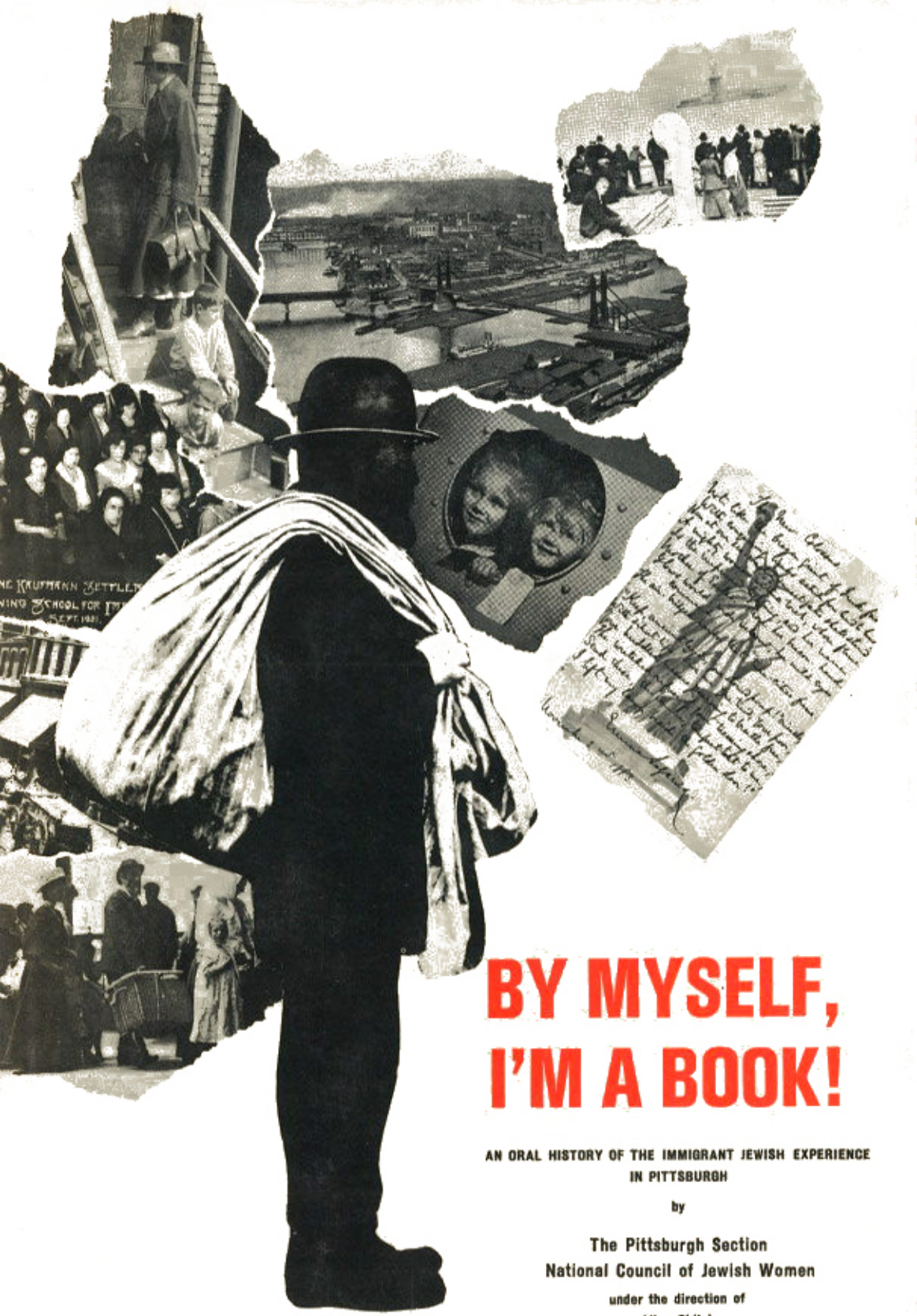


BY MYSELF, I'M A BOOK!

AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE IMMIGRANT JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN PITTSBURGH

by

The Pittsburgh Section
National Council of Jewish Women

under the direction of
Allon Shiloh

By Myself I'm A Book!

An Oral History of the Immigrant Jewish Experience in Pittsburgh

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2025

by
The Pittsburgh Section
National Council of Jewish Women

under the direction of

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AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Waltham, Massachusetts
1972

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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN was founded in Chicago in 1893. The Pittsburgh Section was formed in the same year and has grown to a membership of 3,000. "The N. C. J. W. is an organization which, in the spirit of Judaism, is dedicated to furthering human welfare in the Jewish and general communities, locally, nationally and internationally. Through an integrated program of education, service, and social action, it provides essential services and stimulates the individual and the community toward their responsibility in advancing human welfare and the democratic way of life."

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We are deeply indebted to the American Jewish Historical Society for their editorial direction.

FOREWORD

"By myself, I'm a book!" It was the exultant recognition of an old man that he had a story to tell. We had told him that we were going to write a book about the Jews who had come to Pittsburgh, and he knew he could fill the pages with the exciting drama of his own life.

The Jews who came to America from Europe were able to enter in one generation into the full current of American life. As penniless immigrants they manned the sweat shops of America. Out of all proportion to other ethnic groups they became businessmen, academicians, scholars and scientists. Eighty-five percent of their children and grandchildren go to college.

The National Council of Jewish Women was on the scene when the big waves of immigration from Eastern Europe occurred. The National Council of Jewish Women was founded to help the newcomers learn the language and to prepare them for United States citizenship; to ameliorate the working conditions of the men, women and children; to pass laws for decent housing in the teeming, burgeoning cities; to provide kindergartens and hot lunches for the neglected children of the working mothers; to provide shelters for the young girls who came here alone and were prey to sexual exploitation.

Our records were available. But we had one priceless resource still untapped. This resource was the people who experienced the transplantation and who were here still with us. No one in Pittsburgh had ever undertaken a survey of the Jewish citizens who could tell what it was like. We asked them what they felt when they left their homes, what the trip was like to America, and what it meant to start over in a new culture.

We are a Jewish organization and we naturally are interested in Jewish immigrants. Aside from historic value, the tape recordings we have made are being offered to the family of the participant as a priceless personal oral heritage. Other ethnic groups may wish to do the same for their people.

It has been said that the son wants to remember what the father wants to forget. For many of us the stories our

grandmothers told us about the old country are now too dim to tell our children, and grandmother is not here to recreate them.

To preserve eye-witness history, the Pittsburgh Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, in honor of the 75th anniversary of its founding, has chosen to tell the story of the Jews who came to Pittsburgh from Europe, through the recording of the recollections of those still alive to tell the tale.

In the interaction of the interview, the oral Jewish history burst into a living thing of its own that brought to the surface vast quantities of data only suggested by the pilot study.

Some respondents were, of course, reticent by nature and answers to questions had to be coaxed from them; or they were apologetic in manner conveying their feelings that they had nothing of interest to contribute to such a grand endeavor as a published book. Others were frail and had retired from interest and involvement in the world long before they had agreed to cooperate in the study. A few persons were suspicious of the motives of the interviewers, concerned that some punishment might befall them if they permitted the interviewer to write down the fact that they had come to the country illegally or that they had worked on the Sabbath. Still others were intimidated by the tape recorder, and some of these did not relax until the interviewer put away her tools—at which point they freely told anecdotes about various incidents in their lives.

But the majority of the respondents accepted without question that they were people worthy of being interviewed. By themselves, or as a member of a family group, each had performed a daring personal feat. Each had left the European climate of persecution in which the Jewish tradition had existed for over a thousand years, carried the ethos to the new shores, then accommodated himself and his culture to the myriad conditions of America. This conquest of adversity had given him confidence. It showed.

With strong voice and twinkling eye, he gave us healthy answers to such questions as to what first impressed him when he arrived in Pittsburgh. "What impressed me? The policeman impressed me. I couldn't get over it. The people were not afraid of the policeman. I'm still impressed today." "I told you that already," he said many times to questions that had been carefully designed to cross-check his answers. "First you asked me why I left Russia—that's the reason why I came to the United States." "If you have trouble with that machine, I'll show

you how to fix it," he offered before there was time to let him listen to the playback of his voice. "What could disappoint me?" he wanted to know when asked if there was anything about life in the United States that was disappointing during the first five years. "I was in business. I made a living."

The academic observation would be that the interviewers were from the same ethnic minority group as the respondent. It would be more accurate to say that those interviewed considered the interviewers as members of their extended families. They were compelled to place us. Could it be that we were acquaintances of their children? No, well then were we cousins of their cousins, neighbors of their friends? What were we—Hungarians? Litvaks? Somehow, they managed to place us.

Once placed, they gave us their confidence and trust, accepted us as their fellow Jews. "You know how we are—our people," was the preface to many an observation. "I don't have to tell you, you know!" they said, when asked to give more details about various observances. But tell us they did, in interviews that extended for as long as three hours or that continued for a double session. They offered us cookies and tea, showed pictures of their grandchildren, freely gave us unsolicited opinions on current politics. Only at the door of the immediate family was there lack of cooperation with our questions. They protected their privacy. We were, after all, only extended family. If we were to believe them, there had never been a problem between husband or wife, not a tension between parent and child.

The respondents' warmth and friendliness sometimes made the role of the interviewer a difficult one. An interview is, after all, not a conversation nor a soliloquy. There is a structure to be observed, a professionalism to be maintained. When the respondent was too anecdotal, it became impossible to complete the questionnaire form during the progress of the interview. The interviewer then had to re-play her tape at home and do her work there, involving double time. The process was long and tiring. Respondent fatigue had been discussed during the training session, but it was interviewer fatigue that became the larger problem.

Pre-conceived notions were repeatedly shaken as we dealt with the unpredictability of human beings. "I'm seventy-nine, I'll bet you don't believe it!" announced one fellow or another while we were taking off our coats. We hurriedly leafed through

the pages of our schedule to record the information on the last page to which it had been delegated because it had been considered an area of sensitivity. Other areas that appeared to be safely neutral had our respondents reacting defensively. "Did you go to concerts, opera?" "Well, you see, it wasn't that I didn't like music. I liked music. But how could I go? I worked long hours. I was tired." There was always an unexpected answer to a routine question. "How did I learn to speak English? I spoke love, L...O...V...E—I was a lover. American girls, Lithuanian girls, it was the same. If you speak love, to learn English, it's nothing."

Despite the turn-over in interviewers, the completed interview forms and tapes continued to accumulate and the tabulators reported that the quality of materials was steadily improving.

Although many community services and fund raising campaigns have long depended upon volunteer energy, the use of volunteers skills for the total execution of a social study is a relatively new idea. Because it was a new idea, the study was competing for volunteer hours, and it is noteworthy that the research involved some persons with professional training and backgrounds who did not usually do volunteer work. In addition, some of the inexperienced interviewers did highly competent work and the tapes and completed schedules demonstrated their empathy with the respondents.

INTRODUCTION

This unique piece of work represents the collective efforts of a volunteer women's group. The Pittsburgh Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, with the stimulus and advice of Mr. Saul Weisberg, Associate Director of the United Jewish Federation, decided to embark on an oral history project of the immigrant Jewish experience in Pittsburgh.

Early in 1968 they consulted with me concerning the broad aspects of such a research project and I indicated to them the parameters of responsibility, time involved and work demands. In particular I emphasized to them the tremendous commitment to see such a project through to completion, especially, when as the women informed me, there was no budget allocation for the proposed work.

Shortly thereafter the representatives of the local section informed me that they had discussed this with their group and the decision had been taken to accept the responsibility and undertake the work.

With a full understanding of the challenges and difficulties inherent in such a project, we then began to outline a proposed time/work schedule. In February I met with some twenty-five members of the chapter who had volunteered to participate in the study and we delineated a flow-chart work schedule and the specific roles of the volunteers.

Among our first tasks were the delegation of group responsibilities—one group was assigned the responsibility for drawing up a standardized series of guideline questions to constitute the framework of each interview; a second group was assigned the task of establishing a roster of volunteers for the data-collecting, the actual interviewing; and a third group was assigned the work of determining and listing a roster of persons to be interviewed.

From Purim until well after Pesach, a small group of us met regularly to consider, design and test a series of perceived critical areas for interview questioning. During the pilot study

we further refined the guidelines and subsequently further delineated them during the pre-test period.

The descriptive design of the study was established at this time—the goal was to collect and synthesize a critical mass of data describing the rich and dramatic immigrant experience as lived, remembered and related by the immigrants themselves in their own words.

All of our questions were to be open-ended in that each immigrant could respond in the manner he chose. We decided to focus our attention on the lived experience and we wanted to record these first-hand accounts as told by the immigrants themselves. We would, however, back up their verbal history with careful research and documentation.

This approach, we felt, not statistical and not third-person narrative, could provide an invaluable dynamic dimension often missing from traditional histories.

In order to achieve this goal, the Pittsburgh Section of the National Council of Jewish Women ascertained from its members those women who were willing to participate in the important and arduous data-collecting phase, to work as interviewers, and attend a series of in-depth, interview-training sessions to be conducted during September.

We set up our interview training program to be conducted weekly during the month of September prior to the High Holidays. Over thirty women attended these sessions as we carefully went over the guideline questionnaire and role-played interviews in order to standardize our procedures and yet allow for spontaneity and flexibility.

While all of this was proceeding apace, a third group of women were determining the criteria for selecting the respondents. We decided to select only respondents who were foreign-born and had immigrated to America between 1890 and 1924—the high-water mark of Eastern European immigration to the United States. Inasmuch as there is no precise listing of all the Jews of Pittsburgh by name, age, or birthplace, let alone date and place of emigration, we decided to draw up our list of interviewees derived from personal acquaintances, family, friends, organizations, and contacts thereof. Ultimately a roster of some 250 persons was established.

Actual data-collecting and interviewing began after the High Holidays of 1968 and continued until Pesach, 1969. This

autumn-winter-spring session provided us with a determined time period in which to maintain the enthusiasm of the volunteer workers and see to the completion of their assigned interviews. Group meetings were held every month to reinforce their morale, to discuss any problems and to keep everyone informed of the group's progress.

Publicity about the volunteer group project appeared in the Pittsburgh weekly, the *Jewish Chronicle,* and in the Sunday edition of the *Pittsburgh Press.* Follow-up articles subsequently appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle.* In December of 1968, a Voice of America program featured the study and, in 1969, a half-hour television program sponsored by the United Jewish Federation featuring the Oral History Project was shown. Furthermore, an Oral Jewish History Week was proclaimed during March, 1969 and the *Jewish Chronicle* again featured a story of the dedication of the volunteers and the cooperation of the respondents.

All of these activities, it is clear, were very important not only for maintaining the interest of the volunteers in their willingness to carry on the work but it also stimulated the respondents in becoming familiar with the study and accepting it as having substantial community respect and support.

Data analysis of the accumulating files of interviews was the next phase of the study. Despite the excellent work of the women in coding, assigning and synthesizing the data, it soon became clear that the analysis of the data required the full-time attention of a paid research assistant.

Early in 1969 we submitted a request for $5,000 to the Pittsburgh Foundation to assist us in the completion of the study and in June, the late Mr. Stanton Balfour informed us that we had received the grant.

Accordingly Mrs. Amos Selavan was hired as the Research Assistant to the project in July, 1969 and, thanks to her excellent scholarship and sound intellectual capacity, we were able to work through to drafts of the report during 1970. Further evaluations and rewriting of the manuscript led to the goal of a final copy for publication by Pesach of 1971—some three years from the original inception of the study.

As an example of the type of project that can be determined and seen through all the stages of research by a volunteer group of women, this, I believe, is a landmark publication; as an oral

history, this work can stand, I believe, as a modest but sound contribution to Americana and Judaica.

Ailon Shiloh

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS BOOK

The contributors to this book are volunteers of the Pittsburgh Section, National Council of Jewish Women. Although many have professional backgrounds, they gave freely of their time and knowledge for this pioneering study.

Shirley Amper has a M.A. degree in Sociology from the University of Pittsburgh. She had responsibility for editing the final questionnaire and has written the description of the development of the questionnaire, the interviewing procedure and the interaction of the interviews, some of which is in the foreword.

Gene Dickman has a B.A. degree in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin. She was the volunteer co-ordinator of the entire project, and participated in interviews with the press.

Carol Elias has a B.A. degree from the University of Pittsburgh. She transformed the massive material from the early questionnaires into a statistical analysis until a research assistant was hired. She took responsibility for bringing the manuscript to publication.

Lillian A. Friedberg has B.A. and M.A. degrees from Radcliffe College. She was the executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Pittsburgh for 23 years and prepared a comprehensive history of the Pittsburgh Jewish Community which is found in the Appendix of this volume. In addition she joined other volunteers in conducting interviews.

Marcia Frumerman has a B.S. degree from Carnegie-Mellon University. She was Vice-President of the Pittsburgh Section, National Council of Jewish Women from 1968 to 1970 in the Department of Community Service and carried supervisory responsibility for the program. She served as President from 1970 to 1972. She participated in interviews with the press and the Voice of America.

Edith Goodman has a B.A. degree in Education from the University of Buffalo. She was chairman of Volunteer Recruitment.

Lawrence W. Kaplan has a J.D. degree from the University of Pittsburgh Law School. He is a practicing attorney and volunteered his services as legal consultant for the project.

Symone Laufe has a B.S. degree from Wells College and a M.S. degree from the University of Louisville. She recruited most of the senior citizens who participated in the study.

Sarah Landesman participated in constructing the first draft of the questionnaire.

Marion Markovitz has a B.S. degree in Chemistry from the University of Connecticut. She teaches Jewish History courses for the Pittsburgh Section, National Council of Jewish Women. She participated in constructing the first draft of the questionnaire.

Charlotte Sadofsky participated in constructing the first draft of the questionnaire.

Frieda Shapira has a B.S. degree from Teachers College, Columbia University and the Diploma of the New York School for Social Work. She was President of the Pittsburgh Section, National Council of Jewish Women from 1966 to 1968 when this project was undertaken and carried administrative responsibility for it. She prepared the introductory material in the Foreword and edited the final manuscript.

Saul Weisberg has B.A. and LL.B. degrees from the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh Law School. He is the Associate Director of the United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh, and was professionally responsible for the development of the Jewish Senior Citizens residence in Pittsburgh, known as Riverview Apartments. His interest was aroused by the life stories of the senior citizens who were applying for the apartments. He conceived the idea of preserving these stories by recording oral history interviews, and he participated in all policy-making decisions.

Tibby Weisberg is art director of the United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh. She designed the book jacket.

Sheila Werner is a doctoral candidate in History at the University of Pittsburgh specializing in European history. She helped formulate the questionnaire and prepared background material on European Jewry.

Staff

Ida Selavan, research assistant for the project, has a M.A. from the Middle East Institute at Dropsie University and a M.A. in History from the University of Pittsburgh. Her knowledge and understanding of Jewish culture, her sympathy for, and empathy with the respondents, as well as her research capabilities were of invaluable assistance in the formulation and completion of this project.

Director

Ailon Shiloh, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh, directed the entire study, trained the volunteers, and set the guidelines that were followed.

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CHAPTER ONE

LIFE IN THE OLD COUNTRY

Vilna changed hands so often, we children played a game: "Who are we today—Russian, German, or Polish?"

1. The Shtetl

Most of our respondents came to Pittsburgh from small towns, or *shtetlach* in Eastern Europe. In 1910, every seventh man in former Poland-Lithuania, every ninth man in Western Russia and Galicia, and every tenth man in Moldavia was a Jew. Thus, what had been the Kingdom of Poland, with its boundaries as they were before the partitions of the late eighteenth century, was the focal point of Jewish population. The Jews of Eastern Europe lived their lives along the same general pattern it had been lived in Poland in the Middle Ages.

An archtypical shtetl in Russian Poland is described by one respondent:

> Gombin is a small town in Poland, located about ninety miles west of Warsaw, seven miles south of Poland's largest river, the Vistula, and fifteen miles east of the old city of Plock. It is half-encircled by an ancient pine forest that provides the town with a constant fragrance of fresh pine scent. In the surrounding agricultural countryside were two ancient German settlements, one speaking Hoch Deutsch and the other, of Saxon origin, speaking Swabian. The population of the town was roughly two-thirds Jewish and one-third Polish, with a few Germans and Chenovnikes, officers of the Czar. The Jews spoke Yiddish, but

they also knew Polish, German, Swabian, Russian and, of course, the Hebrew of their prayers. Most Jewish men could even understand the Aramaic of *Targum Onkeles.* I would estimate that there were between 2500 and 3500 Jewish souls in Gombin at the turn of the century. The Czarist regime evinced little interest in a census, being indifferent to the local population except to preserve order during the periodic uprisings.

Another recalled her birthplace:

Lithuania was under Russian rule when I was born near the end of the 19th Century in a region between Vilna and Kovno, between two rivers—the Straba, a narrow stream that ran into the wider and deeper river, the Nieman. In that vicinity, wealthy Polish landowners occupied large estates composed of farms, orchards and forests. On the land were large herds of cattle, hogs, sheep and horses, and a variety of other livestock. The farm where I was born in Staneva was owned by a family of Polish nobility named Romorova. The village was part of the estate, inhabited by Lithuanian families who were each given a couple of acres on which they built small homes and cultivated gardens for their own use.

For older people looking backward, the special atmosphere of Sabbath in the shtetl is remembered with bitter-sweet nostalgia.

This is the way the Sabbath was celebrated by Jews throughout every country in Eastern Europe. My father was a man of modest means, nor was he a dedicated scholar, but on Friday evenings he became a "Melech"—a King of the Sabbath. Before he returned from services my mother blessed and lit the candles at sundown and set the table. He usually brought home with him a poor guest from *Shul.* They came in; my father said, *"Gut Shabbos!"* to his family and greeted the Sabbath as if it were a revelation of heavenly emissaries: "Sholem Aleichem, Malachei Hashores, Malachei Elyon!—Angels of Service, Angels from Above, Peace be to you!" He bestowed a tribute to womanhood by reciting "Aishis Chayil Mi Yimtza—Who can find a woman of valor?" then poured the sacramental wine and made *Kiddush.* He washed his hands, blessed the *challes* and the festive meal began. Between

each course he sang *zmires*, and my father's songs of the Sabbath were a real treat to hear. The meal lasted through most of the evening and my father did not leave out even the smallest detail, yet he sustained the mood of grandeur and exhilaration during the entire ceremony.

In the Galician shtetl of Potkamin, the birthplace of a number of Pittsburgh Jews, life was complicated by the frequent changes in authority.

I lived in a small town which had belonged to Austria, Poland, and Russia. There were about 1000 Jewish families and about 1000 Gentiles. My parents and two older brothers and two older sisters and I lived in a three room house—my grandparents and aunts lived on the other side.

My father sold wood and I helped him. I had a private tutor for Hebrew. I went to his house where I also learned to read and write Yiddish, Polish, and German. There was a public school in town, but my father did not let me attend.

One basic difference among Jews of Eastern Europe was whether or not they were Hasidim. The Hasidic movement was strongest in Galicia and the Ukraine, with enclaves in Roumania and Hungary, but encountered strong opposition in Lithuania. During the childhood of our eldest respondents, the last decades of the nineteenth century, the clash between Hasidim and Misnagdim had lost its earlier acerbity. Our respondents remember the Hasidim in their towns as colorful types. The most frequently mentioned sect was that of the followers of Shneur Zalman of Liady, the *Lubavitcher Rebbe.*

My name in Hebrew is Shneur Zalman, after my illustrious ancestor, the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

There were practically no gentiles in our shtetl. We had ten synagogues. My father was a Lubavitcher hasid.

My grandfather was a Lubavichter hasid. In Romadan he worked as a *melamed.* Later he became a *Rosh Yeshiva* in Cremenchug.

I was born in Liady, the home of the world-famous Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Other Hasidic dynasties were mentioned by respondents from Roumania and the Ukraine.

We lived in the small town of Savine, Batshaw province, Roumania. The whole town was Jewish. There were seven synagogues. We went to "Das Mitelste Beis Medrash"—(the Middle *Beth Midrash*)—so called because it stood in the middle of the town. My father worked as a *shohet* of both fowl and cattle. There were five *shohtim* in town, but we managed. As often as he could pay for a horse he would ride off to visit the Shtifineshter Rebbe.

Our father was employed by the Skverer Rebbe as supervisor of his estate. Because of his respected position it was never suspected by the police that our house was being used by the local Jewish revolutionaries as a meeting place.

My father spent most of his time reading and studying the Torah. When the holidays came he would travel to his Rebbe, and celebrate there with the other hasidim.

In Uman where we lived there were three Hasidic groups, the Manestrishter, the Tolner, and the Loiver. They didn't have much to do with each other, although many of the Hasidic Rebbes were related to each other. My father was a cousin of Rabbi Baruch Twersky, the Loiver Rebbe, but he served as a *gabbai* in the Tolner *Kloiz*. When the Tolner Rebbe died my father started going to the Loiver Rebbe.

An immigrant from Lithuania recalled, however, that most of the Jews in their part of Europe were Misnagdim.

Our shul was in the private home of one of our neighbors. His name was Nissen, and he was the only one among us who was an owner of a small piece of land, which was used by peasants to grow grain for horse and poultry feed. He was a very devout Jew and had decided to turn one of his rooms into use as a place of worship. He equipped it with a *Bimah*, an ark to hold the Torah, and high reading desks in front of long benches. The men in their long, wide prayer shawls mostly stood and leaned against these lecterns and read from the prayer books placed before them at a convenient slant. There were in the vicinity about eight or ten Jewish families who would gather every Sabbath and on all holidays to this place converted from a plain house to a house of

worship. There was neither rabbi nor cantor, but among these Jewish settlers were learned scholars capable of reading and interpreting the scriptures and leading the congregation in chanting prayers. One corner of the large room was partitioned off for the women. The upper part of the partition was glass reaching to the ceiling, enabling them to take part in the prayers and listen to the reader, but not comfortably to see him.

Life in the city was much richer culturally, although more likely to be affected by invading armies.

Bialystok belonged to Russia, to Germany, and then to Poland. It had about 90,000 Jews and there were many synagogues with different names, some *shtiblach* for Hasidim, others called *Batei Midrashim*. The synagogue attended by the assimilated Jews was called the "Chorshul" because they had a beautiful choir.

The most famous synagogue in Bialystok had a large dome. It was a show place where famous cantors performed, such as Rosenblatt, Hirshman, Sirota, and Kvartin. We did not have a Rabbi because when Rabbi Shmuel Mohliver died it was felt that no one could replace him, so there was a *Beis Din* instead.

When the Germans took over in World War I they removed some of the restrictions on cultural life which had been enforced by the Russians. We could now present our Yiddish plays in the open, not secretly as we had done before. In fact, sometimes the German army band played for our performances.

