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KEEPSAKE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY



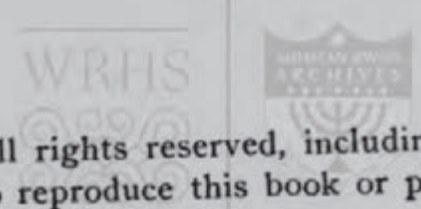
BESSIE R. LIEBOW — 1948

Keepsake:
An
Autobiography

by

Bessie R. Liebow

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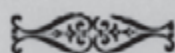


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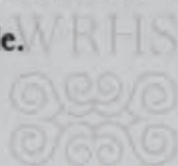
DEDICATION

To my husband, children, and grandchildren.



FOREWORD

I wish to acknowledge the help of my dear daughter, Estelle, without whose aid the writing of these memoirs would not have been possible.



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Chapter 1

GENESIS

In the throes of World War II I have begun to write my story. I am deeply concerned about the safety of my son, a major in the United States Army Medical Corps. He has just left for an unknown destination from a western port of embarkation. His assignment will be the treating of our wounded soldiers—men who have been fighting so that our beloved country may continue to follow its democratic ideals. I begin to wonder, as I sit here thinking, how all this brutality will finally affect me and my family. And this thinking starts a reminiscence of my own full life. This recollection takes me back to my earliest years.

I was born in the small town of Neinstadt, Lithuania, on January 28, 1887. My parents lived together with my grandmother in a big rambling house surrounded by a garden. Neinstadt lay on the east border of Prussia. Here my mother grew up as one of ten children: six sons and four daughters. When the oldest brother was eighteen, he decided to go to America—to the land of golden opportunity. After he arrived there, he became successful, and sent for his brothers one by one, until four of the boys had emigrated. They settled in Boston, where they opened a department store and prospered. The store was called Seaman Brothers.

As the sisters grew up, they too followed their successful brothers to America. That is, all except my mother, Dinah, who remained at home with my grandparents.

Some time later my grandfather accepted an invitation to

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visit his children in America. Grandmother was not strong enough to go with him. After he spent a wonderful summer in the new world, my grandfather returned to Neinstadt. However, on the return trip he caught a cold which developed into fatal pneumonia.

Grandmother and Mother remained alone in the big house. Mother had been educated in the Russian schools and a Hebrew High School. She was able to converse in Russian, German, Polish, and some Hebrew. With her graceful figure of medium height, black hair, and beautiful dark brown eyes, Mother was an attractive young lady. When Grandma mentioned marriage for her daughter, Mother would wrinkle up her nose, for she felt that there was not a young man in the whole town sufficiently eligible—certainly not one with whom she would care to share her life!

Mother loved to tell me about Grandmother who was a fine hostess. She entertained itinerant merchants and out-of-town students for dinner. There were no hotels or restaurants in those days; private hospitality was the local custom. Therefore, it was not unusual for a young man to stop in at Grandmother's for a Friday night meal. One traveling salesman in particular became interested in Dinah. He was impressed with her worldly knowledge, even though she came from a small town. While he traveled to other cities on his business affairs, he kept up a faithful correspondence with my mother. He returned one day to propose, but my mother's answer was no. She was not in love with him.

Several months later our town Rabbi paid Grandmother a visit.

"Mrs. Seaman," he said, "I am here to ask you to extend your hospitality to a young stranger. The son of a Rabbi in a town near Kovna, he himself is on his way to study at the Theological School. May he have supper with you?"

"Of course," replied that fine old lady.

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The next Friday night a tall handsome young man presented himself. "I am Moses Silver," he said. The maid took his hat and coat, but not before he had withdrawn a little black skullcap and fitted it on his head. Grandmother led him into the dining room. He hesitated on the threshold to admire the Sabbath table: the tall candelabra burning brightly with the Sabbath candles, the gleaming china, and the silver cup.

"I am happy to welcome you," said my grandmother. "Pray, be seated." Her warm smile put him at his ease. "Come in, Dinah," called Grandmother. "We are ready for dinner. Mr. Silver, this is my daughter, Dinah. Dinah, our guest is on his way to study at the Theological School."

The two young people smiled at each other briefly, and then began to fuss busily with dinner. Mother secretly admired the young man's fine forehead and beautiful, long hands. He began to speak of his studies and of the hardships a student of religion must undergo, since he had no one place where he could be sure of eating or sleeping. All that mattered, however, *was his finishing school and becoming a Rabbi like his father.* He told about his four brothers, two of whom had gone to America. It was a pleasant meal for the three people, and the first of many.

Throughout his year of studying, Moses Silver took every opportunity to become acquainted with this attractive young lady. They became very much attached. He was so tall and straight and handsome, and she was so dainty and demure. The time soon came, however, for Moses to move on to another school. He could not leave without baring his heart to Dinah, because he knew that other young men were keeping her busy. Finally he gathered enough courage to propose.

Moses marched to Dinah's house with a determined glint in his eyes—and came face to face in her living room with another ardent suitor. Here was Dinah with two determined young men on her hands. How could she avoid an embarrass-

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ing situation? Thinking quickly, she simply introduced Moses as her cousin. The both young men relaxed and spoke of inconsequential things. When Moses Silver finally found Dinah Seaman alone, he proposed to her and she accepted.



Chapter 2

THE DREAM

After his graduation from Rabbinical School, the two young people were married. They settled down to live in Grandmother's home, which was spacious and beautiful. There was, however, no place in that small town for another rabbi. Father, therefore, decided to try his hand in the business world. With the help of his mother-in-law, he bought a small factory which manufactured toilet soap. He sent salesmen with samples to different cities, and they sent the orders back to him, where they were promptly filled. Business was good.

A year after their marriage, I was born. They called me Bessie Rebecca. Two years later, another girl, Pearl, was born. Several years later, on a hot summer day, Mother took Pearl and me to a lake for bathing. While we played in the water, Mother fell asleep on the grass and dreamed. When she awoke, she told us a peculiar story: she dreamed that God had told her, "You are going to have two sons. When they grow up, they will be rabbis. Some day they will be famous." I was only five then, and I asked mother, "Was that a nice dream?" And she answered, "Yes, dear, it was a beautiful dream."

It came true, too.

Mother bore two sons, two years apart.

Times became bad and the ingredients for the manufacture of soap became increasingly harder to obtain. For a while, Mother was pressed into the business of becoming traveling salesman for Father. All of us children were left at home with Grandma and a Polish maid who had been with us for years. Since I was the oldest, I used to say the prayers with the chil-

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dren at night. Soon things became so uncertain that Father decided to sell out to another firm.

Grandmother died, leaving two sons and my mother in old Neinstadt. Mother decided to join her sisters in America. Reluctantly, she sold the home in which she had grown up, and sadly she parted with her neighbors, who were the Shubert family, whose children became famous on Broadway.

Mother felt that the wise thing to do would be to have Father go first to the New World, find some occupation, and then send for us. And so it happened. Mother moved us to Valkevsk in the meantime, near Father's youngest brother, Peretz. Father's brothers, who had already prospered in America, were happy to hear of his arrival. They welcomed him at the dock and took him to their home to rest. A few weeks later he found a position as a teacher in a Hebrew School on East Broadway in New York City.

Father paid a visit to my Mother's younger sister, Rose Sectorsky, who had married a wealthy young man. She was preparing to journey to Carlsbad, Germany, for the summer. During her trip, Aunt Rose came to visit us in Valkevsk. There she told my mother that she would never be able to have children. Could she borrow me for the summer and take me back to America with her, since I was going to go anyway?

Mother talked the matter over by mail with my Father. It was decided that when I graduated from school in June of the next year, I would join my aunt.

Chapter 3

FIRST YEARS IN AMERICA

On June 18, 1899, when I was twelve and a half years old, I was graduated from a Russian school. With my diploma, I received a handsomely bound book with a picture of the Czar and Czarina of Russia. I still have this book in my collection.

In the next two weeks Mother prepared me for my first trip from home. Father had written detailed instructions concerning necessities for the trip. As Mother packed my one suitcase, she looked very sad: her oldest daughter was leaving her. Years later when my own son left for college I understood how she must have felt at the time.

I was tall and thin, with dark eyes and long black hair. I was thrilled at the thought of seeing my father in America, but sorry to leave my family and friends. Only the thought that I would soon see Mother and the children consoled me. My aunt, Riva Seaman, the wife of Mother's brother who died in Europe, was making the trip with her children at the same time. She took me along with her three daughters, one son, two sons-in-law and one granddaughter. I met them all at the railroad station, where I bade my whole family goodbye. Mother had given me a big bag of food. In a little silk bag tied around my neck were some money and my steamship ticket.

The train was crowded and smoky with not enough seats for everybody. But between my cousins and me, I managed to sit down occasionally. Towards evening we arrived at the German port of Bremen. We learned that our ship would not leave for two days, so Aunt Riva made arrangements for us to stay at a hotel not far from the pier.

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I had read in school that Bremen was a beautiful city, and here I was. I asked my Aunt to take us for a walk. She agreed, if we would wait for her on the balcony. But we were so eager to go sightseeing that we wandered into the street impatiently. There were so many exciting things to see in this new city. Aunt Riva finally came out to the balcony, but of course we were nowhere to be found. We were lost, she thought frantically. While she searched for us, we young innocents returned to the hotel.

The next morning we were up for an early breakfast. A call came for us to go to the Health Station to be vaccinated and to take a steam bath. When we were through, we were allowed on the ship, *The Kaiser Frederick The Great*. It was a large ship, having three classes: first, second, and steerage. Our tickets called for steerage.

We settled down to a comfortable voyage. The weather was beautiful; the ocean was calm; the air, warm and sunny. When I opened my bag, I found a big salami and toasted cakes, which Mother had thoughtfully supplied. I enjoyed my first meal on the ship. I did not feel seasick and was in good humor.

The next morning we all came out on deck. My young married cousin had a harmonica, and we gathered around to sing. I sang a song by myself later. When I finished, someone from a second class cabin threw down a big apple for me. I had to promise to come up the next day to sing on that deck.

We had no idea how long the trip would take, but the days passed swiftly. On the fifteenth day a small fire broke out in a hold. Of course, we were all frightened, but it was quickly extinguished. Three days later we sighted Ellis Island. We were told we would land that day. Imagine our excitement at the prospect of seeing the golden land.

At Ellis Island inspectors opened our suitcases, asked our names and who was to meet us. I sent a telegram to my father, and in a few hours he was there, waiting for my name to be called. At last, after two years, I was in the arms of my father.



BESSIE SILVER in N. Y. — Age 12

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As I walked down into the streets, I noticed several dark-skinned people, whom I saw for the first time in my life. Dad saw me staring. He told me that they were negroes who had been slaves in the South and had been freed by an American president named Abraham Lincoln. That was the first story of freedom I heard concerning this beautiful country, America.

My father took me to his brother's home in Harlem, at that time a pleasant section of Manhattan. I was supposed to go to the home of my Aunt Rose who had offered to keep me, but she was away on her summer vacation. While I waited for her to return, I was given a room in the comfortable apartment of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Silver, a younger brother of my father and his wife, who were very kind to me.

When the summer was over, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Spectorsky came for me and took me to their lovely home on 89th Street near Fifth Avenue, next to the Carnegie Mansion, which was then being built. My Uncle Joe, who was born in New York, married my Aunt Rose soon after she arrived in America from Neinstadt at the age of seventeen. They were very fond of me because I brought companionship and happiness to their childless marriage. Aunt Rose took me with her on her shopping tours and to occasional theatre matinees. I was also sent to school. My father came to see me every Sunday. I wrote to Mother and the children, telling them all about America and its wonders. Life would have been ideal except that I began to grow up and outgrow my clothes. Aunt Rose was a nervous, sickly woman who found after a while that providing a young adolescent with the necessities of life was a burden.

I was lonesome for my mother; I used to think of her and the children every night when I went to sleep. After I was here nearly two years, Father decided that he was able to bring over Mother and the children. We had been three brothers and three sisters, but my youngest brother had died from pneumonia during my absence.

While Father was figuring out a way to bring the family over, I was growing up. I had outgrown the first coats and dresses and shoes my Aunt Rose had bought me. She decided it was time for me to earn some money. So, although I was only fourteen and I loved school, I had to find a job. My cousin Dinah Scaman who had come to America with me found work for me in her place of business, and I continued my schooling at night. From the money I earned I bought my own clothes; the rest I gave to my Aunt Rose.

At the time in 1902 that my father decided to send for the family, he was teaching in a Hebrew School on East Broadway. In anticipation of their arrival he rented an apartment on Madison Street near Rutgers in New York's East Side. I went along with Dad to pick out the furniture, dishes, curtains, and other items to make a home complete.

In the month of June Mother and the four children arrived. What joy and excitement reigned at the dock! I cried with happiness when I saw my mother. The children were my sister Pearl, age 13, brother Maxwell, age 11, brother Abba Hillel, age 9, and sister Rose, age 4. The girls with their brown hair and brown eyes wore neat little dresses. The boys wore sailor suits with long pants; their hair was long and curly.

On the way home we all stopped in a restaurant for their first meal in the new country. When we finished eating, Dad said, "You girls wait here, while I take the boys outside for a little while."

"Where are you going?" Mother asked.

Dad merely smiled as he took each boy by the hand. "We'll be back soon," he reassured her.

In a short time Dad returned with my two brothers. Behold! they had had their hair cut in real American fashion.

Then we took the family to their first home in the new land. They were pleased and grateful for what they saw. Life here was happy for them. My parents were devoted to each

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other and to their children. They were determined that the boys should receive the best possible education. They made many sacrifices, but lived to see their dreams come true.

Sister Pearl went to school for a while, and then found a job. The boys continued their education in the afternoon at the Yeshiva Etz Chayim, on Henry Street, where English and Hebrew religion were taught. Mornings they attended Public Schools 25 and 62. During the High Holy Days they sang in synagogues and so earned their first money. I still lived with my Aunt Rose. I worked during the week, and on Sundays I spent happy days with my family. I often cried when I had to leave them all in the evening.

When Maxwell reached the age of 13, he was bar mitzvah or confirmed. This was the occasion for a family party. Mother was a fine hostess and cook. Everyone had a good time. I became more and more lonesome because I was not living with my family.

Finally, when I reached the age of seventeen, I gathered enough courage to tell my aunt and uncle that I wanted to leave them. As long as I had to go to work, anyway, I might just as well spend all my free evenings with my family. Although they had been kind enough to me, I was not sorry to leave them. The joy of being united with my family was too great. However, I promised to return for a visit some day.

My sister Pearl and I became inseparable. We worked together and went to night school together. Father bought us a piano, and we began to take lessons. Soon our house was full of music and dancing and young people. We joined a Hebrew-speaking club and met friendly boys and girls.

