, Chaya feige - Yeh, Chaya Feige, your Grandfather's mother. How far back do you know? Grandpa's father? My Father's father was called Isaac, Froym Isaac. Isaac was named after

him. I was named after Father's mother. When her husband died, she came to live with us. They lived near Umin, a long way from us. She told Mother she wouldn't be with us long, because she had come to die. She had no one left there, so she came to be with her son. Mother said she wasn't there long before she died. I never knew her.

Father was born in Umin, where Mime Manye lived. She was 12 years old when Isaac was born. Her step mother said Mother should take care of her. She (stepmother) had no children of her own when she married, and none until 10 years later. Manye was my mother's siter.

My grandmother ?? had 2 brothers that lived. I remember an Uncle Avrom. There were two other brothers, but they were taken to the Army when they were 8 years old. One was the General; of the other one, we knew nothing.

The General came from a religious family, and they put him in the cloister. Inwardly, he knew who he was.s

Go back to Bobbe's family. My grandfather, Ma's father, died a year after his wife died. His name was Moishe.

And your Bobbe's nomen? That I don't remember. She died long before, so it was as if we had no grandmother. After all, Mime Manye was from another wife. Mime Manye, Uncle Lazer, Uncle Mayer and Mime Esther - 4 children born to another mother. That was Mother's father; their name I don't remember. But my mother took in Mime Manye and Mime Ester into her home. She said she would keep them with her. Mime Chaya Feige was also a sister, but she didn't want to take them in. Mother told her to take the boys, they would help with the work, and she would take the girls. She would marry them off, and that's the way it was.

So, Mother and Mime Chaya Feige were from your grandfather's first wife, and all the rest from the second wife. Mother said they were her sisters and she took care of them. If one of them had an argument with her husband, she ran to Mother. She would stay two to three weeks, and then he would come to get her. Make up and go home.

Uncle left for America, after Isaac; and to Philadelphia, too. Mime Manye was left alone. He didn't have work; he was a painter. When Isaac sent money for Ma, he sent for her as well. He sent \$10 for her so she had \$20, so she was able to manage the whole month. She stayed with us, didn't have to pay rent, and paid only for her food. Then there was Esther. When her husband left for America, she came to us with her two children. Manye's man was Uncle Yossel, and Esther's was also called Yossel. He left after Uncle Yossel.

No, I'm mistaken. They were girls when they came to Mother after their parents died. When my grandfather, Ma's father, and his wife, died, the children were left alone. Mime Chaya Feige didn't want to have anything to do with them, so Ma took the two sisters. Mayer, opened a little store for himself in the country. Laizer worked for father until he left for America. (Here is the story of how Ma's father took care of the two girls weddings.)

It seemed to me that all his life Father was paying for the necklace; he'd take it out for a few weeks and then hock it again. When you opened up our closet, we had a closet like yours, you found a million Kappotes, expensive ones. But when someone approached Father, they needed money for Matzot, he said he had no use for so many Kappotes, why should they simply lie in the closet? - and he gave them away. Wouldn't they return them when they could afford it? If they had to go to synagogue and they needed a Kappote, he supplied them. That's what he had Kappotes for.

Sonya's mother was my mother's sister. She got married, and was pregnant with Sonya. When Sonya was born, Aunt came to us. She had nothing to live on, so she became a wet nurse - at the Tolner RAbbi's. He tried a number of them, but preferred her for the baby. When she left, Mother had Moishe and nursed both him and Sonya. Manya was born exactly on the day

of Mime Manya's wedding. Sid was 6 months older than Manya.

~~SONYA'S LEGGINGS~~ <sup>WDS WITH YOU A LOT?</sup> Sonya iz geven asach bai aich? Sure. When her mother came back from the Zaign, she went back to her mother, didn't she? Sure. Sonya's father was in the army, so Mime Feige would up and come to us. My mother was a wet nurse, so she took care of Feige's child too. A sister, what could she do? She cared for all of them. She never said no. Father was like that too. What are you supposed to do with orphans?