Some respondents suggested that the favorable impression made by the German invaders in World War I lulled some Jews in the early part of World War II into believing that the Germans were not as bad as rumor had painted them. This may be the reason they did not flee before the German armies. As for the domed synagogue of Bialystok, it was burned down in 1940 with 1500 Jews inside.

2. The Homes

The homes in which our respondents lived as children ranged from one-room thatched cottages to city apartments, according to the economic circumstances of the families.

Our home was in Luban, near Minsk. It was one large room built of stone with a straw roof. We had a brick oven. Under the oven was place for about a dozen chickens. Adjacent to this room was a larger room used for storing milk. Next to this was a place for potatoes and above the potatoes we stored hay and feed. Next to the storage room were the stable and barn. For a short time we had a grain mill operated by foot power—by jumping up and down on pedals.

Our home in Boguslav was very simple—wood with a straw roof. We had no gas or electricity but used kerosene and candles for light. The floor was earthen, smeared with clay.

We heated our house with dried dung in the stove in winter time. We had a well near the house and an earthen cellar for storage in the back yard where food was kept cold.

The seven of us lived in a one-room wooden house with thatched roof in the village of Krozeck near Tarnow in Poland. My grandfather had a farm and we got some produce from him, which helped.

We inherited a big ten room stone house but we lived in only one room of it. I was the oldest of four boys and I had one younger sister. Part of the house was used as a bakery.

We lived on the outskirts of Skvera in a three room house at the edge of the Skverer Rebbe's orchard. The kitchen was on the first floor next to the barn and had a dirt floor. The other two rooms were upstairs, with wooden floors.

My father was a cattle dealer and my mother had a milk store. We were considered middle class, but in fact we didn't even have enough beds to go around. Most of the time I slept on the ground.

In the larger towns and cities housing conditions were somewhat better.

Mogilev is a large cosmopolitan city near the Dnieper River. We lived in an apartment in a row house near my mother's grocery store.

My parents, two brothers, two sisters and I lived in a two room apartment in Senee, in Russian Poland. There were four apartments in the building. It was a frame house, very clean. The owner and most of the tenants were Jewish.

I lived in Jassy, the second largest city in Roumania. We had a five room house with a big brick oven in the kitchen. We boys

often slept on top of it.

Tavrick in Lithuania was a large army town. We had a frame house with a special play room for the children, a large kitchen and a maid and a governess.

3. The Family

Families were generally large in Eastern Europe and there were often step- or half-siblings. There were sometimes gaps of as much as twenty years between the oldest and the youngest in a family. Some of our respondents recall that their older siblings had left for America when they were very young.

My father had five sons and two daughters. I was from the second wife. My older half-brothers came to America before their army service.

My oldest two half-sisters left for America when I was quite young.

I had an older brother and two older sisters. There had been other children who had died in infancy. When I was four years old, my older brother left for America. My sisters followed him.

My parents had twelve children.

I had three brothers and five sisters.

My older half-brother came to the United States when I was two years old.

I had six brothers and two sisters. They are still alive except for one brother.

I had six brothers and four sisters.

Infant mortality was a common factor in child-rearing. Some do not even remember all their siblings.

I had four brothers and three sisters but there were also some who died as infants whom I do not remember.

My grandmother married very young. She had fourteen children, including two sets of twins, but most of her children died. Her last two boys survived the cholera plague that took so many of them, including their father. Later she married a widower with two children, a son and a daughter. When the daughter was sixteen she married her step-brother who was seventeen. They became my parents.

Recalling his brothers and sisters and their fates, one respondent seemed to be reciting a short course in modern Jewish history.

> One brother was a judge in Pinsk, one brother is in Moscow, one brother who was a rabbi in the Baltic states was killed in the Holocaust, one brother was killed in the First World War, one brother died in the United States, one sister is in the United States, one sister was killed by the Nazis, two sisters are living in the Caucasus, I don't hear from them. How many is that? We were twelve children in all.

When a parent died, the friends and relatives immediately looked around for another mate.

> My father's first wife died and left him with six children. He left Cracow in Galicia and came to Klosterputna in Bukovina to work in the lumber mills that belonged to Baron de Hirsch. My mother was born in Bukovina. After she married my father she had six children of whom I was the first. It was a big household—twelve children.
>
> Some time after I returned from military prison my wife gave birth to our son, and died six months later. I realized that I would have to remarry so that my son would have a mother.

Some respondents were the children of May-December matches.

> My father had been impressed into army service as a child and could not remember his name, only the fact that he was a Jew. When he was released from service they called him "Curly" because he was curly-haired, and that became his family name. He was married at forty-six to a girl of sixteen and they had 14 children altogether. As an ex-soldier he had special privileges in terms of land ownership and occupation.

Many respondents lived in matriarchal homes because the fathers had left for America. In some cases many years passed before the wives and children could join them.

My father came in 1890. We joined him five years later, but he died six months after we came to America.

4. Occupations

Occupational possibilities for Jews in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were very limited—generally due to the enactment of restrictive measures by the government.

My father had a saloon in Botoshaw, Roumania, the third largest town in the country. When the German ruler, King Carol, came, he took the rights away from Jews and father went to the city to sell wood. Times were terrible.

When the King of Roumania died, there were a number of heirs. It was decided to put a Hohenzollern on the throne. At first, all the people who were born in Roumania were granted citizenship, but many were persuaded to give up their rights. They were worried about paying taxes. My father tried to persuade the Jews of his town not to give up their citizenship rights but he was threatened with reprisals if he continued his campaign.

Conditions in Austria-Hungary were not much better than those of Roumania, with one exception. Kaiser Franz Joseph is invariably described as being good to the Jews.

Kaiser Franz Joseph was in power and the Jews were well treated. When the Kaiser came to town and the non-Jews came to greet him, he held them back so the Jews could present the Torah, which he kissed, then he greeted the others.

The personality of Kaiser Franz Joseph even impressed one respondent who was not a citizen of Austria-Hungary.

I was sent to the front as soon as the war began and was wounded almost immediately. The Austrians captured me, but since it was just the beginning of the war, and they were not prepared for so many prisoners, we Russian soldiers were put in the same wards as the Austrians. One day Kaiser Franz Joseph visited the hospital and he came to our ward. There were about

fifteen or twenty Russian prisoners. He asked them questions, where they were taken prisoner, did they know why the war started. No one knew. When he came to me he asked my name and I told him. He said that was a German name, but I explained that I was Jewish. We conversed in German. I was the only one there who could explain about the assassination of the Grand Duke at Sarajevo and how the war started. The Kaiser gave me 100 kronen and told the officers to send me to the estate of Baron Otto Zollinger. The rest of the prisoners stayed in barracks on the Baron's estate called Knittenfeld. I had my own room in the castle and was put in charge of clothing distribution and worked as a tailor. There were 75,000 Russians and 13,000 Jews imprisoned there. This was because Alexander, the uncle of Czar Nicholas, had suggested that the front ranks be of Jews so that they would be slaughtered first. I was able to use my position to help the Jewish prisoners. I gave the German lieutenant in charge of the Jewish barracks sugar and other things, and he allowed them to build a synagogue. When there were rumors of exchanges of prisoners they only sent the sick ones back. I asked a nurse for help and she told me how to bribe a doctor to say I had tuberculosis, so I was sent home.

Since there were many occupational restrictions in Czarist Russia, Jews engaged mainly in non-agricultural pursuits, as merchants, innkeepers, lumber dealers, artisans, and religious functionaries.

The Jewish shoemakers' workmanship was superior. There were a number of Jewish butcher shops in the market square annex. During market days twice a week and at the *yaridim*, Jewish women sold bread and rolls and fruit and vegetables, tailors sold ready-made coats, pants, and jackets and the capmakers squeezed in wherever they could with their wares. One of the two busiest taverns in town was owned by a Jewish family. There were some Jewish traders in livestock and some Jews were employed in the tannery.

When the fruit ripened in the orchards, many Jews paid for the right to pick them, dry them, and sell them. This was a very important business, but also risky. If there had been a bountiful harvest in many areas, one could return from market without any profit at all, and even in debt.

My father was a scholar. My mother was a grain broker and sent grain to Germany. After her death, my father married a woman who was financially independent. One of my older brothers was away at a Yeshiva. One of my aunts had a bakery and sold flour, another aunt had a dairy, another relative ran a tannery. One of my uncles was a Rabbiner, a Government Rabbi. Another uncle was in charge of buying and selling timber.

My father had been a rabbi who died when I was three. My mother remarried—to a tailor. As soon as my brothers and sisters were old enough, they went to work, and then to America.

My father was a blacksmith, my mother was a midwife, and I became a tailor.

My uncle was a postmaster, an unusual job for a Jew.

My father was a teacher, but in America he became a peddler.

My father was a lawyer, but by the time my turn came for an education, wartime conditions made it impossible for me to attend the *gymnasium*.

A small group of respondents came from farms.

I grew up on a farm near Plock, in Poland. My mother, sisters, and I lived with my grandparents while my father was abroad. My grandparents made cheese and cream and drove into town every week to sell the products.

My father ran a farm which really belonged to him, but since Jews were not allowed to own land in Roumania at that time it was legally registered under a gentile's name. We had about 10 peasants working for us. The corn was milled right on the farm, but the wheat was taken to the city once a month and sold.

My father was a grain merchant and land owner in the Ukraine. He had a large sugar-beet plantation. But the land was legally registered under a gentile's name.

My parents ran a dairy on an estate owned by a family of Polish nobles. When the Russian government passed a decree forbidding Jews to trade or live on the land, this family obtained permission to have the dairy continue as usual, but not for long. Eventually all the Jewish settlers had to leave, some of whom had been on the land for generations. They moved to nearby towns. Some of the young sons and daughters fled to America.

5. Education

Almost all Jewish boys learned to read Hebrew well enough to pray, and enough Yiddish reading and writing to manage their business affairs. Many could also read and write the dominant non-Jewish language well enough to get by. In the best situations, where a father could afford to give his son the leisure to study, a fourteen year old boy might be sent to a Yeshiva. If he wished, he could also receive private lessons in foreign languages, mathematics, and science. Many young men who were eager to learn but could not afford to pay for schooling or who had to go to work at a very young age became autodidacts, that is, self-educated. Some went to Yeshiva after working all day.

> I worked as a blacksmith's apprentice all day and at night I attended a Yeshiva called Tiferes Bahurim.

For girls the situation was different in two respects. Where the family was poor, it was considered more important to educate the sons, and so we have some elderly women respondents who are illiterate. On the other hand, where government secular education was available, it was often the daughters who were sent to study, rather than the sons, who were supposed to devote themselves to holy studies. Thus, some of our female respondents received a *gymnasium* education.

> My father was a shoemaker by trade, but he was often away from home on business. My mother ran a little store and earned a living for us five children. She wanted me to be a rabbi. I was sent to the small Yeshiva in Minsk, then I studied with Rabbi Yitzhak Horowitz, a leader in the *Musar* movement. I spent a year in Lida, studying with Rabbi Reines. By then I had done a lot of reading on my own. I read Abraham Mapu in Hebrew and Peretz Smolenskin. I changed my mind about being a rabbi and decided I should like to be a pharmacist. I went to Vilna to apply to the Government Teachers Institute. I studied Latin and chemistry and supported myself by giving private lessons in Hebrew. I spent two and a half years in Vilna which was then a center of all kinds of movements. I myself became a Socialist Territorialist. In Vilna, I took algebra and Russian lessons from the son of Dr. Simon Dubnow. One day I met a man coming down the stairs of

Dubnow's house. He introduced himself as Vladimir Jabotinsky. When the list of people accepted into the Teachers Institute was posted, my name was not there. I was not allowed in because I was too close to army age so I had to go back home and be inducted.

My father earned a very nice living as a foreman in a wine factory so I was able to attend a private school and complete all the courses up to *gymnasium* level. But my father died and I could not afford to pay a tutor to teach me the extra languages needed for entrance. Also there was a strict quota. Only one percent of those admitted were Jews, and they had to be the very best students.

Only a certain percentage of Jewish students could get into high school. Even then bribery was necessary. Many Jewish students had private tutors, then took the examinations as externs. I studied Latin, Greek, and mathematics privately until I was fifteen, then I took the exams and graduated as a pharmacist's apprentice.

In Roumania, the formal treatment of Jews as aliens in the educational system was introduced in 1893, when aliens were required to pay fees for entrance into the public schools and were admitted only when there was enough room for them.

Jews were not allowed in the government school, but we bribed our teacher with cones of sugar—about twenty-five pounds—and he let us stay.

In Austria-Hungary, the Fundamental Law of 1867 granted legal emancipation to the Jews. However, in the various parts of the Twin Empire there were great variations in respecting this law.

Jews were compelled to pay taxes in Galicia, even though they could not send their children to public schools. When they refused their homes were stripped of material possessions.

In Bukovina, public school was compulsory. We had to take Christian religious instruction too. In general, relations were good, but occasionally there were ugly outbursts by the peasants.

I attended five grades of school in our village in Hungary. This much public education did exist. Public school in our town was compulsory. As a matter of fact, my mother's candlesticks were

confiscated because I failed to attend on the Sabbath.

I used to go to heder from 6 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., then went to public school where I studied Polish, Russian, German, math and history, then I would come home for a few hours and then return to heder until 9:00 p.m.

Almost every Jewish boy received at least four or five years of Hebrew education. Traditionally, this education started at about the age of five.

My parents brought me to the heder the first day, opened the book and threw a coin down into it. They told me that an angel had thrown the coin. After two or three years there I went to a second heder where I studied Bible and a little Russian. I was about ten, already studying Mishnah, when the war broke out.

There was no school in our village so I went to live with the Rebbe when I was five years old. Once a week my mother would come with fresh clothes and to comb the "animals" out of my hair and wash it.

Jassy was a big city with a very large Jewish population. I attended heder and a Jewish cultural school supported by the Jewish Community.

I attended a Stube, a village school, from the age of six through ten. We learned to read and write some Hebrew, but with no explanations.

Our heder was in a store room with about thirty children aged four to seven in the room. When I was seven I could read and write Yiddish and was familiar with the Hebrew texts. From seven through ten I attended a more advanced school where I studied the Bible and German. The war broke out when I was ten years old and put an end to my studies.

Many parents made financial sacrifices in order to send their sons on to higher studies at a well known Yeshiva.

Lithuania was famous for its scholars. My older brother went to the Dinaburg Yeshiva to study and I was sent to the Yanoshik Yeshiva. My father was a scholar, he was ordained at eighteen, and he earned some money by traveling from village to village teaching the sons of well-to-do families. He left early Sunday morning and would return on Thursday. He often tried to help my

step-mother in her grocery store but he was more hindrance then help. He was a true scholar whose main desire was to sit in the synagogue and study Talmud. In 1901, three years after I had left for America, he, my step-mother and my half-brother went to Jerusalem, where they remained. My half-brother's son still lives in Jerusalem.

Until I was eight years old I went to the home of a private teacher where several children were taught religious subjects. This was a heder. Then I went to a heder in a larger town where we had one hour a day several times a week for secular subjects. Afterwards I was a student at the Slobodka Yeshiva near Kovno.

Occasionally, girls, too, were given intensive Jewish education.

My father believed that girls, too, should be educated. My older sister Chana was sent to the nearby town of Zjezjmir where she studied at the only boarding school for girls in the region. The teacher was considered an idealist, because he believed that girls should get a higher education, just as boys do. Chana studied *Humash*, the Prophets, and Jewish history.

Usually, however, girls were given much less Hebrew education.

If a girl could read the prayers, and maybe write a Yiddish letter, she was considered sufficiently well-educated.

CHAPTER TWO

DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL

Jews were considered inferior. They were sent to Siberia for talking against the government. They were called "Siberniks."

1. Reasons for Leaving

We came to get away from the pogroms. There were terrible conditions for Jews.

When our respondents were asked for the reasons behind their decision to leave their birthplaces, the answers were almost invariably bound to the deteriorating relations with their non-Jewish neighbors and the fresh outbreaks of violence against the Jews, often with government approval.

The Jewish families barricaded their windows every night—they were alert. We heard stories of anti-Semitism from beggars who passed through.

We feared the peasant hoodlums from the countryside who would throw rocks at holiday time, breaking our windows.

Our synagogue was in a room with the windows blacked out. We were afraid to speak Yiddish on the street. We often had to hide from people who came to persecute the Jews.

The assassination of Alexander II of Russia in March, 1881, was used by the authorities as an excuse for anti-Jewish legislation. A series of pogroms swept over the Ukraine and its neighboring provinces and Russian-ruled Poland, continuing on to the recurring pogroms of 1903 and 1905.

I still have a scar on my thigh where a Cossack struck me with his sword. I was three years old and my mother tried to protect me with her body, but he got to me.

I participated in a self defense group. During the pogrom in Vitebsk around 1905, my collarbone was broken and the back of my head still bears the scar of a dagger.

There was a pogrom in our city, Bialystok, in 1905, which was the reason we left.

Our shtetl was near Bialystok, and we heard about the terrible pogrom there.

There were pogroms in Roumania too and there the situation gave rise to the movement known as the "fussgayers"—groups of men, women and children fleeing north, walking over a thousand miles to Hamburg. They called themselves "The Walkers," "The Hikers," "The Despairing Ones," "The Wandering Echo," and "The Wandering Jew."

The *fussgayers* came through our town about a year before I left.

My older brother was one of the *fussgayers*. He came to Pittsburgh where a temporary House of Shelter was set up. Later, when he became established, he helped me to come over.

As the pogroms and economic pressures increased in intensity, whoever could leave did so.

In 1907 there was a pogrom in Batshan. Jews were robbed and murdered. I worked my way from town to town as a baker until I got to Bremen and from there I set out for America.

Once again, one heard the medieval ritual murder libel, that Jews used Christian blood to bake matzahs. The most infamous of these blood accusations was the trial of Mendel Beilis. One respondent related that he spent a night in the same jail with Mendel Beilis in Kiev. This was while he, the respondent, was being transported to another jail to stand trial for helping his brother desert.

Respondents from all over the Jewish area of settlement in Eastern Europe gave the same reasons for leaving, anti-Semitic

outbreaks and the difficulties in making a living.

> We lived in the province of Grodno. When I was born in 1876 it was Poland. Later it came under Russian rule. My father was forced out of business by a local nobleman and he had to find another means of livelihood. We always knew that there was anti-Semitism around us so we had to think of getting away.
>
> My older brother served in the Russo-Japanese War. When he came back he had nothing to do. The government didn't care about the Jews. My sister married a fellow and they left before he had to go into the army. Then one brother left and another and finally my mother and my youngest brother and me.
>
> I left because there was no work. Jews were not allowed to go to school, or to have government jobs, or to work in the sugar refinery. There was no future for me.

Another important reason for leaving was fear of the draft. Conditions of army service in Eastern Europe were brutal and brutalizing. Even after the twenty-five year compulsory army service for Jewish boys was modified in Czarist Russia, young men went to any lengths to avoid conscription. This was not due to lack of patriotism or to cowardice. (A 1901 report revealed that, while Jews amounted to only 4.13 percent of the imperial population, the percentage of their servicemen was 5.73, exceeding their population ratio by nearly 40 percent.)

A number of respondents mentioned the specifically anti-Semitic aspects of military service.

> At twenty-one boys were forced to go to the Army. Jews were not free to go from one town to another.
>
> My relative had served in the army for three years and nine months in deep Russia where Jews were not allowed to live. When this boy got his discharge he also got a notice that he had twenty-four hours in which to get back to the Pale of Settlement.
>
> I left because I did not want to go into the army. I would have to go to Warsaw for four years. My mother sent letters to her three sisters in Cleveland and they sent a ticket for me.
>
> I left when I was due to be drafted. My father did not want me to go to America because he considered it *treif*. I thought I would be able to earn enough money in five years so that I could return and bribe the draft board to leave me alone.

It did not seem reasonable to me to serve the Czar for four years under the conditions that existed.

I did not want to serve in the army of the Czarist regime which oppressed Jews. We were confined to the Pale. We were kept out of the big cities and the universities. As a member of the Social Zionists (later we were called Territorialists) I saw America as a place of refuge. Perhaps we could build a Jewish national life here.

Some told about their experiences in the service of the Czar and of the King of Roumania, and why this motivated them to leave.

When I was drafted there was a new rule that they were not allowed to call Jews "Zhid," which is like "Dirty Jew." It was not so bad. But when it came time to pick candidates for officers and they went down the ranks, they called me "Zhid" and I was not chosen. I got sick of this.

I served in the artillery for three years. I left to avoid being called up to serve again. The government was anti-Semitic.

The peasants were common, ignorant, primitive and uncivilized. The government was anti-Semitic and Jews were persecuted. They were drafted into the army but could not advance in rank.

My father had served his time in the Russian army. When the reserves were called up in 1904 to go fight the Japanese, he deserted and hid out and finally left.

I was not allowed into the Teachers Institute in Vilna because I was too close to army age. I knew that if I avoided conscription my mother would have to pay a 300 ruble fine, so I showed up. I was stationed close to the German border. After two nights I walked to the border with a friend and got different clothes from a bath house there. We had arranged our trip through an agent. It cost 150 rubles for the trip and 50 rubles for show money. We waited in the bath house for a week until the money came.

Some mentioned that their motivation for leaving was due to the government repression of freedom of expression.

If you would say one bad word—they would hang you or kill you. You had to be very careful. For example, here you can say

President Nixon didn't talk well, or talked too much. If you would say it there about the government, they would put you in jail or kill you.

I wanted to go to America for freedom of speech. I was always afraid to express myself in Europe.

My father brought home an anti-Czarist proclamation and burned it. In Russia you were afraid to say a word against the government. You were afraid of your own shadow!

One respondent told at length about his involvement in an underground movement.

Right after Bar Mitzvah I got involved in the *Bund*. When other youngsters were looking at girls, I was interested in throwing down the Czar and freeing the world. In 1905 there were many searches and arrests. I knew they were looking for me—they had already searched my house. But I was careful not to keep suspicious literature around. Once I had a brochure of thin paper. They came to search and my father asked me, "Do you have any treife stuff?" I gave him the brochure and I think he swallowed it. We were all searched and nothing was found.

It became more dangerous. My father did not want me to leave because I was an only son. My brother had died in infancy. But he sent me away because of the danger. He wrote to his brother in Newark who sent a paid-up ticket. My father took me to the German border and I sneaked over. I waited to hear from home that I could go back but three months passed and I had to leave.

The reluctance of some to leave was often due to the fear that Jewish observance in America was not as strict as in the shtetl.

We stayed in America by chance. My father did not think it was religious enough here. We only came for my brother's Bar Mitzvah because my grandparents were in America. While we were here the War broke out in Europe and we remained.

When the decree came ordering Jews off the land my father moved to town. He was very patriotic and my two brothers served in the army. But then there was a pogrom in nearby Bialystok and my father persuaded my brothers to desert and go to the United States. He himself did not want to come because he was very religious. My mother saw that there was no future for us in

Europe so she made my father go with her to the rabbi to decide. The rabbi advised us to leave.

The movement to the United States was paralleled by movements to other countries, most notably, the First and Second Aliyot to Palestine. Many respondents mentioned relatives and friends who left for the Land of Israel.

I had a brilliant, devoted Zionist cousin who went to Palestine. My brother was a "real" Zionist. He left for Palestine when I left for the United States.

For some, to be a citizen of any country was better than being stateless.

My father went to Turkey and purchased citizenship. He wanted to be a "citizen" of somewhere, since he could not be one in Roumania.

Some Zionists hoped to come to the Land of Israel eventually but had to go where they could. What were the Jews hoping for? To create a Jewish state and go to the Land of Israel. But in the meantime, since we were second or third class citizens, we thought of going to the United States.

I was in Kishinev for three years working as a tailor. A *landsman* went to Palestine and promised to help me come too. However, he was disillusioned. In Palestine he worked on the roads. Since I had to support a wife and child, he advised me to go to America and make a living there.

The situation in Eastern Europe changed radically for the worse just before, during, and after the first World War. The upheavals of the Russian Revolution led to frequent pogroms. They were different from the pogroms of the past in that these appeared more organized and there was widespread looting, rape and murder.

After I was wounded in the war, held as prisoner by the Austrians for three years, I returned home. My wife gave birth to our son and died six months later. I hired a peasant woman to take care of my baby while I worked fifteen miles away. Rumors came that Petlura's men were approaching Boguslav. I walked

through the forest all night and came to my house where I found my son lying on the floor, abandoned. I grabbed him and hid in the reeds all night, hearing the sounds of looting and screaming in the village.

I was the youngest of eight children. My sister was killed in a pogrom. My mother died, and I wandered from one brother or sister to another. Finally, with the financial help of a brother in America, I went to Lvov, from there to Warsaw, from there to Danzig, then to a German port where I got a ship to Ellis Island.

During the First World War very few Jews were able to emigrate from war-torn Europe. Some went through many adventures before they finally arrived in the United States.

I did not want to fight for the Czar. I was in Warsaw when the war broke out. From there I went to Tashkent and sold raw cotton. From there I went to Siberia where I worked as a bookkeeper and then to Manchuria for a few months. From Harbin I took a ship to Japan and from Kobe I went to Canada. I arrived *erev* Rosh Hashana and HIAS arranged for me to spend the holiday in Seattle. I advertised in the *Jewish Forward* for a cousin in Pittsburgh. He responded and offered to send me money, but I didn't need any because I had picked apples in Seattle for six weeks, and had made $120—enough for fare to Pittsburgh. I had planned to return to my family in Russia after the war, but after the revolution I decided to stay here. My wife and children came in 1919.

It was during these years that the *landsmanschaften* showed their true concern to help their fellow countrymen in distress. In Pittsburgh a group of Jews from Pliskov had formed an organization called the Pliskover Verein in 1908.

Pliskov had been attacked by the bands of Zeleny and the refugees who had managed to cross the border were gathered in a camp in Roumania, under the aegis of Harry Adler sent to Europe as delegate of the Pliskover Verein. Many came to Pittsburgh with their relatives' aid.

Potkamin in Galicia was also affected by the war, but it was on the losing side. For the Jews it did not make much difference. The presence of a group of families from Potkamin in Pittsburgh made it easier for the refugees to receive immigrant status.

My father worked as an agent to help people travel to the United States. After the Revolution, when the Russian patrols started entering our town, we decided to leave for America. A large group of families got together and we took a horse and wagon to Lemberg (Lvov), the train to Cracow, another train to Paris and from there to Hamburg, the port from which we sailed.

The government changed rapidly because of the different countries that conquered our territory. We Jews did not trust the communists. I did not buy what they were selling. We obtained a visa from the Polish government and went by horse and wagon to the train and from there to the port of Cherbourg.