Chapter 4

ROOTS OF ZIONISM

In the summer of 1904, soon after the death of the immortal Dr. Theodore Herzl, my brothers Maxwell and Abba Hillel, along with Israel S. Chipkin, students then at the Yeshiva, met at my parents' home, 360 Madison Street, to organize a boys' club. Their object was the dissemination of the Zionist ideal—a Jewish homeland in Palestine—among the Jewish youth of the city. The Dr. Herzl Zion Club was officially formed in August. My father was director, with Maxwell Silver, president, S. J. Abrams, treasurer, and E. D. Coleman, secretary. Membership was open to boys from twelve to sixteen years of age with a knowledge of Hebrew. The weekly dues were five cents, out of which one cent went toward the Jewish National Fund—an organization which purchased land in Palestine for the Jews. From such small beginnings rose the great movement for an open Palestine forty years later! My Dad became counselor and guide to the young organization. With an increase in membership, it became my duty to arrange the seating in the living room and prepare refreshments. Mother and I used to watch and enjoy the meetings.

A mass meeting and concert was held in February, 1905, at Apollo Hall, where Rev. Z. H. Masliansky was chief speaker in Hebrew. Toward the end of 1905, Abraham Goldfaden, called the father of the Yiddish Theatre, offered to write a play with music for the club. He coached the boys in their roles. In March, 1906, "David Ba-Milchomo," a play in three acts, the first Hebrew play to be produced in America, was given.

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I remember well how they pleaded the Zionist cause. It gave us great pleasure to watch these boys grow. They used to bring their books over to do their homework and stay for dinner. How they loved the ginger candy my mother made! Our home became a combination library, music hall, and discussion center. Several years later, when the boys left to continue their studies at colleges and universities, the house was a lonesome place.

I still belonged to my Hebrew-speaking club and continued to work. Pearl and I made fine neckties. We were able to do the work at home rapidly and thereby earn fine salaries.

Aunt Rose soon reminded me of my promise to go back to her. I thought this would be a good time to take a vacation from my work and spend some time with her and my uncle. I met their circle of friends with whom I shared a year of gay, social activity. Yet I still preferred the atmosphere of my parents' home.

When I returned, we had moved uptown to 119th Street and Madison Avenue near Mt. Morris Park. We had six large rooms in a new apartment house. The neighborhood was pleasant. When Father had time, he used to sit in the park with Mother. They and Pearl and I made new friends here. During this time my sister Pearl and I helped support our family. We saw to it that our young brothers continued with their education, and they in turn earned money by teaching Hebrew. Rose, the baby of the family, was much younger, and she, too finished high school. The boys went on to college and Rabbinical School.

One day, a girl friend invited me to a party she was giving. Her cousin from Pennsylvania was visiting her at the time. At the party, this young man asked to take me home. At my door he said, "May I see you tomorrow night? I am going to be here only one week."

I was pleased and flattered at his obvious interest. "Won't

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BESSIE SILVER — Age 19



THE SILVER FAMILY — 1911

Seated—Father and Mother. Standing—l. to r. Bessie, Abba, Max, and Pearl. Little Rose is at school.

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you come and meet my parents tomorrow night?" I asked. He did. And he called every night that week. When he was ready to leave town, he proposed to me. I was a very surprised girl of nineteen. He was a successful business man at twenty-four, owner of a department store in Pennsylvania. He had come to New York to see the styles at the Spring showing.

"One week's time is too short for me to make up my mind," I answered quietly. "Marriage is a serious business." Reluctantly he agreed. We corresponded faithfully. In the next two years he came to see me often. When I finally decided I could not marry him because I did not love him, he was a depressed young man.

During this time I met many young men who liked me. I was considered a sensible girl with a good background. I was tall and slim, with jet black hair, black eyes, and an olive complexion. I sang and played the piano and had a conversational knowledge of Hebrew, Russian, Polish, and German. I cooked, sewed, and embroidered well because my mother was a good teacher. All I wanted in life was to marry a man I loved. I did not care for wealth. I saw in my parents' home that happiness is more important. My parents were a model for the kind of life I wanted. I decided to follow their footsteps.

Chapter 5

COURTSHIP

My father one day was chatting in the park near our home with a friend of his. The subject turned to marriage, which was close to my father's heart, because now both Pearl and I were of the marriageable age. Father's friend said, "I know a young man with a fine background who would like to meet an equally fine young lady."

"That interests me very much," said my father. "When can I meet him?" Of course Father would have to approve of the young man first before his daughters could be brought into the picture. Father and his friend made the necessary arrangements to see the young man in question. He liked him at once and invited him to our home for a Sunday afternoon in June.

When Mother heard of the plan, she said to me, "Bessie, I want you to be at home with your father and me to receive the visitor. You are the eldest girl."

"Oh, no," I shied away. "Pearl must be here, too!" I insisted. "I must have some moral support." And so it was agreed.

At 2:30 in the afternoon we were dressed in our prettiest clothes. We wore no cosmetics in those days. The bell rang, and Father ushered in the handsomest blond man I had ever seen. His name was Samuel Ely Leibow. Almost at once he was at ease in our surroundings. We talked through the afternoon. When he left, he made an appointment with me for the next Wednesday evening. I was pleased, for I had been attracted to him.

We met on the appointed evening and strolled through the park on a lovely June evening. My new friend was very

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good-looking, tall and blond, with greenish-blue eyes. When we sat down to talk, I learned much of his background. He was the oldest of four children, in Asheshin, Poland, where his father was a rabbi and a well known orator. His mother was the daughter of a businessman. Ely had been educated in the Hebrew School of his town, where his parents had wanted him to continue his studies as a rabbi.

"I saw little future for myself in that small town," Ely continued. "I asked my parents to allow me to go to the United States, even though I was only fifteen."

"All alone?" I asked.

"All alone," he nodded. "However," Ely went on, "my parents had friends in New York by the name of Suchoff. They were wonderfully helpful to me. When I arrived in the United States, they welcomed me and gave me a job. I went to school at night, and during the day I worked for the oldest Suchoff son, Aaron, who had an embroidery factory. Altogether they were four boys and two girls. The second boy studied medicine, and the third son studied law. The three older boys were very friendly to me. With their two sisters we had enjoyable times together. The Suchoffs made me feel one of the family until I was old enough to become an American citizen."

"And then?" I asked.

"Then I sent for my older sister, Bessie, to join me in New York."

After our long talk in the park I began to see Ely often. From June to September we saw each other often enough to realize that we had fallen in love. Although I knew he was not making much money, I did not care, for I loved him very much. We were the same age, reared in the same type of atmosphere, both of religious families, with still other things in common: we enjoyed music and the theatre.

My parents were happy at my choice for a husband, and they agreed that October would be a good time to announce our

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engagement. Since I was the oldest child, Mother wanted to give us a big party. I was delighted with the idea. Together we rented a ballroom in Harlem for the occasion and left a deposit for the date of October 15, 1911.

Meanwhile, Ely wanted his Suchoff friends to meet me. One Sunday late in July, as president of a Young Men's Benevolent Association, he arranged a picnic in a park on City Island in the Bronx. I prepared a basket of sandwiches, fruits, cake, and a thermos bottle of coffee. At ten in the morning Ely called for me. When we all met, Ely introduced me to the Suchoffs and the rest of his friends, remarking jokingly, "Bessie comes from the country!"

One of the Suchoff boys replied, "She doesn't look like a country girl." We continued to joke, play games, and dance. It was a beautiful summer day. Someone suggested boating. At this Ely beckoned me. "Come on, Bess," he said. "I'll paddle you around in a canoe." I went along with Ely, while the rest followed in pairs. Afterwards, we were all thirsty. One of the boys spied a running stream.

"Over here," he called. "This looks like cool water." As we approached the stream, I remarked, "The water looks rather dirty." But the others made fun of me, so I drank along with them. We continued to enjoy ourselves the rest of the day. At eight in the evening we left for home. I had had a lovely day, and enjoyed meeting Ely's friends.

When we arrived home, I told my parents that the picnic had been fun, but that I had a slight headache and was going straight to bed. I bade Ely good-night immediately.

The next morning I awoke feeling feverish. Mother said, "I think you spent too much time in the sun. Stay in bed today, and by tomorrow you will feel better."

"I imagine that paddling in the sun was too much for me," I agreed.

However, the next morning I awoke feeling worse. Mother

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ELY AND BESSIE AT THEIR BETROTHAL

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immediately called the doctor. "You might develop anything," he said. There was nothing to do but wait.

The third day he diagnosed my case as typhoid fever. His first question was, "Where might you have drunk polluted water?" My thoughts turned quickly to that dirty-looking stream of Sunday's picnic. My parents were shocked to learn that I must be removed at once to a hospital for treatment. Ely came immediately to help me into a private ambulance which took me to the Lebanon Hospital in the Bronx, not far from my home.

At this time, my brother Abba was studying at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio. Max, the older brother, who was studying in New York, and my parents did everything in their power to comfort me. Nevertheless, for twenty-one days I suffered from high fever and delirium. My night nurse told me much later that in my delirium I sang one song all the time. I did not believe her at first. But when she said, "You kept singing Schubert's *Serenade*," I knew she was not joking. That was, and still is, my favorite song.

My parents hesitated to write Abba of my condition. When the doctors gave me up, however, they notified him of my condition.

On the night that I took a turn for the worse, Maxwell, as a last resort, called a Professor Meyers, asking him to come at once. Since it was the middle of the night, he refused to come. Max pleaded my cause eloquently. "You can't allow a young bride-to-be to die just because you don't make calls in the middle of the night." A taxi at his door changed his mind and saved my life.

When Dr. Meyers examined me, he changed the treatments which had hitherto proved useless. He ordered me to be bathed in ice to bring down my fever. The next morning I awoke from my delirium to find myself being rubbed down with ice. I recovered very slowly during the next four weeks.

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Ely came to see me every day. He had lost so much weight through worrying about me that I could scarcely recognize him. I myself felt ill and weak. "Ely," I whispered, "go away. Forget me. I may never get well."

"Be quiet," he commanded me as he smoothed my brow. And he continued to shower me with flowers, candy, and cognac, which the doctor had said I should drink.

That summer of 1911 a typhoid epidemic seized New York. Ely's sister, Bessie, came down with the disease and was brought to my hospital. Her case was mild. In two weeks she was well again, while I suffered on and on. One day the ice pack on my head began to annoy me. I complained to the doctor that my left ear was being affected by the constant cold of the ice packs. I found it a little difficult to hear whoever spoke to me. The doctor assured me that it was the result of my weakened condition. "As soon as you leave the hospital," he said, "your ear will stop bothering you."

My hospital room was made constantly cheerful by many flowers, books, and candy. The nurses were good to me and my doctor came in more often than was necessary. He felt sorry for Ely and me. I tried to do everything that was expected of me: eat, drink, and act cheerful. After seven long weeks, I was discharged at last.

Ely brought me the news with a radiant face. "Here is a bouquet of white flowers for you, Bess. I have a taxi waiting for you at the door." He and my nurse helped me down to the taxi which whisked me away to my home. My parents welcomed me happily, and I found myself surrounded by flowers.

When I looked in my long mirror, I saw how my illness had wasted me. I was pale and thin; my hair was beginning to fall out; and I needed a cane to support me in walking from room to room. But my dear Mother urged me not to worry. "After your convalescence," she said, "you will be healthy and strong."

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I received many notes from friends and relatives. As soon as I could, I wrote to Abba to show him that I was really well. He was still in Cincinnati busy with his studies. I shall never forget his beautiful reply which I saved all these years:

Cin. O., Nov. 25, 1911

1356 Burdette Ave.

Dear Bess,

Just think with what unbounded pleasure and joy I read your letter. For seven long dreary weeks I was thirsting for a written word of yours and could not get it. Now, thank God, my long vigil has been blessed with a note from you.

We must all be thankfull and grateful to Him who sleeked your feverish brow in your sickness and was your stay and hope during weary days of suffering and pain. He granted our prayer and you have been restored to the living, to the light of the day, and to the hearth of our home. You have paid fully the great debt which every man must pay to God for the life He granted him. And now—may your life be as bright as the summer skies after a rainfall, and as fresh as the fields after the dews had fallen. The tears we have shed—may they water rich flower beds to bloom and spring into life—and the sighs we have heaved—may they be recorded by God as an ample retribution for your future errings and failings.

Dear Sister—you were on the very brink of that awful chasm into which all men must inevitably plunge, and God has granted you a reprieve and stayed the terrible doom. Then live and be a blessing and a joy to yourself, to our home, and to all whose love goes with you.

May the God of our Fathers, the Great God of Israel, be with you, to guard you and guide you

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wherever you will go, and may He grant you a long,
happy, and blessed life and a hope that never dies.

Your loving brother,

Abe

Every day my doctor visited me for a check-up, and every evening Ely found me looking improved. After two weeks at home, I really began to feel like myself again. My hair grew back, black and curly. I regained my lost weight. In a few more months I looked better than I ever did before. My fiance was overjoyed. We went to the theatre and concerts together, and were delighted with each other's company. We decided to be married June 9, 1912.



Chapter 6

EARLY YEARS OF MARRIAGE

I wore a lovely white gown at my wedding and was attended by bridesmaids and ushers. Some of the many friends who were present also attended a celebration of our thirtieth wedding anniversary in 1942. We spent our honeymoon in the Catskill Mountains of New York. Upon our return to the city, we found the weather so unbearable that Ely told me to spend the rest of the hot summer in the mountains.

This arrangement was ideal. During the week he lived with my parents. On the weekends he came up to see me, and we discussed our future plans. At this time there was an outbreak of labor strikes. Ely decided to go into business in partnership with another man manufacturing ladies' suits and coats in Yonkers. Meanwhile, he was furnishing an apartment for us in the Bronx near where my parents had recently moved. I spent the summer reading, writing letters, and embroidering. I remember in particular my needlework on a centerpiece which adorns my dining room table even today.

After Labor Day, Ely brought me home to our new four room apartment, which was already furnished by him. We were happy there. My parents were pleased to have us so close. I was a good cook, fortunately, so that fact made my husband happy indeed. Business in Yonkers improved.

We sent photographs to Ely's parents in Poland. They wrote a warm letter of congratulations. My parents invited them to come to America. However, they were very pious people and feared that in the United States they might not be able to practice their orthodox traditions. They declined graciously.

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Ely's father, as I have mentioned before, was a rabbi whose preachings took him as far as China. There he found a band of Chinese people practicing Judaism without a Bible. He imported the Old Testament for them and taught them how to read it. He stayed long enough to lead them in their prayers on the Jewish High Holy Days.