When father left for AMerica, we were supposed to sell the house and the work-house in order to have enough money to get to AMerica. When everything was sold, Mother saw that she had more than enough money. So what do you do with Mime Esther and Mime Manya? You take them with. They didn't have any money, and she did. Morry tried to warn her that unexpected things could happen along the way; that she had to take Sherman into account. If they were my children, would I leave them behind? Should I leave Sherman behind? So she took them along. Mime Esther had 2 children, a boy and a girl. Mime Mane had no children. So they all left for America, and we were turned back.

Sonya's mother didn't come; she died there. Sonya went with Sid, at the time the revolution started. AT that time, you didn't need passes and you didn't need visas. You simply sat down on the train and went. If the train went, you went. If not, you waited till they brought a caboose. We actually did have papers, but they were taken from us.

We used to get letters from FAther's sister, and when Isaac went, he went to her. He didn't know anyone else. He was 18 at the time. When she died, and the children married, there was no point him remaining there, and he went to Winnipeg. He had many friends in Winnipeg, and there he found himself partners. They treated him well, and business was very good. Then Father came, and joined the partnership. Morry wasn't there; he was with us. When they turned us back, Morry stayed with us. We returned to the town where Mime Chaya Feige, Sonya's mother, lived.

Father used to send us money - every month 50 kerblach. In those days, you could live a whole month on 50 kerblach. That was \$100 American or

Canadian - they were worth the same then. So Mother had a lot of money. Uncle Velvl, Sonya's father, asked her why she kept so much money with her, and offered to take the money and "work" with it. She gave it to him and he worked with it.

When we got to Winnipeg, Mime Manya already had given birth to Velvl. She had no children before coming here. The husbands came straight to Canada, they didn't go to Winnipeg to the States where Isaac was. They were there a few years before we came. They made good money, and put it in the bank. Eventually, the bank went bust. They had no money, Father had no money. Isaac and Morry also had their money there, so there was no one to go to for help. That's when we arrived. Father used to say he was saving for me, for a dowry for me. He thought it was still in Oshana where you needed a dowry. Anyway, the money was all gone - no more money.

While we were in Russia, my Father wrote this little song he used to sing to himself. Sing it for you? Can I sing now? OK, I'll try.

I walk the streets, all alone,  
 With no one to talk to but myself,  
 Lost in a strange land,  
 You alone, my God, brought me to this state, (he always talked to God)  
 The power to bless or to damn is in God's hand  
 The creator of the universe,  
 It is written in his wise book  
 that I should be separated from my own.

There were a few more verses I can't recall, and then the last:

My God, it's no longer early, winter is coming,  
 Bring me together with my wife and children.

He sang this song constantly until we arrived.

After they went broke, what did Zaide do?

He worked for himself; always in the cooperage business. All his life. In Russia, he used to go into the forest, buy lumber, the Goyin would split

it for him, and he would make barrels, pails, all sorts of items. You remember the pails with herring in Winnipeg? If it wasn't herring in a barrel, it was herring in a pail. If it wasn't pails, it was bathtubs. Everything was made from wood then. He made a good living; he wasn't rich, but he made a nice living.

But he had a horse and wagon? I was talking about the old country. Here in Winnipeg, after they lost the money, he became a peddler. He had to make a living. For one thing, he grew older, and had to retire. Mother was also of pension age when she arrived, and they got \$20 a month together.

When they lost the business, Isaac left for the States. Morry became a lawyer, or something. He did all sorts of things, a money collector, like a lawyer, until he left for Philadelphia too, like Isaac. But he came back and married here, some sort of strange woman. Then he left again for the States. There he worked for a factory that sold their product on the instalment plan. He did the books, and he collected the payments.

The woman in Winnipeg? I heard that she died. She was an elderly woman. Why he got involved with her I don't know. Maybe because he was "green", maybe he studied with her - she was a very educated person, but elderly. I don't know why. Sonya said she once saw the grave of a Mrs. Ghan at the cemetery. She always called herself Mrs. Ghan.