The border towns were under special difficulties, for the Jews were always accused by the "other side" of having helped the enemy. Very often there were some grounds for this, for the Austrians often seemed much better than the Russians or Roumanians.

Why did we leave? Because they chased us out. The Austrians came in, and then they retreated, and we civilians were taken along.

Our town was on the border of Austria and Roumania. Before World War I it belonged to Russia. They were hard on the Jews. The Austrians occupied in 1918. They were good. Then the Roumanians came in 1919 and they were terrible. When I went to serve in the army I was knocked down and beaten. I decided to go to the United States where I had relatives. My uncle had sent me affidavits before the war and I used them.

2. The Departure

Emigration included three critical states: the movement, often illegal, from home to a safe embarkation port; the actual voyage; and the reception in the New World. It took much trouble and time, and often large sums of money to leave or be smuggled out of Eastern Europe.

Generally friends and family were necessary for this dangerous task and it was they also who arranged for prepaid passage tickets to enable the immigrants to reach America.

Special agents often handled the arrangements.

An agent arranged for a group of us to slip across the border. We took a wagon to the little town of Yatkun near the German border. In the evening we slipped across. The agent paid off the Russian soldiers who "looked the other way." We slept in a silo, went to Hamburg by train, and there the group separated. I went to Bremen and from there to Baltimore.

When I was called for army examination I did what most young men did, I left home. My family paid 200 dollars to an agent who helped me get out of my town to a German border town. I hid for a week and then waded across the river. The Russian soldier on duty had been paid off by my uncle. From Germany I took the train to Belgium and then the ship to New York.

Sometimes the problems that were encountered were solved by other Jews—strangers to the emigrant, but with a feeling of brotherly involvement.

Forty people assembled at Tavrick. We hid out in a barn for a week, then a man led us over the border to Germany. We then separated and went our individual ways. On the train to Berlin I showed my ticket for an English ship and they wanted to send me back. I looked around for some local Jews who were able to help me. I continued to Hamburg where I took the ship to Hull in England. I stayed in Glasgow and waited for my ship to America. I had an English penny and I bought a Yiddish newspaper. At the hotel, paid for by the ship company, a missionary came on Friday night and tried to convert us. I read my Yiddish newspaper.

I was the only boy traveling with about a dozen women. We were taken to the border, ten or twelve miles away, in a covered wagon. We stayed in an empty house. In the middle of the night we crossed the border barefoot, although there was frost on the grass. When we got to Bremen we discovered that we had just missed the boat. Passover was approaching and the Rabbi of Bremen and the Jewish community provided us with *matzot,* wine and fish so that we would not have to eat *hometz.*

For others, the hazardous trip was made without the help of an agent.

The Cossacks attacked our town and whipped and stabbed Jewish boys. Since I was past twelve I could not get a passport. I sneaked across the border and was sent back in chains. It took seventy-eight days to get back and I was given only bread and water. Three weeks later I left again. This time I was more successful. I hitch-hiked to Stuttgart and traveled second class to the United States.

Because of the persecution in Roumania I had to leave. I crossed the border to Austria-Hungary, worked for two weeks as a harness maker, then I went to Bremerhaven where I worked for three months. I had enough money for a ship's ticket and some hundreds left over.

It was a common practice to put a number of different families on the same passport.

I traveled with a group as the child of two adults. When we crossed the border I almost forgot my false name.

I came with an orphaned cousin and with a passport made out that I was eighteen years old. I was kept in Ellis Island because I did not have proper identification for my cousin. A lawyer from HIAS told me to reveal that the child was my cousin and then we were released.

3. Crossing the Ocean

Oy! Was that an ocean cruise!

Our respondents left for America from various port cities in Europe. Some took the southern route to Constanza in Roumania. Others traveled to the German ports of Hamburg and Bremerhaven. Travelers from Antwerp in Belgium often stopped in England en route.

When the ship stopped in Liverpool my grandfather got off, thinking he had already arrived in America.

I worked in England for three months as a capmaker, but got paid very little. That is where I changed my name to make it more "English." When I came to America I used my new name.

Many took their own food parcels along, not trusting the

kashruth of the steamship company.

> All we ate was herring and potatoes.
>
> We spent six weeks on a cattle boat, the *Liebau,* and ate bean soup and coffee the whole way.
>
> I had a piece of hard cheese and a sharp knife to cut off slices. I still have the scar where I cut myself once.
>
> I cooked a large pot of jelly and baked bread to take along. On the boat we ate only their herring.

Most respondents did not take much luggage with them. If they had crossed the border illegally, they had to travel light. Most of the men remember taking their prayer books, prayer shawls, and phylacteries.

> All I had with me were my tefillin in a little package. I was the youngest one there traveling alone, thirteen-and-half years old. They called me "Das Yidele Mit Dem Pekele"—the little Jew with the little package.
>
> I took just my clothes and tefillin. When I came to the United States I threw my clothes in the river at my brother's suggestion, and kept my tefillin.

Some of the women, however, remember taking considerable amounts of luggage with them.

> I took along eighty-five pounds of featherbeds, a copper pestle and mortar, and a blue enamel pot.
>
> My mother took her trousseau, silver, everything but the furniture.
>
> I came with the four children and many big bundles, full of bedding and clothes, but in Ellis Island my husband told me to throw them away, he would buy me everything new.

Most traveled in steerage or third class. Conditions varied from awful to bearable, depending upon the ship and the year in which the respondent arrived. Most respondents did not wish to recall the details of the voyage. Many suffered from seasickness and were infested with lice. The reason for traveling this way was simple. Since most of our respondents came on prepaid tickets, for which their relatives had scrimped and saved, the

cheapest possible class was usually chosen.

A few respondents, however, reported that they traveled to the United States in relative comfort.

> We traveled second-class from Hamburg on the *S.S. Finland.* The food was elegant. We used to drop food down to the lower deck to the immigrants there.
>
> My father was very wealthy, with many business dealings. He lived in the United States and came to visit us once a year. My mother did not want to leave home but finally agreed. A travel agent arranged the trip. My mother and I and my seven brothers and sisters had our own table in the first-class dining room.
>
> My father wanted to save his sons from the army. We were quite wealthy and he got us second-class passage on the ship from Bremen.

4. The Isle of Tears

In 1882 Ellis Island replaced Castle Garden as the main immigrant reception center. Castle Garden, a round building in New York's Battery, had served this purpose from 1855-1891, but, although almost none of our respondents came before 1891, many used the name "Kesselgarten" for Ellis Island. It was a word which entered the vocabulary of the prospective immigrant while he was still in Europe. Ellis Island, however, soon gained a reputation as a place of purgatory which one had to pass in order to reach the Golden Land. In the writings of Yiddish poets and novelists it became "The Isle of Tears."

Before 1891, immigration into the United States was free. In March of that year, Congress passed one of its first laws regulating and controlling free immigration to the United States. Immigrants who were paupers, or likely to become public charges, were to be rejected. Varying amounts of "show money" were required to prove to the authorities that one was not likely to become a public charge.

> I took pillows and clothes with me and $25.00 to "show." After I got a job I sent it back through Roth's Bank, but my family never got the money because war broke out.
>
> My aunt sent me $50.00 "show money" that was waiting for me when I arrived.

The restrictions on immigration continued. In 1910 the Department of Commerce and Labor issued instructions ordering the arrest and deportation of assisted immigrants. For Jewish immigrants the threat of this act was the provision that "assisted immigrants" included those aided by private organizations. There was hostility on the part of labor unions to the mounting numbers of possible rivals for jobs. In 1921 the American Immigration Quota Act established, for the first time, an annual quota of 3% of the total foreign-born of each nationality resident in the United States on the basis of the census of 1910. In May, 1924 the United States Congress passed the Immigration Act which allowed only 2% of each nationality of the foreign-born residents in the United States as of 1890 henceforth to be admitted into the country. (This 1924 law bore most heavily on Jewish emigration from Poland, Russia and Roumania, with their aggregate Jewish population of over six million.)

Unlike the masses of immigrants who came to New York and were processed at Ellis Island, and then often stayed in New York, many of our respondents came to the ports of Baltimore or Philadelphia, were met there by relatives or were given money sent for them by their relatives, and then continued on their way westward. Many who did come to Ellis Island did not recall any special problem. Some, in fact, remember their arrival in terms quite different from the stereotyped picture seen in books.

> We sailed to New York first class. We did not have to go through any formal procedure. My brother, who had been here for some time and had become quite prosperous, was a Mason. He must have made an impression with his Masonic pin, because he came on board the ship and arranged for us to land in Hoboken, New Jersey. From there we took the ferry to New York.
>
> We sailed second class on the *King Albert* and arrived in Baltimore. We were greeted by some kind of Traveler's Aid. There were people there who spoke Yiddish, Italian, etc. They directed us through customs and served us free coffee and cake.

5. Immigrant Aid

> HIAS met us, arranged a place for us to stay overnight, and then put us on a train for Pittsburgh.

HIAS, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, was one of the major agencies handling immigrant aid in the United States from 1900 to 1914. Almost all of our respondents remembered being assisted by HIAS.

> HIAS met me and directed me to my destination.
> HIAS helped me on my way and bought me a meal.
> A lady from HIAS showed me where to stand for the train to Pittsburgh.
> HIAS met the ship and gave me a place to stay overnight.
> Mr. Bluestone of HIAS made arrangements for me.

The National Council of Jewish Women took upon itself the special responsibility of helping women and children.

> My father had listed his whole family while applying for citizenship which made us all United States citizens even while we were in Poland. We were met by a lady from the Council at Ellis Island and she took us to the train to Pittsburgh.
> Since I was traveling all alone, a seventeen year old girl, the Council ladies took a great interest in me. Even when I was living with friends in Pittsburgh, they used to visit to see how I was, whether I was comfortable, for quite a while.

In Pittsburgh, the Council became the major agency for Jewish immigrant reception, fulfilling the same functions as HIAS in the port cities.

The Council's special role in helping women was recognized by the United States Government and the ladies of the Council were requested to help prevent the exploitation of girls and women by white slavers and sweat-shop operators. In 1904, the Pittsburgh Section of the Council established its Service to the Foreign Born. Zena Saul served as the Director of the Service from 1921 to 1937, when the Service merged with four other agencies to become the Jewish Family and Children's Service.

It should be stressed, however, that most of our respondents were not dependent upon HIAS or Council for more than temporary assistance. They came to relatives and *landsleit* who helped them when they were in need.

CHAPTER THREE

DREAM AND REALITY

My parents cried when they saw the Statue of Liberty.

1. America, Land of Freedom and Opportunity

For most of our respondents, America beckoned as the land of freedom and opportunity.

America was a free country. It was every child's dream to go there.

America was a haven of freedom.

There was no money or opportunity for schooling in the Ukraine. America was the land of opportunity.

America was heaven for Jews. A free country where a Jew could even become president.

I thought of America as a wonderful place. There was no royalty—everyone was equal and had political freedom. It was good for the Jews.

Many, too, had heard the stories of fabulous America where gold could be picked up on the streets.

When I came to America I looked for the gold in the streets.

I thought that in America you took a shovel and shoveled buckets of gold.

In America it rained money every two weeks.

In America the streets were lined with money.

America was a golden country, abounding in money.

These fables took on the appearance of reality when American relatives sent money home to Europe or came back to visit.

Even as a child I had heard about wonderful America. People returned with two hundred or three hundred dollars.

A neighbor came back with 600 Russian rubles. I had a great desire to go.

Pictures sent from America showed people who were well-dressed, with gold watches and chains.

America was the place to go. Everyone was going.

My father had been in America twice and each time he returned he told us all about it.

All the teenagers wanted to come to America. Our teacher read to us about it.

I received letters from friends in Pittsburgh.

My three sisters and two brothers wrote letters about the fine conditions in Pittsburgh.

My brother wrote letters tempting me with descriptions of life in the United States.

Some did not have any illusions about getting rich quick.

I knew that you could not shovel money from the streets.

A small group of respondents were actually opposed to emigration to America, mostly on religious grounds.

I thought of the United States as a place where even the bricks were unkosher.

My father did not want to come for religious reasons.

My father thought that America was not religious enough.

Influential religious leaders such as Rabbi Israel Meir Kahan (The "Hofetz Haim") and the Slutzker Rav warned the Orthodox not to go to America because of the reported irreligious behavior.

2. First Impressions

When I came to America I wanted to kiss the ground.

Most respondents were impressed by the New York skyline and the way of life of the big city. There is a kaleidescope of impressions reflected in their minds even now, as they recall the sights of sixty years ago.

I stood with my mouth wide open.

I had never seen so many electric lights.

The size of New York, and the big buildings; Brooklyn Bridge and the escalators and elevators.

I was impressed by the Statue of Liberty.

The traffic and pushcarts in the street—so many different types of people and different types of dress.

I was amazed at the laundry strung up high between the buildings and the open street cars with people jumping on and off, and the fire engines pulled by trained horses which harnessed themselves when the firebells rang.

In addition to the sights, some made the discovery of other, more intangible aspects of American life, which seemed to promise the fulfillment of their hopes.

On the train there were plush seats for everybody, not just the first class.

On the train to Pittsburgh, as I looked through the windows, I saw paperboys delivering newspapers and milkmen leaving milk at people's doors, and no one stole them.

My first impression of the United States was that you did not need a passport on the street and you did not have to be afraid when you went to bed.

I was not impressed by the big buildings, I had lived in big European cities, but rather by the idea of freedom.

Some first impressions of America were not favorable.

When we arrived our clothes had to be burned and we had to be deloused. We crowded together at Ellis Island waiting for our names to be called.

I was too sick to remember anything—full of lice from the boat. I lost forty-three pounds in three months.

The people on the East Side of New York lived much poorer than they did in Europe. There were many people crowded into

one room.

Some declared that they were not impressed at all.

I was not impressed. I was not a fool.

I was not particularly impressed on my arrival. I had seen large cities.

I was not impressed by Providence or New York. I had seen better cities.

Many immigrants saw Negroes for the first time in their lives and were amazed, sometimes frightened.

The first American I saw was black and I thought that perhaps in America people became black.

I saw Negroes and thought they were chimney sweeps. I figured that America had a lot of chimneys.

I wondered why there were so many chimney cleaners around.

I saw a Negro family for the first time in my life at the railroad station.

I saw my first colored person selling fruit in the station. I had studied about Negroes in history books in Hungary, but this was the first time I saw one.

I was impressed by the number of black people.

I feared the Negroes that I saw on the dock in Baltimore.

I saw the colored people and thought I was in Siberia, not the United States.

I saw my first Negro and was frightened.

Equally memorable for immigrants were the new foods they ate upon arrival, especially bananas.

I saw bananas for the first time. We bought some from a peddler and waited to see how other people ate them. To this day bananas are my favorite fruit.

I got a banana and did not know how to peel it.

I ate a banana for the first time but I did not like it.

While we waited at Ellis Island we ate bologna sandwiches and tomatoes and bananas with the skins on.

I ate bananas for the first time and they made me sick.

The new foods were bananas and tomatoes.

I was impressed by bananas and ice cream and the dark-skinned people.

I was impressed by the cold, the tall buildings, colored people, and bananas.

I was impressed by Negroes and bananas. I had never seen either before.

3. On the Way to Pittsburgh

Many immigrants came to the ports of Baltimore or Philadelphia. A few even came via Japan and Alaska to Seattle. Some spent some time in other cities before coming to Pittsburgh. Their first impressions were quite varied.

When I came to Seattle I was impressed by the tables set for Rosh Hashana by HIAS. It reminded me of the Garden of Eden.

The train to Akron was full of soldiers returning from the Spanish American war. It took us many days and nights to travel.

I came to Newark and was not favorably impressed by the honky-tonk atmosphere. It seemed an unsettled, wild, and disorganized place. Unemployment was high.

My destination was Jacksonville, Florida, where my uncle lived. I thought I was in heaven when I saw the beautiful white sand on the beach.

4. The Smoky City

I arrived on a dreary December day. Pittsburgh was dark, dismal, and dirty. My spirits sank at the sight of Pittsburgh.

This theme, of Pittsburgh as a dirty, smoky city, is repeated over and over.

Pittsburgh was foggy and dark and smoky and filthy.
Pittsburgh was smoky.
Fog and dirt, you could hardly see.
Very dirty.
Pittsburgh was so dark.
A dirty, smoky city.
Smoke and factories and noise.
It was dirty and dark. I almost regretted coming.

We came on a very grim, dark, smoky November evening. It was a dirty, unattractive, smoky city.

The electric lights were on in the daytime because it was so dark.

My impression of Pittsburgh was very bad. It was smoky and dirty. The houses were wretched and poor.

One tells about a conversation in the train on the way to Pittsburgh.

A lady asked me where we were going. When I told her, "Pittsburgh," she said, "See how white your blouse is now? In Pittsburgh your white blouse will be black."

For others there were factors in Pittsburgh which counteracted this generally dim first impression.

I liked the sound of the name. It sounded Russian, like Petersburg.

I was impressed by the mills and smog and smoke and flaming chimneys. There were lovely parks and rivers. The only thing I did not like was the soot from the mills.

I was impressed by the glittering lights of East Park on the North Side.

I was impressed by the steel mills.

It was lovely here—so much food. Plenty to eat.

I was very excited and happy here. I saw the flames in the sky and was told that they were mills working at night.

I thought Pittsburgh was beautiful as I crossed the bridge to the North Side.

I arrived at night and the lights and hills were so pretty.

5. Welcoming the Immigrant

Our respondents who came to settle in Pittsburgh usually came to a relative or *landsman* who had already made his home here. The first ones from a family or a shtetl to settle in America felt a moral obligation to save enough money to arrange for the passage of their relatives and friends. There were a number of ways one could do this, but the most popular way was through an agency which provided complete service. Many agents also

entered the foreign exchange business and some became bankers. Joseph Roth's Bank in McKeesport was mentioned by some as was Jacob Roth's Bank of Pittsburgh.

> When we came, we discovered that the money for our tickets was advanced to the family by Jacob Roth, and he expected to be repaid. I went to work as a broom peddler in order to pay the debt, on a weekly installment.

Peter Lazerevitz (Lazear), himself an immigrant from Lithuania, managed a very successful foreign exchange agency which went out of business during the Panic of 1893. In 1890, he and other Yiddish speaking immigrants founded the United Hebrew Relief Society of Allegheny County for the purpose of helping Jewish immigrants.

Thus the adjustment to a new society was made easier by the presence of friends who had themselves already made an initial adjustment. There was always someone to serve as a connecting link to the past.

The first meeting with relatives in the United States was often a deeply moving experience.

> We arrived on July fourth. There were firecrackers and we were frightened. We were so happy to see Dad. Mother could not get over the fact that here the schools gave treats to the children.
>
> My father met us at the B&O station and we walked to my uncle's home on Fullerton Street. Other relatives came, too, and joined the procession.
>
> The first day we spent sitting in the house, relating family history.
>
> My children did not know their father because they had not seen him for eight years and they were babies when he left. The first day the whole family came to visit and brought presents for the children.
>
> I was excited and fearful when I saw my brother.
>
> I felt strange. Even my brother was a stranger.
>
> I had never seen my brother because he left for America before I was born, but I recognized him immediately because of the family resemblance. I was very impressed because he came to meet me driving his own car.
>
> I arrived on April fourteenth. My father bought me some bagels

because we were very hungry. He told me I would be Bar-Mitzvah next week.

On my first day in Pittsburgh I helped my cousin make noodles. I felt right at home.

Sometimes the arrival in Pittsburgh was something of an adventure, with no familiar face at the railway station.

I came to the B&O station but my brother was not there. I saw a newsboy on the street from Pliskov, my home town. He showed me where my brother lived, but my brother had gone to the wrong station. All the relatives greeted me warmly and we had a fine Sabbath meal.

No one met me at the station because no one knew that I was coming. I saw a bakery truck with my cousin's name on it and I persuaded the driver to take me to Braddock to my brother's house. I slept most of that first day!

I lost the address of my step-mother's uncle, but the relatives of another immigrant at the station helped me find him. I was made welcome immediately.

It was very cold and snowy and my aunt was not at the station. I went to a cheap restaurant on Water Street near the B&O and paid one dollar for a dish of wieners and sauerkraut. Then I shared a cab with four other people and we each paid a dollar to be taken to our destination.

I knew that my aunt lived on Logan Street but I did not have the exact address. I took a horse and buggy to Fifth and Logan for a dollar and then I wandered around. A woman asked me if I was lost. I told her my aunt's name and she said that she lived in my aunt's rooming house and took me there.

I arrived at the station with another girl who was going to the same street, Crawford and Clark. She had lost her shoes on the boat and was barefoot. We were put on a truck and I came to my friends' home where I was greeted warmly.

I went to Roth's Bank across the street from the train station in McKeesport. There was a sign that they helped foreigners. They took me to my brother and he got in touch with my sister. I was very tired and dirty and all skin and bones.

The theme of mutual aid of one immigrant for another is repeated constantly. The feeling of responsibility for each other

underlies the entire process of helping one's friends to come to America, meeting them when they arrived, and helping them in their initial adjustment.

Some had not planned to make their homes in Pittsburgh and were persuaded to do so.

I was supposed to go to my cousin in Pittsburgh, Kansas, but I was directed to Pittsburgh, Pa. by mistake. However, I found cousins here too, so I stayed.

We were on our way to Toronto, but my husband had come to Europe from Pittsburgh and we had to return here first. While I was waiting for him to get a cab, holding my baby, I was seen by a man who passed by. He grabbed my baby and ran after my husband yelling, "Shver, shver! (father-in-law)." I was bewildered. It turned out that he was the husband of my husband's late daughter by his first wife. He persuaded us to stay in Pittsburgh and to go into business here.

On occasion, the reception in Pittsburgh was not pleasant.

My first day here I was arrested for peddling without a license. My cousin paid the fine.

I was thirteen years old. I got off the train and followed the people out. I did not know that meanwhile my aunt was waiting for me at the B&O station. I saw horses and wagons so I went to one driver and showed him my aunt's address and asked if he could take me there. We rode and rode and I became frightened and asked if he would let me off. He wanted to know how much money I had. (I had $13). I started crying so he let me off. I walked and walked. Finally I showed my aunt's address to some men and one of them gave me a nickel and put me on the right streetcar. I arrived at Beaver Street on the North Side before my aunt. When she came, boy did I get it! She had bought a chicken on the hill and she made me "flick" it (pluck the feathers) for Shabbos. As if I didn't have enough lice in my hair from Ellis Island! That was my how-do-you-do to Pittsburgh.

6. Food, Clothing, Shelter

We were warmly received by our relations who took us home for dinner.

Food

Many memories revolve around the first meals eaten in the new environment.

My cousins took me to vaudeville at the Harris Theatre on Diamond Street and bought me a chocolate ice cream cone. I thought that America was heaven.

My friend took me to dinner at Klein's Restaurant, to an ice cream parlor, and to the Hungarian Club where we met many *landsleit.*

There were such enormous lemons—I thought the grapefruit were lemons.

My husband's business partner had prepared a fine meal for us.

Our relatives met us at the station and took us to a restaurant on Liberty Avenue.

We were served apple pie which they called torte.

The festive welcoming meal was sometimes less than had been anticipated.

There was bread and butter and coffee for supper, and some groceries, but I had expected a big dinner.

My uncles seemed surprised that I liked apples. As if there were no apples in Europe!

For one family the first day went by with no food at all.

Our first day in Pittsburgh was *Tisha B'Av.* My parents fasted all day long. In the evening they discovered that the home we were in was not kosher, so they did not eat at all that day.

Clothing

The first days in Pittsburgh were often hectic ones of getting rid of the clothes (and dirt) that labeled one "greenhorn" and buying new clothes and shoes to make one "Americanized."

First my father took us all to Kalson's Bath House. The girls went with my mother and I went with my father. After a good

"shvitz bod" (sweat bath) we were all fitted with new clothes.

On my very first day my aunt took me to a store to buy shoes and rubbers. I was very impressed by the polite salespeople.

My brother bought me new clothes.

My aunt took me to Bogg's and Buhl's on the North Side to get new clothes.

My sister took me to our aunt's house for a bath and then to Fifth Avenue for a new outfit.

My cousin bought me a new cap.

My cousin took me to Finkelhor's and I bought a suit and shoes for $12.

The newly arrived immigrant was not always thrilled by American styles of clothing.

My sister took me to a men's store and outfitted me in new heavy shoes, narrow slacks, sweater and jacket. This was "American" attire, not "green." I didn't know what "green" meant. I was unhappy about giving up my own clothes as they were very good and my shoes were hand made. But I felt that I had nothing to say. From that time on I felt like a pawn, manipulated by others, no longer my own master.

My uncle made a disparaging remark about my coat which my mother had made for the trip. He told me to throw it away and buy a new one. I was heart-broken but I wanted to be Americanized.

I liked everything but the American shoes.

I didn't like the dresses they had for $75. I could make better ones for $25.

The first dress someone gave me was like the ones we gave our janitor in Europe.

Shelter

My father came in 1888 and lived near Duquesne University. When we arrived in 1889 he was already living on Hazel near Clark in the Hill. He had two rooms in the basement, two rooms on the first floor, and two rooms on the second floor and an outside bathroom and water.

By 1900, the major area of Jewish residence had become the

Hill District, first Ward Three, and then, by 1910, Ward Five, the "Upper Hill."

Located on the North Side of Pittsburgh, then the separate city of Allegheny, there was a thriving community of well-to-do German Jews who had arrived in this country much earlier.

It is possible to reconstruct the Jewish neighborhood of the Hill District by following the stories of respondents who lived there. Those who came as family groups tried to rent an apartment with separate kitchen and bathroom. Sometimes the father had come first and the home was there, waiting.

> My father had prepared a very nice apartment for us at Wylie Avenue corner Erin Street, near the drugstore.
>
> My husband had furnished a three room apartment for us on Dinwiddie Street on the second floor. Even the kitchen windows had curtains.
>
> My father was an expert carpenter and earned a good living. He had helped to build the house on Epiphany Street where Kalson's Baths were and he was given first preference in choosing an apartment.
>
> My sister and brother had furnished a nice seven room apartment for us on Bedford Avenue.
>
> My father took us to our house at 35 Vine Street. We had six rooms in a busy Jewish neighborhood. After two years we moved to 1804 Webster Avenue, then we lived at 2125 Centre Avenue for twelve years.
>
> My father, mother, and we six children lived in four and a half rooms at 132 Crawford Street. We bought furniture at Cooper's Furniture Store at Fifth and Pride. We had two rooms on the first floor, two rooms on the second floor and an attic for $16 a month. First we had to clean out the house and exterminate the bedbugs. Later we moved to the corner of Clark and Crawford, back of the dry goods store on Centre Avenue, next to Sachs Real Estate. Next door were Drs. Eber and Seegman and next was Seegman's Drug Store.