My sister-in-law, Bessie, of whom I became very fond, also married that year. She settled in Brooklyn with a pharmacist. A few years later Ely sent for his younger sister, Roslyn. That left his brother, Walter, at home with their parents. Roslyn lived with us for a while, and I treated her like a sister. She has always been grateful. She married a Brooklyn boy, also, and settled near Bessie.

Almost a year after our marriage, on May 31, 1913, my son was born. My husband was delighted that the baby was a boy, and my parents were thrilled with their first grandchild. Our baby was beautiful and healthy and resembled my husband with blond hair and blue eyes. It is the custom to name a child in the Jewish faith after some deceased person in the family. We called him Irving Maxwell after the two grandfathers on my side of the family.

All this while we had been living in an elevator apartment. Just the week the baby was born, the elevator broke down. Imagine how all the visitors felt when they learned that they had to climb five flights to see the new baby! I was weak for some time after Irving was born. But the baby was good and healthy. I could not help but recover cheerfully. A month after his birth, since Irving was a first-born son, we celebrated the ceremony of Pidyon-ha-ben. Ely bought his son from a high priest, a Cohen, for five shekels, to redeem to his offspring. Sol Cohen, our old friend from the Dr. Herzl Zion Club days, was our priest.

I trained Irving to have good manners from babyhood. His nursery was filled with toys which kept him busy during the day.

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AUTHOR IN 1912

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Every summer I took him to the country—away from the hot city.

When Irving was two years old, we moved to Yonkers. I did not want to leave the neighborhood which was so close to my family. However, my husband had to travel to and from Yonkers every day. He never had a chance to enjoy the baby. We found a comfortable five room apartment in a two-family house, where we spent two happy years. At that time my husband dissolved his partnership and acquired a dress shop in Jersey City, New Jersey. Again he faced the problem of commuting. Eventually we moved again. I used to take Irving with me to Jersey City to find a new home. One day while we were riding on a train, I felt my little four year old tug my sleeve.

"Mother," he said, "why does that man wear his collar backwards?"

When I looked up, I was gazing embarrassedly into the face of a smiling priest!

At length, for our convenience, we moved into an apartment house in Jersey City. Ely eventually branched out with several other stores by borrowing money, because he could not earn a satisfactory income from one store.

One day a neighbor walked into my kitchen and said, "Mrs. Liebow, didn't you hear me ring the bell?"

"No," I replied.

"I meant to tell you that the last time I came in," she went on. "You didn't hear me ring then, either."

Instantly I began to tremble with fear. Was I going to lose my hearing now that I was the mother of a lovely son? Would I never be able to hear his sweet voice again? I remembered all too clearly the miserable days I spent in the hospital, where I could hardly hear my nurses or friends. I had hoped to become active in charity and welfare work as soon as Irving began to go to school. But I had to give up all such ideas; I discovered that I was actually losing my hearing.

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I now began to devote my time to saving or improving what amount of hearing remained. When my husband also noticed my failing, he took me to a doctor in Jersey City for treatment. This doctor treated me with oil through my nose. This treatment always left me ill and irritable. As time passed by and I did not improve, my husband took me to an ear specialist in New York. He carefully X-rayed my ears and after a thorough examination gave us a frank diagnosis.

"Mrs. Liebow," said this doctor, "your left ear drum is completely useless. You will never hear through that ear again." This doctor was the now famous Dr. Julius Lempert. "I am perfecting a new type of operation of the ear which might have saved your hearing in an earlier stage, but your nerve is already dead. I am sorry I cannot help you with surgery or treatment."

How my heart sank! In great bitterness, I remembered how many times the nurses had packed my head in ice during my typhoid illness. The doctor was now being honest with me.

"Do not waste time on useless treatment," he continued. "My advice is to learn lip-reading and to buy a hearing aid."

And so it had to be. I attended a lip-reading class in Jersey City, and later on, after my second child was born, in New York. These classes helped me a little. The only hearing aid invented at the time—in 1920—was the Gem Ear Phone, an inconvenient thing to wear. It consisted of a heavy head band with a large ear phone on one end from which wires were attached to a clumsy battery and transmitter. Nevertheless, I was brave enough outwardly to wear it in public. My sensitivity to my failing increased in direct proportion to my boldness about wearing the earphone in public. I began to imagine that people were whispering about me and laughing behind their hands. For a year or two I avoided people as much as I could. I felt miserable. My husband remained as loving and as understanding as ever. He cheered me throughout the years.

Chapter 7

THE CALL TO PALESTINE

When the United States finally entered World War I in April, 1917, my husband was over the draft age. However, my two brothers, Abba and Max, who were now rabbis, were just old enough. They both volunteered as chaplains. Max went to Pelham Bay Naval Station and to the New London, Connecticut Naval Station, where he met his future wife, Miss Jane Frances Baratz. As a morale officer, Abba was sent to France. There he was decorated by France for his morale work. We at home felt the pull of war through the shortages of food and labor.

I never liked Jersey City. When my sister Pearl was married to Jacob Michaelson in 1917, she too, moved to my town. This, together with the fact that my parents had a good reason to visit Jersey City more often, made me much happier. Pearl and I both gave birth to daughters in the month of June, 1918. My daughter, Estelle, was born two weeks before her daughter, Florence.

My son and my husband were delighted with Estelle, for both of them wanted a girl. Irving promised to mind his little sister while she was sunning in the carriage and I was busy with the house-work. He started out nobly but when I came down to relieve him, he was always playing elsewhere. What could you expect from a five-year old?

We were now a family of four. Irving had started school and had a private tutor for Hebrew lessons. On New Year's day, 1921, my second daughter, Ruth, was born. She was a good child and gave me little trouble.

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Business was becoming steadily worse for my husband. We decided it was time for him to try his luck in a different type of business.

In the meanwhile, my family of sisters and brothers had grown up and were branching out for themselves. Brother Maxwell married Miss Baratz of New London on January 14, 1919. My sister Rose married Jacob Matlow, a pharmacist, the next year. Brother Abba had been the rabbi of a congregation in Wheeling, West Virginia. There he met and was much attracted to Miss Virginia Horkheimer, the daughter of the president of the congregation. After Abba returned from France, he became the spiritual leader of The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio. In January, 1923, Abba married Miss Horkheimer and took her back to Cleveland with him. Thus my parents' five children were settled and already establishing families of their own.

My husband, after looking over various fields, decided to apply for the position of salesman with the real estate firm of George J. Wolf Co., in Jersey City. Mr. Wolf was being married that month, in 1923, and he needed a man to take charge of his office while he went on his honeymoon to Europe. Everything ran smoothly during the boss's absence. When Mr. Wolf returned, he was completely satisfied with Ely's work and trained him to be a real estate salesman. His interest turned to brokerage for the buying and selling of apartment houses and here he developed his talent.

When Estelle was four years old, I began to send her and Irving to a Hebrew School. Now my sister Pearl had a son, Alvin, as well as a daughter, Florence, and the four children eventually attended the same school. A private bus used to make the rounds of the city to pick up all the pupils and then take them home again. I recall that Estelle never liked the long ride. While she studied there, she took part in many of the plays on the different holidays.

We moved to the southern end of town when Estelle began

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to go to public school. I liked the neighborhood because we faced a lovely park. The children were growing nicely. One accident marred our contented life, just as my husband began to be successful in his new work. Ruth was knocked down by an automobile while she was crossing the street. She suffered a leg bruise and a temple injury, neither of which proved too serious.

During this time, my parents realized they were growing older. Now that their five children were settled and their two sons were making names for themselves, their lifetime dreams were being fulfilled. They began to feel that their lives were drawing to an end. One day Father said to Ely, "It is time for us to look at a cemetery plot."

Ely drove them to the nearby cemetery. As they looked around the crowded tombstones, they suddenly decided they would rather go to the Holy Land in Palestine and die there. When they made up their minds, they worked quickly.

In breaking up their home, they distributed their belongings among the poor and their congregation. They gave up their apartment, bought their steamship tickets and were ready to sail. No amount of talk on my part could dissuade them from going.

"How can you leave such a fine family behind?" I cried. But they would not be deterred. They felt a call to the Holy Land which could not be denied.

Just as they were ready to board the ship, flames broke out and the ship was damaged beyond repair. Since my parents had already given up their apartment, I invited them to stay with me in Jersey City, until the next boat was available. My children loved having them so close. They enjoyed watching my father press wine from the grapes for the Passover Holiday. He sang songs for them. Mother baked ginger candy for them, and it was like a continuous party.

Yet they were looking forward to leaving. Father, the idealist, wanted to finish out his days writing and studying, while

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Mother wanted to do philanthropy work in Jerusalem.

My son was approaching his thirteenth birthday while my parents were still with us. Father taught Irving to chant the Haftorah for the portion of the Bible that was connected with his birthday week, and helped him to prepare his confirmation speech.

One of the things my parents made me promise was to make a Passover seder each year for my brothers and sisters and all their children. For ten years, Ely presided at the table, I did all the cooking, and hired help did the serving. We had twenty to thirty people every year, including some of Ely's relatives.

At the end of this time my Mother wrote from Palestine that now that the grandchildren were grown, each mother should make her own seder. This turned out to be a wise idea because our own children began to invite close friends and their families for the occasion.

When my parents were ready to leave at last, all the children gave them a farewell party. There were many guests, including the Rabbi from their New York synagogue. The guests paid fine tribute to my parents for their active participation in Jewish life. Both father and mother spoke. I kept remembering them as they used to look, when I was a little girl. And now, here they were, both white-haired and in their sixties, about to start out on a great adventure. They were blessed, indeed. God lengthened the days of their lives so that they yet lived to watch their Palestine grow—the Palestine which we hoped at the time would one day become a Jewish Commonwealth for the long-suffering Israelites.

On the next ship which sailed for Palestine, they embarked. During the Passover week of 1926, they arrived in the Holy Land. At first they stayed in a hotel in Rahavia, a suburb of Jerusalem. Later they built a modern home there. Father busied himself with a garden which grew beautiful roses. Some he pressed and sent to me, and I framed and hung them on my

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wall. Together they were ideally happy in the Holy Land, where welfare work was their main activity. My two brothers saw to it that they had every comfort throughout the years.



Chapter 8

BAR-MITZVAH

My young son was reaching his thirteenth birthday. According to Jewish tradition, it was time for him to be confirmed—declared ready to embark upon his manhood. The celebration of the event took place in early June, 1926, at the Five Corners Talmud Torah, Jersey City, the Hebrew School where he had been studying for several years. The occasion was honored by the presence of my brothers, Max and Abba. The latter had already begun to become nationally known for his wonderful oratorical powers and his stand for Zionism. When it became known that Dr. Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland would be present, crowds gathered for hours in advance to grasp the opportunity of hearing him speak.

After services were conducted by the students, my son stood up to read the Haftorah. Clad in a new blue suit, a talis, and cap which my parents had just sent from Palestine, he made a dignified little figure in the pulpit. I was very proud of my good-looking son, who was becoming more like his father every year.

Then Abba, already known as the Silver-tongued orator, spoke eloquently. "A man has three names," he said, "one which is given to him at birth; the second, which his family hands down; and the third, which a man carves for himself. And this last one, my dear nephew, is the most important of all." My son listened attentively. The impressive benediction was delivered by brother Maxwell, who occupied a pulpit at this time in Flushing, Long Island. Afterwards the principal, Mr. Yellen, and a man long active in Jewish educational affairs,

Mr. Schluger, showed my brothers through the new Hebrew School building. In the vestry rooms my husband and I had luncheon served to some two hundred guests. However, that night the real celebration for our close friends and family took place.

That was a night to remember. We entertained fifty people for dinner at the old Majestic Hotel on Fifth Avenue and 59th Street in New York, a spot which has long since housed an elegant apartment hotel. An orchestra played for dancing. At the dinner, Irving made a fine speech of promise for his bright future. My eyes filled with tears of pride and also of a little sorrow that my parents could not witness the happy event. Yet they were with us in spirit, for their cablegram of good wishes arrived that night and was read to the gathering. All the way from Palestine their words filled us with fond remembrance. My son had come of age.

Since my son was old enough to take care of himself, we had been in the habit of sending him to summer camp. The summer after his confirmation, my husband learned that his old friend, Libby Suchoff, who was now Mrs. Berkson, wife of a professor teaching at the Hebrew University in Palestine, was running a summer camp. She persuaded us that her camp, some eight miles from Skowhegan, Maine, was the best place for Irving. We were so delighted with what we learned about the camp through Irving that the next season we sent Estelle along with him. And the following summer Ruth, who was then seven and a half, went too.

While Estelle and Irving were at Camp Modin, my husband and I took Ruth with us on an automobile trip through New England up to Maine. Here we visited the children and were much impressed with what we saw. It was, we found, a summer home for molding character and instilling the love of the religious life in the child. We used to enjoy watching the Sabbath services by twilight. On the boys' side of the lake, the

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services were held on the shore. The ark containing the sacred scrolls was hewn from wood in the shape of the torah and wedged in between two birch trees. To see one hundred boys with their counsellors praying in a semi-circle around the ark was an impressive and unforgettable sight.

The summer Ruth traveled with us we continued up through Canada to visit Quebec and the many magnificent cathedrals along the way. On the homeward trip we came down through the Thousand Islands and Old Orchard Beach, Maine, which is one of the most beautiful beaches I have ever seen.

These were easy times in the late twenties, when we were able to spend a thousand dollars to send three children to camp for the summer. My husband and I travelled all over the New England States these months and enjoyed our leisure.



Chapter 9

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TWENTIES

About this time we bought a home on Wegman Parkway in Jersey City. My husband was making a comfortable living, and we installed such modern conveniences as a refrigerator and an oil burner. We landscaped the small back garden and furnished the nine rooms.

My colored maid, who had her room and bath on the third floor, relieved me of much of my work. I was now able to engage in social activity. Our street was really a small Jewish community of some of the finest families in the city. As soon as we were properly settled, we gave a housewarming for our many friends, neighbors, and relatives. My husband saved one of the bottles of champagne from the party. "This," he said, "I will save to celebrate Estelle's engagement." And with much ceremony, he hid it away.

We joined the up-and-coming Congregation Emanuel, which held its services at the Jewish Community Center. I was active in the welfare work of the Sisterhood. One evening I opened my home for twenty-five tables of bridge and a Dutch supper for the benefit of the Sisterhood.

I was able to enjoy these social activities. By this time, an improved hearing aid called Sonotone had reached the market. Instead of the ugly headpiece, a new device was invented, making the earpiece almost invisible. It consisted of a small, black piece of metal which fit exactly into the ear. I wore my long black hair over my ears and tucked the wire under the bun of my hair. The wire disappeared into the transmitter hidden in the bosom of my clothes.