So that's the way it was; the Aunts husbands were in the States. Mime Esther lived there until he died. The oldest son, Moishe, named after my grandfather, came to visit us once. He lived in Philadelphia, married, and had children. Whatever happened to him, I don't know. Maybe they went to Buonos Aires.

Lets start from the beginning. It seems as though mother had a third sister, I'm not sure. Probably from the first wife. Where could Barushka have come from? She was mother's neice. I was 18 years old, after a sickness, and I went to her wedding. My head had been shorn, so I wore a big hat to hide it. Her brother got leave from the Army to come to the wedding.

Brushke eventually left with her husband and a child. The child spoke French, or maybe Spanish when they visited us. We couldn't tell. To me he seemed like a Frenchman - anyway, a Jew. She had a boy either the first or second child, a number of girls, and finally another boy. She had a Becky, and a Rochel (we were named after grandmother), and a Moishe. Those kind of names. They were a lovely family, and now nobody knows where tat has become of them. While we lived on Robert St., there was a visitor from there to the family who lived accross from us. I actually went in there and showed her the picture. She said she did not recognize the picture, but did I have a name? Maybe if I had remembered his name, she might have known him. Who knows.

Isaac met Elka in Philadelphia. She came from Poland to be with a sister, two sisters I believe. She was probably already no baby, so her sisters looked for a match for her. Walking by, Isaac saw her sitting on the verandah, and said that she would be his wife. I don't know how they met. Elka used to tell the story that he would come holding his hat, not knowing where to put it, so he just stood and held it. SHe always told that story.

He returned to Winnipeg; he was there when we arrived. At that time, Mary was 6 months old and Sylvia about 2 1/2. They were both born in the States, and Chavele and Boomie in Winnipeg.

Morry married Clara in Chicago, and Sid married Esther from western CAnada. Sid was a young man. He had a store in the country. He had a group of friends who knew the Hoffers, and they arranged the meeting with Esther. He had prettier girls, but I guess she was the destined one.

TELL ME ABOUT ROSES'S FAMILY The story Rose told me. I was already married when they came to live with Ma. They lived in the country. Their father came alone. He didn't want to have anything to do with his wife and children. He married a non-Jew, a German. Rose's mother died on the way over. There was no family connection whatsoever. Ma took them in because they were orphans. Sherman left for Brantford, so Sid was the only one who lived home at the time. Mother had 3 bedrooms there, so the girls had a room for themselves. Sara must have been about 18 or 19, and Rose about 16. Their brother Jack was also there for a short while. He left to someplace or other, and I didn't hear from him again until he married.

Friends of Rose's mother in Russia thought that if they brought over the children, the father would care for them, but the wife would have none of it. But he did help Rose. She worked for him in his store, a grocery store. He was very well off. He already had a new family, a son and two daughters. Sara went to work in a shop, and earned enough to pay for board and room. Rose was worked very hard, and when she had had enough, she and Sara looked for a place to move in together.

When my mother hear the story about the orphans who were left alone, she said - What, orphans and no one to care for them? And she took them in. Sara was married in our house, and Rose, of course, went off to Toronto to marry Sherman. They were married alone; none of us were there.

Rose came for Pesach to us when she was pregnant with Lionel. She was angry at Sid's Esther because she went to her cousin, who was married to a non-Jew. How could she do that, when Father had just come from the hospital after and operation; who knows if he would live to see another Pesach, and she goes off to a cousin? Rose was always angry at her for that. Lionel was named after my father.

Now where was I? Rose and Sherman, yes. When the girls moved in, SHerman was in school. When he came home, she would take him wherever he had to go. She was always with him after work. She was jealous of other girls. There was the Shoichet's daughter, a teacher, who would come and read for him. Fissel, or Hin, he called her. Rose had boyfriends too, but she wanted Sherman. After they went to Toronto, Sonya wrote me that they did not marry, but were living together. Both Abie and Sonya told me that, but Sherman said they were married. \*\*\*\*\*

When I sold the business, I went down to Winnipeg, and I left \$15,000 with the Cohen boys. I have a will there, with the money to be left to the grandchildren in case anything happens to me. That's all, only for the grandchildren.