The new home often lacked the amenities.

> We lived at 57 Crawford Street in three rooms on the third floor. There was no toilet and no running water. We used gas mantles for light. Two years later we moved to 2 Miller

Street—three rooms on the first floor with inside plumbing.

Our first home on Locust Street had no electricity.

We lived on Webster Avenue in five rooms on the second floor over a cigar factory.

We moved to a two story house on Congress Street with no inside bathroom.

Our apartment on Logan Street had an inside toilet but no bath. We used to go to the Irene Kaufmann Settlement for a nickel shower. When my mother came we rented a house on Mercer Street. There was no central heat. We used gas stoves and gas lights.

We lived near the Irene Kaufmann Settlement where we paid five cents for a bath. Then we moved to an apartment with a bathroom.

Apartments were fairly easy to find and people moved around a great deal. They found out about vacancies by word of mouth or by looking for "To Let" signs in the windows.

It wasn't too hard to get places to live years ago.

We moved many times. First we had an apartment on the third floor on Bedford Avenue. Then we moved to Crawford Street where Mrs. Shoenfeld was our landlady. Then we lived in a four room house which we shared with another family. Each had a kitchen on the first floor where the parents slept on folding beds and one room on the second floor for the children.

First we lived on Beebe Street then Wylie Avenue then Webster Avenue then the South Side.

After World War One it became harder to find a good home.

We lived on Overhill Street for one to two years. Then I heard from a neighbor about a row house being vacated on Robin Street near Centre Avenue and I grabbed it. We lived there for 15 or 16 years.

Families with young children often encountered difficulties when they looked for a place to live.

We came to an aunt and uncle where we slept on folding beds in the basement for eight days. Then we rented a room and garret on Miller Street. I kept looking for an apartment. On Clark Street the man said my sons might break his stairs. Finally I went to

Sachs Real Estate and said, "Sachsie, find me a place to live." He sold me a house and garage for $6,000 on Centre Avenue. A few years later I sold it for $8,000.

I spoke broken English and no one wanted to rent to me because I had three children. I made two separate trips to Pittsburgh from New Castle before I found a place for us.

Among our respondents were some who were quite prosperous.

My husband bought twenty-six houses on Cliff Street and we lived in one of them. In the basement was the kitchen, bathroom and toilet. Water was heated on the stove for washing. There were two rooms each on the first and second floors. There was a large fenced back yard where I had a vegetable garden.

I moved around a good deal, from New York to Pottsville to Harrisburg to Clarksburg and finally to Pittsburgh where I rented an eight-room, two-bath house on Centre Avenue for $65 a month.

I bought three houses on Wicks Street even before my wife and children came.

A common phenomenon of immigrant life was the rooming house, where single young men and women, or husbands waiting for their families stayed on a weekly or monthly basis, with or without meals. Some immigrants boarded with relatives.

My aunt was very poor. She took in roomers in her house on Pasture Street.

I paid $6 a month for a room that I shared with my brother. We had an outside bathroom. It was in a rooming house on Pasture Street behind Wylie Avenue.

I lived with the Levines for three dollars.

I lived in a clean boarding house on Vine Street for three or four years.

I lived on Crawford Street over my cousin's grocery store. Pittsburgh was very primitive at that time. There was no hot water, and no commodes.

Some of the memories of boarding house life are pleasant.

We lived with nice Jewish people on the Hill along a cobblestone street.

We stayed in a very pleasant place on Fullerton Street.

I roomed with a friend in a nice apartment on Fifth Avenue.

I roomed with my aunt at Wylie and Devilliers. It was a good neighborhood, with grass and trees.

I stayed with Mrs. Albert on Crawford Street for two years. It was a nice place.

I lived with the Feinman's on Marion and Washington Street for three years, then moved in with *landsleit,* the Silverblatt family.

My friends had brought me over to America, and I stayed with them for some time. When I did not have a job, they did not ask for board money.

For some, being a boarder was very lonely.

A boarder is treated like a stepchild. My landlady gave fresh penny rolls to her own children and day-old half-a-cent rolls to the boarders. The landlord gave my room to his own children when they arrived unexpectedly and I slept on a chair. I moved out the next day.

Some remember the Hill District with fond nostalgia.

We used to go to Friedman's on Fifth and Logan for good shoes. At Black's grocery on Logan you could get eggs for 16 cents a dozen and "crack eggs" for eight cents a dozen. At Webster and Roberts there was Diner's Confectionery. Next door was Abramovitz's Butcher Shop. I painted the sign for him, in Hebrew, and he made my mother take the fee out in trade. Press's drugstore was there, too. At Centre and Roberts was Seldes' Drug Store. His sons, Gilbert and George, became famous writers. He sold his store to Isadore Gorenstein who sold it to David Busis who sold it to Abe Litman who sold it to Mr. Abram. Englesberg's Drug Store was at Centre and Arthur. At Clark and Crawford there was Frank's Bakery.

At Kalson's Bath House there were Ladies' Days and Men's Days. The children would be sent to the delicatessen at Logan and Epiphany for sandwiches, to be eaten after the sweat bath.

Many Jewish immigrants lived in very poor conditions because they were saving money so that they could send for relatives still in Europe.

I boarded with my uncle on Cliff Street in order to save money to send for my wife and child.

My husband ate the free lunch that he got with a glass of nickel beer so that he could save ten cents. His landlady charged fifteen cents for supper. He saved so he could send for me and the children.

7. Leaving the Hill

We were the first Jewish family in Oakland. The other kids were cruel and anti-Semitic.

By 1914 some Jews had moved out of the Hill District into neighboring Oakland. Some of our respondents still live there, in the houses they bought fifty-odd years ago.

In 1908 we bought a seven room house in Oakland.

We rented a six room house on Lawn Street in Oakland. There was no electricity so we had an electrician wire it.

In 1918 the Housing Corporation, a department of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, renovated several buildings in Oakland in order to provide good living conditions for Jewish families.

Some Jews chose other parts of Pittsburgh in which to make their homes, usually for economic reasons.

We had our tailor shop on St. James Avenue in Shadyside. It was not a Jewish neighborhood.

We lived in Glenwood in a mostly gentile neighborhood for over six years.

My cousins had a cigar store on 1213 Federal Street in the North Side. It was a German, not a Jewish neighborhood.

My uncle had a store on Ohio Street, and we lived at 615 Lockhard Street on the North Side.

During the 1920's Jews began leaving the Hill in sizable numbers to Squirrel Hill, the East End, and a few to the South Side.

8. The Satellite Communities

A sizable group of our respondents spent some years of their lives in communities outside Pittsburgh in what is now called the Tri-State or Western Pennsylvania Region. This area includes parts of West Virginia and Ohio.

According to Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, Jews were often recruited by the local coal and steel companies to manage their company stores, inasmuch as they were familiar with the languages of the ethnic groups which were then coming to America to work in the mills. This often accounted for the original Jewish settlement in these outlying areas.

McKeesport Jews have led a more or less autonomous Jewish life, with a largely Hungarian Jewish population.

> We came to McKeesport in 1892 and rented a house near the railroad tracks. After two years we moved to a house which we shared with another family.
>
> Everything looked nice and clean. I lived for six months with each of my three brothers on Fifth Avenue in McKeesport.
>
> We lived in Versailles, a suburb of McKeesport, in a small wooden home for 23 years.

Braddock had a small Jewish community which grew from about 100 families in 1901 to 350 families in 1923.

> I was disappointed. I had expected a city like Vienna when I came to Braddock in 1900.

The biggest department store in Braddock was Famous, owned by a Jew.

> I was impressed by Famous Department Store where my brother worked. I lived with him for five years until he got married, then I moved into my own apartment on Holland Avenue.

Other communities mentioned included Uniontown, Sharon, Aliquippa, Clearfield, New Castle, Curtisville, Wilkinsburg, Monesson, Jeanette, Ellwood City and Butler.

Monesson was a boom town. The people were friendly but Vienna was more beautiful.

We were the only Jews in Jeanette in 1906. We lived near the railroad tracks on Sixth Street for eight years. Later my grandmother bought the entire block of houses.

I liked the plumbing in my brother's house in Ellwood City. I flushed the toilet for hours.

When I came to Ellwood City I asked a Jewish storekeeper where the synagogue was and I joined.

We bought a farm out in Butler so that we would have room for the relatives we brought over from Europe.

The Jews in the satellite communities were removed from the strongly Jewish environment of the Hill District, but they had compensations. Their housing was often much better.

My husband had a lovely home ready for us in Indianola. There were two kitchens, one for winter and one for summer, and a back yard for the children.

9. The Initial Five Years

For some respondents, life in America was quite different from what they had dreamed of or expected in the Old Country.

Life was different. I was not able to go to school as I had hoped but had to stay home and help my step-mother with the children.

It was very dirty here, not nearly as nice as Bucharest. We said, "What did we do to come here?" My sister lived like a poor person, it was terrible, terrible! People were poor, everybody was poor.

My father never got used to America.

I was very disappointed because I had to go to work immediately (at 14) and give the money I earned to help the family.

I came on a Thursday and was at work on Monday and I have never stopped.

I was disappointed because I was not able to go to school.

The first period I was disappointed because I could not get a job where I would not have to work on the Sabbath.

Even when some individuals felt that they had not achieved their personal goals, they adjusted to realities and found reasons to be happy.

I had wanted to get an education but I did not achieve this goal. Many Jewish immigrants who came and many Jews who were born here set impossible goals for themselves. But my children went to college.

Although the house was not as nice as the one I had owned in Russia, I was able to get a job and maintain my family.

I never thought that the world owed me anything but rather that it was up to me to make a contribution. My goal was to be part of the community and to do something for the community and in this I succeeded.

We suffered when we got here—don't think it was handed to us on a platter. It was hard to earn a living. But we were happy to be free and we were not afraid to go to sleep at night as we had been in Russia.

It was not as comfortable as I had imagined it would be. We had no electricity and no phone and lacked other conveniences. But I saw my son through medical school which was my goal.

It was disappointing to do domestic work instead of going to school. But no matter how hard I worked, I feel that I accomplished my goal.

I came to work and was willing to work. I was lonesome, but I felt that I had a future here.

Most have kept their dreams about America untarnished to this day. In spite of difficulties encountered on their arrival, they adjusted to their new environment, and within five years had found a measure of contentment—they had achieved their goals or felt that they would in time achieve them.

I enjoyed every day here.

I wanted very little. I was very easy to please and am still pleased.

After three years in the United States, at the age of fifteen, I was in business for myself. I had definitely accomplished my goal.

I found work and was happy and was treated well because of the baker's union.

Within the first five years I had brought over to America two brothers and three sisters.

We achieved our goal. We made a home for our parents.

Within the first five years I had married and had two children and had adjusted to life here.

Even during the recession, when things were difficult here, I never wished to return to Europe.

After three years I felt that this was my home.

I had suffered so much in Europe, fleeing from one place to another. I was so happy to be with my husband again. We had enough to eat, new furniture, and the children had decent clothing.

I was on my own, independent, and could send money home.

I was happy, I had a chance for advancement.

I was very satisfied. In two years we had made $10,000, the restaurant was a going business, and I had my children near me.

I had a good husband who spoiled me and older neighbors who taught me how to cook and bake. I was very happy except for the knowledge that back in Europe my family had been killed in the pogroms.

It was a good country and I was proud to be here.

I had never had big eyes. I was trained in the old country to make a living and that is what I did here.

I was satisfied. I missed my family but I had a warm relationship with my relatives here and I enjoyed being in America.

After five years I received a driver's license and became a citizen—I had accomplished my goals.

After five years I felt that I had done what I wished to do—I had served my new country in the armed forces.

The following statement sums up what many respondents consider their feelings about America.

Nothing disappointed me because I came from a country where we had no right to say what we wanted, no right to vote, one

didn't dare say anything against the Russian government. Here in America I could go anywhere and say anything. I had achieved my goal of freedom.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAKING A LIVING

I became a peddler. I did not not need any training, you did not have to go to college.

1. Peddling and Trade

Most of the newcomers went into peddling.

My father came to Pittsburgh about 1865 to his sister and brother-in-law. He became a peddler with a pack on his back. Merchants trusted him with goods which he sold in surrounding areas. Somehow he learned how to communicate with his customers and he established a clientele for an installment business. His customers would pick out items at department stores, which he would buy at discount, and they would pay him on the installment plan.

A neighbor's brother, who came to Pittsburgh as a boy, started out with a basket of notions. I taught him the names of the items in English.

This was the pattern followed by many of our respondents who came without a trade, who had been students in the Old Country, or who had a trade which they could not engage in here.

I came in 1891 at the age of 15 from the province of Grodno. I had no trade. I went to Lieber Brothers Wholesale House and got a basket of notions for $13. I went with my cousin who peddled with a pack on his back. Later I got merchandise such as yard

goods and clothing, and I carried my pack as far as Beaver Falls and Butler. In a good week I made $10. I did not work on Saturdays.

The German Jews looked down on us. At Rauh Brothers Wholesale House they kept me waiting for hours. I did not go back there to them. In 1898 I opened my own store in Braddock. Then in 1909 I opened a wholesale hosiery business. I retired in 1939.

Another respondent, who came somewhat later, in 1903, also became a peddler and later settled down on his former route.

I peddled all along Steubenville Pike out of Crafton, selling drygoods and housewares. Later I opened a drygoods store in Carnegie, and then I went into the shoe business with a partner in Aliquippa. I worked hard and gave all five of my sons a medical education.

For many, peddling was a transitional occupation, something they could do immediately while they learned the language and saved some money. There were variations in peddling—the peddler (usually a boy) with his basket of notions, the peddler with a pack on his back who went to outlying towns, the huckster with his wagon who later got a truck, the customer peddler who took orders for items from a regular clientele and then delivered them and was paid on the installment plan, and others; but there were not many pushcart peddlers in Pittsburgh—the streets were much too hilly.

Besides the easily obtainable notions, a beginning peddler was often given a bundle of brooms. Since the price was uniform he only had to memorize a few words of English.

My brother sold brooms, carrying a bundle on his shoulder. Then he went into peddling mantles for gas lights, and from that into real estate.

My uncle gave me a bundle of brooms and told me to sell them. After a while I became a clerk on Logan Street, then I worked for Westinghouse as a laborer, then I sold drygoods on the road. I worked all over the place. When I had saved up to $200 I went into business with a partner. My experience was worth more than his money. We opened a store on Logan Street and I stood outside

and said, "Customers come here." Everybody knew me. The first week we took in $900.

Most of the Jewish peddlers became storekeepers or eventually went into other businesses.

I worked as a huckster with a horse and wagon from 7 a.m. to midnight (no Saturday) and made $4 a week. Then I clerked in a grocery store for four years. By the time I was in America five years I bought my own store, in partnership, for $150 and even had some money saved up.

First my husband worked for Reich's Dairy, making ice cream, for $8 a week. Then he sold vegetables from a truck and made good money. We bought a building with a grocery store and other property as well.

In Europe my husband was a shoemaker. Here he sold produce from a truck in East Pittsburgh. Most of the people there worked for Westinghouse. We had a fair-sized Jewish community. He stopped his truck on the street and people came to buy. He was out from early morning until evening, and on Saturdays too. During World War II he joined the union and went to work for Westinghouse but he left after a few years because he made a better living working for himself.

Some immigrants did not peddle but started working in a store immediately, usually one belonging to a relative or a *landsman* who would teach him the language.

My relatives owned a general store in a small town and I went to work for them. My cousins teased me by teaching me vulgar words which I would use quite innocently and they would laugh at me. But I learned English very quickly and soon I would correct their spelling, which they would resent. Eventually I went into business for myself. If you are ambitious and have a little talent and a little brains you can pick up anything.

Some used ingenuity to get a job.

I was down to my last fifteen cents. I waited until someone threw down a newspaper and then I went through the want ads. I saw an ad that said, "Boy wanted." When I came to the store there

was a crowd of young men waiting. I walked up to the cash register, picked up an apron, put it on, then said to the others, "The boss said I could have the job." They left. The boss said, "Anyone who can think that fast can work for me."

I knew many languages—Yiddish, Polish, German, Hungarian, Russian. I worked in Kaufmann's putting tags on dresses. I suggested to them that I work as an interpreter. They refused because I had not been in the country long enough. So I took my idea to Kaufmann and Baer's and they accepted me. I would look in the newspapers for engagement announcements with foreign names, then I would get in touch with the brides and talk to them in their native languages and perusade them to buy their gowns and trousseaus at Kaufmann and Baer's. When they came in I would act as interpreter. If they bought a wedding dress I would get a commission. I did not work on Saturdays but sometimes if they needed an interpreter, I would walk to the store on Saturday and translate for them, and then would walk back home. My husband was a scholar, and not very healthy, and I knew that I had to earn a living for the family, so I used my ingenuity.

Usually, however, getting into business was the result of years of drudgery and saving. One of the attractions of America to the European working man was the possibility of becoming independent.

It was easier for a single man to live frugally and to save for the future. Once the store was opened, however, it helped to have a wife at one's side. Many of our female respondents who said that their life's work was "housewife" later revealed that they spent many hours in the family store. Very often, as the children grew up, they also "helped out" after school. While it was quite common for immigrants to go to work at a very early age (sometimes as young as nine or ten) it was most uncommon for American-born children of immigrants to be sent to work. Many of the children, however, worked after school. One of the most popular occupations among Jewish boys was that of newsboy. Social workers considered this child labor, but our respondents thought otherwise.

Between the ages of nine and eleven I sold newspapers downtown. I made about two dollars a week, and they were needed at home. Of course, I got to read the newspapers too.

Many tell of working at many different things until they could open a business of their own.

> I cleaned horses, worked in a grocery store, from 5 a.m. until 8 p.m. for $8 a month and after seven years I went into a butcher shop of my own.
>
> I worked in a grocery store for $5 a week, 14 hours a day, for five years and saved $400. I heard about a grocery store for sale from a neighbor and I bought it and lived in the back.
>
> When I came here I was straight from the Yeshiva and nobody wanted to hire me. They thought a Yeshiva Bocher was too intellectual and would not be able to deal with the business world. Finally I got a job cleaning pickle barrels. My fingers were swollen from the pickle juice.
>
> One day, on the street car, I became friendly with Mr. Joseph Glick, the editor of the *Volksfreund.* He recommended me to his nephew in Bridgeville. There I helped out in the clothing store and tutored the children for $3.50 plus room and board. The boss's wife taught me English. Gradually I learned the business and eventually I was doing the buying.
>
> Three years later I opened my own clothing store in Delmont with $20 capital. The wholesaler who knew me from Bridgeville gave me credit. The first day I took in $158.

The peddler and storekeeper had something in common. They depended upon the Pittsburgh or milltown workman for their income. When the mills closed down because of strikes or lockouts, it affected the Jewish businessman as well.

During the Mine Workers Strike of 1923, Jewish merchants in the mining towns extended credit to the striking miners, despite extensive pressure from the mine owners. In gratitude, a local of the Miners Union voted unanimously that its members with their wives and children should go to church and pray for the health and happiness of the Jewish Community.

However, when times were bad, businessmen, whether they were peddlers or storekeepers, sometimes had to turn for help to the Hebrew Free Loan Society, a local fund which helped establish or reestablish the needy through the financing of a horse, cart, and even merchandise.

2. The Stogy Industry

What could one do in Pittsburgh? Make stogies. So I learned the stogy trade. I worked for four to six weeks for nothing and then, the first Monday I came to work for pay the place had burned down. I went to look for a job at Mr. Simon Mazer's stogy factory on Forbes, downtown.

Almost every Jewish family in Pittsburgh had someone in the stogy industry.

Just as the needle trades of New York were the characteristically Jewish occupation, so it was with the stogy industry in Pittsburgh. The cigar industry in general was considered a "Jewish" occupation and Samuel Gompers entered the labor arena as a representative of that trade. Cigar-making, however, had its center in New York. Stogies, made of filler rolled in tobacco leaves, cost less to make and did not require as much skill. The making of stogies was a major Jewish industry in Pittsburgh and Cleveland.

My mother's three sisters in Cleveland took me into the stogy factory where they worked. Apprentices had to work four weeks for nothing, then they got half price—$1.50 for 1000 stogies. Since Pittsburgh was the main center for stogy making in 1905, my aunts sent me here. I came into the Dispatch Building, 1300 Fifth Avenue, to a cigar store and luncheonette where the stogy workers congregated. I got a job at Simon Mazer's factory where I got the full $3.00 per 1000 stogies.

There were 235 stogy factories in Pittsburgh of which 133 were in the Hill District. Nine were factories and one hundred twenty-four were sweatshops. In 1914 this was the fifth largest industry in number of employees in Pittsburgh. By 1920, however, the Hill as the center of the stogy industry had declined tremendously. The reasons for the decline are reflected in the following accounts.

I went to work at the age of nine in toby making. The government inspectors came to see if young children were employed and the underage children ran and hid. If they were found they had to quit working and go to school. I wish I had been found so I could have gone to school.

Six months after I came in 1893, when I was only nine years old, I got a job rolling tobies. We children were hidden in the next room when the inspectors came because we were under age. I worked from dark to dark and made $1.50 a week, no Sabbath or holidays. After I left this job to get married, they started a union. Instead of being paid by weight they were paid by piece and they knew what they were getting.

I had to go to work although I was only eleven when other children my age were going to school. I was in the back room stripping the stems from the tobacco leaves. We were miserably paid—sometimes only ten cents for a full day. Occasionally an inspector came to see that the law was obeyed. Children were supposed to get working papers if they were less than fourteen years old. But I was so small and skinny that I was refused, so I worked without papers and when the inspector came I hid in the basement. Please don't think the employer was a bad man. He really was nice. This was just the practice everywhere. I stayed until I married in 1913. This factory was not unionized.

There were several reasons for the widespread employment of Jews in the stogy industry rather than in heavy industries of Pittsburgh. The first Eastern European Jews who came were Orthodox and preferred to work in industries where the Sabbath and Jewish holidays were observed. Since the stogy factories were usually run by Jews, it was natural that the newcomers found employment there.

I was very unhappy because I could not get a job where I would not have to work on the Sabbath.

My uncle was very Orthodox. He was related to Rabbi Leifer's family. He went to work as a cigar roller.

My father was a rabbi but he died when I was three years old. When I came to Pittsburgh I worked in a big toby factory where I did not have to work on Saturdays or holidays. The work was very easy, they showed you how to do it and then you could do it. About 200 people worked there. However, the hours were long and the pay was not very much.

Many of the large industries also did not hire Jews.

I was a very strong and husky young man, but when they saw

my name on the application (I had not filled in the blank for religion) they refused to take me.

There were exceptions in communities like McKeesport where Jews were employed in the mills, possibly because they were identified as Hungarians rather than Jews.

Although the tasks of "stripping" and "rolling" were not too difficult to learn, the long hours, the odors and heat made stogy making extremely arduous work.

My two sisters worked in a cigar factory stripping tobacco and hating it all the time.

I worked for the Standard Cigar Company for five years. My hours from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., no Sabbath. If I had to choose some work I would choose anything but stogies.

Two weeks after I came I was working as a stripper in a toby factory on Overhill Street. I was shown how to pull out the stem and how to put the tobacco in a pile. I got two cents a pound. I worked for eight years, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. for three dollars a week average. In the beginning I worked in the cellar because I was too young.

In 1910 the stogy workers organized. In 1913 I was one of the leaders in the strike of 100. We struck for 18 weeks. We wanted fifteen cents per 100 instead of 13 cents and we compromised on fourteen cents. We were an IWW local because the AFL would not take us in.

Although my fiance was the son of a stogy factory owner, he became one of the union leaders and later secretary of the stogy workers union. But after the strike was settled he left the stogy industry in order to advance himself.

As in the New York sweat shops, tuberculosis was the scourge of the stogy factories.

I sat opposite a pale, thin Yeshiva Bocher, who gradually coughed out his lungs into the tobacco dust. One day he didn't show up for work. We heard that he had died of consumption.

In spite of the long hours put into the stogy factories, many spent additional hours in education.

I would run home from work, grab a bite, and run to school. I managed to complete three years at Franklin Night School and one year at Fifth Avenue Evening High School.

I came from a well-to-do family and my grandfather had been a Rosh Yeshiva. My father had served in the army, and was a reservist. When the war broke out in 1904 he was called up. Instead of going back into the army he escaped to the United States and I followed him here.

I started working with him in the stogy industry. Since no one under fifteen was allowed to work in Pittsburgh I went to Homestead where the Jewish owner was in cahoots with the police.

All this time I went to Franklin School at night, then to Fifth Avenue High School at night, and then, after graduation, to Law School. I was in the stogy industry from the age of thirteen until the age of twenty-two when I left for Law School.

3. The Bakers

My *landsman* taught me the baker's trade. At first I got room and board and four or five dollars a week. I did delivery work, then inside work. We did not work Sabbath or holidays. The Bakers Union improved conditions.

Perhaps the only Jewish union still extant in Pittsburgh is the Jewish Bakers Union. Its strength lies in part in its association with Jewish food, to which even non-observant Jews remain attached.

The big strike was against Caplan's bakery in 1907. But in 1906 I stood on a wagon and persuaded people not to buy bread without a union label.

When I came to Cleveland things were bad, it was the depression of 1907. People were out of work there. But I came to Pittsburgh and got work as a baker and was happy and treated well because of the baker's union.

A baker for many years, active in the union, summarized the history of the bakers union.

In the beginning of the century there were two classes of

bakers: those who served an apprenticeship for five years; and those who were children of bakers. There was no job security for the first group, however. Friday was traditionally the bakers' day off. They would meet in a saloon and an itinerant organizer of the Bakery and Confectionary Workers of America organized them. This was about 1905. They were unable to obtain recognition from Caplan's bakery which was the biggest Jewish bakery.

In 1907 they got another charter and called a strike at Caplan's. They were out for six weeks. Caplan's conceded and signed an agreement. Then the union was established. At that time they received $9 for a 60 hour week. Our local had the only union bakeshops in the District.

Today local 44 consists partly of non-Jewish bakers working in Jewish bakeries. In 1957 they received a new charter from the American Bakers and Confectionary Workers, AFL-CIO.

4. The Needle Trades

Although, at its height, the United Garment Workers Union had 700 members, it did not succeed in retaining its members. The needle trades were not important in Pittsburgh, and the Jews who worked in these trades, and who organized the unions, often left at the first opportunity to go into business for themselves.

