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INTRODUCTION

Several years ago, a few of us grandchildren asked Grandma and Grandpa to tell us about their lives. Grandpa did all the writing and, not surprisingly, the tale focused on his life. Now, six years later, in honor of Grandpa's 94th birthday, I present his story. The manuscript has been reorganized and edited to eliminate some duplication and to present a more readable story. However, with minor exceptions, the words are Grandpa's own.

Jeffrey M. Elliott, grandson

Adar 8, 5745

March 1, 1985

This is the story of my life, written by me on August 25, 1979
[and thereafter] at 2 Lincoln Place, Liberty, New York.

Ozeron

My name is Fishel Fiedel. I am Jewish. My Jewish name is Fishel Meyer Fiedel. My father's name was Joseph. My mother's name was Hettie. I was born in a small town in Ozeron, Russia Woliner Gubernia (which we call it "State" in English) on February 25, 1891, according to the Russian calendar, Adar 8, according to the Jewish calendar. It was also called Zitomer State. My father was also born in Ozeron, and his parents came from a town called Kovle from the same State.

Ozeron was once wild--nothing but forest and wild animals. One day, the Czar of Russia, at that time Alexander the Great, gave out a proclamation to the Jewish people: if any one is willing to go and settle down there they can own the land and have the same rights as the Christian people. Before that, Jews had no right to own land, to an education, to important business, or to have their Jewish judges in courts or their own police.

Ten families from that town where my great grandparents lived accepted the offer, and they went out there [to Ozeron] and started to work on that land. So they had to be on the look-out all the time for wild animals. There were many wolfs, bears, wild boars, large snakes and other special animals at nighttime. They had to build fires and be on guard until they

moved away from there. Occasionally, one of those animals still visited our town, but it was no more such a problem. They were already able to clear out a great deal of the forest and every family built a house of their own.

My Great Grandparents and Grandparents

My great grandparents had three sons and they were all builders; my great grandfather's name was Jacob. My grandfather's name was Gershon. My grandmother's name was Reizel. His second brother's name was Yosil and his third brother's name was Yudel and he later built a house for himself right next to our house and a little more modern. My father dug a well in the front of their house. It was the best drinking water in town. It never went dry.

My grandparents had three sons and two daughters. The older son's name was Meyer. He was married and he was the Saxon in our big school, one of three in our town. The second son's name was Chaim. He was married and he was a builder. My father was the youngest of the three brothers. The older daughter, Miriam Rachel, was married to a Rabbi. He wrote religious books and tefilen.

My father's youngest sister, Goldil, married a blacksmith. They all lived in our town except my older aunt. They lived in the next town from us four miles away. They had a little hardware store in the town called Workowitch. They had

three sons and three daughters. My older uncle, Meger, had three sons and three daughters. The second uncle, Hyman, had three sons and three daughters. The younger aunt had two sons and two daughters. My parents had three sons and five daughters.

My father's family. My grandfather lived with us in the same house. He had his 2nd wife. We did not like her. She was blind in one eye and she was a very funny woman. He was a builder. When I was 6 years old, he used to teach me how to saw lumber at times he took me along to the forest when they were cutting down trees; then he gave me a carpenter hatchet and showed me how to trim some of the light branches and he would trim some of the bigger ones. Then he tied up a horse to pull the big log out of the forest and he let me walk with him and lead the horse with the log out of the forest. He had a rupture. It was as big as a basketball and a very bad ear. I imagined it was cancer. He never complained. He never saw a doctor. He lived with it working to his last day of 86 years.

He had three sons and two daughters. One son was a builder who was a contractor and one was a Saxon in our school. My father was a merchant. One sister married a blacksmith and the other sister married a Rabbi. He was a writer. He could write tefilen, what you put up on your head and arm when you say your prayers in the morning. My grandfather had two brothers, both builders. He had no sisters.

My mother had one uncle. Her mother's brother who served 25 years in the Russian Army in his time when he was a kid they use to kidnap kids and make them serve in the army 25 years. My great grandfather also had to serve 25 years. My mother had an uncle in Kiev. He was a brother to my mother's mother. His name was Mordehl Tochterau. He was a sexton in Brodzkis school in Kiev. It was the richest in Russia. He was the right hand to the Brotsky who was the next biggest millionaire to the Rothchilds. They were white beet growers and they manufactured sugar and from the waste they had many places where they had Story and they made them fat and they were selling them all over Europe. Her uncle was picked up in the street when he was a small kid. They kept him in the Russian Army for 25 years, then he was discharged with many medals.

Now we lived together with our grandfather in the house that was originally built by my great grandfather (at the time when the land was still wild) for the families of his three married sons.

Our House in Ozeron

Our house was a two-room apartment, one large room including a kitchen and oven. Grandpa with his second wife lived in the back open bedroom. We had two beds and one sofa, one long bench and a trunk and a long table. Now I had a

brother and five sisters and father and mother. We all had to sleep in that one room and sometimes family came to stay over for a few days.