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My husband had become busy with Jewish Community affairs. He became a director on the Board of the Congregation and was later elected its President. He was also made president of the Jersey City Chapter of the Jewish National Fund, an organization which purchases property in Palestine for the Jews.

As life went on, we had our little ups and downs. Ely had his tonsils removed in a hospital in New York. Instead of recovering immediately, he caught a cold in one ear. This ear ache developed into a mastoid condition which was operated on by a Dr. Marvin Jones of New York. After the operation, Ely spent two weeks at Lake Mohegan recuperating.

The original members of the Dr. Herzl Zion Club, which my brothers and Israel Chipkin formed years before in New York, were now grown up and pursuing their various careers. By 1914, ten years after its inception, the organization began to disintegrate. World War I broke it up completely. Three men sought to keep its memory alive, I. S. Chipkin, Sol Cohen, and Jesse Schwartz. Through their efforts, reunions were held in 1912, 1916, 1919, 1920, 1923, and 1924. The group met for the last time on July 10, 1929. Ely and I attended these gala reunions and enjoyed every one. We met old comrades and sang Hebrew songs. The lofty ideals which inspired the club originally were being perpetuated, particularly by my brother, Abba. He travelled the length and breadth of the country in the cause of Zionism. Years later during World War II, he was to fly to England while that country was being bombed, in order to arouse the world against the White Paper which prevented the tortured Jewish refugees from entering Palestine.

It is a remarkable thing to note that this small group of boys I helped entertain in my home grew into such educated and prominent men: important rabbis, leading doctors and well-known educators, lawyers and newspapermen.

THE REARING OF A FAMILY

Chapter 10

By the time Irving had entered high school, Estelle was proving to be a bright student in Junior High School, where she made the honor roll every term. She was a studious girl who loved to read books in her leisure time. In Hebrew School she always took part in religious plays. Her one great ambition was to go to college. Ruth, two and a half years younger, was a gay, carefree child with a great gift for talking. I spared them nothing to give them a well-rounded, social background.

Ely and I were happy to watch the children develop along their individual lines. On my birthdays he presented me with lovely gifts. One time it was a diamond lavalier, and another time, a diamond dinner ring. He always wanted me to be dressed in the height of fashion. He retained the good taste he acquired while selling women's clothes. Whenever I bought something for a particular occasion, he came with me.

As my son, Irving, entered his last year at Lincoln High School, it was time for him to decide on a career. Ely and I would have liked him to be a rabbi and so follow in the footsteps of his relatives. However, Irving made up his mind to be a doctor. He applied for entrance at three pre-medical schools—Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Pennsylvania. To our satisfaction, he was accepted by all three. A close friend of his belonged to a fraternity at Pennsylvania and finally persuaded Irving to go there.

With his college decided upon, Irving entered into his high-school activities with gusto. He took part in the senior

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class play, "Seven Keys to Baldpate," which we all enjoyed. He was a tall, young sixteen year old when he was ready for graduation. Today I am appalled by the idea that I was willing to allow him to live away from home at that time. Yet I must have known then that he had learned to be independent and self-sufficient through his wonderful summers at camp and the training Ely and I had given him at home.

His high school commencement was held in January, 1930, and immediately, in February, he entered the University of Pennsylvania. Although he had his heart set on joining a fraternity, college rules decreed that he must live for six months in the dormitories on the campus. When my husband and I went to visit him, we helped him furnish his room in typical freshman fashion.

He swung into his new life with ease. Fortunately he had a facility for writing, and he started a steady flow of letters that have been a constant source of comfort and delight to the entire family. He has a keen sense of observation, and his descriptive powers are incisive. He adapted himself well, for his youth, and soon found a number of congenial friends who introduced him into the routine of college life.

When Irving came home for his summer vacation in June, he found a tremendous surprise: a pretty new baby sister. Ely and I had decided we ought to have another child. We had a large new home, plenty of space, and the full impact of the stock market crash of October 1929 had not hit us yet. Besides my husband wanted another boy—to be named after his father.

Well, he took what he got. On June 19, 1930, a beautiful, black-haired girl was born to me in the new building of the same New York Hospital where my other girls were born. Dr. Ratnoff, now the head of the hospital, told me she was the loveliest of my four children. Soon after her birth, my new daughter began to lose her black hair. In its place grew beautiful golden ringlets, and her blue eyes turned to green. We

named this light of our life Naomi Arlene, after her paternal grandfather, Nathan Aaron. She became immediately the favorite of the whole family.

We had arranged before the birth of Naomi that our three other children would spend the summer together at Camp Modin in Maine. My husband saw them off from Grand Central Station on July 1. I came home after the Fourth of July, feeling strong and well. A colored maid took most of the household burden off my hands and I was free to enjoy a quiet summer with my new infant.

My next door neighbors, the Schultz family, had two sons, Henry and Harold. Harold, who was Irving's friend, used to love to come in during the afternoon to give Naomi her bottle.

"If I ever have a child, Mrs. Liebow," he said, "I hope she'll be as pretty and as good as Naomi. Why, she never cries at all!"

Indeed, she was a joy to the whole family. At the time she was born, Ruth was nine and a half, Estelle had just turned twelve, and Irving was already seventeen. They loved to treat Naomi as a doll. When Estelle entered high school in the afternoon session, she used to take the baby for an airing every morning before school. No one could touch Naomi's golden curls except Estelle, who fashioned them into all kinds of hair styles.

My son Irving finished college in three and a half years by taking some courses at Cornell University one summer. He and a friend from Newark bought a jalopy and drove up to Cornell where between classes they had a rousing good time.

While at the University of Pennsylvania, Irving joined the Tau Epsilon Phi Fraternity, which had a house of fine reputation on the campus. He eventually became its Chancellor and was also active in the business end of the school magazine, *The Punch Bowl*.

At the proper time, Irving applied to three Medical

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Schools: Johns Hopkins, Dartmouth, and Western Reserve. We were thrilled to learn that he was accepted by all three. After much deliberation, Irving decided to go to the Medical School of Western Reserve University, in Cleveland, where my brother Abba was well-known as a religious leader. My charming sister-in-law, Virginia, did much to put Irving at his ease in a strange city. She invited him every Sunday for dinner and saw to it that he had every comfort. She is a gracious hostess, with a good heart, and has always been kind to my family.



Chapter 11

THE LOSS OF A SISTER

In March 1931, I suffered a tragedy. I was shocked by the death of my dear sister Pearl, who had helped to make my life in Jersey City more enjoyable. I had never liked the town, but the fact that she lived nearby made it pleasant. Her girl and boy were about the same ages as Estelle and Ruth. The children often enjoyed each other's company. For several years Pearl had been ailing with high blood pressure. One day she had a sudden attack of appendicitis, and an operation had to be performed immediately. She recovered very slowly and was never herself again.

Virginia and Abba thought a change of climate might help her. Consequently, they sent her on a trip to Palestine to visit our parents. In order not to worry about her children, she left them in a French boarding school of good repute in Lakewood, New Jersey, where they had good care. My parents were overjoyed at her visit, but her health did not seem to improve. Besides, she had her children on her mind. After six weeks in Jerusalem, she returned to America.

Pearl was a sweet and sincere person, and I was devoted to her. How unhappy I was to see her in bad health. I helped her in every way I could, and tried to brace her up. For a while, she left her children at boarding school and lived with my sister Rose, in order to try to regain her health. To no avail. One day she had a sudden attack. A few weeks later she died.

Abba came from Cleveland for the funeral, which was a very sad affair. To this day, as I have watched her children grow up, I have missed her. I often pray for her at her grave.

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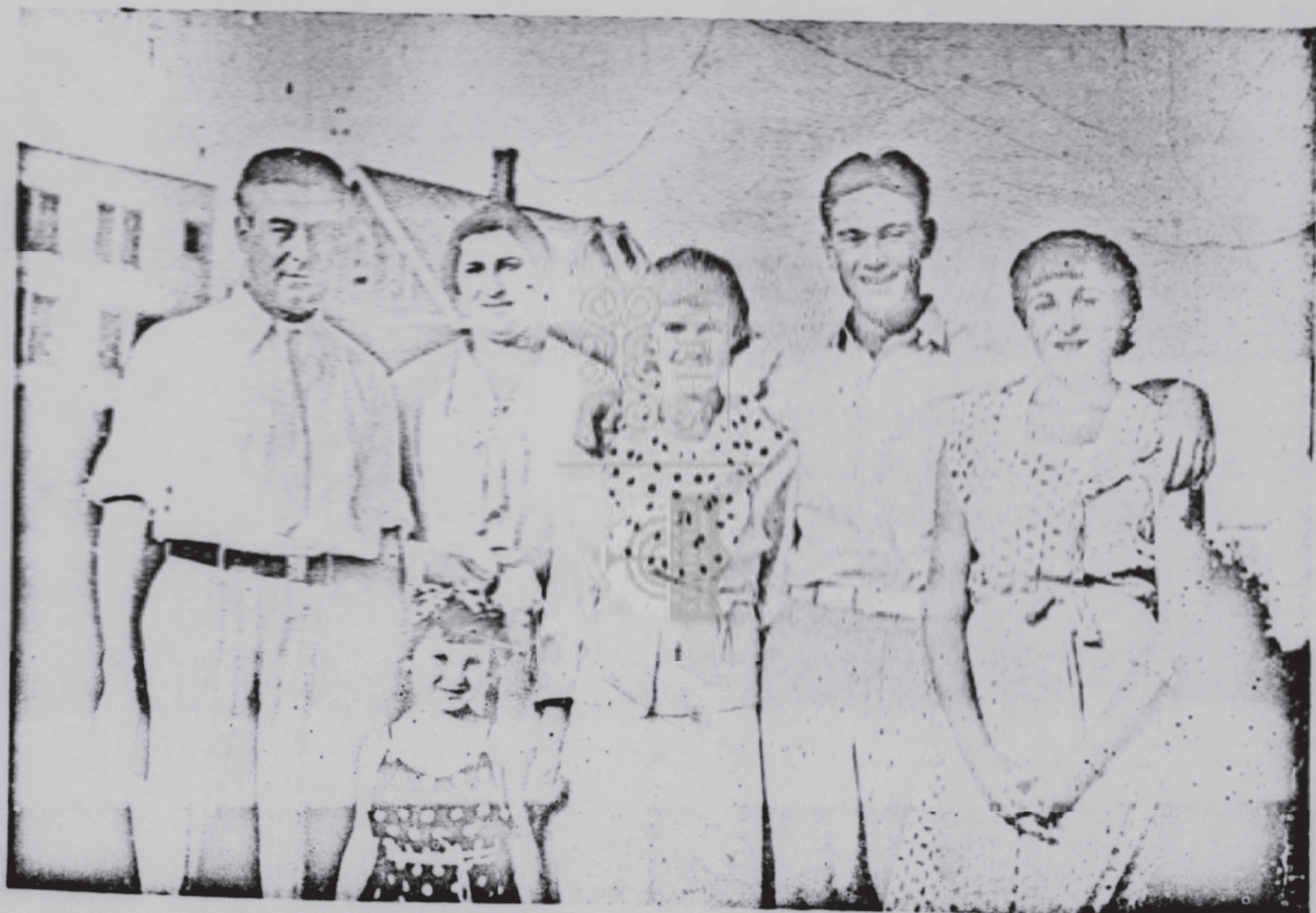
Her husband took the children out of boarding school. Florence, who was almost fourteen, kept house while she went to high school, and did a very fine job of it. I remember what a success she was in her senior class play, wearing a lovely pink gown.

Upon her graduation, Abba and Virginia took Florence into their home and gave her every comfort imaginable. She became an accepted part of their household on Lake Erie and a real comrade to the two boys, her cousins Daniel and Raphael. She enrolled at Western Reserve University and busied herself with school work and gay social activity.

Meanwhile, Alvin remained at home with his father to finish high school. He had a yearning to become an electrical engineer. By diligent application he won a scholarship to Cooper Union College at night. For eight solid years he worked by day and plugged through his technical courses at night. Upon the very day of receiving his degree in Electrical Engineering he was inducted into the United States Army, a young man of 24.

A few years after her coming to Cleveland, Florence met a young man by the name of Philip Bernstein who was working in the field of social service. After a winter of exciting courtship, they became engaged. The whole family was thrilled and delighted, for this was to be the first marriage of the children of the family. The whole family went to Cleveland for the affair, but that is a later story.

After the death of my sister, the full impact of the stock market crash and the depression hit us. Ely lost a great deal of money, and we curtailed all our expenses in order to make our savings stretch. Everything we did was on a much smaller scale than before. We were thankful that we were able to keep Irving in college and medical school through those lean years.



THE LIEBOW FAMILY—1934
Ely, Bessie, Ruth, Irving, Estelle and Naomi

Chapter 12

THE CHILDREN

My oldest daughter, Estelle, was growing up. In Junior High School she received uniformly good marks. She applied herself diligently to her homework daily, and the results were gratifying. At school she made friends who were constantly calling her on the telephone and dropping in at the house. Early in her teens she developed a love for tennis. We bought her good racquets, and she enjoyed herself almost every spring day at the tennis courts a few blocks away. The boys who helped her develop her game later became the city champions.

I used to delight in giving her birthday parties for her many friends. She had become reacquainted with the boys with whom she attended Hebrew School as a child, and they called on her often. At the age of fifteen she went out on her first real date—on New Year's Eve—with one of these boys. For the most part she went out with her crowd.

Some of her girl friends belonged to a club, the Elbees. One day Estelle was asked to join. The meetings were held once a week at a different girl's home. The purpose of it was purely social. I make mention of it, because it turned out to be of long duration. The girls were all of high school age, and at that age their topic of conversation centered around boys and hair-dos. As the years passed by, the girls advanced their education, entered the business world, found beaux, and eventually were married and began to raise families. And still the Elbees met. The friendships made through the club have lasted even through the war years, although the exigencies of the day have cancelled formal meetings. Every engagement means a

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shower, every birth means a gift. It is gratifying to realize that at least fourteen women can swallow petty differences and remain friendly through the course of fifteen years.

During her last year at high school, Estelle decided to become a high school teacher. She was accepted at the State Teachers College, Montclair, New Jersey, and prepared herself for the College Entrance Examinations.

As a senior she was elected associate editor of the *Quill*, Lincoln High School's year book. Most afternoons she spent in the Quill room working on the book.

She always had an escort for her school dances. For her commencement ball, I took pleasure in outfitting her in her first formal clothes. What excitement that was!

In January 1935, Estelle was graduated among the first ten in a class of over 300 hundred students. We were proud of her that night. Since her College Entrance Examinations were not until April, she spent the intervening months reviewing her mathematics which had always been her weak subject. In April she successfully completed the entrance requirements and was accepted for the fall term of 1935.