I have at Paul's place \$11,000 in bonds - 7 and 4. \$9,000 in certificates, and \$10,000 for a 3 year period. \$16,000.

Ephraim Cohen (father of Jacob, father-in-law of Rachel)

He knew nothing, he couldn't read. He couldn't even write Yiddish

It was unbelievable! Such a smart man. He came to the Rabbi, and said he was going to America. He asked for advice, what should he do there? Build houses, is what the Rabbi told him. He had no mone, what was he going to build houses with? He borrowed money - everybody trusted him. A Jew with a grey beard; he would build and return the money. He built a block, a three-storey building near his own house. That way he built afew houses, and dy made a living from renting them out.

And after the war, when new-comers were arriving in Winnipeg, with nothing, they would come to Old Cohen - Cohen Columbus. A baker came to him, saying he had no money to get started. "Go and ask for flour, say that I sent you, and they will give you the flour on credit, on my account. After you bake and sell the bread, you can return the money. And he wasn't the only one that he helped. There weren't many Jews in Winnipeg at the time. He was one of the first, so they called him Cohen Columbus.

One day, your father - he was about 14 at the time - was on his way to work, making cigarettes. He saw a Jew walking and talkind to himself. "If I knew where there were Jews, I would go and talk to them." And your father, who was by no means a bad person, approached and asked him where he was from. He offered to take him home to his parent's house, but the man said he was waiting for his brother who had come a day earlier, and he didn't know where he was. Your father took him home, and while his mother was preparing breakfast, the man who had come a day earlier came down from upstairs. It was the brother. When we were married, he came to see if I was good enough for your father. Those two brothers were your friend Zuriel's gramdfather's brothers. (Ma thought one of them was Abba's granfather, but Abba says his grandfather died before reaching America.)

Your father helped everybody he could, and your grandfather was like that, too.

When they got married, Sonya wanted everything right at the start. SHe and Abie wanted a piano, so he went and arranged for them to get it on payments. When they didn't keep up the payments, the piano was reclaimed, and they were angry. My father pointed out to them that Pa's father had done them a favor, but that they had to make the payments.

WHEN WAS PA IN Saskatchewan? That was before I knew him. Zaide Froim's brother Moishe, from Minneapolis, was in the hotel business. He had a hotel in Estavan, and he took Pa into the business. Pa used to work harder than the Uncle, who was an old man by then. How did they come by a hotel? Grandfather, - always Grandfather. He put up the money together with Moishe, and put Pa in as a partner. By the time I knew him, he already had the store on Higgins Ave., also one of Grandfather's properties. He couldn't get along with the Uncle, so he looked for a business for himself, and got the place when a tenant moved out. He made a store out of the living room. After we married and moved in, there were 3 rooms; upstairs a bedroom, and dining roomd, with the kitchen downstairs. We used to pay him \$25 rent a month.

The wholesalers supplied us with goods, because he was Cohen's son. Business was good, and he paid his bills. THey supplies him with whatever he wanted, on his own name now, not on Grandfather's.

Then Alec came and asked Pa to sign for him. He would trave into the country and sell cigarettes. And he signed. It was his brother, after all. Zaide was like that, and so was your Pa. When I go married, I was sick. I coughed and had difficulty breathing. The doctor said a fur coat would make it easier for me. Grandfather wouldn't buy me a coat because Rivke didn't have one, so he bought us both a cloth coat. A coat at that time cost about \$300. He wouldn't by a coat for Vera, because he said she should go to work. He didn't know, nor did any of us, that she was deathly ill.

That's when Pa said he wanted no part of Grandfather's inheritance. He knew that his father had money, and If he could treat his one and only daughter that way, then he wanted nothing to do with the inheritance. That's why he was always angry with his father.