I received six months of training in a tailor shop for $4 a week, working a ten hour day. In one year's time I had saved enough to bring my father over from Europe. In 1914 the United Garment Workers organized us and they presented their demands to the contractors:

1) The work week to be cut to 54 hours;
2) Only half-day work on Saturday;
3) Piece work standards

Organizers came in from New York. We went out on strike and we got our demands. In 1917 we became a local of the Amalgamated. In 1918 I went into business with my cousin. We became contractors for merchant tailors. They cut the garments and we sewed and pressed in our shop. I worked as a presser. Of course I myself employed only union labor.

A number mention this form of contracting. In New York such

contracting and sub-contracting had led to sweat-shops, but there does not seem to be much evidence of sweat-shops in the Jewish needle trades in Pittsburgh.

The itinerant experienced tailor was a common phenomenon.

> First I worked in a pants factory for a year at $2 a week. By the end of the year I was making $5 a week. Then I worked for Hollander and Lewis as a pants preser for $10 a week and by 1911 I was up to $17 a week. I worked from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and a half day on Saturday. I joined the union in 1915 or 1916. Dues were $2 a month. We met in the Moose Temple on Penn Avenue. I went to Illinois for two years and did other work, then came back to Pittsburgh and worked on alterations at Kaufmann and Baer's. I worked for eighteen years at Seiger and Goldbloom's as presser and on alterations, and then for almost twenty years I worked for Abe Forman's at 711 Penn Avenue. In my last job I was making $75 to $95 a week.

Comparisons of these salaries with salaries in the mills make it evident that tailoring was much to be preferred. Women, too, were active in the needle trades.

> My husband died in Europe and I came here with three children and had to make a living. I had no experience but a friend of my husband's taught me how to cut and sew pants and I got a job in a factory at 700 Penn Avenue. It was non-union. I worked from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. for $35 a week average. It was piece work and if they had extra work they allowed me to do it. I worked there for ten years and was able to support my children through school. I became so fast at work that they called me "the train."

A number had worked in their trade in Europe.

> I had worked as a seamstress in Roumania so I had no difficulty in getting a job. I sewed shirts for the Alpern's Imperial Shirt Company for $3.30 a day from 8–5. I was not allowed to take Saturdays off.
>
> We came from Lodz which was a center of cotton manufacture. My husband had a golden hand with the needle and I had worked as a dressmaker. For a while I sewed at home. In 1912 we opened our own shop in Carrick. Some parochial school children threw

manure into our shop. I thought, "Is this America?" It reminded me of Poland where I had been chased from the park because I was Jewish. When the priest came for a donation I told him what the children had done. He punished them and we had no trouble afterwards.

We became friendly with the president of the bank who told us that "even though you are Jews, you are people of character."

Although the early Russian and Polish Jewish immigrants were not tailors in large numbers, many of them turned to the garment trade because of the piece rates practice, which related earnings to individual effort, and capital could be amassed to enable one to go into business for oneself. The later immigrants however took sewing lessons prior to their arrival in America.

While I was in Poland, waiting to get my ticket I studied tailoring. My sister wrote to me that I could get a good job as a tailor. I have been a custom tailor ever since.

Some came to Pittsburgh because work was available while other cities were undergoing employment crises.

I came to Newark in 1906. In 1907 there was a terrible depression. It didn't last long but people worked for anything, just for a bite to eat. I went through two years there. A friend of mine wrote that he had a wonderful job for me at Meyer Johnson's Ladies Store. I got a job as a fitter and made $15 a week and up to $20 with overtime. In Newark I had barely been able to exist. Here I was able to send money home to my family. I worked for over two years.

Others were transferred by their employers.

I worked as a capmaker in Russia for a year before I went to the army. I came to America and first worked in a factory in Philadelphia, but the building burned down, so I transferred to the firm's location in Pittsburgh. We were met at the station by friends of the employer who took us home with them, gave us a meal, and were our hosts for two days. I worked there as a capmaker for three years. I worked seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. piece work and averaged $20 a week. There were two

union capmaker shops in Pittsburgh. I was the treasurer of the union labels.

Many people went into small businesses associated with the needle trades such as cleaning stores and custom tailoring. Some got their experience in roundabout ways.

My husband applied for a job as driver for Brace Brothers Laundry. He liked the work and he quickly built up a clientele for the laundry. Some time later he was dismissed because, he was told, Brace Brothers did not hire Jews. He got another job, but shortly after this Brace Brothers called him and asked him to come back. The customers had asked for him. My husband increased their business so much he soon needed a helper, so he took on another Jewish man. Eventually with this experience we opened our own cleaning store.

5. Skilled Crafts

I had trouble getting a job because I did not know English. I was a trained cabinet maker. In 1907 I got a job with a German firm. The boss told me he knew that Jews were good businessmen, but he did not know they were good mechanics too.

There were many people who did not know that Jews were good craftsmen. The stereotype of the Jewish *luftmensch* and the Christian stereotype of the Jewish usurer were all too evident in the attitudes shown to young men looking for jobs. When skilled craftsmen were needed, Jews were hired, but they constantly had to prove themselves.

My foreman always gave me the hardest jobs of carpentry to do, just waiting for me to make a slip.

In Pittsburgh, a major obstacle in the hiring of Jewish craftsmen in industry was the anti-Semitism of unions, which refused to admit them. In certain industries non-union members could not get jobs.

There was a copper refinery near Pliskov and many of the men in that area were skilled metal workers. My first job in

Pittsburgh I nailed boxes in a box factory for $3 a week. It was the Keystone Box Company at 599 Seventh Avenue. Then I was apprenticed to Mallinkoff the plumber for five years at $3 a week. I helped Kalson install the plumbing in his Bath house. In 1910 I was a plumber but was not allowed to join the plumber's union. I would come to the union meeting every week with my $100 initiation fee and was always passed over.

Finally I went to Monesson and got a job there as a plumber. The first day on the job some man approached me and warned me that I had better join the union. I agreed readily and paid the $10 they requested.

In 1917 I was the first Jewish delegate to the National Plumbers' Convention. I am still in plumbing but if I had gone into business I would have made more money, in the long run.

When I met Judge Lencher recently I told him about the restrictions in the Plumbers' Union in my time—and how these same restrictions were now being used against Negroes. I sympathize with the Black Coalition Workers.

There were no Jewish toolmakers. To be a toolmaker you had to go through a four year apprentice course run by the companies. They just did not allow Jews into these courses. I got into toolmaking because I already knew the trade when I got here, and they needed trained men.

Among our respondents there were a few blacksmiths, housepainters, paper hangers, roofers, plasterers, welders, toolmakers, machinists and harness makers.

Not all had difficulty finding work. Some were helped by Berish Chaimovitz, delegated by the B'nai B'rith in cooperation with the Industrial Removal Office to help Jews get jobs in industry.

Between 1907–1912 Berish helped many Jews get jobs in industry. His office was his living room on Miller Street across from Passavant Hospital. He had lists of jobs available and he knew many people in industry.

6. The Professions

The few members of the professions came to America as young children and were able to complete their education here.

Thus, among our respondents there was a dentist, a doctor, some lawyers, a judge, a few pharmacists, an engineer and a music teacher. Of these, only the engineer had received his training in Europe.

CHAPTER FIVE

EDUCATION IN THE NEW HOME

> I had to stay home and keep house for the children while my father peddled. My younger sisters went to Forbes School, but I could not get away. Some of the Council ladies came to the house to teach me, Mrs. Hamburger, Miss Halprin, Miss Block . . . They treated me as a friend.

1. Yearning for Learning

The respondent quoted above who came to Pittsburgh in 1897 at the age of seventeen, found almost no facilities available for educating immigrants. An educational gap existed between those immigrants who came as young children and were enrolled in public school and quickly Americanized, and those who came in their teens or as young adults.

In 1890 Rabbi Lippman Mayer of Rodef Sholom Congregation organized a "Russian School" staffed by three instructors who were paid by the members of the congregation. Classes were held in the basement of the Temple on Eighth Street and by 1891 this school had 110 pupils.

In 1899 the first classes in English and Citizenship sponsored by the Pittsburgh Section, National Council of Jewish Women, then known as the Columbian Council, continued the work begun by Rabbi Mayer. The Columbian Council School held three classes four times a week from eight to nine-thirty in the morning and one class three nights a week. These were the only free night classes in English, open all year for the urban district of Pittsburgh, which contained a population of 700,000.

For girls and women who could not leave their homes because

of family responsibilities, the "Big Sister" from the Columbian Council was a link to the new environment.

Outside the Hill District, the major area of Jewish settlement, there were no educational facilities for immigrants for some time.

> I learned Yiddish and Hebrew at home in Poland with my father and a private tutor, because my father was a foreman in a warehouse and we were comparatively well-off. Then he went to America to make a better living and sent for us. We were five children at the time and my step-mother. We came to McKeesport in 1900 when I was sixteen years old. There was no place for me to go to school. Besides, I had to stay home and help with the younger children. Later, when we came to Pittsburgh, I went to work in a cigar factory. I learned how to speak a little English, very poorly. I can't write well, and I can't read the newspaper in English. In spite of this I managed to send all three of my children to college.

The men and older boys, because of their contacts outside the home, had more opportunities to pick up the language.

> One reason I learned English fast, I went to Akron first where there weren't too many Jews, and worked as a peddler with a pack on my back. I was good at languages. I had a Yiddish-English dictionary and I looked up everything. I started speaking the day I arrived from Lithuania in 1898. I knew German and Russian, and this helped me learn how to write.
>
> As a peddler I would be gone all week in the outlying villages and come back for the Sabbath. I had to speak English to my customers.

In the Pittsburgh area, however, men who worked in outlying towns often did not hear English spoken.

> How did I learn to speak English? That's a good one. I'm surprised sometimes myself! It was hard for me because in a mining town I had to learn foreign languages, Polish and Slavic, in order to accommodate the customers. But I persisted and now I write articles for my organization in English. I tried to give my children the education I did not get. My son is the head of the

math department at a big university and my daughter runs a nursing home.

I came here in 1901 when I was 21. I knew Yiddish and Roumanian, and I had a good trade as a carpenter, but I wanted to learn English. I went to school at the Columbian Council for about five years, two nights a week. I had to practice speaking English because I worked with gentiles. All of my children went to college.

2. Public Education—for the Young

There were a fortunate few who came when they were young enough to be enrolled in the public elementary schools.

I was overcome by the size and importance of the big red brick school building on Miller Street. I worked after school and on Saturdays so that I could go on to high school, college, and law school.

A retired lawyer remembers his high school teacher, Miss Ethel Finney, with fondness.

She inspired me with a love of poetry and books. Now that I am retired, I travel and write poetry and am attempting a book on Jewish history. During the recession of 1907 I worked five hours a night for thirty-five cents as a stripper in a tobacco factory, then in a confectionary store after school, and as a sign painter at two dollars a sign. My children did not have to work so hard when they went through school and college.

Those who attended Franklin School at this time remember the large ungraded class called by many "the greenhorn room." All entering pupils who had just arrived from Europe, no matter what their age, were placed here. This was often a painful experience.

I was thirteen years old, five feet nine inches tall, and I was put into the first grade. The children made fun of me so I quit.

Some youngsters were able to overcome this experience and persist until they were promoted to a class of their age group.

I was put into the first grade with the father of Dr. Goldman. On the first day the teacher asked us to copy the alphabet and do easy sums. By lunchtime I had been skipped to the fourth grade. The fourth grade teacher knew German and she gave us extra help.

Discipline problems were sometimes handled by the teacher with the aid of a wooden ruler in the cloak room. Children who continued to create disturbances had to appear before the school board, accompanied by their parents.

In September, 1906, the Letsche School was opened on Bedford Avenue and Cliff Street to relieve the overcrowding at Franklin School. Two of the classes of foreign pupils, mostly Jews, were transferred here. Its principal, Mary P. Breeze, reported that "many of the foreign pupils because of some education in their own country, and with high mentality, soon passed to the higher grades and on to High School."

The Grant School, built in 1850 and destroyed by fire in 1927, had a number of classes for New Americans who graduated into high school. This school "was indeed a credit to the otherwise muddled Pittsburgh school system. This school had dedicated teachers and high educational standards and was fortunate in its Principal, Miss Martha J. Grahem. An indomitable and strict disciplinarian, she devoted her entire life toward the Americanization of first generation youngsters."

3. Public Education—for Adults

The Columbian Council School was so popular that it soon outgrew its quarters. In the spring of 1904 it applied for permission to use a room in the Frankin School building for night school. The popularity and success of the evening school program for adult immigrants eventually led to public school sponsorship.

As soon as I came to Pittsburgh in 1910 I went to work for a stogy maker. Everyone there spoke Yiddish. I didn't see how I would learn English. I worked from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and then I would rush home, get cleaned up, have a bite and run to school. People used to laugh at me. "What are you trying to grab?" I went

to Franklin Night School for three years and then to Fifth Avenue High School at night for a year. . .

At Franklin School, there were so many immigrants, 1500 to 2000, that our class had to use the kindergarten room and we had to sit in the small chairs. . . It was very hard to learn. The teacher taught us isolated words, not conversation. Later one of my teachers was a young college student who was himself an immigrant. He is a well known judge now.

In 1912 nearly 95% of the night school population was Jewish.

Relationships in class were good, although we did not see the gentiles socially outside of school. We were all immigrants in class, Italians and Greeks and Jews, just like one family.

Other schools in Pittsburgh started night classes and action was taken by the new Central Board of Education in 1921 to make night classes an integral part of the system of public education. A minimum of 100 people had to express an interest to get a class started, and eventually there were thirteen elementary evening schools in Pittsburgh. McElvey School at Bedford Avenue and Erin Street was used as an evening school and recreational center from October, 1916. Between 1918–1923 the enrollment there was 400–500 but only about 10% graduated to go on to evening high school.

4. Higher Education

Until 1907 there was no evening high school in Pittsburgh or in Western Pennsylvania. Edward Rynearson, Principal of Fifth Avenue High School, early recognized the need for an evening high school, fought for it, and was given permission to organize one at his school. With Dr. Heber L. Holbrook, Principal of the projected Evening High School, plans were made for 300 students. On opening night 800 people showed up. By 1913 there were 1,541 students enrolled at Fifth Avenue Evening High School. Sixty credits were required for graduation.

By the early twenties some Jews were already moving out of the Hill District to the East End and Squirrel Hill. I took night classes at Peabody High School and also some evening courses at Pitt.

There were no free colleges in Pittsburgh. Thus, only a few of our respondents are college graduates. They were the ones who came as youngsters, worked their way through school, and succeeded in getting a college education.

5. Obstacles to Formal Education

The desire to learn was not always sufficient when obstacles were put into the immigrant's path.

> I came here from Roumania in 1904 when I was fifteen. I felt at home in my brother's house until three weeks after I came he said, "If you don't work, you don't eat." I said to him, "I thought you were going to send me to school—I don't know anything." But my brother didn't listen to my pleas and I had to go to work.

For Orthodox Jews, attendance at night school required the violation of the Sabbath. Registration for classes was often on a Friday night in October, after candle-lighting time, and classes were held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:30 to 9:30.

Greater deterrents to completing evening school were physical exhaustion and family responsibilities.

> I went to Franklin at night for a few weeks but had to drop out. I had nine children to take care of. I probably could have learned more English by talking to the children, because all of them went through high school, but I talked to them in Yiddish so they would not forget the language.
>
> I was fairly well educated in Europe. When I came to Pittsburgh in 1907 I went to day school for six weeks while I looked for work, then to night school for a year. I would have gone longer, but I was just too tired from work.
>
> I went to elementary school in Roumania, had a tutor for German, one *melamed* for Bible and another for Talmud. In secular subjects I was self-taught. I studied Latin, read the classics and radical literature. When I came to Pittsburgh in 1913 I was already twenty-three. I went to Franklin Elementary School at night and then to Fifth Avenue High School where I

studied Latin and chemistry, but I could not complete the course. I had to drop out because of work.

For married women with children, another obstacle was the husband's opposition.

I wanted an education. My husband wanted me to stay with the children. When my oldest son was old enough, I left him with the other children and I went to night school.

Very often the great distances from the educational facilities which were concentrated in the Hill District prevented people from benefitting from formal education.

I tried to go to night school at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement a few times, but it was so far, and the ride was so long, I was afraid to go at night, so I dropped out.

I knew many languages in Europe—Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, German, and Yiddish. I also learned how to read and write Latin and Hebrew. But I never got any formal schooling in America. We lived in Ellwood City and there was no night school there. Later, in Pittsburgh, I used to go to the library for Yiddish books.

When I came to Braddock I already knew Yiddish and Polish and German from a private tutor in Galicia. My family helped me to "pick up" English. I read newspapers, and that's how I learned.

In Grodno I learned Yiddish, Russian, and Polish, but I could not go to *gymnasium* because only one percent Jews were allowed, and they had to be the best students. In Braddock I felt deaf and dumb because I didn't know the language. I taught myself, and now my sons both use English fluently. One is a lawyer and the other is a journalist.

6. Jewish Education

Hebrew and Religious Education

From the 1880's on, as Eastern European Jewish immigration increased, *hedarim* on the old country model were established in Pittsburgh. Some were run by private teachers in their own homes, others were attached to synagogues. A typical heder of

that time was one taught by a Rabbi Kaminetsky.

> The younger children came at 3:00 p.m., the older boys came straight from their newspaper routes at 4:00 p.m., bringing their suppers. They were given written work by the teacher until the younger children went home. At 5:30 there was a supper break. Rebbetzin Kaminetsky made tea and we would eat our sandwiches and play ball in the yard. From 6:00 to 8:30 we went back to our studies. Sometimes the teacher told such interesting stories at the end of the lesson that we would not get home until after nine, and our parents would worry.
>
> I went to the first heder established in Pittsburgh, Rabbi Sivitz's Talmud Torah on Crawford Street.
>
> Our teacher was very strict. If we asked a question he would slap our faces. Once, when he fell asleep, we pasted his beard to the table with chewing gum. I ran to the Rebbetzin to get shears to cut his beard where it was stuck. My next teacher was different. He had a kindly old face, as if he had just stepped out of the Book of the Prophets. His name was Mr. Smilowitz. He said, "Now my child, let us study."
>
> In Europe I left home at five and went to live with the Rebbe. Every Friday my mother came to wash my hair and finecomb the "animals" out. Here in Pittsburgh I went to heder in the Beth Jacob *shul* but when it was time for my Bar Mitzvah I went all by myself to a private minyan to be called to the Torah because my father was too poor to give the customary donation to the synagogue.

Girls were usually taught how to read their prayers and to read and write Yiddish by their parents or a private tutor.

> If a girl could write a Yiddish letter, that was considered enough. I read the *Morgen Journal* and *Der Tog,* and I used to get a group of women together and we would read the *sedra* of the week every Shabbos. In fact, I still read the *sedra* every week with my daughter.

Every synagogue had weekly study groups for men in Bible or Talmud, usually conducted by the rabbi or other learned men of the congregation. These were a direct carry-over from similar groups in the Old Country.

My husband belonged to the *Hevra Mishnayos* and the *Hevra Tehillim* at shul. They met every Shabbos.

I belonged to a young men's *Hevra Shas* that met every Sabbath to study Talmud.

Most young men and women who came to America in their teens or as adults did not, as a rule, participate in formal Hebrew studies. Some, who had been well educated in Europe, worked as Hebrew tutors.

I taught in the heder over the Sandwich Inn.

When I came here I was a typical Yeshiva Bocher. I had attended Slobodka Yeshiva near Kovno. I could not get a job because employers thought a Yeshiva Bocher could not do physical work. One day I met Mr. Joseph Glick, the editor of the *Volksfreund,* on the streetcar and we got to talking. He helped me get a job as tutor of his relative's children in a nearby town. There my Yeshiva background helped me. The previous tutor had been teaching the children good Hebrew grammar and their father did not want any "new-fangled" Hebrew. He saw that I would teach in the old-fashioned way, no grammar, and he hired me.

A B'nai B'rith 1913 survey in Pittsburgh indicated that 80% of the 5,200 Jewish children aged five to fourteen then living in the city were receiving some kind of Jewish education.

Some outlying towns did not have enough of a Jewish population to form a congregation. In 1916 there were 1,050 Jewish children attending the eighteen Sabbath Schools taught by 92 teachers employed by the Council of Jewish Women. Some of the teachers worked on a volunteer basis with traveling expenses paid.

Those immigrants who came with young children or whose children were born here began to seek new methods for Hebrew education.

I made my first trip from Akron to Pittsburgh in 1904 to talk to Rabbi Ashinsky about the possibilities of Jewish education here for my children. This was one of the main reasons we moved to Pittsburgh. In 1911, with sixteen other men and Rabbi Ashinsky, (we numbered eighteen, *hai,* meaning, "life,") we got together to

> discuss the possibility of establishing a modern central Hebrew school. I became one of the charter members of the Hebrew Institute, but by the time it opened, in 1916, my son was too old to attend. He received his Hebrew education from private tutors, but the Hebrew Institute was there to serve other Jewish children.

The Hebrew Institute opened its building on Wylie and Green Avenues with Israel A. Abrams, trained in European yeshivot and in American universities, as Educational Director. From its inception it was supported by representatives of the older Jewish community as well as by Eastern European Jewish immigrants.

By the time the Hebrew Institute was five years old, in 1921, it had 795 pupils, and branches on the North Side, Squirrel Hill, and East Liberty. Thousands of dollars in scholarship funds made it possible for it to function as a free school without tuition fees. Donations ranged from $25,000 to the five dollar memberships paid by hundreds of Pittsburghers.

Some of the older immigrants had longed for a place where they could increase their knowledge of Hebrew. There was no place to go.

> I attended the Hebrew Institute a few times, and then I saw that I knew more than the teacher, so I quit.

In response to this need, the Louis I. Aaron Hebrew High School and the Sol Rosenbloom Teachers Training School were opened in 1923. Graduates of the Hebrew Institute elementary classes and young people who had received their basic education abroad entered these classes for higher study.

Yiddish Education

The various Jewish socialist movements ranging from the Bund, Workmen's Circle, Socialist Territorialists, through the Poale Zion used Yiddish in their meetings and for their minutes and publications. A number of attempts were made to establish Yiddish schools for children. In 1912 the Poale Zion opened a Yiddish School, the National Radical Volkschule, on Centre Avenue with forty to fifty children. The 1913 B'nai B'rith survey

reported less than 100 students at this school.

> I taught for a while at the National Radical Volkschule which met at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement. Of course I didn't get paid for my work. All of our teachers were volunteers. I would never take money for teaching Yiddish. But eventually we had to close because of lack of funds.

In 1914 the Jewish branch of the Socialist Party and the Workmen's Circle opened a Yiddish School at the Labor Lyceum. It was closed after a few years.

> The twenties saw a world-wide Yiddish cultural movement. Here in Pittsburgh, all the Yiddish cultural organizations began opening schools. As soon as a Yiddish school was opened by one organization, another would spring up. At one point we had four Yiddish schools. Instead of consolidating our forces we spread them thin, and none succeeded. . .
>
> The Yehoash Folkschule, founded by members of the non-partisan Yiddisher Kultur Gesellschaft (Yiddish Culture Society) was the most successful. We had two branches, one in the Hill District and one in Squirrel Hill. We gave courses in reading, writing, conversation, grammar, composition, Yiddish literature, Jewish history and Yiddish songs and dances. The school lasted for eight years, from 1924 to 1932.

7. Self-Education

> We did not have time for systematic education. We had to struggle to get ahead. Nobody taught us. The characteristic of the generation and the time was to teach ourselves.

Lectures and Study Groups

The most popular form of self-education was the lecture. World renowned literary and political figures appeared in Pittsburgh.

> When Sholom Aleichem came here to talk to our Socialist Territorialist group at Zionist Institute we had terrible competition. That same week, Grigory Gershuni, the Jewish Socialist

> Revolutionary who had escaped from Siberia, came to Pittsburgh and everybody bought tickets for his lecture. Sholom Aleichem read his story, "Naches fun Kinder" (Gratification from Children). Instead of the $150 we had contracted to pay him, we had only $75. He said, "All right, I'll take the $75."

The Zionist Institute, founded in 1904 at 1851 Centre Avenue, was the first institution to offer courses in modern Hebrew. All the Zionist groups, except for Poale Zion, met there, and there were frequent lectures on Zionism and Jewish history.

Probably the most active institution was the Labor Lyceum on Miller Street. There the Workmen's Circle had weekly meetings which included lectures in Yiddish, often attended by hundreds of people. The Jewish branch of the Socialist Party, the Young Peoples Socialist League, and Poale Zion also met at the Labor Lyceum and they also scheduled lectures.

While most of the above mentioned groups held their lectures in Yiddish, the lectures at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement were mostly in English.

> When I was chairman of the Gateway Club at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement, I arranged a lecture series on "The Press, the Theatre, the State, and the Schools." Alexander P. Moore, editor and owner of the *Pittsburgh Leader*, spoke on the press, Allan Davis, the son of Mrs. Barnett Davis and one of the founders of ASCAP, spoke on the theatre, Congressman James M. Moran spoke on the state, and Dr. William R. Davidson spoke on the schools.

Debating societies served as the forum for young men who were to become lawyers and leaders of the community.

> Benjamin Lencher and I once debated on the subject, "Should women get the vote?" He took the affirmative and I took the negative and he won. Then we switched sides and he won again. He was called the "Daniel Webster of the IKS."

One of the aims of the Young Men's Hebrew Association, founded in 1910, was the cultural development of Jewish adults and youth. Its founders hoped to make it an independent self-supporting institution with a dignified program of cultural

activity. There were many lectures sponsored by the "Y" which always combined education with entertainment.

There were also a number of buildings under non-Jewish ownership where Jewish groups met for educational and recreational purposes. Kingsley House, established in 1893 by the Reverend George Hodges, moved from Penn Avenue and 17th Street in 1901 to the corner of Bedford Avenue and Fulton Street in the heart of the Hill. The German Turnverein, also known as Turner Hall, rented out its rooms to Jewish groups for lectures, meetings, and dances. Many respondents recall walking to Oakland to Syria Mosque and Carnegie Music Hall to listen to lectures by the important personalities of the time. One of the most popular lecture series was that of Mr. Burton Holmes, who presented illustrated travelogues. In 1913, Nahum Sokolow appeared under the auspices of the Zionist Council of Pittsburgh, and Helen Keller under the auspices of the Council of Jewish Women.

Libraries

In 1898 the Columbian Council opened a Reading Room in its building on Townsend Street. The Council also persuaded Carnegie Library of the need for a branch in the Hill District.