That summer I took my children up to the Catskill Mountains, Fleishmann's, New York, to a farm. We enjoyed pleasant evenings of entertainment at a nearby hotel. Early in the season the management needed an extra counselor to take care of an unusually large amount of children of their guests. Estelle was asked whether she would take the job. Her years of summer camping gave her ample experience in arranging a program to keep the youngsters occupied. That summer began a long career as a summer camp counselor.

In the fall she entered Montclair State Teachers College and enjoyed both the academic and social life of a commuting student. Every morning at eight a huge 1926 Buick would toot the horn at the door. Off she went to clamber in with seven sophomores, all boys, bound for college. Some of the boys

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were younger brothers of my son's friends. All of them were determined to become high school teachers. Little did they realize what a momentous and fateful future lay in store for them.

The Freshman Formal Dance in February was something Estelle had been looking forward to for months. In December she broke her ankle while playing basketball. When February rolled around her leg was still heavily bandaged, but good fortune was with her. An unusually heavy snow storm snow-bound the beautiful college on its hill and postponed the dance. Three white orchids went to waste that night. But her faithful swain managed a single orchid for the real occasion the next month.

The school year came to a close. Estelle brought home above average marks at the completion of her Freshman year. Ruth was entering her last year at high school. Irving was about to become a third year medical student at the School of Medicine of Western Reserve University. And Naomi, the little baby of the family, had already entered grade school. My family had grown up too quickly.

In the summer of 1936, Estelle had just turned eighteen. A dear friend of mine from New York, Mrs. Louis Tauscher, was sending her son and daughter to a summer camp in Pennsylvania in the Pocono Mountains. Estelle applied for a job as counsellor there and was accepted. That began a cordial business relationship between her and Blue Mountain Camp, which lasted through the four summers of her college career.

It was hard for me to realize that she was becoming a young woman. That Labor Day weekend she brought a young man home to visit, a law student from Baltimore. He had been a counselor at camp, also, and most attentive. When he left, after taking her to the theatres in New York and the night clubs, Estelle confided in me.

"Mother," she said, "Dave wants to marry me."

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My eyebrows shot up in surprise. My oldest daughter had grown up. I managed to say calmly enough, "And what was your answer?"

"Why, Mother," she said firmly, "'No,' of course. I don't love him. Besides, I have to go back to college!" And so she did.

Life went on for our family. I always had a desire to visit my parents in Palestine, but I did not wish to make the trip alone. I wanted to wait until my husband had the opportunity to come with me. However, Ely could never get away for a long vacation. Yet I still hoped to go to see them. My sister Rose, her husband, and two children stayed for two years with my parents.

On June 9, 1937, I was married twenty-five years. We celebrated with a quiet dinner at home for the family. Our friends and relatives remembered the occasion with gifts of silver. Toward the end of June, my son was graduated from Medical School. All the time he was studying in Cleveland, Abba and Virginia were kind and generous to him. Irving became attached to their two bright and handsome sons.

For the commencement exercises Ely and I drove out to Cleveland. We were thrilled to see the degree of Doctor of Medicine conferred on our son. At the same time he received a small certificate. When I inquired about that, Irving said casually, "Oh, this entitles me to be a second lieutenant in case of war." We both smiled at such a remote idea.

In Cleveland we spent a pleasant three days visiting my son's friends and their families. They remembered that the summer before we had brought Naomi with us to visit Irving. She had made such a hit that everybody asked for her. This time, however, she was at home, because school was still in session.

That fall we moved from our home on Wegman Parkway where the taxes were too high. We rented a comfortable

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smaller house with six rooms further south near Bayonne. Naomi attended the public school around the corner, while Ruth finished her high school at Snyder. There she was active in the Drama Playshop. Her histrionics made her well-known throughout the school. She was growing into a beautiful young lady, tall, slim, with dark hair and dark eyes. She was one of the most popular girls of the young set. For her sixteenth birthday we gave her a formal party. Our living room was transformed into a ballroom decorated with ferns and flowers. It was a New Year's Eve affair, and therefore doubly gala. Ruth and her friends ushered in her seventeenth year with noise and laughter.



Chapter 13

MEMORABLE INCIDENTS

During her last term at school Ruth was busy practicing for the senior class play which we enjoyed. My husband, in the meanwhile, had opened a real estate office for himself. After two years he gave this up to become a broker for Ben Schlossberg, Incorporated, one of the large real estate firms in the city.

Ruth went on to Columbia University to take some general courses which appealed to her. During one summer she went to a business school. In the fall she became a secretary-bookkeeper. Evenings she took courses at the New School for Social Research.

The stage was always an attraction for my children. Irving and Ruth did their bit of acting during high school. Estelle, on the other hand, really blossomed out during her sophomore year at Montclair. Their dramatic club put on Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors," produced and directed entirely by the students in full costume. What a hit Estelle made in her role of Adriana! Naomi, Ely, and I enjoyed the play very much. In fact, it was such a success that it was given twice more during that year.

In her junior year Estelle starred in "The Taming of the Shrew." As the strident Kate she swept across the stage in convincing tones. Her interest in amateur theater is still keen today. One act plays took up her time in senior year. Once out of school the Little Theater of the Jewish Community Center claimed her attention. There she played in "Squaring the Circle." When she went to work for a New York department

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store, she joined their dramatic group and starred in a frothy one act play.

While Ruth and Estelle were working, Irving was interning at the Lakeside Hospital of the Western Reserve School of Medicine. Although he worked hard there, he managed to come home for visits during the winter holidays. These were always festive events at home. He would gather around him his old schoolmates and friends—most of them with their wives—for talk-fests. Since Irving was almost a stranger to his hometown, he had no girl friends. So Estelle played hostess for him at his parties. The following year, Irving became Assistant Resident Physician at the hospital. At the end of that time, he was awarded a fellowship in Cardiology, a post newly-created for him. We were very pleased with the progress he had made. He planned to work under the fellowship for two years and then go into private practise. In other words, by June 1941, he would have branched out for himself. Little did we realize what a cataclysmic world we faced.

One Sunday, in 1938, my brother Abba was invited to speak at the Armory in Newark, New Jersey, in honor of Professor Albert Einstein, who had just arrived in this country. On Saturday, we received a wire from Irving. Since Uncle Abba was chartering a plane, could Irving fly with him? It may seem strange that a grown young man should ask permission to fly, but one must remember that no one in our immediate family had ever flown before. My husband wired back that Irving might fly from Cleveland.

On Sunday, Ely and I drove to the Newark Airport and waited anxiously for the plane, which was late. When it finally landed, we greeted Abba and Irving amidst a flurry of reporters and photographers. Abba stepped into a waiting limousine, Irving into our car, and then we followed Abba's car. At once, we were surrounded by a motorcycle police escort which screamingly cleared a path to the Newark Armory. There 2000 people

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were gathered. We were ushered up to the first row seats. Abba delivered a moving address in honor of Professor Einstein, and Mrs. Einstein was presented with a bouquet of flowers. America was happy to acclaim the great scientist who had left a Hitlerite Germany.



Chapter 14

DAUGHTERS' BETROTHALS

In the summer of 1939, I took Naomi with me to Kiamesha Lake, New York, for a few weeks in the Catskill Mountains. It was a beautiful place with a big lake for boating and fishing. The vacationers there were pleasant, particularly a couple from Englewood, New Jersey, who had a son who was Naomi's age. The two children played together while I enjoyed the company of Mr. and Mrs. Hyman. When my husband came out for weekends, the four of us went walking and boating together.

One weekend, Ely brought Ruth with him. When I introduced her to the Hymans, Mr. Hyman exclaimed, "Mrs. Liebow, where did you get such a pretty daughter!" And pretty she was indeed.

After the summer and an exchange of cards, Mrs. Hyman invited us for dinner. A week later, with my three daughters, we drove out to suburban Englewood. We exchanged introductions and greetings and settled down for a visit in their comfortable living room. A few minutes later, Pat, Naomi's friend from the country, walked in. Then a young man with dark hair and rosy cheeks was introduced. This was Malcolm, the middle son. And then, a still older brother, Mervin, came in to say hello. My daughters were very surprised, for I had neglected to mention the fact that I knew Mrs. Hyman had three sons.

We spent a pleasant evening dining and talking. Mervin seemed to divide his attention between the two older girls, while Malcolm teased everyone. Thus was the first formal meeting of two families whose lives were destined to be joined.

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The Hymans, en masse, returned our visit. Mervin began to call Ruth on the telephone, and shortly afterwards, began to take her out. He was a dark, good-looking young man of 23, who worked in the research department of *Time Magazine*. He used to pick up Ruth in his car and take her to the latest shows and night clubs in New York.

Estelle, in the meanwhile, was busy with Philadelphia friends, particularly a handsome young dental student, whom she had met at summer camp. He visited our home, and occasionally, she went to see her girl friends in Philadelphia, who saw to it that her favorite was always around.

Traveling to and from New York became a steady routine for her, since she worked in Manhattan. Every evening at about 6:30, she waited on line for the local bus. One late fall evening, while on line, she bumped into a tall young man who looked vaguely familiar.

"Why, you're Henry Schultz," she exclaimed in surprise. "You've grown so tall and broad I can scarcely recognize you."

"And you've grown up yourself, Estelle," he smiled. "What happened to your long curls?"

And so, all the way home on the bus, these two young people, who had lived next door to one another for almost ten years, became reacquainted. Henry's older brother, Harold, had been Irving's very good friend. Since Irving had left home for school, and since we had moved from the neighborhood almost four years before, we had lost track of the family.

Henry told Estelle that his sister Florence had married and moved to New York. In fact, he had reminded her that Ely and I had attended the wedding. Harold was selling insurance for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, where his father was a manager, and he, Henry, was practising law in New York City.

At least once or twice a week, they would meet on the bus and chat hastily. "Do you like concert music?" Henry once

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asked, and upon Estelle's affirmative reply, he asked to take her to Carnegie Hall in New York for such music.

And before I knew it, Henry was dating Estelle every other week. Soon the sisters made it a foursome with Henry and Mervin. When the Christmas vacation approached, Ruth planned to go to Cleveland to visit Irving. Since she had a New Year's date with Merv—on her birthday—she promised to be home for that day. Estelle had planned to spend the evening with Henry.

That fall had been an exciting one for Estelle and Ruth. Mervin had rushed Ruth off her feet, phoning her every night from his office in New York. On the other hand, Estelle was dividing her time between her New York lawyer and her Philadelphia dentist.

Irving came home that Thanksgiving and took Estelle with him to see the University of Pennsylvania-Cornell football game. Estelle enjoyed herself at Irv's fraternity house and at the thrilling game, from which she came away with a case of laryngitis. In the evening her dentist friend took her to a basketball game and he seemed on the verge of becoming serious.

But Estelle had too vivid memories of a dance the evening before with Henry in New York, so she managed to forestall any declaration in Philadelphia. New Year's Eve promised to be an exciting event.

Ruth arrived home in time for her date with Mervin. He gave her an exquisite wrist-watch for her birthday. When she showed it to me, I realized that their intentions were really serious.

Estelle's day was entirely different. The morning of New Year's Eve, Henry called to say that his Mother, who had been ill for a few years, had taken a turn for the worse. The doctor was in constant attendance, and Henry, who adored his Mother, was distraught. He promised to keep Estelle posted by phone.

At 9:30 P.M., Estelle received a call from Henry's brother-

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in-law that Henry's Mother had died an hour before. Estelle crept up to bed quietly and wept herself to sleep. New Year's Eve had lost all meaning for the entire Schultz family. My husband and I took Estelle to the funeral the day after New Year's. I remember seeing Estelle walk over to Henry, who was consoling his aunt, and press his hand. There must have been a deep understanding between them, for Henry has never forgotten that gesture.

Eleven days later Henry asked Estelle to marry him. We were all pleased with the match, for they made a fine young couple, both tall, and well-educated. Ruth and Merv were overjoyed because now they felt they could ask to have their engagement announced. What a busy, happy family we were the winter and spring of that fateful year, 1941! In February we announced Ruth's engagement to Mervin at a dinner party for both families. He presented her with a lovely diamond ring, while everyone beamed with happiness.

Estelle and Henry wanted to keep their betrothal quiet until June at least. However, early in March, Henry received his "Greetings" from his draft board. This was the time when the United States was drafting men for one year of service with the Armed Forces. Since Henry was eligible in every way, he realized he would be drafted soon. Therefore he and Estelle decided to have their engagement made public in April. Their date was a happy choice, for it fell on April 11, 1941, the first night of our Passover observance. We made a large seder, or feast, for the announcement, with both families in attendance. Estelle also received a beautiful diamond ring.

The announcement was made on Friday night. That was the weekend of Easter Sunday. Henry thought of the bright idea of taking his future wife to Washington, D. C., to see the Cherry Blossoms on Easter Sunday. They made up a party consisting of Ruth and Merv, along with Henry's law partner Allan Wexelblatt, and a girl friend of his. They left by train at mid-

night Saturday, which gave them a very early start to take in the highlights of the capital and Mt. Vernon. They came home thrilled with what they had seen and the pictures they had taken.

The next few months became a bustle of preparation for Ruth's wedding, planned for June 29. I was so busy with these details that the time flew by swiftly.

Ruth's wedding fell on the hottest day of June. The ceremony and reception took place in an attractive suite of rooms at the Capitol Hotel, New York City. The ceremony was singular because of the fact that the two rabbis who performed the honors were her uncles, my two brothers, of whom I was very proud. Almost two hundred friends and relatives attended. My son, now a first lieutenant in the Medical Corps, had been able to arrive from New Orleans in time for the affair. Estelle was the maid of honor, and Mervin's brother, Malcolm, acted as best man. The ceremony took place in the early afternoon. Ruth was beautiful in all-white, while Mervin gave the impression of a cool collected bridegroom in Palm Beach white. The youngsters, Naomi and Pat, made a darling couple in the bridal procession.

After the reception Ruth and Merv left on a tour of the New England States and Niagara Falls. They came back to a completely furnished, second story of a two-family house in Englewood, right across the street from Mervin's parents. The months between Ruth's engagement and wedding she had spent choosing all the appointments necessary to comfortable living. The result was a most pleasant five room home to which she and Merv returned late in July.

By the time they came back, Estelle had already bid good-bye to Henry. Her fiance became a soldier July 8, 1941. He reported to Camp Upton, Yaphank, New York. After five days he was on his way to Fort Bragg, Fayetteville, North Carolina, for basic training. A soldier in the family was quite a novelty then, and here we had two—my son and my future son-in-law.