My mother came from a large town called Kremenitz. She had four brothers and four sisters. Her father was a Rabbi and her mother I did not know. My mother was a very religious woman and very kind to my father and always wanted to help others. She lived to the age of 47. She died from gall stones before they could operate on her. She died before any of us children were married. My father died at 76.

Our grandfather lived with us with his second wife in the same house which was a two-room house. They had the bedroom and we had a large room which consisted of a long oven to cook and to bake bread. Also, to dry fish or fruit for the whole year. We had two beds, one long table and two benches. At night, we used them for beds and we were seven children. We had one large trunk where we kept our linen and clothes and all other valuable things. For water, we had a wooden barrel. It was brought in from the well outside.

The Czar Visits Ozeron

When I was three years old, the Russian Czar Nicholas was crowned and he passed through our town so my mother took me to the main road where he was supposed to come by and she held me up on her hand. I should be able to see him and I did. I

still remember everything about him; how everything looked--the horses, the carriages, the harness. If I were a painter, I could paint the picture how it looked and something happened.

He traveled on a special train where there were rail tracks. They also had a special three-car train with a kitchen and dining car. It had to be prepared for him before he came on his train where they were going to. So when the kitchen train came in our town, the man in charge wanted to open the kitchen. He lost his key and if that kitchen was not open, the man could lose his life. So he asked everyone in town who had a key to come and help him. It just so happened that my father had a key to match and the kitchen was opened and the man's life was saved. My father had a habit when he traveled on the roads--he was far-sighted. When he saw something shining he would stop and pick it up and that was how he had a key.

In another case it happened where one of his keys helped. My father did business with a village where they were making the 96 proof whiskey. We had a lot of plantations growing white long beets and long white potatoes that made the best clear vodka. Now that had to be shipped to the Czar in Petersburg from our town because we had the railroad station in our town. Once a week on Fridays, they brought in a transport of that vodka and it was in wooden tanks sealed with locks. Once while they were making a delivery, it was very bitter cold below zero very much frozen snow.

The foreman of that transport took along plenty of vodka for the men on the trip, but while that day was so bitter cold, they reached our town. They had no more left unless they would go in to the government liquor store and buy a couple of bottles which they were not very willing to do. Now the foreman knew my father very well. He came in to my father and he was very upset and he expressed himself in these words: I am ashamed I am riding so much vodka and I don't have enough to bring to us to the railroad station. If I could only open one of the locks. So my father said to him, "I have a lot of keys. Go and try. Maybe you can find a key to match."

He took those keys and he found a key that opened one of those locks and they had enough to go on with the trip to the station. So after that happened my father was rewarded by that foreman. When every Friday he'd make that trip, he would bring to my father a five-gallon container of that vodka so whoever had any kind of party, my father would supply them with all they could drink--no charge. This was until my father left for America.

* * *

When I was three years old, Nicholas the late Czar of Russia was crowned and he made a tour over the land. When he was about to reach the railroad station in our town the train was supposed to stop for lunch so they lost the key to the kitchen and if that could not be found the man in charge had to die. Some of the officers came in town and they checked everybody's keys.

My father was a far-sighted man and he was a merchant. He traveled to a lot of different places and he had a bunch of keys so he gave it to them and they found a key to match so he could have his lunch and the mans life was saved and my father did not even get the key back from our town.

The next stop was a town 20 miles away called Dubno. From there, the next town was called Radzevilou -- near the Austrian border called Broad. From there he went to the next town where my mother was born. It was called Kremeniz and that was how far the train could go.

So the word came that they are coming back our way and they will start the tour by horses and everybody cleaned the streets and decorated with flags. When the train got to the station which was one mile away from the town then before they unlocked the horses with the coaches the people formed two lines on both sides of the main highway. My mother was holding me up on her hands. So I had a chance to see them very clearly.

I remember just like it just happened today. He was greeting everybody and everybody was shouting and greeting him even the horses were showing signs of greeting. The first coach he was in had eight white horses hooked up four and four they were silver and gold horses. The coach was decorated with all kinds of metal that shined for a far distance away; the second coach had four horses, light blonde and more of them. My mother got tired of holding me and we went home and they went to the next town four miles away called Markowitch where my father's

sister lived, next stops were a couple of farm places. Then they stopped at a big commercial town called Robnov and they went on and on.

An Early Lesson

Now when my father left for America, I was ten years old. There was no Yeshiva in our town and I had a Rabbi who could not make a living from teaching so he had a sideline making sofas. He was very good at that. Then each time I had to ask him a question about a subject in gamara and he would by mistake give me the wrong answer because he was excited in his work.