> Many years ago this neighborhood had no library. The first one opened was by the Irene Kaufmann Settlement. After many years of effort, we, with others, had the Wylie Avenue Branch Library built. After this branch was opened, the IKS discontinued its library and donated all of its books to the Carnegie Library.
>
> For one year I read the books in Russian and Yiddish. Then I switched completely to English.
>
> I learned English through reading. When I read I digest every word.
>
> I had to leave school after the eighth grade because my mother died and I had to keep house for my father and sisters. I used to go to the Wylie Avenue Branch Library and read all the newspapers and books.
>
> I had to go to work at twelve and leave school. My stepmother didn't want me to study. But I would meet my girl friends at the Wylie Avenue Library and try to catch up a little.
>
> On Friday afternoons after school there were story hours at the

Wylie Avenue Branch.

There were libraries at the Labor Lyceum and the Zionist Institute which were patronized by members. Hirsch's Bookstore was a favorite gathering place for booklovers who could afford to buy books.

> Each group had a place where they gathered. My favorite place was Hirsch's Bookstore. There you met the newly arrived *landsleit.*

Newspapers

> If I had to choose between buying medicine and buying a Yiddish newspaper, and I didn't have money for both, I would buy a newspaper.

Almost all of our respondents mentioned reading at least one of the Yiddish dailies and usually the local weekly as well. The newspapers were the *Yiddishes Tageblatt* of New York, Orthodox and Zionist in orientation, the *Vorwaerts* (Jewish Daily Forward), whose aim was "to help the workingman and the Jewish immigrant in this new land"; *Der Morgen Journal* (The Morning Journal) and *Der Tog* (The Day), Zionist and middle-class in orientation.

> My husband was the first subscriber to *Der Tog* in Pittsburgh and he received a prize.

Only one respondent mentioned reading the *Morgen Freiheit,* the Communist daily.

Many recall fondly the local Yiddish weekly, the *Volksfreund* (Friend of the People) published in Pittsburgh from 1887 to 1920 by Joseph Selig Glick. Largely written and edited by Mr. Glick, he closed each week with the words, "Zoll zein mit Glick." (It should be with luck) a pun on his name.

The Jewish immigrants also read at least one of the seven daily newspapers published in Pittsburgh before World War One. A respondent who worked as a newsboy reeled off their titles:

The Press; The Sun; The Telegraph; The Post; The Gazette-Times; The Dispatch; The Leader.

Some were proud of the fact they had no formal education in America.

I did not have half-an-hour of schooling in the United States. I worked with non-Jews, read signs and newspapers and learned how to speak and write through use.

I never went to school in Pittsburgh. I learned from other people. My father and brother and brother-in-law were druggists and I used to help out in the drug store in Europe. I knew some Latin so I used to figure out the English word from the Latin root.

For those of our male respondents who were of army age at the outbreak of World War One, the army served as a major factor in their Americanization. They enlisted, or were drafted, received immediate citizenship, and learned how to speak English while serving their country.

CHAPTER SIX

HAVING A GOOD TIME

Yiddish theatre years ago, that was the tops.

I saved all week in order to pay a quarter for top balcony seats at the Yiddish theatre.

The Yiddish theatre was my only recreation.

1. Yiddish Theatre

The first Yiddish troupe that I saw came to Pittsburgh on Shavuos, 1901. Boris Thomashevsky and his group put on the play "Die Immigranten" at the Bijou. We all went to see it because the plot was so close to our own stories. That is when I became a great patriot of the Yiddish theatre.

Thomashevsky's visit to Pittsburgh was typical of regular appearances by various itinerant theatrical troupes, usually in the springtime, after the New York theatre season. His visit to Pittsburgh during a Jewish holiday, and the attendance at this performance by hundreds of Pittsburgh Jews, aroused great criticism by the Orthodox leadership.

Rabbi Sivitz gave them hell at Shaare Torah.

However, the Yiddish theatrical troups continued to come. There were shows on Friday nights, Saturday matinees, and Saturday nights, and the houses were always full.

My parents were Orthodox but they loved the Yiddish theatre. They would buy their tickets before the Sabbath and then we

would walk to the theatre on Saturday afternoon.

The Yiddish theatre received a tremendous boost in Pittsburgh with the coming of the post-1905 immigration. These were young people who had been associated with various Yiddish speaking groups, ranging from anarchist, Bundist, Socialist Territorialist to Poale Zion. Some of them had seen the Yiddish theatre in Europe and most of them had read Yiddish plays. The members of the Workmen's Circle whose Pittsburgh branch was founded in 1904, and of other secular Jewish organizations, became the Yiddish theatre's greatest fans. The seasonal appearances of what were sometimes second-rate troupes did not satisfy the connoisseurs among them.

Each year I took a week off from work, took the excursion train to New York, and saw all the shows, sometimes two a day.

Some of the greatest stars of the Yiddish stage appeared in Pittsburgh.

I went to see Keni Liptzen in "Mirele Efros" by Jacob Gordin. That was a tearjerker. She appeared at the old Nixon Theatre, downtown, around 1909 or 1910.

Besides the Bijou and the Nixon a number of theatres and large halls that had stages were used for theatrical performances.

At first Yiddish troupes appeared at Turner Hall then Madame Simon and David Levison came from Cleveland on a semi-permanent basis at the Simon Theatre across from the IKS. There were also occasional visits by big name stars from New York. I never missed a show.

I remember going to Turner Hall and carrying my own box to sit on. It was twenty-five or thirty-five cents a show.

I remember hearing Regina Prager sing at Simon Theatre.

The plays put on by the Simon Troupe were described by one respondent as "Second Avenue." By this he meant that these were not the great classics of the Yiddish Theatre but rather melodramas relying on a mixture of comedy and tragedy. Even

the most dramatic scenes were incongruously interrupted with songs and dances. There was often a "happy-ending" where lovers were wed and parents reconciled, but before that there had to be a requisite number of "tear-jerking" scenes.

I did not like to go to the Yiddish theatre because I did not like to cry.

I did not like the low humor directed against oneself.

The more highly regarded troupes of Thomashevsky, Liptzen, Adler, David Kessler, and Maurice Schwartz's Yiddish Art Theatre performed the classic works of the Yiddish stage and translations of Shakespeare, Ibsen, and the ancient Greeks.

The last professional Yiddish theatre in Pittsburgh was the Lando Theatre on Centre Avenue. It lasted from the mid-twenties until 1935. Groups came from New York for six to eight weeks at a time. In 1926 Habima came and performed in Hebrew. Ben-Ami was here with an English play in 1928. I invited him to come and speak to our group in Yiddish and he did so. When he was here in 1962 with "The Tenth Man" we saw each other again.

Many well known actors started out on the Yiddish stage. I worked as a playwright for a while with David Kessler's Peoples' Theatre. In one of my plays the part of a forty-five year old butcher was played by a young, relatively unknown actor, Muni Weisenfreund. He received rave notices. This was Paul Muni.

2. Amateur Theatricals

We performed the serious classics of the Yiddish theatre, not cheap melodramas.

The immigrants who came in the early part of the twentieth century had along with their desire for self-education a burning desire to participate in cultural activities. Play readings and performances were an integral part of organization meetings.

My sister was active in a dramatic group organized by the man who became my husband.

Our dramatic club and singing groups met at the Columbian Council.

We had a great deal of fun performing in readings and group singing.

We had a dramatic club which met at the Labor Lyceum. Our sketches in Yiddish were so successful that we were invited to perform in Rochester and Monessen and other outlying communities.

The facilities of the Columbian Council House were in great demand for dramatic performances. A number of groups performed there in Yiddish. In 1923, the Self-Culture Club presented "Die Zvei Kuni Lemels," by Goldfaden which was very successful, and called for newcomers to audition for a new play. At about the same time a Jewish Dramatic Club was formed which presented polished, professional performances with costumes and scenery.

Our Dramatic Club was invited to perform in other communities, too. I remember performing in Weirton, West Virginia. The plays we put on, I can remember only a few, were "Der Vilder Mensch," by Jacob Gordin, "Mitn Shtrum," by Sholem Asch, "Yoshka Musikant," by Osip Dimov, "Die Mishpocha," by Nomberg, and, of course, "Gott, Mensch and Teivel," by Jacob Gordin. Recently one of the issues of the Y-IKC Weekly featured a photograph of one of our plays, but this must have been after 1930, when the beautiful large theatre was built. Mr. Harry Ratner, assistant to Mr. Sidney Teller, was our liason person with the IKS. Sometimes we had a paid director, sometimes I directed. We copied out parts after our three man dramatic council—Arluck, Belfer, and Efemov—decided what plays to do. We rehearsed for three months, two times a week. Efemov, now in New York, was the makeup man and he did a very artistic job. Hundreds of people came to see our shows, and admission was charged. Of course, except for an occasional paid director, we all did this without pay, just for love of the theatre.

A number of our respondents were members of this group which lasted until 1940.

Why did we break up? People moved away. Some went to Chicago, some moved to Squirrel Hill and the East End. To tell you the truth, we ourselves got older and we didn't have any

young blood coming in.

The Zeirei Zion also had a dramatic club which performed in Yiddish, with some of the same people who were in the IKS Dramatic Club.

> We were not overly ambitious. We chose plays that we felt we could do, given our abilities and small budget. But everything was done on a professional level—scenery, make-up, costumes, and so on. I remember that we performed in the Morris Kaufmann Auditorium at the Y so it must have been in the early thirties.

In the mid-thirties, a group called The New Theatre League performed social and industrial problem plays at the Labor Lyceum. It was sponsored by various radical groups, many of whose members were Jewish, but performances were in English. They put on "Waiting for Lefty" by Clifford Odets.

Amateur theatricals in English were sponsored by the Columbian Council School from the very early days of the twentieth century. They started as tableaus put on by the children of the ethics classes, and by the twenties there were operettas and plays on many levels of proficiency.

> My club, the Dukane Club at the IKS, was very active in dramatic work. We put on a play once a year—some of them were "The House Next Door," "The Melting Pot," "A Pair of Sixes," "Stop Thief," and also minstrel shows.

3. American Theatre

> The nickelodeon was very popular with us immigrants. We did not have to understand English and it cost only a nickel.

Pittsburgh was the birthplace of the nickelodeon, which preceded silent movies. The first nickelodeon was opened at 433–435 Smithfield Avenue on June 19, 1905. It was run by State Senator John P. Harris, founder of the Harris Amusement Company, together with his brother-in-law Harry Davis. They installed 96 opera chairs, a white sheet, and a phonograph and ran shows from eight in the morning until midnight, consecu-

tively. Each show lasted from twelve to twenty minutes. It was so popular that there were often 7000 patrons every day. The second oldest nickelodeon was located on Wylie Avenue near Fulton Street. 'The Great Train Robbery' played a solid month with two performances daily.

Silent movies became a major form of recreation for many immigrants.

> I saw Griffith's, "Way Down East" and "Orphans of the Storm" at the Sam Shubert Theatre with the Gish sisters. It was wonderful.

Another form of entertainment which did not require a perfect mastery of English was vaudeville.

> When I saw vaudeville at the Harris Theatre, I thought America was heaven.
>
> I remember seeing Sophie Tucker at the Grand Theatre.
>
> There was vaudeville at the Majestic on Fifth Avenue for twenty cents.

Some of the women mentioned viewing burlesque at the Academy of Music and the Gayety but hesitantly, feeling, perhaps, that burlesque is vulgar.

Those respondents who mastered English quickly became interested in the serious plays which came to Pittsburgh fairly regularly. Some recall that Pittsburgh had four live theatres in the pre-World War One era.

> There was a stock company at the Lyceum Theatre, where the Roosevelt is now, which had matinees. There were shows at the Nixon and the Alvin Theatre and the Pitt Theatre on Penn Avenue.
>
> In 1912 or 1913 the annual Shakespearean Festival came to the Alvin Theatre for one week. I went to every performance. Pittsburgh was used to "try out" shows in those days. I remember standing in the lobby of the Nixon where "Ah Wilderness" was showing and seeing its author, Eugene O'Neill, talking to George M. Cohan. "Strange Interlude" also played in Pittsburgh before it came to New York.
>
> My husband got a job ushering at the Alvin Theatre. This was

before we were married. He always got two tickets for Monday nights. I saw all the shows.

Even lack of knowledge of the language was not always an obstacle.

I would go to the English plays at the Nixon Theatre and my friends would explain them to me.

One respondent has made the theatre his life-time hobby.

In Bialystok the Jewish theatre was forbidden by the Czar so we would perform secretly in private homes. When the German army entered in 1915 there was freedom of dramatic expression. In fact, the German army band played for some of the performances. When I came to Pittsburgh I became involved in the theatre immediately. Wherever there is good theatre there I go. In 1934 I went to Leningrad to the theatre festival. I saw "Fiddler on the Roof" in Yiddish in Israel, and I try to go to New York regularly to see the shows.

Some respondents had intimate memories of show people.

When I came to invite Mr. Alexander Moore, editor of the *Pittsburgh Leader* to lecture to our club, he gave me a ticket to see his wife in Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew" which played in the Grand Opera House that night.

In October of 1916 I appeared on the legitimate stage together with Sarah Bernhardt in her farewell tour. I was at Pitt at the time and seats were seven-fifty and up to twenty-five dollars each. I didn't even have seventy-five cents to spare. I saw a sign that they needed eight supers. A bunch of us got together and went down to the Nixon.

Madam Bernhardt was playing Cleopatra in a Moliere drama. She had an artificial leg and she needed four men to carry her on stage in one of those "Egyptian taxicabs." She was a hefty girl. The other four fellows were supposed to walk beside her as guards. Andy Hastings, he made Walter Camp's All American Football Team so you can imagine what kind of a boy he was, said to me, "You carry the Queen and I'll be the bodyguard." Sarah Bernhardt looked at both of us and said, "Non, m'sieu. You carry

the Queen (pointing at Andy) and you be the bodyguard (pointing at me.)"

4. Music

I used to walk with my sisters to Carnegie Music Hall for the free organ recitals and for concerts.

Love of music was something the immigrant brought with him from the Old Country. Although formal music lessons were very rare, every small town had a band of amateur musicians who played at weddings.

My father was an itinerant fiddler. Our family name was Fiedler, so I suppose this was a hereditary profession.

A number of respondents played an instrument, one worked as a piano teacher.

I played the harmonica.

My husband played the violin.

I loved music but did not have a chance to take lessons as a child. Later, when my children were learning, I learned how to play the piano too.

I learned how to play the banjo and would play at the parties of our social club, the Kleen Sportsman Klub.

Only a small number actually played musical instruments, but the overwhelming majority attended concerts and opera, whenever they could. Just as library attendance increased proportionately with the influx of immigrants, so did attendance at the free concerts increase. By 1909 the recitals had become even more popular and the Carnegie Music Hall could report that there was not an empty seat for its Sunday afternoon organ recitals.

As soon as the Symphony came to Pittsburgh I got a subscription which I renewed for years.

We came in from Braddock for the concerts.

I went to all the concerts and all the operas. I remember when Ephrem Zimbalist and Jascha Heifitz came to Syria Mosque.

There were also free concerts at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement and concerts at the Labor Lyceum for twenty five cents which were attended by our respondents. Some also mentioned the outdoor concerts at Schenley Park which were very popular. A nickel was charged for these.

Occasions for opera viewing were rather rare.

> When the Chicago Opera came to Pittsburgh I went for fifty cents standing room.
>
> The Aborn English Grand Opera Company used to come to the Alvin Theatre. They did "Il Trovatore" and "Aida" and other operas of that type.
>
> I saved every penny I could until I had enough for a balcony seat at the opera. Whenever I saw an advertisement in the newspaper for a record of an opera I had seen, I would cut it out and carry it in my breast pocket, and look at it often. Of course I could not afford to buy the records, but at least I knew that I had seen the operas.

The older generation was more interested in cantorial music.

> Occasionally a good *hazan* would come to a synagogue and I would go to hear him. I enjoy a cantorial concert.
>
> In 1910 I worked as a helper for Mr. Cohen, the Ladies' Tailor in the Fulton Building. He was considered the finest tailor in the city. All the top families like the Mellons, came to him. He had thirty or forty people working for him, Italians and Jews. When Hazan Zeidel Rovner came to sing at the Beth Jacob synagogue, Mr. Cohen closed the shop for the day and took all the workers to the concert as his guests.

Group singing was well-known and many joined groups when they came to America. Singing was also a spontaneous form of expression whenever young people met at picnics and meetings. At the Columbian Council the Halevy Singing Society (for men) met every Sunday from 2:30–5:00 under the direction of Mr. A. Blumenthal. Twenty years later the Irene Kaufmann Settlement was sponsoring musical contests and putting on children's operettas.

We had a singing group that met at the Labor Lyceum, the Freie Gesangsverein, led by Mr. Litow. We sang mostly Russian and Yiddish folk songs.

We sang at all our meetings and picnics. We would march to the park singing overtures to operas. The Workmen's Circle sponsored picnics in Highland Park which would sometimes bring out as many as 700 people.

5. Picnics and Dances

As soon as I arrived my relatives took me to the Socialist Party picnic—it was just like the Old Country atmosphere.

All the immigrant groups had picnics in the spring and summer, a Pittsburgh area tradition still preserved in the yearly Kennywood Park picnics and *landsmanschaft* picnics. The availability of Schenley Park, Highland Park, Kennywood Park, and Olympia Park made picnics a relatively inexpensive recreational activity.

We had a deep yearning for green meadows. We often had a professional photographer take pictures of our groups at our picnics which we would sometimes send to relatives in Europe.

We had a club of girls, and would pack lunches in picnic baskets and go out to the park and treat the boys to lunch.

Picnics were sometimes sponsored by stores where our respondents were employed.

Frank and Seder's had picnics and parties for their employees.
Gimbel's threw parties and held picnics for their workers.

Luna Park, at Centre and Craig in Oakland, was easily accessible from the Hill District.

Sometimes groups of boys and girls, or mixed groups would walk or take a five cent car ride to Luna Park. The amusement rides were a nickel each, and if the attendant was friendly he would sometimes let you stay on for another turn. We got our money's worth. I'll never forget how once I was at the top of the Ferris Wheel and I saw a lion which had escaped from his cage

maul a woman to death.

In Europe, boys and girls from "good" families did not have many opportunities for joint activities. Of the older generation of respondents, many were introduced to their mates by matchmakers. Later, young people who joined secular organizations such as the Bund or the Zionists, could talk, take walks together, listen to lectures, and engage in other "uplifting" activities. As a rule, boys and girls did not dance with each other, except perhaps at weddings or at the classes run by "Tanzmeisters" which became popular in the larger towns in the first decade of the twentieth century. In America, however, dances became the favorite meeting place, especially if they were sponsored by respectable organizations such as the Irene Kaufmann Settlement, the Labor Lyceum, the Zionist Institute or a *landsmanschaft.*

The IKS was a blessing. There were special programs for foreigners. There were dances every Saturday night and I would go with my brother. A girl I met at the classes for immigrants in Grant School invited me to go to the IKS with her because she wanted me to meet her cousin who would be there. We liked each other and started dating and then married.

Every Saturday night we would go to the dances at the Zionist Institute. They had live bands, I don't know how good they were but they were loud! We danced waltzes, two steps, schottishes. Only Jews attended. We paid a quarter for the evening. Afterwards we would go to Wiesenthal's for ice cream at Centre and Overhill.

Sometimes the Hungarians would hire a hall and we would have dances.

We often went to dances at Turner Hall, sponsored by different Jewish organizations.

We used to go to the Armory to dance, where Blank's Funeral Home is now.

The Workmen's Circle had an annual masquerade ball at the Labor Lyceum which was very popular.

The annual affair of the Jewish Home for Babies drew large crowds.

Every Sunday night there were dances at the Montefiore Hospital Nurses Home. We loved to dance. My husband and I won

many trophies.

There were a number of private social and athletic clubs for boys which ran dances as part of their activities. Among those mentioned were the Nixon Theatre Club, the Don Giovanni Club, the Willows Club, the Fidelis Social Club, and the Bono Tempo Club. The best known of these was the Coffey Club.

> One of our favorite pastimes was to go watch the Coffey Club play basketball. After the game there would be dances. We paid for this but they were the best team in the city and they always had good local bands for dancing. We danced at the Old Montefiore Hall which they leased from the Montefiore Lodge of the International Order of Odd Fellows.

6. Sports

> As a boy on the Hill, my favorite recreation was playing baseball with the boys in the Basin, Washington Park on Bedford Avenue.
>
> If I should find a ticket to a baseball game, I would give it to the first person I would meet.

These contrasting statements about sports are indicative of the range of attitudes of our respondents. Generally, those who came here as adults were rather indifferent to sports, although some developed an interest in watching games in their later years. Sports were unfamiliar activities for East European Jews. Heder usually lasted from dawn to dusk six days a week, the Sabbath and holidays were spent in the synagogue and as soon as a poor boy was ten or eleven years old he went to work.

Immigrants who came to America as youngsters, however, adjusted very quickly to American sports.

> My American cousin taught me how to play baseball.
> We used to meet at the Basin and play ball there.

Washington Park, known as the 'Basin' was formerly a city reservoir. It was converted into a city playground, where all forms of sport were played by youngsters and adults.

Basketball, played in whatever open area was available, was

next in popularity to baseball. Boys who had never participated in sports in Europe became basketball adepts.

> I was nominated President of Kingsley House Alumni Association. That is where Jewish and Gentile boys encountered one another as teammates on the basketball court. We had good relationships with the non-Jews at Kingsley House.

There were basketball quintets sponsored by the Columbian Council, the Zionist Institute, and numerous private clubs. When the Irene Kaufmann Settlement House was built, it offered more opportunities for organized games.

> In 1911 I helped organize and I played with a basketball team at the IKS.

Immigrants living outside the largely Jewish Hill District participated in activities organized by synagogues and by the public schools.

> I joined the Boy Scouts who met at B'nai Israel. We had boys from Lawrenceville and East End. The most fun was the trips to Guyasuta Camp. I got as far as First Class Scout. I played basketball and baseball at Arsenal Park and became Captain of the Lawrence School Baseball Team, which was pretty good for a Jewish boy.

Other sports in which our respondents participated were swimming, skating, handball, shuffleboard, tennis, horseback riding, boxing and golf, the last four mentioned by only one person each.

The favorite spectator sports were baseball and basketball.

> From the top of Monument Hill we used to watch the Pirates play in Expo Park two miles away.

The basketball team mentioned most frequently by our respondents was the Coffey Club. John Coffey was the circulation manager of the *Pittsburgh Press*. He was concerned about the moral welfare of young newsboys and in 1913 organized some of these boys and founded the club. They were

all Jewish, except for one gentile. They met first at the Kingsley House for basketball and at the Basin for other sports. Later they played at the YMHA at Jumonville and then they leased Old Montefiore Hall. They had one important rule, no smoking or gambling.

Alderman Joseph Kahn, whose zig-zag running down the football field earned him the nickname "Ziggy" from sportswriter Al Abrams, came from the ranks of the Coffey Club. He became the distinguished Jewish athlete of the Hill District. From 1921 until 1965 he served as Athletic Director of the Irene Kaufmann Settlement where he coached many immigrant boys. He also taught them boxing.

> It was very important that we learn how to defend ourselves. The Italian kids were our friends, but the Irish kids on the Hill would accuse the Jews of putting blood in the matzos and we had to fight. Knowing how to box was vital.

During the transitional period, between the time the old Columbian Council buildings were torn down and the building of the new Irene Kaufmann Settlment House, some of the young people who had been active there decided to reorganize the YMHA.

> In the fall a group of us were walking toward the home of Morris Neaman for the purpose of presenting to his brother Abe a watch for volunteer service as Physical Culture Instructor at the Zion Council. Harry Applestein explained about a YMHA they were considering.

There had been a YMHA in 1881, sponsored by Rabbi Lippman Mayer of Rodef Shalom Congregation which disbanded after a while. In 1905 a group of young men started a YMHA in an abandoned tobacco factory on Miller Street. This became the nucleus for the reorganized YMHA dating from 1910.

The YMHA met first at the Dispatch Building and later at Jumonville and Fifth. It became an important recreational and cultural center.

> The girls formed a YWHA in 1911. We met at the IKS for sewing and we had social events and dances with the YMHA at

various synagogues.

The leaders of the IKS regarded the YMHA with paternal fondness as founded by boys and young men whom they had raised at the Columbian School and Settlement and the Irene Kaufmann Settlement.

7. Family Fun

The table was always set for company.
Our home was the social center.
We had a wonderful time at home. With five girls and a piano and all our friends we did not have to look elsewhere.

Many respondents stressed the fact that having a good time was a family affair, often involving food and conversation.

Before television, conversation was a tremendous thing. We would gather in peoples' homes until two or three in the morning having stimulating conversations.
We had fun at home.
We used to visit friends and family.
We did not have to go out in order to have a good time.

When people did go out, it was often to a *landsmanschaft* or synagogue affair, or to a family gathering. The biggest social events were weddings.

The Ohab Zedek Sisterhood in East Pittsburgh was the center of my social life.
Our *landsleit* from Potkamin would meet and have fun.
I always went to the Roumanian Shul functions.
The McKeesport Hebrew Institute had a Chanukah banquet and a party after Yom Kippur every year.

Festive meals were a frequent form of entertainment.

My girl friend's mother was very kind to young people. She often invited us all over for Sunday goulash dinner.
We had a sewing circle which met weekly, with luncheon at a different home every week.

Sometimes having fun included going to a restaurant.

> The Roumanians used to have a Karnatsaria on Centre Avenue where we met on Sundays to eat *karnatzlach,* peppered sausages.

All the restaurants on the Hill were meeting places. Some of the restaurants mentioned were Gold's, Turkle's, Klein's, "where you could get a meal for a quarter," and Ludin's Restaurant and Pool Room. After 1914, Weinstein's became the most popular meeting place.

> Where did we go for a good time? First to a meeting and from there to Weinstein's on the Hill.
>
> Weinstein's is where we would gather after meetings and discuss everything.
>
> Weinstein's waiters were not interested in tips. Each group would sit at its own table and the discussions would go on for hours.
>
> Weinstein's served full meals from six in the morning until nine at night and light snacks, eggs, coffee, tea and toast all night. Every day there was a different specialty—sometimes knishes, latkes, or varenishkes.

For the younger crowd, the ice cream parlors and the confectionaries served the same purpose, as a place to meet, eat and converse.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ABI GESUNT

I never had a sick day and I never needed medical care. We never went to doctors.

1. Health through Cleanliness

My aunt gave me Epsom salts. She said that everyone who came from Europe should take Epsom Salts right away.

The use of purgatives was very common. One man told how this custom caused him and his family much anxiety.

My sister gave me Epsom Salts as soon as I came. Then we went to Kalson's Bath House, then she got me some new clothes. She wanted to show me a good time, so she took me to the Yiddish Theatre to see Jacob Adler. The physic started working and I told my sister that I wanted to go, but she shushed me and whispered, "After this act." I could not wait. I ran out of the theatre and ran and ran until I came to the river.