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My daughter RUTH and her husband, MERVIN HYMAN

Chapter 15

THE WAR YEARS

When Estelle's vacation came in August, she decided to visit Henry at his Army post in Fayetteville. Although most of the soldiers in Henry's group had been inducted only a month or so before, they were all grateful to see a girl from home. While Estelle was there, Congress passed a law requiring all present and future inductees to remain in the Army for two and a half years, instead of the original one year. This new law upset their wedding plans, for they had talked of being married in September, 1942, after Henry had served his one year.

Estelle returned to her job as a clerk in the furniture office of B. Altman and Company, in New York. Henry came home on Labor Day. As he stepped off the train, he said, "Estelle, how would you like to take your Wasserman test right now? We can be married during my October furlough."

"But I'm not ready to be married!" Estelle exclaimed.

Yet before the day was out, they had decided October would be fine for a wedding. Estelle told us, "I have decided that October would be best. I don't want to be a war bride. If I wait until Henry's next furlough, that will be Christmas-time. I am afraid we'll be at war by then."

What prophetic words were these!

Ely and I made the arrangements for Estelle's wedding at the same hotel where Ruth had been married four months before. Abba and Max had agreed to perform the ceremony, just as they had at Ruth's wedding. They were married on a Thursday evening, October 16, 1941, in the presence of sixty close relatives and a few friends. After a week's honeymoon spent at

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My daughter ESTELLE and her husband, HENRY SCHULTZ

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the Waldorf-Astoria and seeing the theater, ballet, and concerts, Henry returned to Army camp and maneuvers in South Carolina.

Ruth's husband, in the meanwhile had volunteered for the Navy and the Army. He was rejected both times on account of a heart murmur which he had developed in high school. When his draft number came up for him to be inducted into the Army, he was again rejected as 4-F.

And on December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. How true had been Estelle's prediction of war by Christmas!

Ruth took a position as a clerk in the statistics department at Bendix Aeronautical Company, Teterboro, New Jersey. Merv continued with his position at *Time Magazine*. Estelle took a course during the next summer to become a machine shop inspector. At Worthington Pump and Machinery Corporation, Harrison, New Jersey, she worked as an inspector for nineteen months. Naomi, who was in high school, Ely, and I planted a victory garden next to our house, bought the rationed food and clothes and gasoline carefully, and kept clear of the black market. This, together with sending food and gifts to our son and son-in-law and clothing for the needy in Europe, was what we helped to do during the war. The girls donated blood several times and helped at the Red Cross and the U. S. O. canteens.

In March of 1942, when Henry was stationed with a Military Police Outfit at Fort Sheridan, outside of Chicago, Estelle visited him there. On her way home, she stopped off in Cleveland to visit my sister-in-law, Virginia. At this time Abba had flown to England, when that country was undergoing its worst bombings, to ask for contributions to help the stricken Jews of Europe. Estelle told us how anxiously Virginia awaited cabled word of Abba's return. While she was there, a cable arrived saying, "See you soon." Although it was war time, the cable was datelined with the name of a town.

Virginia said, "Let's see whether we can find this town in

Uncle Abba's Atlas. I'm eager to know how soon he will be home, because Passover will be here soon."

Estelle and Virginia went into Abba's spacious library, spread an enormous map of Europe on the floor, and began to search for the name they had read on the cable. They combed the coast lines of England, Ireland, France, Spain, and Portugal, and finally concluded that the name of the city had been misspelled on the cable. And so it turned out. When Abba finally flew home, he reported that he had cabled from a small town outside of Lisbon, Portugal. He had tried very hard to return on time for the first Seder night, but came a few days later. He had lectured in all the large cities of England, and his mission had been successful.

A wonderful surprise awaited us on the evening of our thirtieth anniversary. My cousins, Rae and Sam Eig, had invited us over for dinner. After we were there about a half hour, we received an urgent phone call from Estelle. She said a friend from Cleveland had just called and was on her way over to visit before catching the midnight train back to Ohio. We were to rush home at once. Well, this friend had been very kind to our son all the years he had been in Cleveland. The least we could do was to be at home to receive her. And so, without any dinner, we rushed back home. Estelle answered the door and ushered us into the living room. In one blinding flash the room was lighted and a chorus of voices shouted, "Surprise, surprise! Happy anniversary!"

Ely and I were stunned. Our large living room was filled with more than thirty friends and relatives. A sign proclaimed, "Happy Thirtieth Anniversary!" and people milled around us with good wishes. We had to sit down to catch our breath.

All our children, including Irving who was stationed at this time in New Orleans, had contrived to plan this surprise, the idea originating with Ruth and Merv. Not one word of this surprise had leaked out in advance. We spent the evening eating,

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drinking, and making merry. Our hearts were further cheered by loving messages telegraphed from Irving and Henry. Everyone enjoyed the party doubly because the surprise had been so successful.

The next month, July, 1942, Henry was shipped overseas. When we next heard from him, he had arrived in Australia. He spent eight months with his Military Police Outfit in the bush country of Darwin, the port of the north central tip of Australia which the Japanese were bombing. Fortunately for our men the Japanese never managed a direct hit. For the next three years Henry supervised the movements of all American civilian personnel traveling for the Army in the Southwest Pacific Area. From Private Schultz he worked his way up to Technical Sergeant.

My son had entered the Medical Corps as a First Lieutenant. During the next three years while he was stationed in General Hospitals in New Orleans and Oklahoma, he became a Major. On the day that I found out that he was being shipped overseas, I felt all at once the impact of the whole world situation. And then I began to write my thoughts. I felt that the little details of my lifetime would mean something to my children and grandchildren—to know their background, how they were raised and educated. These thoughts would be for them a keepsake.

Both boys wrote lengthy, fascinating letters during their years of service, reflecting their observations within the limits of censorship. On March 27, 1944, Irving wrote from somewhere in New Guinea where he was attached to the 35th General Hospital:

"Today I drew my turn supervising the unloading of the 35th's equipment from the ship and put in an eight hour shift. I'm on a bay in New Guinea, which is the site of a tremendous base. There are many of us here, of course, all of us set up in areas cleared from the jungle or coconut groves. The

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permanent personnel are housed in cool (water-proofed) native thatched huts with wood flooring; the rest of us are set up as in bivouac tents set on the grounds. Of course, there are no cities or towns anywhere near, so I'm afraid civilization, as you know it, is a thing of the future for me. We're in the rainy season, and that one doesn't forget. Malaria is under control, but our outfit maintains strict malaria discipline against the day when we move to our real site farther north. The natives are used as contract laborers for ridiculously small sums and are just as primitive as described by all accounts. Australian money is the medium of exchange and Pidgin English gets one in contact with them. I can't describe how busy this base is. The engineers did a bang-up job in road construction and the twenty-four-hour-a-day traffic is enough to make one gasp. If behind-the-lines work is helping win the war, a goodly share of it is being done here. The medical units assembled here are for installation in this area and also for movement up ahead and are intended to give the boys abundant medical attention. Apparently the medical corps has really come into its own in this part of the world."

Early in 1939, as events in Europe began to take on macabre overtones from the mad rantings of Hitler, I felt that I must cry out against man's inhumanity to man. The result was a poem I called *The World of Today*.

What has happened to the world of today?
Progress, inventions, made tyrants they say.
Why not give thoughts to peace and humanity,
Strengthen our morals and hope for unity?

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Help avoid the misery enforced upon men.
Through democracy and freedom we can
triumph only then.

Passing through this world of ours,
Life so short—let's strew with flowers.
Let us look forward to the world of tomorrow,
And give to all mankind, joy—not sorrow.

It was published in the *Jersey Journal*, our local paper, in the *Center Review*, the weekly organ of the Jewish Community Center, and in the *Temple Bulletin*, a weekly published by our Temple Beth-El.

I have always been interested in writing and periodically world events have moved me to set down my feelings in poetry. In 1942, inspired by the situation in Palestine, I wrote *My Prayer for Israel*. My poem appeared in a volume called *Sod and Mast*, a compilation including poetry from every part of the United States. The following is the poem:

I live here in this land of the free,
But my heart is filled with misery
When I think of the desolate refugee.
Please, God, put a stop to this bigotry!
Deliver these children from Germany.
May this be the end of Israel's plight.
Help us to carry the torch of right.

Hitler's strength must finally weaken
In spite of more land and money,
And our willing youth will help rebuild
Our land of milk and honey.

Chapter 16

SOLDIERS' RETURN

During the war, the housing shortage began to affect us. We were living in an old, rambling house which we had been renting. The owner sold it, and we had to move. Although Estelle was married, she was living with us and we had to have a place for Henry to come home to. Of course, we needed another room for Naomi, and one for ourselves. Ely searched Jersey City for new living quarters. He found a three-story house on Duncan Avenue, in the heart of the Bergen section of the city, adjacent to an excellent shopping district.

As soon as I saw the house, with its sixty-foot front and back gardens, I concluded that with intelligent decorating, we could make this a beautiful home. We modernized the kitchen and bathrooms and papered all the rooms. Ely and I had the large front bedroom, and Naomi's room was on the same floor. On the third floor, was Estelle's room and bath. Downstairs, after entering a screened-in porch, we passed into the living room, library, dining room, butler's pantry, and finally, a large, bright kitchen. On the whole, the house was comfortable and attractive.

As a result of the move we had made, Naomi changed schools, attending Lincoln High School, from which both Estelle and Irving had graduated.

Estelle passed her teacher-in-training examination in English and started teaching in Ferris High School in Jersey City. Together with a friend, Helen Kleinzahler, who also taught there, she produced and directed the senior class play, Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors." It was the first time that a classic

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had been presented by the students of that school. The play was so successful that Estelle received commendation from the Superintendent of Schools.

On March 14, 1945, Ruth gave birth to a baby girl, Linda Joan, our first grand-child. We received a great thrill from watching our daughter's child grow.

Our small personal excitement was overshadowed two months later by the tremendous news of the victory in Europe in May, 1945. The whole country thanked God that night for the cessation of fighting in at least one part of the world. And among the thankful ones, there prayed the mourners of sons and husbands who would never return.

The historic atom-bombing of Japan quickly followed, leaving us gasping at the possible consequences. And finally, with victory over Japan in August of 1945, World War II was over. Europe was devastated—most of its Jewry annihilated—and America faced the job of returning its fighting men to their homes, families, and jobs.

In our own family, Henry was discharged in July, 1945, four years after his induction. He came home to our house on Duncan Avenue. After the summer, he began to look for work. Here was a young lawyer with three years of legal experience before going into the Army. There were jobs available to him in large firms at small salaries. For an ambitious, enterprising young man in an age of inflation, a small salary had no appeal. In December, 1945, in association with Leo Checkver, an old friend and accountant, Henry opened his own law office in Manhattan.

The pleasure of this event was marred by the death of his father, who passed away after a serious operation.

Irving was sent from New Guinea to an Army hospital in Ohio and discharged there. He, too, now faced the problem of earning his living. After a brief rest and considerable thought, he accepted the generous offer of a former professor to share a

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suite of offices in Cleveland. There he began his practice of Internal Medicine, with emphasis on Cardiology. He shared an apartment with another young man, bought himself a car, and prepared to swing back into the social life of Cleveland which he had left five years before.

In a few months, Ely was lucky to find Estelle and Henry a three room apartment in a house which he managed, directly across the street from us. We helped them furnish their home and soon it looked complete, even to the baby grand piano, for the musical Henry. Here Estelle took pleasure in entertaining their many friends and relatives, especially Henry's sister, Florence Gritz and her family, who had been so kind to her during the lonely war years.



Chapter 17

VISIT TO THE HOLY LAND

The year 1946 rolled around. Since before the war I had been thinking of visiting my parents in Palestine. As soon as the war ended, I waited for the first ship that would take the visiting civilians with no special mission. Ely planned to go with me also, and in preparation we took pictures for a double passport. In a letter dated March 12, 1946, Abba wrote me from Cleveland:

"I have received letters from Israel Ziman, our cousin in Jerusalem, who has been very attentive to the folks, stating that Mother has been very seriously ill. Fortunately she has a very excellent doctor, Professor Zondek, looking after her, and I know that she is getting every attention necessary. Because of Mother's advanced age, and the fact that she has been twice seriously ill within the year, it has occurred to me that if you are going to Palestine to visit the folks, you might arrange to go immediately."

Consequently, when we were informed a week later that we could sail for Palestine in seven days, I needed no other urging. Ely, however, could not wind up his business affairs quickly enough to make the boat. Having no other choice, I packed a steamer trunk and was ready to leave alone on March 29, on the steamship, *Vulcania*. The ship, which had been used for transporting troops, had not yet been reconverted for civilian use.

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As I said before, Ely had planned to come with me. We had had only one passport made out for the both of us. On the day the boat left from a Jersey City dock Ely and I stood on line three hours to reach the table where the passports were being examined. When my turn finally came, the inspector announced coldly, "If you wish to travel alone, you must have a single passport, not this double one."

I gasped with astonishment. "But I must sail on this boat!" I protested.

"Then you must go to Wall Street in New York to have your passport adjusted," explained the inspector. "It is already late afternoon. I will phone the office there to expect you. You will still have time to catch the boat."

Through his good efforts and after a frantic drive to New York we found the proper authorities. As we drove madly through the harbor terminal back to the ship, an angry policeman tried to stop us. A hasty explanation rushed us through, and as I ran up onto the ship, the gangplank was removed.

On the *Vulcania* I followed a line for passes—one for my cabin and one for my meals. This took no time at all, for I was last on line. I shared my cabin with three other women. We enjoyed our first meal aboard ship and slept well that night. The weather was pleasant. The next day, Saturday, I was seasick. Sunday night an elderly woman with twelve suitcases entered the cabin. She announced that she had just left a cabin shared by fifteen women without a bath. We took her in. She turned out to be a Mrs. Biskind who was going back home to live in Palestine, near my parents.

That night a raging storm broke out. We did not recover our equilibriums until Tuesday when the weather cleared. When we were able to move about the ship, I met several people I knew, and they helped to make the voyage pleasant.

Sighting the Rock of Gibraltar made us feel that we had almost arrived. Our first stop was Naples, Italy, where sev-

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eral of the women disembarked. Men were peddling all kinds of jewelry and basketry for American cigarettes. A friend gave me a pack which bought a little bracelet for my youngest daughter. Everywhere there were signs of the recent war. The harbor and buildings were wrecked by shell-holes. Storekeepers who had been bombed out displayed their merchandise out of doors on the sidewalks. My heart was stirred by these and other signs of humanity's cruelty.

Finally, we reached our destination, Alexandria, Egypt. We made ourselves comfortable at the Canal Suez Hotel. Three rabbis who had been fellow passengers asked some of us to join them on a visit to the Temple in Alexandria for the Saturday afternoon prayers.