My father sent some money to our super Rabbi. He gave me an interview every Saturday. So once when I had the interview, the Rabbi stopped me on the spot where I was wrong and I told him that was how my Rabbi told me. Then on Sunday he got in touch with the Rabbi and he denied that he did not tell me so, and he gave me a bad beating. Luckily I had proof that he did tell me so because we were three boys together on the same subject that made the chief Rabbi angry and my mother stopped me from going to that Rabbi.

And she sent me to a relative in the town of Kovly. There was a Yeshiva. When I got there I was told that I have to wait about 2 weeks they might have room for me. Meantime I have to stay with our relatives and all they could feed me with was

cooked lima beans in plain water. Cooking was cheap because the only fuel we had was wood. So I suffered and after the two weeks there was no room for me so I went back home. When I came back home and mother gave me to a Rabbi who was a great chassidic Rabbi and he had a class of about 12 boys all about my age. It could have been fine so he used to pick himself up every once in a while and tell us I am going out and I will come in right of way. Those days we had no bathrooms so we had to go in the back of the house or out on the field which was close by. So we thought that he is coming right back and we sat down and continued with our learning. Then one day when that happened, we finally discovered that instead of him going out, he went to one of his great Rabbis to a big town and he was away for three days.

So you could imagine what happened. Then we were fighting with one another. One day we climbed over a fence and got into somebody's orchard and we picked fruit off the trees. One day we were caught and we got in trouble. So I stopped and I found a better way. I would not join with the group anymore. Instead, when that happened again, I went to the railroad station and found something to do where I got paid 50 kopeks a day.

One day when I had saved up three rubles from my work, I took a walk to a farm village--4 Russian or better call it American miles from our town and I bought myself a calf for the three rubles. So I got myself a job to bring it to town. I had

to pull it and carry it. Then I called a Rabbi. He killed it for me and it was the only kosher meat in town. The killer took the head for his job, then I skinned it. I got one ruble and 25 kopeks for the skin. Then I sold the part meat for kosher three rubles and for ourselves we had the feet and all the inside that was clean to use, and that put me in business.

Right after that I stuck by my grandfather and my uncle who were building a house in our town and they taught me to be a builder. They were cutting their own lumber in the forest which the town owned. Our town was a fair sized one. Here is a small map of it [attached at end]. It started here the main highway from a town called Marko which four miles before and to next stop three miles.

A Hole in My Head

Soon after [the Czar's visit] there was a trouble sickness in the land it was the Collerg [cholera?]. I got it. I was sleeping in my father's bed which was filled with straw for a mattress the whole frame was made out of wood and it had very sharp edges. I was very restless. I kept hitting my head against the edge of the bed and developed a hole in my head so my mother took soft bread and filled the hole for me. It was in there until it dried up. Then I got scabs on my head. My father tried to see doctors where ever she used to go and bring all kinds of medicines and it did not help me. I had to live with it until one day my father was already six years in New

York so he decided we should come out there. He did not want to go back to Europe because there he only helped others but not himself. He used to go to sales to the Ural Mountains where the Cossacks lived and buy carloads of Horses. By the time they arrived to our town unloading them out of the cars some were dead some had broken legs and he was just about able to pay his creditors credit.

He always could get plenty because my father always had to work for the Christian woman to sew for them and she got flowers and lima beans and chicken and made Shabbath and she made my father happy. My father went once to a good section to raise cattle and sheep that was on the border line of Russia and Rumania. So he bought eight carloads of cattle and by the time they had to be unloaded there were only seven cars out of the eight. The rest were only good for the skins which was of very little value.

Things got so bad that he left for America. When he got here for the first week he got six dollars as a night watchman by buildings the first five weeks he sent my mother 50 dollars so we were rich already because we got 100 rubles. I did little work when I could get and I made 50 kopeks a day. Now my father knew that things could not get better for him again in Russia and his mind was made up to take us out here to America. Then my mother tried to see if they could do something for me to cure my head with that condition I could not pass the doctor to go on board the ship.

My parents used to believe in Rabbis. They used to come in to our town for weekends from all parts of the country. There was one Rabbi who lived in a town called Koretz and my mother had a lot of confidence in that Rabbi. He came into our town for a weekend. My mother took me over to him. He knew my father and mother by their first names. He also knew that my father was in America because he used to get a couple of Bibles from my father once in a while.

So when he opened the door for us, he saw my mother crying, so he put his right hand over her head and called her name, which was Hettie: "Why do you cry?" My mother told him Yasil that was my father's name he wants us to come to America and this is the trouble I have with my boy Fishel Meyer and she told him the whole story and this is the reason why we can't take a chance to leave here. So he looked at my head while my mother was still crying so he said to her, "My dear child, stop your crying. God will help you. He will be alright and you will be able to go to your Husband and be together with him again. I will tell you what you should do and everything will be alright when you get home. Take a few lima beans, bake them in a pan. They should get very black and crispy, then grind to a flour. Mix them up with butter put that in the same pan again and let it boil over until it becomes a salt. When it cools off you smear it on his head. It will come off and you will be able to go to America."