Afterwards I could not find my way back. I walked and walked, but the neighborhood was unfamiliar. Finally I went to a policeman and with sign language showed him I was lost. He saw that I was a new immigrant, so he took me to Klein's restaurant. There they gave me a meal, and a man said that he knew my sister's store. But it was late, so he took me to his home for the night, and the next morning he led me to my sister's store on his huckster wagon. My sister was extremely worried. She had already been to the police. . . All because of a physic.

Cleaning out the inner man went along with cleaning off the outer man. Many new immigrants were full of lice from steerage and Ellis Island. They were taken in hand by their American relatives, led to the bath house, thoroughly cleansed, and provided with new clothes. The old clothes were often burned.

> Lazer Gordon had the mikveh on Hold Avenue near Tunnel Street before 1900 and Bernstein had a bathhouse on Hazel Street. In 1904 "Huna" Kalson opened his Bathhouse on Franklin Street (later Epiphany Street). His wife was a *landsfrau* of Rabbi Kochin. Kalson was a very pious and a very good man. Once, when the matzo bakers raised their prices, he brought in a carload of matzos from Chicago, so the poor people would have matzos for Pesach. He threatened the fish-mongers that if they raised their prices he would bring in fish, too.

Elhanan (Huna) Kalson and his wife came to Pittsburgh in 1891 from Lithuania when they were in their early twenties. He was a member of a family of distinguished scholars and had been a Yeshiva Bocher. In Pittsburgh he became a plumber and received his Master Plumber Certification in 1895—the first Jew to do so. In 1896 he became a plumbing contractor. He built a large apartment house which went from Franklin Street to Pasture Way and converted the basement into a bath house.

Kalson did all the designing and most of the actual work himself. An enormous oven, as big as a room, heated by gas, had cobblestones put into it (the cobblestones were dredged from the river by the Iron City Sand Company and carried home by the Kalson boys in their wagon). The stones were heated three or four hours and then sprayed with water from pipes in which very tiny holes had been made with a fine drill. The steam would rise through the specially built floor—made of wooden arches which were then layered with bricks and plastered with composition which made them look like glass.

The customers sat along redwood bleachers. Sometimes they would beat each other with twigs, as was the custom in Europe. The steam was so hot it could remove one's skin—but it was tempered as it arose through the specially layered floor, as in a Finnish sauna.

The "sweat baths," often called "Russian," were widely used

both for cleanliness and as a folk remedy to prevent illness. If someone felt symptoms of illness, he would often go to the bath house to "sweat it out." Bath houses abounded wherever there were Jews.

2. Home Remedies

> We were in good health and did not need medical care mother could not handle with home remedies.
> My mother had many cures.

The use of home remedies was widespread. In Europe, only long-time city dwellers went to hospitals. In the *shtetlach* there was often no doctor available. At best a "feldsher" would do some poulticing, cupping, or leeching. Many Jews believed in the power of the learned man to treat illness.

> My father was a *dayan* who often assisted the Rabbi of our town. He was a very learned man. Non-Jews as well as Jews came to him for treatment of rashes and toothaches. He would murmur some words, give some mixtures to drink and they were often cured.

Among the traditionalists, disease was often thought to be caused by the evil-eye and certain elderly women were considered experts in combatting its effects. Called "Zogerins" they said special prayers for the afflicted and often used folk remedies handed down in their families. These remedies were called "bobbska refuas," that is, "grandma's remedies."

Pittsburgh's best known "Bobba" or midwife at the turn of the century was Bobba Hannah Sandusky. She had come to join her husband Louis after the middle of the nineteenth century. Her expertise in midwifery was the result of two traditions: she was the daughter of a midwife and had learned from her mother; and she had spent a year in Germany when her son's sick eyes were being treated and there she studied scientific midwifery and had received a diploma. When Eastern European Jews in Pittsburgh were but a handful of families, Bobba Hanna took complete charge of their health. As the population grew, and she could no longer know immediately who was ill and who was in labor, she organized the neighborhood into blocks. One woman was put in

charge of each block, and it was her duty to inform Bobba Hannah when she was needed. A familiar figure, with her one-piece bonnet and capelet and her sparkling clean apron, carrying her basket of clean linens as she rushed to the side of a woman in labor, Bobba Hannah was called, "the angel," or "the saint." She was available for any delivery, Jewish or gentile, white or black, and charged no fee. The families paid what they could, and often Bobba Hannah would come with baskets of provisions for the new-born's family.

> Bobba Hannah delivered most of that generation of mothers. All the children called her grandma. They knew she had "brought" them. When she came into a house they would run and hug her and she always had some sweets in her basket for them.
>
> My mother told me that when I saw Bobba Hannah I should run and make hot coffee because she was our honored guest.

Bobba Hannah delivered over 3,500 registered babies. She delivered many more before births were required to be registered. When complications arose, she would call in Dr. Buchanan or Dr. Sanes, to take charge. However, she was considered such an expert herself, classes of medical students were often brought to the home of a woman in labor to watch Bobba Hannah deliver a baby.

3. Nutrition

> I loved everything. The food was more plentiful than in Europe and I ate fresh vegetables here that I did not get in Europe.
>
> I didn't enjoy the food. It made me sick.
>
> The only bad experience I had was getting accustomed to good wholesome food. We had been homeless, hungry refugees from the time of the war when our house was burned.
>
> I had stomach troubles but no more since I became a vegetarian.

The responses relating to food and nutrition were varied, depending mainly on when our respondents had come to Pittsburgh, and at what age they came. In general, old people tend to regard the food they ate as young people, with youthful appetites, as tastier and better than the food they eat now.

Most of our respondents stated that they or their parents kept the Jewish laws of *kashruth* in their food preparation at home, although some people mentioned that they ate non-kosher food at restaurants. Some mentioned criticisms of certain butchers' *kashruth* by some rabbis, and even fist-fights which resulted from such criticism. But the actual preparation of the meat lay in the hands of the Jewish woman who salted, soaked, and inspected the chickens for suspicious marks which would need rabbinical verification.

> There were two Rabbis we would take the chickens to for questions of kashruth. Today you buy the chickens all cleaned. You can't tell if the gizzard is covered or not.

In the Hill District, immigrant Jews did not divide as sharply along "ethnic" lines as they did in New York. The Lithuanian Jews, who started coming in the mid-nineteenth century and matched the older German Jewish residents in number by 1880, welcomed the succeeding Hungarian, Russian, Roumanian and Galician Jews into their neighborhoods. Although the men tended to form synagogues from their *landsleit*, the women and children socialized quite freely. After all, no matter how they pronounced it, they all shared Yiddish as their mother tongue.

> We had a backyard neighborliness in those days. All the women were ready to help each other. When my grandmother had to go abroad, she left my grandfather, my mother and my aunt behind, knowing that the neighbors would keep an eye on them.

This mixing made for a varied diet. Russian women who had regarded tomatoes as poison learned how to make salads from their Roumanian neighbors. Hungarian goulash, Roumanian *karnatzlach* and Galician *holupshkas* were shared and recipes were exchanged. A good "American" Jewish *balaboosta* became adept at many more ways of food preparation than her mother in the Old Country.

4. Clinics and Dispensaries

> I suffered a great deal from headaches and had to leave school in the eighth grade because of them. One day I passed by Mercy

Hospital when they were having a nose and throat day in the clinic. I went in, got examined, and had a nose operation, all by myself. It was in 1896, I was about fifteen years old. After that I had no more headaches.

The poor people went to the Pittsburgh Dispensary at 43 Fernando Street. There was also an Eye and Ear Clinic on Fifth Avenue where they paid what they could.

At the turn of the century, care of Jewish sick was usually in the hands of well-meaning women, some experienced, like Bobba Hannah Sandusky, and others not so experienced . The Columbian Council had "personal service workers" whose duty it was to visit the sick in their homes. In 1902, a District Nursing Service was begun at the Council House under Miss Anna B. Heldman. She launched a visiting nurses service and pioneered many innovations in the field of health. She opened the first pre-natal and post-natal clinic, and introduced good health habits to new immigrants. She involved herself personally in the moral welfare of the Hill District until her death in 1940.

Miss Heldman came to the house to show my stepmother how to bathe my baby sister. She insisted that I be sent to school, but my step-mother wanted me at home, to help her.

I went to the IKS for medical and dental checkups.

I took the children to the IKS for Miss Heldman to check on their weight, and to write out their formulas.

Anna Heldman had Better Baby Conferences and contests. One year my son won the first prize over fifty other babies as the healthiest baby of the year.

5. Disease and Epidemic

Around the turn of the century, certain diseases were feared more than others. At a time when small pox was considered vanquished by compulsory vaccination, a number of cases broke out in Pittsburgh.

The greatest scourge of Pittsburgh, however, was typhoid. The relationship between the incidence of typhoid and water pollution meant that before the city filtration plant was built, many well-to-do persons, including Jews, installed portable

filters in their kitchens.

> One day we visited our wealthy relatives who had a boiler in their kitchen to make hot water. My father was amazed. He said, "Such a big filter."

In 1895, eleven percent of all deaths in Pittsburgh were due to typhoid fever, scarlet fever and diphtheria and another eleven percent were due to pneumonia (often a complication of an earlier illness). There were also many deaths due to measles, whooping cough, and bronchitis and croup, with diarrheal diseases killing as many as all of the former added together. In 1907, tuberculosis became an important factor in mortality, second only to typhoid. However, in the thirty years between 1873 and 1907, births per 1000 had dropped from 39.9 to 21.6 and deaths per 1000 had gone down from 26.5 to 18.3.

Eleven years later the dreaded "Spanish influenza" swept through the United States and there were many victims, especially among children and the aged.

> My father died in the flu epidemic, before we came to join him.
>
> My mother lived to the age of 96, at the Home for the Aged, but my father died there in 1918, in the big flu epidemic.
>
> During the flu epidemic I worked as a private nurse.

With the flu epidemic, the Irene Kaufmann Settlement nursing services were mobilized to help the neighborhood. By the end of 1919, 1047 influenza patients had received nursing care from the Settlement.

> The IKS had the best organized influenza nursing service, and its district was more efficiently and better served than any district in the city of Pittsburgh.

Tuberculosis was much feared by our respondents. Many tell of working in the toby factories, where the conditions of crowding, heat and faulty sanitation helped spread the disease. Pittsburgh's air pollution made breathing difficult for people with any kind of lung disease. Many respondents reported throat and lung conditions.

When I had trouble with my throat I went to the Eye and Ear Hospital on Fifth Avenue and had my tonsils removed.

I couldn't stand the smoky air. I got terrible headaches. I went to many doctors. One told me to visit New York for awhile. I had no headaches there.

I had frequent colds due to the heavy air pollution. In 1910 I had a mastoid operation and I moved to South Hills for a while to get clean air.

The smoke affected me and I have trouble breathing to this day. The Pittsburgh hills were very hard on me too.

The first Open Air School at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement was designed to give special attention to fresh air treatment and dietary requirements of children who were possibly affected by tuberculosis.

6. Eyes, Teeth and Drugs

Medical inspections of the Pittsburgh schools in 1908 revealed that a very large number of children had defective vision. The parents were alerted and went into action.

The teacher said the children did not see well. We were taken to Dr. B.K. Elliott the optometrist and we all got glasses.

I got my first glasses in 1908, when I was 18, at the Eye and Ear Hospital. . . . It was a small building.

For those with more serious eye problems there was the Pittsburgh Association for Adult Blind, organized under the guidance of the founder of the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, Mrs. Moses Ruslander of the Pittsburgh Council of Jewish Women.

The Pittsburgh Council of Jewish Women ran a Free Dental Clinic for poor children at 707 Forbes.

We had Dr. Sussman to take care of our teeth although many people went to the dental clinic and not to private dentists.

Aside from naming their dentists, our respondents did not go into detail on dental care during their first years in Pittsburgh. Many immigrants considered the neighborhood pharmacist as

the first man to go to in an emergency. The druggist removed splinters, bandaged cuts, and gave advice.

> Mr. Seldes, the father of Gilbert and George, was a very interesting personality. When you came into his apothecary store you had to be prepared to listen to some philosophy while he compounded your prescription. He was a known anarchist. When Alexander Berkman shot Frick, the police came to him to question him.

Many mentioned that they did not go to the drug store for medicine because the doctor often gave medicines when he made house calls—all included in his one dollar fee.

7. Doctors and Hospitals

> When anyone was sick Dr. Nathan Ashinsky would make a house call. Dr. Lichtenstein was the children's doctor.
>
> We got our medical care from Dr. Lewin.
>
> Mrs. Rosenthal, sister of Dr. Goodstone was a midwife.
>
> I used private doctors—Dr. Wexler, Dr. Sylvia Wexler, Dr. Spector. Once or twice I would go to an eye clinic downtown.
>
> Our doctor was Dr. Max Weinberg.
>
> Dr. Finkelpearl was the family doctor.
>
> Dr. Snitzer had an office on Centre Avenue.

Our respondents listed many doctors' names. It was customary in those days for doctors to make house calls. On occasion, however, people would go to the doctor's offices, which were often set up as small clinics or private hospitals. In general, the attitudes toward doctors were reverential.

> They believed in him like they believed in God.

At the turn of the century most women shunned hospitals when they had to give birth. Births still took place almost exclusively in the homes and many women gave birth with only a neighbor in attendance. Jewish women, however, preferred to have a professional midwife, like Bobba Hannah Sandusky, or the help of a doctor.



Dr. Blumberg delivered the babies at my home.

As time went on, and hospitals became safer for women, the tendency to give birth in hospitals grew.

My first baby was delivered by Dr. Wexler at the Montefiore Clinic. The others were delivered at his private hospital, and my youngest at the new Montefiore.

I had my first baby at Montefiore. I thought it was better than having it at home. There were nurses there and all the facilities.

The name of Montefiore Hospital is bound up with the history of the Pittsburgh Jewish community. A project conceived and carried out by our respondents and their friends and relatives, they are proud of their achievement.

It was the Jewish mothers who built Montefiore. When their sons went to medical school, and then were discriminated against and had to go very far away to intern, they decided to build a Jewish hospital right here in Pittsburgh. They got Mrs. Barney Davis, her husband was a diamond merchant, and she organized the campaign.

Montefiore Hospital was started so a Jew could have a kosher place to stay when he was sick. It was the idea of a Mr. Levin who went to Rabbi Ashinsky and then to Mrs. Davis, and they got the women together to collect ten cents a week for the hospital. Later the Reform Jews associated themselves with the project too, but it was started by Eastern European Jews.

These two reasons, the need for a Jewish hospital where Jewish doctors could intern and could treat their patients without discrimination, and the need for a kosher hospital, were mentioned quite frequently by our older respondents as the reasons behind the building of one of Pittsburgh's best known hospitals.



Bobba Hannah Sandusky, the midwife who delivered several thousand babies and helped supervise care for the sick among the East European immigrants.



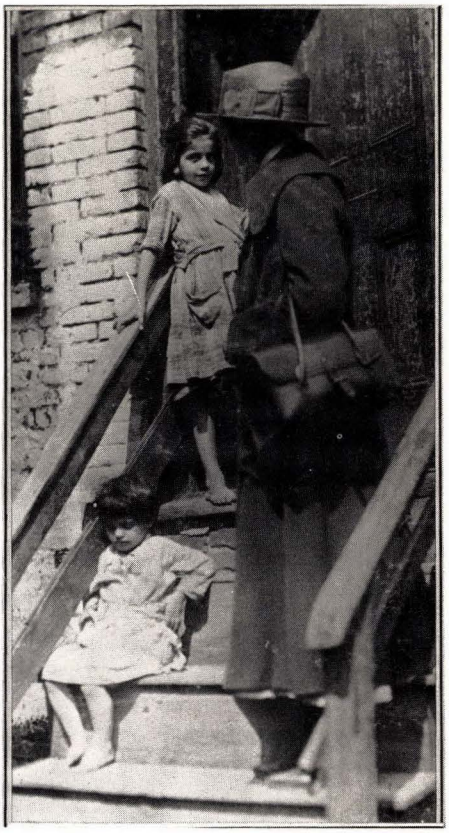
Rabbi Aaron M. Ashinsky



Neighborhood conditions surrounding the Irene Kaufmann Settlement in 1926.



Workers in a stogie factory in Pittsburgh.



The Visiting Nursing Service of the Settlement in 1920.



Members of the Ethical School Class of 1924 at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement.



Winners of the Annual Better Baby Contest, 1924 presented by the Settlement on the basis of general health and physical condition, cleanliness, proper feeding and attendance by mothers at baby health conferences.



Children patronizing "The Milk Well" at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement where milk and graham crackers were sold cheaply.



Boys being weighed upon arrival at the Emma Farm Camp near Pittsburgh which housed groups of children every two weeks during the summer.



The Roof Playground at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement which contained facilities for supervised play, basketball, volley ball, and quoits.



The cast of "Zwei Kunny Lemels" a Yiddish play produced by the Self Culture Club at the Settlement.



Evening School For Immigrants at the Settlement 1921.

NEIGHBORS
Irene Kaufmann Settlement

Volume 3 JUNE 15, 1925. Number 6.



SUMMER PLAY SCHOOL STARTS MONDAY, JUNE 29.

The Irene Kaufmann Summer Play School will open on Monday morning, June 29, at 9 o'clock. All boys and girls under fourteen years of age who are Juniors or Secondary members of the Settlement are welcome. A special summer rate has been arranged for those who have never been I. K. S. members before. Juniors, under 12 years, 25c for the rest of the year; Secondaries, under 14 years, 50c. No one will be admitted without a membership card. For girls there will be classes in swimming, kindergarten, dancing, scrap books, cooking, cross-stitching, basketry, machine sewing, hand sewing, playground work, bead making, dramatics, stories and games, silhouettes, raffia work, spool knitting, doll making, tie dying, etc. For boys there will be classes in radio, electricity, basketry, swimming, first aid, nature study, travelogue, toy-making, basketry, camp cooking, etc. The assemblies will be as follows: Monday morning, Community Singing; Tuesday mornings, Stunts; Wednesday mornings, Health Talks; Thursday mornings, Junior Citizenship; Friday mornings, Story Telling. The I. K. S. Milk Well will be in operation every morning and you'll be able to get a bottle of milk and crackers for five cents. Be sure and bring your nickel every day. You will be weighed and shown your gain in weight during the summer. Join the I. K. S. Summer Play School now and assure yourself a good time for the whole summer.



I. K. S. MILK WELL NOW OPEN

Join the hundreds on the road to health. Milk is the most complete food known. Drink as much of it as you can and you will never have to visit the doctor. The I. K S. Milk Well opens on Monday morning, June 29, at the same time with the Summer Play School. This year you will be able to get a bottle of the best ice-cold milk and some graham crackers, all for a **nickel—5c.** You can also get your weight free at the same time. Bring your friends and visit the I. K. S. Milk Well. Have you seen the Health Posters in the Milk Well?

o

SUMMER PLAY SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Over forty young men and women have already offered their services and have been assigned from one to five mornings a week to assist in the Irene Kaufmann Settlement Summer Play School, which begins June 28 and continues to August 28. To these we give thanks, as their help assures the success of our Summer Play School. With an enrollment of over 500 children and an average daily attendance of nearly 200, it would be impossible for us to cope with the situation without assistance from Volunteers. We still have room for a few more and we can use you morning, afternoon, or evening, any day of the week. Come and join our ranks and we shall promise you an interesting and pleasant summer. See Mr. Gerson, Mr. Pittler or Miss Werthheimer if you can help.

An issue of **Neighbors** published by the Irene Kaufmann Settlement. It included a section in Yiddish.

The Hebrew Free Loan Association

OF PITTSBURGH, PA.

גמילות חסדים

Office, Irene Kaufmann Settlement
1835 Centre Avenue

Pittsburgh, Pa., ...192

M.....

.....

Dear Sir:—
Madam:—

You received a loan on..... and you were to pay $..... a week. You are behind in your payments $..... Please pay at once and make prompt payments hereafter. You can make payments every day at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement.

Yours truly,
Jack J. Frishman,
Secretary.

וועדטהער ,העדר:
מאדאם:

איהר האָט געקראָגען אַ הלואה אם ..... און איהר האָט געדאַרפט צאָהלען ..... $ אַ וואָך. איהר זיט הינטערשטעליג אין אייערע צאָהלונגען ..... $. ביטע אייצאָהלען באַלד, און מאַכט פון יעצט אָן אייערע צאָהלונגען פראַמפט. איהר קענט יעדען טאָג צאָהלען אין אירין קויפמאַן סעטעלמענט.

יעקב פרישמאן, סעקרעטער אכטונגספאל,

Form letter sent to delinquents by the Hebrew Free Loan Association.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RELIGIOSITY AND RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION

I came here with the traditional baggage of a European Jew—Shabbos, kashrus and so on. I was surprised to see my former countrymen throw off the mantle of religious behavior. Since I have lived for many years I have become more liberal and now I put more stress on how a person acts to another person.

1. Religiosity

Some respondents felt called upon to defend their breaches of strict religious observance.

Of course I worked on Shabbos. I had to. Pittsburgh was not New York. You had a very hard time here finding a job where you could keep the Sabbath.

I was always Orthodox but I had to work on Shabbos. I went to shul daily when I wasn't working on the trains. When I tried to get off on Rosh Hashanah my boss said no, so I went to a higher boss who switched the schedule and let me off. I was able to get off from then on. At the Annual Dinner at Webster Hall they automatically served me cheese without even asking. I had originally planned not to eat.

I didn't know what non-religious was! I was Jewish. When I had to work on Shabbos I did, but if I didn't have to, I would not even light a match.

I went to services only on the High Holidays. On Shabbos I stayed home to take care of the younger children so that my mother could go to shul.

In general, food habits changed less than Sabbath observance. Although some respondents mentioned that they started eating in restaurants which were not kosher, most kept to a kosher diet. This was due, in large part, to the fact that they lived in their parents' homes where the kitchens were the responsibility of their mothers.

Some of the men told how they gradually stopped performing some of the religious rituals, such as daily prayer, putting on phylacteries and so forth.

> For two years after my Bar Mitzvah I was very careful to do as my father—put on my tefillin and pray before breakfast. But already I was starting to become a doubter. One morning I just sat down and had breakfast without praying. I knew that my father was hurt, but that was it.
>
> I was all alone in America and the other people in the boarding house used to laugh at me for putting on tefillin and praying regularly. Little by little they influenced me and I stopped.

Those who came with their parents often mentioned the difficulties the older generation had in adapting to American ways.

> My father never got used to America.
>
> My father worked in a stogy factory run by an Orthodox man so that he could keep the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. I worked there too, but as soon as some of the stogy factories started opening on Saturday I got work there. For a while I tried to keep it a secret from my father—he was in shul most of the Sabbath anyway—but he found out. He didn't like it but we needed my wages.

Some remarked that their fathers tried very hard to transplant their religious institutions from the Old Country to Pittsburgh.

> My father's life was the shul. When Rabbi Sivitz opened the Talmud Torah, he made me a charter student. It wasn't like the heder in Europe, because we went after public school, but the subjects we studied were what was studied in heder.
>
> My father donated a Sefer Torah to the Pliskover Verein. Since

we did not have a Pliskover shul, we decided to keep it in the *Aron Kodesh* of Rabbi Kochin's shul, because he was very friendly with us. On the day we took the Torah to Tifereth Israel we made a parade. Professor Rosen and his band marched at the head and we paraded through the Hill District to Webster Avenue to the Shul.

My father was an officer of his congregation, but we children were all Socialists. However, as long as we lived at home we respected his feelings and tried not to do anything at home that would hurt him.

Some, however, were quite outspoken about their negative attitudes to religion.

I didn't change my religious observance in Pittsburgh because I had rejected religion while I was still living in Vitebsk. I was a leader of a Bund group there and I did not suddenly become a shul Jew in America.

Those who came here after World War One, and before the imposition of the strict quota laws of 1924, tended to be polarized into two groups: the extremely Orthodox and the free-thinkers. Among the former were women whose husbands had come to Pittsburgh some years before the war and had saved money to bring their families over, but had been caught in Europe during the war and had stayed for years until they could come. There were some instances of adjustment problems because the newcomers from Europe could not recognize or adjust to the ways of their Americanized husbands or fathers.

I was supposed to meet my father at the railroad station but I did not see him. A man with a little short beard came over to me but I did not recognize him. When my father had left he had a long beard.

My wife was very observant but I was not. I went to work on Shabbos and she prayed for me.

2. Building a Shul

Between 1905 and 1906 we collected $100 from each member. In 1907 we bought a lot from Mr. Caplan the baker and built our synagogue—Sharei Zedek, the Polish shul. Our ladies auxiliary

raised money for free loans, for wedding gifts, and so on. We organized a mutual aid society called Erste Warshover Unterstitzungs Verein. We did not all come from Warsaw—some were from Lodz and some from Lublin and you did not have to be Polish to come to us for help. We gave help to whoever asked.

When enough people from a certain area could be assembled they tended to form their own congregation, often on a *landsmanshaft* basis. This was the place to which new immigrants from the same town could come and meet *landsleit,* find out about a job or an apartment, and tell their compatriots the latest news from the Old Country.

In the satellite communities, Jews did not divide along nationality lines. As soon as there were enough Jews to form a minyan, discussions would start on building a shul.

In 1905 I bought a Swedish Lutheran Church which became Congregation Ahavat Achim of Braddock. The Congregation later repaid me the $7,000 it had cost. I also organized a Religious School and Jewish Center on Fifth Street. At one time eighty children studied there. We brought a rabbi from New York.

Another characteristic of the satellite communities was the tendency of the congregation, a sisterhood or men's group to become affiliated with a national Jewish organization.

The B'nai Abraham Ladies Auxiliary in Butler was organized in 1907. In 1918 we became a section of the National Council of Jewish Women.

The Hebrew Ladies Aid of McKeesport became a B'nai B'rith Auxiliary.

I helped organize a B'nai B'rith chapter at the Tree of Life in Ellwood City.

In the smaller communities, all of the Jewish social life tended to revolve around synagogue affairs.

The Ladies Beneficial Society of the Gemilas Chesed Synagogue on Market Street in McKeesport was involved in all kinds of functions and banquets.

My social life was around the Ohab Zedek Sisterhood in East Pittsburgh.

In the big cities, however, there was proliferation rather than consolidation of synagogues. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, synagogue formation proceeded apace. The Hill District became the site for some two dozen synagogues some of which were recorded by our respondents only by their popular names and could not be identified. Thus, the "Miller Street Shul" is a vague term because there were about five congregations meeting on Miller Street at various times.

> At that time all the shuls on Miller Street were filled up most of the time.

When a respondent was asked why his father found it necessary to organize a new congregation and buy a house for the shul (he could not keep up the payments and lost the house) when there were already two established Orthodox synagogues, the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol and the Beth Jacob, the respondent answered that they were "too far away."