The Temple is set in the center of a large plot of ground surrounded by an iron gate and palm trees. Two Egyptian guards opened the gates to let us enter. The structure is of white stone and marble, large enough to seat four hundred people. The thirty year old temple is adorned with mahogany seats, large stained glass windows and white satin curtains to cover the ark. Twelve gorgeous silver lamps hang over the Ark, one containing the perpetual light that must never be allowed to go out.

The prayers were very impressive. Rabbi D. M. Ventura delivered the sermon in Hebrew and then in French. After the services he invited us to his home adjoining the Temple. In his study, he and his assistant, Rabbi Aaron Angel, treated us to demi-tasse and cigarettes. When someone remarked that I was Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver's sister, Rabbi Ventura's face lit up. Although he spoke little English, he told me he knew that Abba had been in Palestine recently. I asked for his card which he gladly gave me. This was indeed a very pleasant interlude during our stop-over in Alexandria.

In order to reach Jerusalem, I took an over-night train which was much delayed en route. Since I was eager to reach

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my parents in time for the seder, I left the train one station before Jerusalem and took a taxi to the suburb where my parents lived, Rahavia.

This unexpected taxi ride afforded me a splendid view of the Palestinian countryside. Against a background of the gray and white stone buildings, the colorful orange and lemon groves in full bloom were a beautiful sight. The air was unbelievably fresh and fragrant.

Entering the city, I was amazed to see how modern the "New Jerusalem" is. The residential section, which was the first I observed, is filled with white stone, two-storied houses, most of them with balconies and vines covered with purple flowers.

Just before seder time, I greeted my parents with tears of joy. For this moment we had waited twenty years. It saddened me to see them so old, yet their spirit and outlook on life in Palestine made them young in mind. Later, friends joined us for a happy seder.

The next day was Pesach and just as peaceful as a Yom Tov should be. Following the holiday my cousin, Israel Ziman, offered to be my guide. Since he had lived in a kibutz for ten years, and now had the job of finding displaced persons for the Jewish Agency, I was happy to accept his offer. Here was a man who knew Palestine thoroughly.

From my parents home, Israel led me through "New Jerusalem" where I saw the broad streets of Jaffa and King David. They were lined with modern buildings and full of traffic. Walking through many avenues took us to "Old Jerusalem," where the narrow streets, donkeys, and Arabian food smells contrasted sharply with the "New." I was impressed by a feeling of poverty where the old East and the European Jew mingle.

With growing interest, I noticed the colorful types of people I met on the way. Jews with curls and skull caps led small children by the hand. Arabs in long white robes with shawled heads led donkeys side by side with the people. Soldiers

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from many nations were in the dark, narrow streets. From time to time, I saw a ray of light from a roof window, and this was a reminder that above, it was a bright and sunny day. All along the streets were dirty Arabian children with their black, shining, and staring eyes. Poor people sat and asked for alms. It was hard to tell whether they wanted money or life.

At first sight, the Wailing Wall looks like any other high old wall—long, built of large stones, and aged with moss. Coming closer, I saw an unforgettable sight: men and women pressed against the wall with eyes full of tears. They cry and pray for themselves and for all Israel. The crevices of the old wall are filled with thousands of handwritten notes. My guide told me the reason. If you wish that God grant your desire, you write him a note and place it in a crevice of the wall. I, too, stopped to place a note there—whether out of belief of the legend or whether impressed with the idea—I still don't know. What magnetism there must be in that old wall that through hundreds of years, the hopes and aspirations of a tortured people should be poured into it! God grant that those wishes will soon be fulfilled.

The next important place I visited was the Hadassah Hospital. When my visit was reported to the secretary, I was introduced to the superintendent, Dr. Yassky. He was kind enough to provide me with an English-speaking guide who showed me the hospital. Built high on a mountain, it is spacious, airy, and, of course, flooded with sun-light.

The small reception room was draped and upholstered in good taste. Patients in private rooms and in wards lay in clean linen. The walls and floors of marble were spotless. In the kitchen I saw big tables, large refrigerators, and baking machines. Women in white prepared the meals which smelled delicious. The next stop was in the huge laundry located in the basement. It was filled with washing machines, dryers, and ironers. Closet upon closet was stacked with clean blankets and

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hospital linen, neatly piled and folded. Here was an industry in itself. I think Hadassah Hospital is more attractive, comfortable, and spacious than most American hospitals. Thousands of patients of all nations receive the best treatment in this fine institution. Since 1918, more than ten million people attended the clinics and over 300,000 patients have been treated.

After my tour of the Hospital, I returned to the office of Dr. Yassky, where we paused to chat. "You may well be proud of this fine hospital," I said.

"On the contrary," replied Dr. Yassky, "*You* should be proud. Your American money and help made this hospital possible. And with more effort on the part of you American people we may soon be able to open a Medical School here."

During my stay in Palestine, I had the pleasure of meeting Professor Zondek, the physician who looked after my parents. At his home, I met his cousin, a pleasant young woman by the name of Dr. Wolfson. With them I enjoyed a performance of the ballet by the School of Dance. I also attended the motion pictures and a concert as well as the opera which was sung in Hebrew. I was fortunate enough to catch the touring symphony. I must report that Palestinian theatres are generally far more comfortable than ours. The pictures are English or American-made, spoken in English. At the bottom of the screen is the French translation, while at the left side are Arabic and Hebrew words to explain the dialogue. Four nationalities may enjoy a moving picture at once. During intermission time one may purchase a refreshing orange or lemon drink for five cents.

Another tour took me through the various modern buildings of the Hebrew University. I was impressed by the chemistry laboratory because it was built of stone walls as a special protection against fire from explosion.

My guide, Israel, took me to visit his own kibutz. There I found a different world. All ages were represented, with

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everyone trained in the occupation which best suits him. They do practically everything themselves: raise cattle, poultry, fruit, vegetables, grain, operate bakeries and laundries, and make and mend their own clothes and shoes. Babies are cared for by trained women, and children attend school through high school. If they wish to attend college, and are qualified, the kibutz sends them out for further education. Each family has its own rooms but all eat in a public dining room. One interesting feature is the laundry locker. Each person places his dirty laundry in his own locker. Two days later he returns and finds his laundry clean.

Years ago, some of the members of the kibutz did not believe in the ceremony of marriage. Now, however, the institution of marriage is sacred. If a person misbehaves in any way, it is the privilege of the kibutz to vote on whether or not he should be dismissed as a member of the camp.

Opposite the home of my parents stand the offices of the Karen Kayemeth, the Jewish National Fund. I was thrilled to see the Herzl room, which is a replica of Dr. Herzl's study in Vienna, where he accomplished some of his life's great work. In this same building, I saw, preserved under glass, the famous Golden Books, containing the names of those who contributed, in many ways, toward the fund for Land Redemption in Israel. Today, the basement of one of its buildings houses the Missing Persons Bureau, and around the building stand trees, planted in honor of Zionists. The trees planted by the Jewish National Fund help protect the countryside in sand and wind storms.

I also visited Rachel's Tomb, Haifa, Tel-Aviv, the Orphans Home, the Home for the Aged, of which my father was the director, and the Tuberculosis Hospital which is in great need of funds with which to erect one large building for all its departments. "Ask your American friends," the superintendent begged, "to send us funds to put these small buildings under one roof."

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I could not crowd in enough exploring in my ten weeks stay. I plan to return again to visit this land of wonders—a land of only thirty years growth.

On June 3rd, I was invited to attend the laying of the cornerstone of the Chaim Weizmann Institute of Science. This was an outstanding event. From its laboratories and classrooms will come discoveries which will benefit mankind and reflect great credit on the Jewish people.

All of us Jews must help rebuild our homeland. We must have the courage to regain our prestige and glory in the family of nations. Every country has shed blood for its liberty, and so was Palestine ready to then, while I was there. All Jews have a right to feel that there is a land where they may find the best expression of Jewish art and culture. That land is Palestine.

After almost ten weeks in the Holy Land, I was eager to return home. This I found was not an easy task to accomplish. I visited the American Consulate every day trying to book passage on the next ship to America. Each day I was told that the next boat was filled to capacity, my only hope lying in a last-minute cancellation.

On a Saturday morning, June 21, 1946, the American Consul appeared at my parents' door.

"I have a cancellation allowing you to sail on the *Marine Shark* if you can be at the Haifa dock today to buy your ticket," he said a bit anxiously. And he had good cause for his anxiety. The curfew was then in full force. Any Arab bus or taxi which left Jerusalem had to be back by sundown. Furthermore, it was the Sabbath. No Jewish buses were running, and if I could have helped it, I would rather not have traveled that day, out of respect to my parents. I was not packed, and therefore could not leave within the hour in order to get to Haifa in time for the Arab driver to return before curfew time. I was indeed in a quandry.

"You must find some way to leave," the Consul urged.

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"There will not be another boat for a long time, and I am afraid we will be at war by then."

Here was an ominous note indeed. I went to see the friendly Professor Zondek and told him my predicament. He at once put his chauffeur at my disposal. I bid my parents good-bye. How sad they were at my leaving. But they realized that this was the only opportunity to leave before heavy fighting began.

The chauffeur drove me to Haifa, where I bought my ticket. Later, at the Hotel Zion, I enjoyed American style food and music, and became acquainted with a very pleasant woman who was America-bound to see her family. Early the next morning, I sailed for the United States on the *Marine Shark*, after ten weeks in Palestine.

The ship was still equipped as a troopship with poor food and accommodations. I shared a cabin with nine other women. A high point of the voyage through the Mediterranean was a stop at a Greek port, where I could not resist buying from the street peddlers leather suitcases and a hassock, for my children.

The weather on the return trip was generally fair, and as we approached New York Harbor, I understood, at last, the grateful and prayerful feeling that so many travelers have reported on seeing the Statue of Liberty. I sighed with great relief, knowing that I was back home safely.

The Jersey City Chapter of the American Jewish Congress, of which I was a member, asked me to report on my trip. Before a large group of the membership, I reviewed the highlights of my visit to the Holy Land.

My youngest daughter, Naomi, had graduated from high school during my absence abroad. I had also missed a family gathering on the occasion of the marriage of my niece, Sylvia Doris Matlaw, to Nathan John Jacobs on July 4, 1946. My children told me that the affair had been dignified and impressive. My brothers, Abba and Max, officiated as had been the

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family custom at Ruth's and Estelle's wedding.

Now Naomi was ready for college. At this time, many discharged soldiers were taking advantage of free education under the G. I. Bill of Rights. Colleges were flooded with male students and girls were being rejected from most schools because of overcrowded conditions. We were pleased, therefore, to learn that Naomi had been accepted at the Flora Stone Mather College for Women of Western Reserve University, in Cleveland. The college found room for her in a dormitory, and, outfitted for the winter, we shipped her off to begin her college career as a neighbor of her brother, now practicing medicine in Cleveland.

On October 26, 1946, the forty-ninth annual convention of the Zionist Organization of America was held in Atlantic City. Our son-in-law, Mervin, drove us there, as he and Ely were delegates. We stopped at the Hotel Traymore. Between meetings we met friends from Cleveland and along with my sister-in-law, Virginia, Abba's wife, we sunned ourselves near the sea. This convention enthusiastically re-elected Dr. Silver to his second year as President of the Zionist Organization of America, urging him to continue his militant attitude in Washington to obtain recognition of Palestine as the Jewish National Home.

Ely has always been active in local Zionist circles. For several years, he has organized theatre party benefits to raise money for the local district. All of his affairs were successful, usually netting the organization over \$1,000.00.

Mervin became an ardent Zionist through the inspiration of Ruth. In Englewood, he helped increase the membership from eighteen to three hundred in one year. He then became president of the district for three successive terms.

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My husband, ELY — 1948

Chapter 18

CLEVELAND AFFAIR

The Passover holidays of 1947 fell in March. Ely and I were spending the week in Atlantic City. Naomi was visiting a girl friend in Warren, Ohio, for the holiday. We telephoned her there to say hello. What an exciting conversation that turned out to be!

"Dad, Dad," she cried, "I have wonderful news for you! Irving is engaged to be married to a Cleveland girl. He tried to reach you at home, but there was no answer. You'll love her."

We immediately called Irving to congratulate him. "I'm glad you got the girl you like," I said.

"You'll like her, too, when you see her," Irving replied.

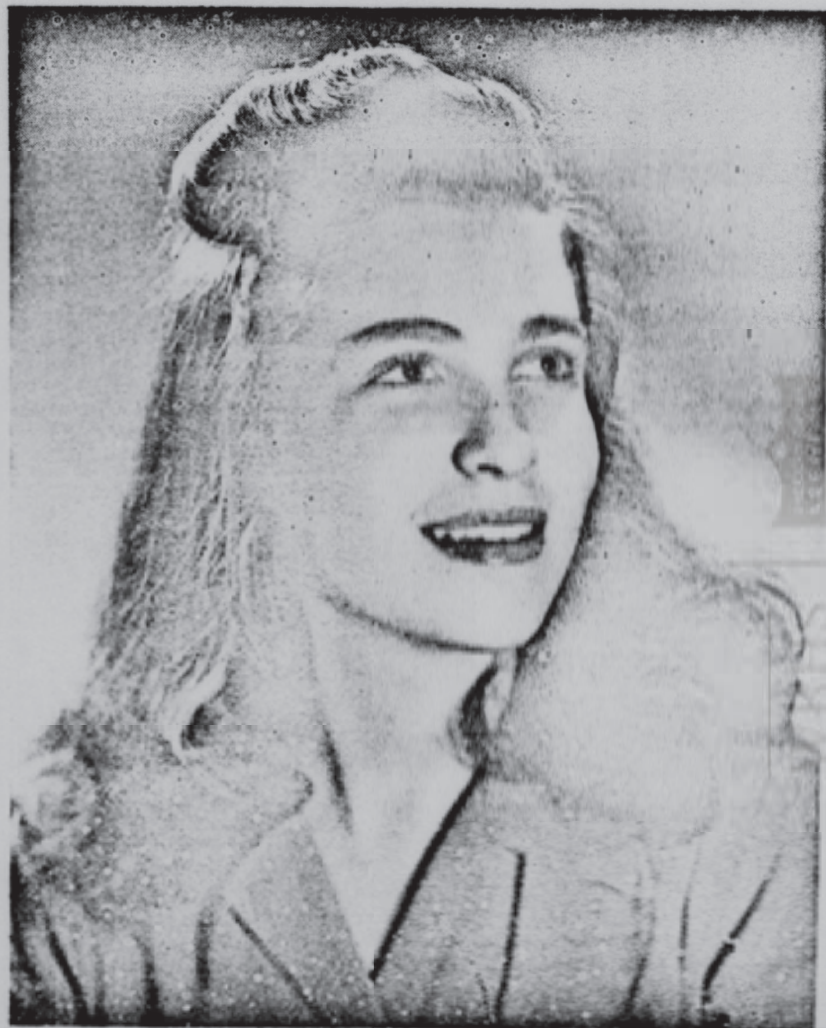
Ely asked, "When are you bringing her home?"