Well my mother did that and within a month all the scabs were cleared off except the place where the halo was there was a mark left to this very day so when that was taken care of new trouble began.

An Accident and the Death of My Grandmother

When my parents married, my father went one day to the railroad station to get a job to reinspect some railroad ties that you lay the tracks over them. He was working with other men so while my father and the others were about to put one tie down, the other men let go and it chopped two middle fingers off my father's right hand. He ran back home to my mother holding the two chopped off fingers and bleeding all over my mother. My mother did all she could think of to stop his bleeding and then my grandmother came and saw him bleeding. She could not see it and fell dead. My father was her youngest child so she had more love for him. My mother took those two fingers and dried the blood and kept them in a valuable place all her life for memory so she could tell us children about it. She loved our father very much.

* * *

He was working with a group at the railroad station checking logs what they lay down under rail tracks they call them ties and one of the men accidently dropped a tie on my father's hand and chopped two of his fingers off. This was the

story my mother told me. It was shortly after they were married. He brought the two chopped fingers with him and was still bleeding when grandma saw that she got hysterical and was sick for a short time and died. My mother kept those fingers preserved in a safe place and everyone once in a while she would show them to us what a hard and brave worker our father was so that we should learn how to take life when something happens to us because we had to be our own doctors.

My Brothers and Sister

My mother had eight children. One was my sister Minnie, the next was a boy who died before I knew him, next my sister Pauline, next was Fishel Meyer, and my brother Herman, my sister Hanna. Then there was one sister Chai Sharah and one sister Reizel, they died from diphtheria in the year 1900.

Now About My Mother

My mother came from a town called Kremenitz about 40 miles east from Ozeron by train. Her name was Ettie. Her father's name was Fishel Meyer Goldfarb. Her mother's name was Chai Saforah. They both died before my time. Her father was a Rabbi and a teacher and her mother was a very religious woman. They had eight children; four sons and four daughters. The sons names were Chaim Leib, Jael, Beril, Hershil, and the daughters names were Ahana, Ettie, Zlata Beila and Nickama. She lived in

Odessa. The first sister, Ahana, lived in Kreminitz and died in Kreminitz. Her husband's name was Isaac. They had no children. My mother lived in Ozeron and died in New York in 1909. She was buried in Mount Zina Cemetery on Declaration Day. My father never remarried.

My mother, as I mentioned before, had eight children. Her maiden name was Goldfarb. My Aunt Zlata Beila lived in Kremenitz until 1911. Then she came to America with her family. Her husband's name was Samuel Tyshel. They had seven children; three sons and four daughters. Two daughters and one son lived with their families in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her sister Nickama, who lived in Odessa (her married name was Singer) was married to a man by the name of Jacob Singer who was a Singer Machine agent. They had two sons. Last we heard from them before the Second World War, they were engineers in the Russian Army. Mother's brother Beril was a very learned man in Hebrew and Russian. He had a very large library room he always used to sit in and study and his wife was running the business. Her name was Chavy. They had a fur and leather store. They had two children; one son (his name was Fishel Meyer and one daughter, her name was Chai Saforah and we don't know if any of them are still alive. One of my mother's brother's name was Chaim Laib Goldfarb. They had two daughters. The name was Gayman. One daughter lived in St. Louis. She had one son and one daughter. The son's name is Hyman Gayman. He was in T.V. appliance, radio, electric furniture business. Her daughter had a drygood's store in St. Louis and I don't hear from them any more. There was also one daughter in Israel.

From my mother's side. Her father was a teacher and her mother was a housewife. I did not know them and my mother had three brothers. One passed away before I knew him. He left a wife and two daughters. One brother died when I was about 10 years. He was a great student. He had a very big library of his own and when he died he left a wife and two children, one son and one daughter and when I knew them they lived in the city of Kremenitz and they had a leather store and both my aunts never married again. The third brother lived in Odessa. He was a dancing teacher. He married in Europe and later came to Philadelphia with my aunt and three children, two sons and one daughter. What is left from them is one son yet living with his wife in Philadelphia. My mother also had three sisters the older sister was married to a merchant in Europe. They had no children and they both died in Europe. One sister married to a man in Kreminitz who was a travel agent. Then they came to Philadelphia and now there is one son and two daughters live in Philadelphia with their families. One sister was married to a singer machine agent in Odessa. They had two sons. They were army engineers and since the 2nd World War we don't know what became of them. From one of mother's brother's family there is one son left in St. Louis in the house [supply] business and one daughter also in St. Louis in clothing business.