But when it came to the house, I mixed in. All the houses, Grandfather's houses, were on my name. He believed in me more than in Rivke; he was afraid that if he put them in her name, he would ultimately have nothing. He even would come to me for advice.

When we moved in the place was a wreck. We paid rent, and painted and fixed it up so that it looked like a palace. I said, this was the first place we lived in, and it was ours.

When Grandfather died, Nate wanted me to sign all the property over to him. He took after the properties, and did the plumbing, and Grandfather had left the properties to him. I wrote everything over, but not this. I told your father that he was also a son, and was due something, but he refused because of how his father had acted. I also think there was something else, dating back to when Grandfather left Russia and nobody heard from him. Your father knew something; Alec didn't. Alec didn't need anything by then. The boys already worked in Calgary; Harry was in the film exchange.

You know how Harry got to the film exchange? He was an excellent skater, and a very handsome young man. While skating one day, he met the young wife of the head of the film exchange. She wanted to learn how to skate, and he taught her. She got him the job in the film exchange. Harry saw to it that the other boys also got jobs.

Before the Exchange, Harry and Jack used to travel with Alec in the country. If he managed to make sales, then the family could eat, and if not, there was nothing to pay for the goods he had taken. So he came to Pa, and Pa signed for him. Alec sold the house his father had given him when he moved to Calgary. When we moved out of Higgins, I suggested that your father talk to his father, maybe he would help us get a bigger place. We had the one bedroom, which wasn't even big enough for a crib. Your father and I and Esther, who was born by then, slept in the same bed. But he would not hear of it, and that was that. But if I needed anything, I would talk to Grandfather. I once called him on the phone and told him I was going to buy a watch, and he said, if you need a watch, go buy one and I'll pay for it. What if it costs \$25? So I bought it, and he paid for it. When Pa heard about it, there was hell to pay. I told him it was none of his business. Where Vera was concerned, he fought with Grandfather all the time.

WHY WAS ALBERT ANGRY WITH YOU? Sam once asked me that. He came to us for a \$300 loan to buy goods to travel with. I told him that we couldn't, we didn't have the money. But Pa said he would sign. By that time, we were in debt ourselves to all the wholesalers. The chain stores opened up in the area, and took all our customers. So I said if he doesn't pay it back, you will have to pay it. And that's the way it was. And Spivak (lawyer) made an arrangement for paying out debts to the wholesalers. \$300 we paid the wholesalers. I was holding Isaac's money, and paid some of the debt from that. And I borrowed \$300 on my father's life insurance policy. They didn't reclaim our house because it was on my name. We were finally able to sell the house for \$9,000, and with the \$3,000 we got for the groceries, we were able to breathe.

When we came to Toronto, we found this place, and I knew right away we would never make a living here. Shabat and holidays he closed up, so all the customers went to the store on the opposite corner. He made a good living, and we could hardly manage to earn enough for food. We bought the building for \$11,000, but paid only \$300 in cash. The rest was mortgage.

Wherever we looked, nothing suited your father, but he liked this place. It was in a terrible state. We had to fix the ceiling, the cellar, and bring electricity and water to the third floor. We were able to rent out the apartment on the third floor, to Ann and Joe Hoffman. Finally, we were able to sell the property to the City, as a playground. I couldn't get \$11,000 when I tried to sell, but now they paid us \$33,000. That's why we were lucky and it turned out so well.

We rented the store just before you left for Israel, about 1952. They were two families of Russian immigrants who had left Israel and came to Toronto. They worked hard, and then moved out to a bigger business. Then we rented to an old couple, and they bought the inventory. They had had a business in Kensington. Being older, and the children gone, they wanted to live in a Jewish district. The old man died in his sleep one night; he was only about 70. She had no reason to stay on, so she sold to a non-Jew. The wife was a horror, an anti-semite. They would bang on the windows and yell, something awful. It was impossible. That's when we tried to sell.