"Early in April, Dad."

"Fine," said Ely. "We'll be expecting you."

In the meantime we found out all the details by mail. Our son's fiancée was Joanne Elisabeth King, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold King of Cleveland. Mr. King, a former lawyer, was a realtor. Joanne was in her junior year at Smith College. Irv had met Joanne briefly two years before through her uncle. During Christmas of 1946, when she was spending the holiday at home, he saw her several times. Again, between semesters, early in February, Irving saw her in New York where she was visiting relatives. In March when he proposed, she accepted, and everyone was delighted.

During the weekend that Irving brought Joanne home to meet us, we gave a reception in her honor. Attended by over



Irving's wife, Joanne.



My son, Irving, as a Major in World War II.

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fifty people, it was a beautifully arranged supper in our large home where Joanne met our family and close friends. To say that we were delighted with Joanne would be an understatement. She is warm and friendly and attractive, with sparkling blue eyes, a fine complexion, and a beautiful smile.

Although Joanne was in Massachusetts at school, she and her mother made all their plans by telephone. The date for the formal wedding was set for Monday night, June 30. For those of use who were going to Cleveland from Jersey and New York, it turned out to be a glorious week-end of whirlwind activity with one affair after another.

The girls and their husbands drove to Cleveland while Naomi, Ely, and I went by train. Saturday night, Joanne's great-uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Miller, gave a dinner party at the Oakwood Country Club. Here the out-of-town guests met the Cleveland family of the bride. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were served on the terrace. Later we adjourned to a private dining room, decorated lavishly with flowers. We enjoyed the gay, friendly atmosphere, the delicious food and wine, and were at once taken with Joanne's family.

Sunday evening, at the same place, Abba and Virginia gave a reception, where we became even friendlier with Irving's future family. The high spot of that evening was a toast by Abba, made over wine, fresh from Palestine.

The climax of this memorable week-end was of course, the wedding. It was truly a beautiful affair. It was held in a suite at the Hotel Cleveland at 7:30 P.M. sharp, Abba seeing to it that the procession began promptly. Henry and Mervin, as two of the ushers, helped escort the guests to their proper places. The best man was Joanne's Uncle Bernard, who had introduced them in the first place. Naomi was the maid of honor. She was dressed in yellow and carried a basket of blue and yellow flowers. The room was decorated with white gardenias, delphinium, and roses. The bride, lovely in white satin and an

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heirloom veil, was escorted by her father in a candlelight ceremony.

The newlyweds honeymooned at Cape Cod. Before returning to Cleveland, they spent a week-end with us. Once back home, Irving moved his offices to a new Physicians and Surgeons Building. Joanne's parents furnished a charming apartment for them and Joanne finished her senior year at Naomi's school, Flora Stone Mather. When Miss Liebow and Mrs. Liebow sat next to one another in their Nutrition Class, confusion reigned for the instructor, to the amusement of the students.

Altogether, this was a happy year for me and my family.



Chapter 19

CREATION OF ISRAEL

The United Nations General Assembly which was created in San Francisco in 1945, brought together 58 nations to discuss world problems and try to settle them amicably.

In 1947, the U.N. held sessions at Lake Success, Flushing, New York. Here, as one of the spokesmen for the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Abba sat at a special table between the Cuban and the Czechoslovakian representatives. Before the Political and Security Committee, Abba presented the Jewish demand for Palestine as a Jewish State and for immediate emigration of Jewish displaced persons from European camps to Palestine. He reviewed all the issues involved and a special committee was convoked to examine the plight of these Jews.

On May 28, 1947, the Zionist Districts of Bayonne, Hoboken, Jersey City, and North Hudson sponsored a Zionist Jubilee dinner in honor of Abba, who cheered the creation of the U.N. appointment. The dinner was held in the Jersey City Community Center.

At my home, before the dinner, Mr. Louis Falk and Mr. Henry Goldman, outstanding local Zionists, joined Abba, Ely, Estelle, Henry, and me for cocktails and hors d'ouvres. After the Community Center dinner, Abba delivered a dynamic speech in which he justified his militant attitude for the Zionist cause and told of his speech before the U.N.

Again on October 3, 1947, Abba addressed the Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine of the U.N. General Assembly in answer to the Committee's findings. He stated that the Jewish people would accept partition only under duress and would

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agree to preserve the economic unity of the two partitions. He concluded his speech with the following words:

"The course which will be followed will be fraught with destiny for all, the Jews, the Arabs, and the United Nations. We hope that it will be a course of wisdom, justice, and courage. The Jewish people hopefully awaits the decision of this body."

On Saturday evening, November 29, 1947, at 5:30 P. M., the sixteenth day in the Hebrew month of Kislev, the U.N. General Assembly finally gave its approval for the establishment of a Jewish State in a part of Palestine.

By the rules of the Assembly, demonstrations were forbidden. But when the meeting was over, the demonstrations of joy among Jews reverberated throughout the world. Abba was bombarded with congratulatory messages from friends, family, co-workers, and his staunch supporters. People danced in the streets with tears in their eyes and joy in their hearts. A dream of 2,000 years has come true.

A dream come true, that is, in the eyes of the United Nations. The Arabs refused to capitulate and fighting between them and the Jews started almost at once. The Jewish pioneers and heroes who lost their lives defending the homes and cities they had built, will remain cherished memories in Israel. The new nation of Israel will become, I am sure, a shining symbol of peace and liberty.

I have often wondered why the leaders of the world cannot work out a means of settling issues by financial methods rather than by warfare. Why don't they use the money poured into ammunition for alleviating the economic ills of humanity instead of for mass murder? As science progresses, medicine seems to be lengthening lives. Yet all the other advancements

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of our civilization seem to be destroying our security and our peace of mind, instead of preparing for better living and richer thinking. War does not bring us nearer the things we really want. It retards our progress by generations.

We come into this world for a visit. Through love, we grow, study, and create. By giving love and respect and help to those around us, we can make our trip agreeable. When God calls us back, we should return with a clear conscience and a sweet remembrance of our worldly visit.



Chapter 20

KNOTTING OF LIFE'S THREADS

During the twenty-two years my parents lived in Rahavia, Jerusalem, they were both active in welfare work. My mother was president of the board of Esras Nashim, a home for the mentally ill, and active in the synagogue and orphan home affairs. Father was a director of the old age home. Between them they gave almost all they had to charity.

"We don't need new clothes," they kept telling their children.

Father was a scholar. In 1936, he started on a two volume commentary in Hebrew on the *Pentateuch*. In 1941, when the second volume of *Chashukei Kessef* (*Delights of Silver*) was published, he celebrated his eightieth birthday, and Jerusalem celebrated his contribution to Hebrew academic life.

Almost two years after I had last seen her, Mother passed away on February 22, 1948. Although she was already eighty-seven years old, her death was still a shock to me. Before my year of mourning was over, my beloved father followed her on January 11, 1949, at the age of eight-eight. I was somewhat consoled by the knowledge that I had spent a few months with them only two years before. Their lives have always been an inspiration to their children and to those who knew them. Their goodnesses and philanthropies will always be remembered.

In March 1948, Ely and I drove to Cleveland to visit Joanne and Irving in their new apartment. We were pleased to see that it was furnished comfortably and in excellent taste. Joanne cooked a tasty dinner for us and Naomi. While we

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were in Cleveland, Rhea and Arnold King, Joanne's parents, took us to their home to show us the colored moving pictures of our children's wedding. We saw ourselves again in formal attire smiling happily at everything. Later we inspected Irving's new suite of offices in a recently constructed Physicians and Surgeons Building on Carnegie Avenue. Along with his practice, he has found time to contribute research articles to the *American Heart Journal*.

My granddaughter, Linda, was thrilled with the arrival of a brother, David Michael, named after his great-grandmother, Dinah Silver, on May 7, 1948. Estelle's first child, Roberta, born on June 3, 1948, was named after her grandmother, Rose Schultz. Ely and I were happy watching our three lovely grandchildren thrive.

Meanwhile, the families of my brothers and sisters and sisters-in-law were also growing up around us. Maxwell, although he had not been active in the ministry since he was a young man, nevertheless obtained his Doctor of Divinity degree from the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, in 1936. Abba also was present and participated in the ceremony. His scholarly books include *Justice and Judaism in the Light of Today*, *The Ethics of Judaism from the Aspect of Duty*, and most recently, *The Way to God*, all of them penetrating statements of Jewish philosophical thought. His son, Harold, is now a rabbinical student at the New York branch of the Hebrew Union College. His daughter Marion, assistant to the head of the lecture bureau of the Jewish Welfare Board, is married to an advertising man, Martin Namm.

Abba's older boy, Daniel, is studying at the Cincinnati Hebrew Union College, while the younger brother, Raphael, still at Harvard, also talks of going into the rabbinate. Rose's son, Daniel, hopes to go to Cincinnati after he finishes college in New York. The grandchildren of Rabbi Moses Silver are following a noble family tradition.

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For many years my husband had been wanting a summer place far from the city and far from the crowds of vacationing people. He always dreamed of the day when he could drive away from the breezeless, perspiring city high into the cool mountains and putter around a place of his own. Since Estelle had married, she too thought of owning a sort of hide-away from the stifling summer months.

In August of 1947, we acquired such a place in partnership with Henry and Estelle. About 2400 feet above sea level, in the Caskill Mountains made famous by Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle, we found Hunter Haven in Hunter, New York. On two acres of land we have a six room house which Estelle made her home. Attached to it is a three room bungalow which Ely and I use. The living quarters have the same conveniences of the city. Also on the grounds are a two-car garage, an out-door grille, two sleeping bunks, and a large swimming pool fed by our own natural springs. The grounds around the houses are landscaped and planted with shade and fruit trees. The air is clear, the scenery is beautiful, and we are at least a quarter of a mile from our nearest neighbors. The peace and quiet are enchanting.

During the summer of 1948, Estelle's infant, Roberta, was too young to be taken up to Hunter. I did not care to go alone, so we rented Hunter Haven to two friends, a dress designer and a psychiatrist, and their families. They liked the place so well that they wanted to buy it. In August I spent a week in Tannersville, the next town to Hunter, and saw how they enjoyed the place. While I was there, Abba left for Israel with the Number One passport issued from the newly established Israeli Consulate in New York. We were anxiously waiting for peace in Israel so that the young nation could start organizing itself.

That winter I put myself under the care of a doctor and carefully lost twenty pounds of excess weight. I looked for-

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ward to spending the next summer in Hunter with my family.

During the week of Linda's fourth birthday, March 14, 1949, Irving and Joanne were visiting in New York with friends who were attending a toy convention. We had them all at our home for dinner one day. On another day Henry and Estelle took them to dinner in New York. Then we drove them to Englewood for Linda's birthday. She entertained us with stories of her kindergarten experiences.

In April Ely and I went to a Hadassah-Zionist bazaar in Englewood where a sizeable sum of money was raised for the cause. At the Hadassah luncheon that year, which is attended by all the women who have earned or donated a set sum of money, Ruth recited a poem before a thousand women. I was very proud of her. She was already a past president of that hard-working organization.

And then in June Roberta was one year old. Since her birthday and Estelle's were a day apart, we made a double party at Estelle's home. Unlike my two other grandchildren, Roberta is now a blue-eyed blonde.

Estelle invited Ruth, Merv, and their children to spend the summer with her in Hunter. They managed the children and keeping house with a minimum of effort. During his month's vacation Merv was a big help. Ely and Henry drove up every weekend and spent their vacations with us. Together we painted furniture, the rocks around the grounds, the two-man boat, and a bungalow, built an enclosure for the outdoor shower, and otherwise made the place comfortable for ourselves and our many visitors.

Almost every weekend we had a frankfurter or hamburger roast on our outdoor grille. The young folks danced to radio music and toasted marshmallows.

My biggest thrill was having my other children visit us. Joanne and Irving spent several days with us. They came from Cleveland by train to Albany. Ely met them there and

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My daughter NAOMI, taken the year she graduated from college.

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drove them to Hunter. They looked tired and pale. By the time they left, Joanne and Irv had becoming suntans and were rested. After camp season Naomi came down from Brandon, Vermont, where she had been camp office clerk. She loves Hunter, as we all do, and enjoyed her stay before returning to her senior year at college. Naomi's train from Vermont also stopped at Albany.

Each time in Albany we visited with our old friends, the Joe Suchoffs, who have a drugstore there. They drove down to spend some time with us. How we reminisced! Our talking brought back long-forgotten events. Their son, Ben, had been married the year before, and we had gone to the wedding. We talked, naturally, of all the children.

Before we left for the summer, Abba sent me a copy of his latest book, *Vision and Victory*, a stirring account of his personal fight for Israel. Abba's other published works include: *Messianic Speculation in Israel*, *The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History*, *Religion in a Changing World*, and *The World Crisis and Jewish Survival*. All his writings reveal his profound knowledge of the Talmud and of Jewish lore. It is too bad that we live so far apart. I do not have the opportunity to see him and his family as often as I would like. Yet, after all, as life rolls by, the sacrifices and joys of our youth serve as a Silver chain to link us with love and respect to the busy present. In July Abba wrote me that he and Virginia were leaving for a vacation in France. They needed the rest, and I was glad that they could go.

The serenity of Hunter was conducive to finishing the writing of my personal history which I had begun during the eventful years of World War II. The summer heat was made comfortable by the shade trees. As soon as the sun dropped down behind the encircling mountains, the air became cool and then cold. We always slept with blankets. This made for such ideal weather that we hesitated at the thought of returning to

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the city. But our Hunter homes were not insulated against the cold. Late in September we finally packed our city belongings, closed down the place, and reluctantly returned to the routine of the city. We had spent a memorable summer.

On December 29, 1949, Abba received the Cardozo Memorial Award given annually by Tau Epsilon Rho, national law fraternity, to an individual who has made "an outstanding contribution to the American way of life." Abba was honored for his leadership in helping to create the State of Israel. In accepting the award, Abba said, "The reconstituted Jewish state, if it will remain true to the essential . . . character of historic Israel, will come to exercise a stimulating influence in world Jewry as well as a unifying one."

Here we find hope for a still greater Jewish future. We have much to look forward to. The blue and white flag of Israel with its star of David flies among the fifty-eight free countries of the United Nations. Israel is now ready to make its contributions to the peace and culture of the world. I hope I live to see some of these accomplishments.