My Going to America

My father was in New York since 1901 and also my older sister Minnie was here since 1903, so in 1908 they decided to bring the whole family over to them. It was my mother, my sister Pauline and myself, my brother Herman, and my sister Anna.

At that time traveling was a problem. The boat companies were very strict with their health examinations especially on the eyes. Many people had cateracts and doctors would not pass it.

Now being an uncle of mine was a traveling agent, he did not know whether we should leave Europe. He told my mother that we might not be able to pass at the boat. We decided to go.

So I said to my uncle that I want to take that first chance and go then we can see what happens so he sent me on the worst transportation to make sure I can't make it because I had a mark of a hole on my head which I got from a sickness when I was a kid.

Finally, my journey began. I left by train. The first town Radzivilow from my uncle's house. My aunt was my mother's sister. My uncle arranged a couple of people who helped me cross the border into the first town in Australia called Brodi. I got on the train to the next city, Lemberg. From there to the next city Cracow and on to Ubina. The next stop was Bazil, Switzerland. We all stopped.

The emigration people took us all in for lunch. Most of us took portions of meat, so I also took meat when I sat down to eat. I could not allow myself to try it. No! I was not sure if that was kosher and I could not take the smell of it and it did not look like regular beef meat and I asked if I could get something else instead so that when I discovered that it was horse meat, I was pleased with a plain bread meal with a little salt and a glass of tea.

From there through Germany, into Antverben, Belgium. Spending that day in Antverben that same evening, I got on a small boat across the channel to London. It took me eight hours to get into London and that trip was my most dangerous experience traveling on boat across water.

Coming into London, I was met by an emigration society man. He asked me if I had an address where I am going to. I told him, yes. My uncle gave me an address to the agent he was doing business with and he also gave me some cash to give him so they marked down how much I brought for him and they took me over to him and they watched when I gave him that money and that was No. 17 Each Bricks Lane, London, England.

The agents name was Kromer. He came from Odessa, Russia. He had instructions to make it very hard for me. I should not be able to go to America to my father. He took me to a man who was supposed to be a doctor. When he examined me, he told me I had a cateract and I had to come to him for treatments every week till I get better. I went to him for six weeks. All

he did for me was give me water drops in my eyes and I could not tell the difference. One day I went into a restaurant for a coffee which was across the street from the office where I stayed and I got acquainted with a boy from Kiev. He was in London for sometime. He also had a problem and he told me the doctor was I was going to was known in the section for a shoemaker. That boy was rejected by the ship doctors for cataract, so he was took to the salvation army and their doctors' were curing him. So he advised me I should go with him to those doctors. They would examine me and they would tell me whether I could go to America. So I went with him and three doctors examined me very carefully. They found nothing wrong on me and they told me that I could take that chance and go. Then I came back to my agent and told him I wanted him to send me to my father.

I left Russia from a town called Rodzervillow on the beginning of the month of April, 1907. At night, I crossed the border from Russia into a town called Brodi in Austria. From there I went by train to a town called Lemberg. From there, the next stop was a town called Cracow. From there, the next stop was Ubina. From there, the next stop was Berlin, Germany. The next stop was Bazil, Switzerland. Then I reached the next stop in Antverben, Belgium. From there I crossed the English Channel in a boat. It took me eight hours overnight to get to London, England. That little trip made me feel that I would want to go back where I came from.

Then in London, I suffered two months until I was able to go to my father in New York, United States. When I had to leave London to take the boat to go to America, so I was in the east side of London. I had to walk two hours to the Buckingham Palace. From there I took the subway to Southhampton where the boat was and it took me two hours by subway. I could not believe myself that I was going until I was on the boat because at that time they were very strict.

The doctors turned back a lot of people who past them before me. When I reached them they did not even examine me. They pushed me right through. The boat I was on, at that time, was the best. She was a sister ship to the Titanic that was sunk by an Iceberg when Mayr Goynor was drowned on it. I got here in four and one-half days from Southhampton, England.

While sailing on the boat, we saw some fish, one half man and some half horse a little larger than you see in the zoo. We had five whales, two very large ones and three smaller ones follow our ship till we passed not far from Boston, then we lost them.

On that boat there were two passengers, bachelors, one was a Jew and the other was Greek. They both liked me very much because while I was in London I studied the English language and they enjoyed my company. We had everything on that boat--theatre, fights, swimming pool. They were first class and I was third class. They bought tickets for me for everything. I was always on first class. Then they wanted to adopt me.

They both came from Africa. The Greek had a silver mine and the Jewish boy had a copper mine. They came to New York for business. The Jew came with me to my father. He wanted to give as much money he would ask him to give. My father refused. The reason why he wanted me because he had no Jewish relative there; for an adopted son to be with him in the business and the Greek also wanted the same. They saw in me that I was a very smart boy and was very strong and good looking.