And then Pa died, one-two-three. They killed him. My doctor said so. When I had to have the operation on the fallen womb- they told me it could be done then, but possibly not later on - Esther asked if it meant putting me under anaesthetic. When she was told yes, she refused to hear of it. The doctor asked why, and was told about Pa bleeding to death during a prostate operation. The doctor said that they must have given him the wrong anaesthetic, and that's simply what killed him.

I had been with him the night before the operation, and asked how he felt. "If I feel tomorrow like I feel now, everything will be allright." When I came in the morning, they told me he was dead. I said that they must have done something wrong, but they said he must have had something in his stomach, and he bled to death. That was the story.

The doctor told me there was a contraption that could be inserted to hold up the bladder, but I would have to learn to put it in and take it out myself. So I have this "thing" that holds up my bladder, otherwise I lose everything. What a story.

After your father died, I rented the store to the couple from Kensington. They paid \$150 a month rent, and that I had to live on. I managed on less than that, so I was able to save as well. After we sold the building, I gave the \$15,000 to the boys to invest in their business. I didn't have sense enough to buy shares for that amount. I rented a place for \$100 a month, and didn't take into account that they would raise the rent. I thought \$100 would be enough, but Sam said I wouldn't be able to manage on that. So they sent me \$250 every month, and I was able to save money. I gave Esther \$5,000 for a kitchen when they built their home. She needed a stove, and I was able to help with that. I also was registered as being a couple of years older, so I started getting my pension two years early. I was able to live on the pension.

When I told them that my rent was raised, each boy gave a \$1,000 and sent my a check for \$6,000. They did this a few times. 2 years ago, they did it again. With that money I purchased the bonds. I'm not saying they didn't help me; they helped me a great deal. But if I had had the sense, the shares would have provided much more. Who knew at that time. \$250 was a lot of money - 20%. No bank would have given me such a return.

When Alec was alive, I used to go there, and I always came back with money. Sam would look at me and say, Auntie Ray, you need another coat. I told him I couldn't afford it, and he said he would pay. He sent me to Holt Renfrew I should tell them he said for me to pick a good coat. When I got there, they were waiting for me, asking if I was Sam's Aunt. I should buy a coat because Sam sent me? So I bought a purse and a pair of shoes I needed badly. When I came back, he said, what do you mean you couldn't find a coat there. They came to me with a mink coat, and he said, why didn't you take it? He sent me back there with a check for \$6,000. But I didn't need the coat, Esther needed it. I had a coat made for me for \$2,000, of the best mink. Now she's wearing it - it's about 12, 13 years old. I don't need it anymore.

Thank God, I have enough to live on. Whoever asked for a donation - I never refused anyone. 2 bonds I had left I gave to the building fund; and for the newcomers. One was for \$360 - American money. So they got a donation. Aside from the pension, there was a drop in property tax, and I received a \$500 deduction. I gave \$25 for Israel, for the old folks home. that kind of thing. I gave about \$100 - \$200.

When I moved in here, I paid \$160 a month; now I pay \$400. THis coming August, it will go up again. At first they figured 6% a year, now it's 4%. For years they made no improvements; now they want to hire the rent for improvements. These buildings belonged to the Steinbergs, but now they sold them, and I don't know to whom they belong. If the rent goes up, it goes up. What can I do? It's a good location. I can use a streetcar. It's central. The apartment is nice. It's clean, even tho they only painted twice in the 20 years I've been here; over 20 years. If it needs painting, I'll paint it myself. Meanwhile, it doesn't need it.

I don't feel like going to Esther's. What will I do there. Here, even the way I am, I get around. If it's nice outside, I go shopping, to the bank. I do whatever I have to do. There I'll have to sit down she should attend me. She can't; she's busy. I wouldn't let her look after me anyhow. I was there when I was sick, and I coudn't get out of bed. I had no other choice, so I was there. The minute I could crawl out of bed, I walked, held onto the bannister, and walked down the stairs.