The same thing happened to me when I was in London. A man who had the richest jewelry store in Paris came to visit his landsman who was my agent. They both came from Odessa, Russia and he saw me and he liked me very much. He had no children so he wanted to adopt me. He spent money on me. He had people trying to accept his offer, but I did not do it.

* * *

I had an uncle, my mother's sister's husband, he was a travel agent for people who were going to America and it was a very good business at that time so he wanted my father should come back home and be in partners with him. He tried every way to stop us from leaving Europe so he advised my mother she should send me first if they would pass me then they could all go. So he sent me to another agent, a friend of his in London and he gave me some money along to pay him for other passengers when I crossed the English Channel from Belgium to London. It took eight hours all night.

I got sick when I got in to London. I was met by emigration society people. They delivered me to the agent and they checked with him how much money I gave him. He called up a woman who came for me to take me to her house where I could stay for the time being eat and sleep and the first night just when I slept over she accused me that I robbed her. She would not accept anything for an answer she wanted to lock me up so I ran away from her.

I went back to the agent's office. He lived above the office and before I could tell him what happened she came running after me crying. I should come back. Her husband was a gambler and a drunkard. She always used to have trouble with him. The neighbors heard and they saw what happened so they all got at him until he finally told them that he was the robber. Well I did not want to go back there and I did not go to anybody any more.

I slept in the office on the Kontur without any bedding. I was there two months. There was a restaurant across the office. I got acquainted with people there and we all had problems. This agent took me to a doctor. He examined me and he said that I have cateract and I would have to stay in London for a long time. I would have to come to him every morning. He put drops in my eyes. I went regular every morning and all I could feel that he was putting water in my eyes. I did not know what to do. Finally one day I became very friendly with a boy who came every day in the restaurant to eat.

He was also an emigrant going to America. He came from Kiev and we told one another our troubles. So when I told him I was going to that doctor for treatments on my eyes so he told me that I was in the wrong place. He took me over to the Salvation Army doctor. He examined me and he found nothing wrong with me. He told me that I could go to America without any fear. I came back. I told the agent I wanted he should send me tomorrow to America. He scared me and he threatened me. So I said I want the money I brought to him so he denied it. I told him I am going to the Emigration Society and they will get it for me so he changed his line and he sent me on the most expensive ship. Her name was S.S. Oceanic on the white star line. She was docked in Southampton and she was a sister ship to the Titanic which was sunk by an iceberg. It took us 4 days from there to New York.

I got off the boat on a Wednesday June 27, 1907. I sent a postcard to my father so he got it the next day after I came on that ship. I was a 3rd class passenger but I was a first class. There were two old bachelors. One was a Jew and one was a Greek. So each one of them wanted to adopt me for a son. The Jewish man came over to my father. He wanted to make him rich. He should let me go with him. They both came from Africa. He had copper mines and the Greek had silver mines. My father did not let me go. They gave me the best of everything on that ship on their expense. They had a swimming pool, theatre, fighting, ball playing. I had many chances to become rich when I was in London.

A man came to my agent. He came from the same town with my agent and with the man from the restaurant. They all came from Odessa, Russia and he wanted to adopt me. He had no children. He had a few jewelry stores in Paris, France. He was very rich. He brought theatre tickets for me to the best shows and I from all of that I ended up being a wholesale fruit dealer.

* * *

I was in partners with my father. I took care of the business at night till 7 AM. Then my father with another partner took over and I went to work on other jobs. I wanted to know all trades and I did work in almost every trade and some I worked one week, some two on one job. I worked 6 months for 3 dollars a week because I took my brother up there from school and they gave him 3 1/2 dollars a week. The reason for this was because they had 2,000 people employed. They always used to raise twice a year 50¢ at the time in January and July. I was a very good worker. I asked for a raise. They could not give me because they gave me they would have to raise everybody. I asked them to give my brother a job or I leave. They sure did not like to leave me go. My foreman told them I was the best worker he had. Well they could not give me a quick answer, so my foreman told me to wait a few days. There was no work they could not hire any new men not even for 5¢ a week. Yet two days later they took up my brother and they started him with 3.50 a week. I got angry. I had to work 6 days a week, 12 hours a day

for three dollars and my brother hardly worked got 3 1/2 dollars so I left and I got into my business for good.

I made out very good. But every dollar I made I gave my father and my father was a very good man for helping other people but not for himself.

My Father in America

We were all married and we all had our children whom he loved very much. He was the kind of man who never lived for himself. He was always ready to help others until one day he was at a society meeting. After that meeting was over there was another old age meeting at an old age home on Henry Street, New York. He went there with three dollars in his pocket. He gave it to them and he started back for home. He lived at South 3rd Street, Brooklyn. He had no money left in his pockets so he walked across the Williamsburg Bridge and it got very windy. It was after midnight he got a very bad cold. He laid up in bed with pneumonia for eight days and died. Before he died, he was in an oxygen tent, so he asked the nurse to let me near him. He had to tell me something. What it was our society had a school which he had taken care of preparing liquor and cakes for the people after the service on Saturdays, so he asked me to continue after he goes. He did not expect to live any longer. We did all we could to keep him alive and it did not help, so I took over.

At that time I was in the wholesale fruit and produce business. There was a very honest Rabbi whom my father trusted very much, so we used to save the spoiled fruit for him and he made good moonshine before Passover. I asked him to bring me a gallon of slivovitch. It was only four dollars. I gave it to the school for the holy days and I bought good Kosher cakes. We had a nice minion. I kept that up that way for a couple of years. Then, a very good friend of my father and me, (he could not see I should carry it all by myself) joined in partnership with me and we both took good care of that. We gave plenty to the people until we were convinced that it was most of all very important for two people who came to the minion. One of them was a Cohen and the other was a Levi. So the Levi was filling the cups and the Cohen made sure that there should not be any left in the bottle. Then we could not see any other way except to give that up. So we had four sfarim. One saifor was very special. It was written for us by one of our members. He was a Sayfer from Europe. He came from a city called Neshwiz. His wife was a Rebitzen without a Smicha. We had silver of the best for every Sayfer and many other valuable things. At that time it begun the hassidic emigration so I offered for them to buy it. Many of them came. They had already their own shtiblech so one of them offered me one hundred dollars for the aren kodesh. It cost us \$600, so I sold it to him. Then many more of them came. Not one of them would give me an offer. Then one dealer from the corner of Norfolk and Broome Street, New York came and

gave me an offer of \$1,100 and I sold it to him. Then some of them came to him. His name was Mirsky. They wanted to buy that one particular Sayfer. He would not sell it for less than \$1,000 and they all felt very sorry. You see we had to give it up. My partner and I were very much occupied in our business and there was no one else to take over.

How I Met My Wife

It might interest you to know how we met for the first time in our life. Well, this is the story.

We both came from a small town in Russia called Ozeron. We had a train station. It was right in the middle. Twenty (20) miles apart from two big cities called Dubno and Rovno. When I was three years old my father had me go to chaidar meaning school. My first Rabbi or teacher was Leonard Bernstein's grandfather. He was a very religious man. He liked me very much.

When I was five years old, I learned chunrush already, so my parents made a big party on a Shabath parshof Waikru and that Rabbi took me up on his shoulder and danced with me until he got tired out. He was still my teacher for three more years. I already learned Mashnais, so one day he recommended that my father should give me over to another teacher who was my wife's father.

Two other boys joined with me in a special class. My father paid him 12 Rubles for six months (at that time it was the top price). I was eight years old and my wife was four years old. The other boys were ten years old. They were taller than I was, so she picked me to show me when she had a new dress or a hat or shoes. I had to approve it, otherwise she would not accept it. I was there until I was ten years old.

My father left for America and my mother sent me to another Rabbi who was supposed to teach me grammar. He was not so good, so my mother sent me to a city called Koble to get into the Yeshiva there. I was there for two weeks and they had no room for me so I went back home and had my Bar Mitzvah after that.

I looked where I could earn money. We used to play together with my wife and other boys and girls. When I was passed 16 years old, my father took us out here. My girlfriend was left there with her parents. When I came here I got to a hard business. I made money but could not think of anything else in the year 1913. One day my brother came and he told me that I went to see her. It refreshed our memories. I showed my place of business and she walked by every morning going to work. One day in 1918 we got our marriage license and at the twelfth of May, 1918, we got married.

* * *

It first began in our birth place in a small town called Ozeron, Russia. My wife was four years old and I was eight years old. Her father was a Rabbi, a teacher and my father hired him to teach me. So we were three boys for a special class. The other two were two years older than I was. they were taller than me and she started to show me all her toys and every new dress or hat, I had to approve. That was how the romance began. When I was ten years old, I was transferred to another Rabbi. My father went to America and I started a different romance.

I looked where I could make a few Kopecs a day. It went on like that until I was 16 years old. I also went to America. From time to time we saw each other. She was a millinary operator. She wanted me to be an operator also. So in one week we both worked together until one day I took our tools when I cam back from shopping and took her out of work to a marriage license. In time we got married.

On the 27th day of June, 1907, on a Wednesday, I landed in Castle Garden. I came here. My father was a peddler with a pushcart selling bananas. He dealt with a wholesaler who came from our town. The first time he saw me, he made an offer to my father. He would make him a partner in the business if I came in with him because I was a very strong and healthy looking boy. Well against my will on one condition that I would take care of the deliveries and can go and look for other jobs. You can imagine how hard I was working.

I had not time to think about romance. I worked at any trade you could mention while I was in the business until one day, my brother was working on Avenue B in the east side of New York and he met my wife with her mother walking. This was in 1913. He came and he told me that so I took time off and refreshed our romance.

In the year of 1913 my brother met the girl with her mother and with that girl I had a romance. When she was 4 and I was 8 her father was one of my Rabbis. Soon I heard that I went to see her and we refreshed our memories. I went to see her once in a while and then she past me by my place of business every morning when she went to work. This was on until the 12 day of May 1918 we got married and we raised two sons and two daughters. They are all married. We have ten grandchildren. Three of them are married. We have one great grand daughter and the 27th of May we celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary in Congregation Akavath Israel.

* * *

Now a little about my wife's family. He father was born in our town of Called Ozeran and he was a hebrew teacher. He was my Rabbi and her mother was born in a city called Rovno. Her family were all in the milinery business. I knew her grandmother. She had two daughters and two sons. My mother-in-law and her sister were here with the families. Her brothers were saved from World War II. He landed in Isreal and died there. Her other brother was here and died here. My wife

has one brother here in Jamaica, N.Y. and she had a sister in Europe in Rovno and her whole family were killed by Hitler's men.

My wife was a very pretty girl. She was very kind and good. When she landed here in 1913 she got a job as an operator by millinery. It was a very good trade. They used to export a lot of Strawhats to China. She made out very good at that. She was a very independent girl. She never accepted an offer from any boy that she was working with. They all liked her very much and she would not even care to take a good look at them. How do I know it , when we kept company she would not marry me unless I worked with her at the millinery. So I became an operator and we worked together for a couple of months and that was how I knew it and I stopped her from work.

Our Family

We got married on May 12, 1918. We fixed up a home of five rooms next house from my business. On March 27, 1919 my wife gave birth to my first son, Harry of 7 lbs. She did want to feed him with bottles. She nursed him on her breast. Then she got sick and she had to be operated on a little cyst. So I had to bring the baby three times a day to the hospital. She should nurse him.

Then on August 11, 1920, my 2nd son George was born, 4 years later my older daughter Eleanor was born on June 10, 1924 and 5 years later on May 21, 1929 our younger daughter Sylvia was born.

In 1939 we brought a new one-family brick house, six rooms, finished basement with garage for \$6,700 dollars and 20 years mortgage at 4 1/2 percent interest. It was a beautiful home and my wife always kept a beautiful home.

We raised our children. We gave them a good Jewish and English education. Then they got a lot of Jewish friends boys and girls and between the Rabbi and us we formed a Junior Club and the Rabbi Helfgott and myself were supervising and it worked very nice until the 2nd World War broke out. Then my both sons went to war and so were other boys and little by little it dissolved. When the war was over thank god our sons came back Others never returned. Then we tried to bring back the good old days and I made a party for them in my house. We had 93 Jewish boys and girls in my house to that party.

After that some of them started to keep company and they all got jobs and the had something else to think about, getting married. So our children picked themselves nice partners from nice Jewish families and to get simchas at first our older son married a nice Jewish girl Joy Epstein on March 23rd, 1947. We gave them a nice wedding and a nice start in savings. Then our younger son George with his girl Shirley Bienstock from a beautiful Jewish home got married on December 28, 1947. Then our daughter Eleanor got her boyfriend Dr. A. Elliott from a good Jewish home. They got married on June 8, 1948 and our younger daughter Sylvia picked herself a nice looking boy the name is Willie or William Spilka and they were from very nice families. The got married September 11, 1949 and thank God they are all happy.

Our older son has a son and a daughter and they are married and they give us our pleasure. Our younger son has one son who is graduating as an Archeology professor and one daughter they are not married yet. Our older daughter has a son and a daughter. The daughter is married to a fine boy from Burlington, Vermont. Her son just graduated Albany Law School. Our younger daughter has 4 sons. The older one is married and they have a daughter and she is our first great granddaughter, 6 years old now and she is sweet. The 2nd son is Michael. He is in the advertising field. The older son is also in that field and it is satisfactory to them. The 3rd son serves in West Point he wants to be a Jewish General. The 4th is going to enter Community College in Liberty, NY.

So it is thank God we are all one family and we celebrated our 60th Anniversary.

Autumn 1942

Farm land

this was our last
afford sweet peas

40
dandel

my father's
house

this was my
father's house
he made a
new garden
my father's house
a doctor

my father's
house

1942

going to war
4 miles
to Gubinska

ROAD to station

age 20 and more
age 20 and more
age 20 and more

old dilapidated building

home 2 flat
one night on front
one night on back
one night on side

Parking

house
5 rooms
5 rooms
5 rooms

front

Gardens

to the railroad station

Public house
in front Big street

main Highway

stand and line
every thing the house
was smelt with that

from garden

TAKING going to front
Rail station
station

STATION

House
5 rooms
5 rooms
5 rooms

Public house

Public house

going to station

Public house