From others, however, one learns of other motives in building their "own shul." The members of the Beth Hamedrash Hagodol and Beth Jacob were mainly Lithuanian Jews who were already well established when the great masses of Russian Jews started coming in the 1880's. The newcomers, mainly from the Ukraine, wanted to be able to pray in their own *nusach*. The Lithuanians were mainly *misnagdim*, the Russians had been influenced by Hasidism. The new immigrants followed the pattern of synagogue establishment begun in 1864 when the "Polanders" broke away from Rodef Shalom (and founded their own synagogue, Tree of Life) when Rodef Shalom adopted the Reform *Minhag America*.

By 1869, there were some Lithuanian Jews who felt that the services at Tree of Life were not Orthodox enough, and so they formed their own congregation, B'nai Israel. Some of the charter members of this synagogue were the relatives of our older respondents, and had sponsored their coming to Pittsburgh.

Ten years later, a group of Jews left B'nai Israel to form Beth Jacob. In 1892, the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol was built on Washington Street by the B'nai Israel. It became the place for all important community meetings dealing with Orthodox

Jewish affairs. The "Washington Street Shul" has been called the "Mother of Pittsburgh Orthodoxy."

In 1887 a group of Lithuanian Jews formed the Shaare Torah on Townsend Street (variously called the "Townsend Street Shul" or the "Litvisher Shul" by respondents; Sharei Zedek, the "Polish Shul," was also called the "Townsend Street Shul".) In 1890, Rabbi M.S. Sivitz came to Shaare Torah after two years at Congregation B'nai Israel, and remained until his death.

In 1901, Rabbi A.M. Ashinsky was called to serve the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol. Rabbi Ashinsky had come to the United States in 1886 and was the first Americanized Orthodox Rabbi to lead the local Jewish community. His participation in the foundation of various educational and philanthropic institutions and his ability to participate with Reform Jews in communal affairs, made him one of the most popular Jewish leaders in Pittsburgh. Through the years, Rabbi Ashinsky also served as spiritual leader of a number of small congregations.

Most of the smaller congregations could not afford a full time rabbi. There were usually a number of learned men in the congregation who could lead prayers and study groups. The first "Russian" Shul, in reality made up of Jews from the Ukraine, was the Shaare Tefillah on Miller Street.

> Our congregation was founded in the 1890's. First we rented a room at Fulton and Centre Avenue over Rapaport's grocery store. We would rent the Marion Street Hall for the High Holidays. Then we built Shaare Tefillah on Miller Street. So many people crowded in on the first day, the new floor collapsed, but no one was hurt.

Soon a dissident group left Shaare Tefillah to form the Beth Mogen David, right next door on Miller Street, and Beth Abraham.

From 1881, Poale Zedek, the "Hungarian" Shul, was the center for Jews from Austria-Hungary. By 1909 there were enough Jews from the Province of Galicia to warrant a separate "Galicianer Shul."

> First my father and his friends met in a rented room at Fullerton and Charles. Then they bought a house on Crawford

Street and my father became the president of Machzike Hadas. Then they moved to Wylie and Granville.

The influx of Roumanian Jews at the turn of the century led to the building of two "Roumanian Shuls," the "big" one, Ohr Chodosh, and the "little" one, Ohel Jacob, both on Roberts Street.

Although many congregations in the Old Country had borne appelations pointing to the trade of their members, e.g. "the shoemakers' Shul," "the tailor's Shul," only one synagogue of this kind has been mentioned by our respondents. This was the "Rags Peddlers' Shul," Keser Torah, founded in 1910 by Jews from Volhynia, on Webster Avenue. "Rags" was the derogatory name used for drygoods of all kinds.

Other congregations mentioned by respondents were Shaare Zion on Wylie Avenue, Agudas Achim on Wylie Avenue, Chofetz Chayim on Bedford Avenue, Anshe Lubavitch on Erin Street, and B'nai Zion which met first in the Zionist Institute, then in the Hebrew Institute basement. A minyan also met regularly at the IKS.

A few respondents mentioned the names of synagogues which were established toward the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. These were Kneseth Israel, a "Roumanian Shul" on Miller Street, now on Negley Avenue; Adath Israel, on Ward Street in Oakland; B'nai Israel in East End, which became Conservative; Adath Jeshurun, the "Margaretta Street Shul," which broke away from B'nai Israel; Beth Shalom, in Squirrel Hill, founded in 1918; and Beth El, in South Hills, founded in 1916.

When asked about their present affiliation some respondents indicated that they have transferred from Orthodox synagogues to Conservative and Reform synagogues. One respondent remarked sarcastically, "Our children have all become 'Deitsche Yuden'. They all go to the Temple."

3. Landsmanschaften

Lazar Rubenstein was the first of the Pliskovers to migrate to America and settle with his family in Pittsburgh. The immigrants that followed had then an 'address' to come to, and there they were made to feel 'at home'. As the first of the Pliskovers to

> own his own home and to become a citizen of the new country, Lazar's home became a haven for all the new arrivals. If a 'Greener' was arrested for peddling without a license, Lazar, because he was a citizen and had political connections with the Squire . . . obtained his release. If the immigrant desired, as they inevitably did, to bring his family over, and he was without the necessary funds, Lazar as a property holder would take him to a bank and indorse a note for passage money, to be paid back later in small installments.

The history of the founding of Pliskover Verein was repeated a number of times, with variations, by groups from other towns. The Jews of Potkamin in Galicia formed the Potkamin Fraternal Association. There were a Volhyner Society, a Roumanian Ladies Aid Society, the Erste Warshover Unterstitzungs Verein at Shaare Zedek, a United Bessarabians, Hebrew Austrian Benefit Society, Marecer Verein, Podolia Society, Federation of Galician Jews, Shadriner—Lubavitcher Verein, Skverer Verein, and others.

Many *landsmanschaften* indicated their major activity in their names—free loan.

> For example, if a peddler's horse died on him, he couldn't do business anymore. We would lend him five dollars. For five dollars you could buy a horse in those days, and he was back in business. Or for three dollars a broom peddler could buy a supply of brooms and mops to sell. They paid us back with small sums every week.

For many newcomers, the *landsmanschaft* served an important social function.

> Sunday was heaven. We had picnics every Sunday at the Polish shul. Every month a different member would contribute herring and a sack of potatoes. The women prepared the herring and potatoes and we always had a meal ready for anyone who was hungry.

One of the most important functions of the *landsmanschaft* or synagogue was the provision of hallowed ground for a burial place. The first permanent Jewish organization in Pittsburgh

was a Jewish cemetery, for which land was purchased in Reserve township in 1847.

The *landsleit* in Pittsburgh also kept in touch with *landsleit* in other cities, and especially with their friends in the Old Country. Most families sent back money which they had saved from their meager earnings. Sometimes the *landsleit* would get a letter about a poor girl who needed a dowry, or a widow and orphans who needed help, and a collection would be made and the money sent. Some of our respondents were personally responsible for bringing to America a dozen or more *landsleit* and relatives.

The growing tensions in Europe which led to World War I and to the Russian Revolution were felt very quickly by the Jews. In Pittsburgh they received letters from their friends telling of pogroms, arrests, persecution, and death.

In 1919 the Pliskover Association of Pittsburgh established a Pliskover Relief Branch, whose work was extended to Pliskover societies in other cities. A delegate, Harry Adler, was sent to Roumania where he assembled the refugees from Pliskov and delivered messages and money from their *landsleit* in America. His aid included bribing the police to permit the refugees to remain on Roumanian soil until visas could be arranged for them to come to America.

4. Charitable Institutions

> We always gave to the poor. What little you have must be shared.

A number of institutions that arose paralleled to a certain extent charitable institutions already in existence when the immigrants arrived. Thus, the earliest philanthropic Jewish women's organization in Pittsburgh, the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society (1856), had as its chief function the visiting and comforting of the sick. One of the organizers of a similar society was Bobba Hannah Sandusky.

A number of small "bikur holim" societies were organized on a *landsmanschaft* or synagogue level. However, when our respondents used this term they usually referred to the Bikur Holim Society organized by Rabbi M.S. Sivitz of Shaare Torah. Founded in 1912, it had over 1,200 members in 1921 and is still

active today. Members of the Society visited families where illness had created problems, and supplied money, medicines, and food where necessary.

Although a number of *landsleit* and synagogue groups had free loan arrangements for their members, there was need for such an organization to serve all the Jews in the city. In 1896 Mr. Simon Shupinsky organized the Hebrew Free Loan Association, later to be affiliated with the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies.

The J.M. Gusky Hebrew Orphanage, founded in 1890, cared for young children who had been orphaned or whose families had been broken up by divorce. However, it usually only accepted children who were over seven years old.

> When three young children in our neighborhood were orphaned, my mother and some of the other Roumanian ladies got together and organized the Baby Home.

The Home for Babies was one of the favorite charities of our respondents and their parents. In 1921 it had more than 4000 members in the tri-state region, and 50 children were being cared for in the Home on Breckenridge Avenue.

In 1906, the corner stone for the Home for the Aged was laid and the founders prepared for about two dozen old people.

> When a *landsman* named Stavsky died at a gentile institution, Lazer Rubenstein ran to Rabbi Ashinsky and started the movement for a Jewish *moshav zkeinim*.

From a 28 bed capacity in 1906, with one professional worker and volunteer help, the Home was filled to capacity in 1964 with 425 beds, a medical staff, and a complete hospital. Some of our respondents served as volunteer workers both for the Baby Home and the Home for the Aged.

Another type of institution was the Lechem Aneyum Society which met at Beth Jacob every Thursday. There the members, led by Max Rogal, Charles Sable, and others, prepared baskets of hallah, chicken, fish, potatoes, and vegetables, which they would distribute to anyone who requested food for the Sabbath.

One very old Jewish philanthropic tradition was *hachnasat orhim*, hospitality.

> Every Friday night my father would look for strangers in the synagogue, usually a newly arrived immigrant with no family here. He would invite him to spend the Sabbath with us. Of course we always had an indigent scholar staying with us for Passover.

An institutionalized form of *hachnasat orhim* was the House of Shelter, where temporary care, food and bed were provided. In 1921 the House of Shelter was supported by the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, had a superintendent, a Mr. Israel, and lodged and fed an average of thirty men a week.

A Malbish Arumin society ("clothing the naked") had 831 members in 1907. It provided clothes for infants and delicacies for the sick.

Another activity with particular significance for the Jewish immigrants was the Maot Hittim campaigns before Passover. This was usually done by each synagogue separately, since the synagogue officers knew which of their congregants were in need. Such money was distributed to non-synagogue members as well.

A universal method for collecting funds for local, national, and international organizations, were the "pushkas," the charity boxes for orphanages, the poverty-smitten, for Eastern European yeshivot and for Palestine. Almost all respondents remembered the various boxes hanging in the kitchen into which they would throw coins before the Sabbath.

A great deal of giving was done on an individual basis.

> If I wanted to give, I gave. I didn't need pushkas.
>
> People knew me, they would come and say, "Srulik, we want you to give to such and such an organization." I would give.

5. Montefiore Hospital

In 1908, the first Montefiore Hospital was dedicated with 65 beds. Although it had been a project conceived and carried out by the Eastern European immigrants, since the older community saw no special reason for a "Jewish" hospital, by 1912 it had been accepted into the newly founded Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and it became a joint project of both communi-

ties. In 1919, the new hospital by-laws indicated that the object of Montefiore Hospital was to afford medical and surgical aid to the sick, regardless of race, creed or color.

A special drive was made in 1924, as part of the Ladies Hospital Aid Society silent drive, resulting in pledges of almost $100,000. Many respondents remember putting aside ten cents a week as their donations to Montefiore Hospital, and collecting sheets and bedding. Some women did the laundry on a voluntary basis.

6. Federation

> The Eastern European immigrants required tremendous aid and all over the country efforts were made to deal with the multitude of problems created by immigration. It soon became clear that coordination and cooperation among agencies were needed, to avoid duplicate and multiple fund raising campaigns. Pittsburgh created its Federation of Jewish Philanthropies in 1912, when there were some 35,000 Jews here.

From 1936, a United Jewish Fund raised money for non-local purposes, mainly for Palestine, and in 1955 the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and the United Jewish Fund consolidated to form the present United Jewish Federation.

CHAPTER NINE

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

> I joined the Maccabean Zionist Organization in 1910 when I was seventeen. A year later I joined the Jewish branch of the Socialist Party and a year after that I became a member of Workmen's Circle.

The answer of this respondent, an ex-Yeshiva Bocher, to the question of wider organizational affiliations, is typical of many. As a group, our respondents were joiners, and many of them are still dues-paying members to multiple organizations—religious, philanthropic, Zionist, labor, local, national and international.

1. The Zionist Movement

A. Hovevei Zion

As one of the leaders of the Dorshe Zion Society in Pittsburgh, R.B. Raphael inspired groups of young people to form Zionist societies. He was one of the few adults in the community to champion the cause of the Herzl Club, formed in 1898 by a group of boys. An enlightened Jew, Mr. Raphael was a firm believer in the ability of women to participate in communal affairs.

> Every week five of us—Rose Raphael, Jennie Alpern, two other girls and myself—would meet at the Raphael home to discuss Zionism. We called ourselves "Daughters of Zion." After Henrietta Szold came to visit Pittsburgh we all became charter members of Pittsburgh Hadassah.

A group similar to the Herzl Club, the Tiphereth Zion Society, had been formed about the same time, in 1898. The two soon merged as the Tiphereth Zion Society, with Morris Neaman from the Herzl Club as the first president. This was the nucleus of the General Zionist Movement in Pittsburgh.

B. Federation of American Zionists

> In Europe, people wished that when they would get old, they would go to die in Eretz Israel. We would collect money to send to these old people, who were waiting to die, and to the men studying in the yeshivas. As a child, I said, "If I had some money, I would go to Eretz Israel to live!"
>
> My father and my oldest brother went from the Ukraine to Turkey to investigate the possibilities of settling in Palestine. I guess they could not manage it. We had a picture of Herzl in the house and I remember the wide-spread mourning when he died.

The idea of Eretz Israel as a place to live rather than die began gaining momentum with the spread of Herzl's ideas and influence. A number of respondents had relatives who carried out their wish to settle in Palestine.

In June, 1903, the Sixth Zionist Convention was held in Pittsburgh, some two months after the horrors of the Kishinev pogrom. Nearly 15,000 Pittsburgh Jews heard prominent non-Jews calling for the establishment of a Jewish state. This first Zionist convention to be held in Pittsburgh netted $5,000 which was used to build a Zionist Institute for the benefit of all the Zionist groups in the city.

> I worked so hard and so long—my only recreation was Zionist activities at the Institute.
>
> I wasn't affiliated but I went to Zionist Institute just to hear the speakers.

The Hovevei Zion and the early American Zionist Federation were mostly middle class in orientation and many of them were Orthodox Jews.

C. The Labor Zionists

I became a member of the Social Zionists in Russia. Our goal was to form a Jewish socialist state anywhere in the world. Our ideological leaders were Simon Dubnow, Israel Zangwill and Nahman Syrkin. Some of us talked about Uganda as a possible Jewish home.

When I came to Pittsburgh we had a small group here of about thirty. We called ourselves Socialist-Territorialists. Some of them were Abraham Joseph, Morris Cohen, Sam Klebansky, Hyman Korn and Jacob Rothbart. I was the delegate from Pittsburgh at the Cleveland Convention in 1907.

Although our group was small we were very active in cultural affairs. We had lectures every week and discussions. We often had arguments with the Socialists and Anarchists.

The Socialist Territorialist Organization as such petered out before World War One. Some of our members formed Branch 250 of Workmen's Circle. Others joined the Poale Zion. Many moved to other cities.

In Pittsburgh the Poale Zion opened its National Radical Volkschule in 1912.

I taught at the National Radical Volkschule in 1914, at the IKS building. This was before we had our own building. We held our meetings at the Labor Lyceum rather than the Zionist Institute. Of course, none of our teachers were paid, but even so we had to close down eventually for lack of funds. Later we participated in the Jewish National Folk School on Murray Avenue.

In 1908 Poale Zion created a fraternal order similar to the Workmen's Circle, called the Jewish National Workers' Alliance (later renamed the Farband-Labor Zionist Order), which at first had its national office in Pittsburgh, with Samuel Siegel as its National Secretary.

The women's section of Poale Zion, Pioneer Women, was founded twenty years after the parent organization.

In 1925 Sophie Udin came to my house where she organized a group of Pittsburgh women into the Pioneer Women. We are the sister organization of the Working Women's Council of the Histadrut.

Pioneer Women is the heart and soul of me. When I joined

Pioneer Women then I started the real work.

D. Mizrachi

Many of the members of the early Hovevei Zion were Orthodox Jews. Those who tended toward political Zionism were among the founders of the Federation of American Zionists. Some dissident Orthodox Jews broke away and formed the United Zionists. Most, however, became part of the Mizrachi movement within the Federation. Among the first such groups were the Dorshe Zion founded by Joseph Selig Glick, editor of the *Volksfreund,* and Ahayot Zion, the women's branch.

One of the organizers of the World Mizrachi Movement was Rabbi A.M. Ashinsky of Pittsburgh. He was a delegate to the eighth Zionist Congress in 1907, National Treasurer and first National Vice President of Mizrachi, and present at the Hebrew University dedication as recorded in the famous painting by the late artist Alexander Pilichovsky.

E. Hadassah

> On May 21, 1916, I met with my sister, Sarah Treelisky, (now Mrs. Jack M. Davis), Mrs. Barnett Davis, Mrs. Moses Krieger, and Mrs. M.L. Avner, together with the Daughters of Zion, and formed the Pittsburgh Chapter of Hadassah. I was privileged as a volunteer to organize practically every chapter in Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio. We had to combat the anti-Zionism of some of the Reform Jews, especially Charles Joseph, editor of the *Jewish Criterion.*

By the end of the first year, Hadassah had 121 members, many from the ranks of the Palestine Welfare Society organized by the late Rabbi J.L. Levy. In 1918 the forty-five members of the medical unit sent to Palestine included four Pittsburghers: three nurses, Bertha Finegold, Clara Millman, and Eva Alpern, and one doctor, Dr. Daniel Jackson.

A very important contribution to Hadassah development by the Pittsburgh Chapter took place at the Convention of 1921. At that time there was a split within the ranks of the American Zionist Organization, which threatened to split Hadassah also. Hadassah, however, emerged whole, autonomous and reconse-

crated to its task, thanks to the wisdom and restraint of certain of its delegates, particularly Mrs. A.H. Vixman of Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh Participation in Zionist Congresses and Conventions

In 1918 the ZOA held its convention in Pittsburgh. These were great times—the Balfour Declaration had promised a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Over 10,000 marchers went from the Zionist Institute on Centre Avenue to the courthouse and from there to the reviewing stand at the Schenley Hotel, led by Hyman Rogal, grand marshal. There were twenty-five bands with Danny Nirella in the lead. Three thousand children, dressed in blue and white, with six-pointed stars on their heads, participated, singing Hebrew songs.

At this convention the Pittsburgh Program for the establishment of the Jewish National Homeland upon the basis of social justice was adopted.

In 1920, after the Peace Conference at San Remo, a parade in Pittsburgh wound through the streets of the Hill District with 12,000 people, twenty bands, and Jacob Lichter as parade marshal.

> After the Brandeis-Weizmann split at the 1921 Convention most Pittsburghers tended to the Brandeis side. However, when Dr. Chaim Weizmann introduced the idea of Keren Hayesod for unified fund raising, many of us supported him. At Louis Yale Borkon's newspaper office on Centre Avenue, we came up with the idea of forming a Palestine Council to be chaired by Dr. A.M. Snitzer and with Mr. Borkon as secretary. We invited Dr. Weizmann to come to Pittsburgh to inaugurate the Keren Hayesod campaign. We organized a mass parade of adults and children with Dr. Weizmann riding next to the Mayor. At Syria Mosque we raised over $5,000 for Keren Hayesod.

A prominent member of the Pittsburgh Jewish Community, Sol Rosenbloom, was one of the major supporters of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He gave large sums of money in his lifetime and in his will for the buildings on Mt. Scopus.

> When the Hebrew University was dedicated in Jerusalem we had a grand academic procession here in Pittsburgh. Thousands

of doctors, lawyers, etc.,—Jews and non-Jews—who had academic degrees, marched through the city wearing their caps and gowns.

The Ubiquitous Blue Box

Every home had a blue box.
Every Friday night mother put coins in the box.
Father would empty his pockets before going to shul on Friday evening and we would put the coins in the box.

The major fund raising of the early Zionist Movement was through "the ubiquitous blue box," the Jewish National Fund blue and white container with a slot into which the Jews of Europe and America threw their coins. These small contributions from millions of boxes supplied the money for the purchase and reclamation of the soil of Eretz Israel.

In 1904 my brother was one of the founders of the Lebanon Zionist society. Together with other groups they formed a Zionist Council in 1906. Jacob Lichter was the first president. The Council formed a Jewish National Fund Committee to coordinate collection of funds for land purchase and reclamation.

Other methods besides the blue boxes were used. There were Jewish National Fund stamps, flower days, inscriptions in the Golden Book, concerts and cultural programs. The Jewish National Fund office in Pittsburgh urged that every synagogue put a National Fund stamp on its tickets for the High Holidays and urged Zionists not to buy any ball or picnic tickets unless they bore JNF stamps.

Before the High Holidays we had door-to-door solicitations for the Jewish National Fund.

In 1926, a very large sum of money realized from the sale of the Zionist Institute was given to the Jewish National Fund by the Zionists of Pittsburgh for the purchase of 2,000 dunams of land near Afula, at Kfar Baruch, registered in the Jerusalem office of the JNF as "Nahlat Pittsburgh."

2. Socialist Movements

A. Workmen's Circle

The Pittsburgh branch of the Workmen's Circle, Branch 45, was founded only four years after the first Workmen's Circle was founded in New York in 1900. Between 1904 and the thirties it was probably the biggest Jewish organization in Pittsburgh. In 1910 we had 1600 members.

The Workmen's Circle in Pittsburgh engaged in educational work on both adult and youth levels, in Yiddish and English. Its activities extended far beyond the needs of the local Jewish community, although it centered its efforts there. When there was a strike in the garment industry in New York in 1910, the members of the Workmen's Circle collected funds to help support the strikers, most of whom were Jewish.

In 1919, when the steel workers of Pittsburgh, probably none of whom were Jewish, struck, the Workmen's Circle served as the distributing agency for thousands of dollars which were raised by Jewish labor organizations all over the country.

Politically, most members of the Workmen's Circle tended toward Socialism, although many were not actually members of the Socialist Party.

During the presidential campaign of 1908, Eugene V. Debs, the Socialist candidate, arrived in Pittsburgh aboard the Red Special. He addressed two mass meetings at the Bijou Theatre, one on Sunday afternoon and one that night. All the Workmen's Circle members came to cheer him.

Years later, when he was released from prison, 100 of us made an automobile caravan to Cleveland to join the masses who waited to welcome him.

The central meeting place for the Workmen's Circle was the Labor Lyceum on Miller Street.

We built the Labor Lyceum at 71 Miller Street with pennies we collected between 1907 and 1916.

After the Russian Revolution in 1917, the fighting in the ranks of the Socialist movement in the United States was

reflected in Pittsburgh in the quarrels within the Workmen's Circle and within the Jewish Socialist movement. Within the Labor Lyceum occurred bitter fights between the Socialists and the Communists, as well as between the Poale Zion and the Communists. Eventually the Communists broke away from the Socialist Party and formed the Communist Party and the Communists within the ranks of the Workmen's Circle were expelled. The long years of strife led to the sale of the Labor Lyceum in 1930. Unfortunately, the money brought in by the sale was lost in the Depression, as the bank administering the funds went bankrupt.

Although many of our respondents who came to Pittsburgh in the first two decades of the century have pleasant memories of the Labor Lyceum as a cultural and social center, some who came later recall it as a controversial place.

> I did not continue in the Workmen's Circle because they were all Communists.
>
> The Labor Lyceum was built by Jewish Socialists. They fought with the Zionists and tossed out all Yiddishkeit.
>
> I used to go to the Labor Lyceum regularly until people began saying that anyone who went there was a Communist.
>
> I did not like the Communist ideology at the Labor Lyceum.

B. The Socialist Party

> My father and uncle founded the Socialist Party in our small town not far from Pittsburgh. I remember shaking hands with Eugene V. Debs when he came to speak. Meetings were held at Bushingers Farm.
>
> I was an active member of the Third Ward Branch of the Socialist Party, also known as the Jewish Section. We were part of the Jewish Socialist Federation and the American Socialist Party.
>
> I am very proud of being a member of the Socialist Party. It was my first love. I went to all the Socialist Party lectures and parties and the annual balls. I remember Eugene V. Debs very well.

Although many of our respondents were active in the Socialist Party, and a few were members of the Communist Party, very few were willing to talk about these associations of the past. The

fear of the McCarthy period seemed to have cast a permanent pall upon them. Before the formation of the Communist Party, the Jewish Socialist Federation was quite strong in Pittsburgh. The Socialists ran a cooperative store on Centre Avenue and put up candidates for local offices. The Young Peoples Socialist League, to which some of our respondents belonged as immigrants, had about 100 members in 1920. After the Communists left, the Socialists founded the Jewish Socialist Verband and joined the Socialist Party of America. It was active in the Anti-Nazi League. In 1936 there was a split within its ranks and one group became the Social Democratic Federation. Those respondents who recall those days often have mixed feelings about the ideologies of their youth. Some are still faithful to these ideas. Most have become bourgeois in their attitudes.

> I was and am a Socialist and have no use for the Zionists.
>
> I went to all the dances and other activities of the YPSL at the Labor Lyceum, but quit when it went Communist.
>
> I was a Bundist leader in Russia but was very disappointed by the Socialist Party in America, so I quit and confined my activites to the labor union.

3. American Jewish Congress

> Ben-Zion Hirsch was well liked by all factions. When there was talk of an American Jewish Congress, he was put forth as the Peoples' Candidate. He did not have enough money to put on a big campaign and he did not get elected the first time. But in 1922 he ran again and was elected.

The American Jewish Congress was formed to serve as a representative of a united American Jewry at the Peace Conference after World War I. Representing the Pittsburgh Jewish Community were Rabbi A.M. Ashinsky, M.L. Avner, Allan Davis, Edgar J. Kaufmann, Morris Neaman and Solomon Rosenbloom.

The American Jewish Congress which reconvened in 1922 was not really a continuation of the first Congress but rather a Zionist outgrowth of it.

Ben Zion Hirsch, chosen by the Pittsburgh Jewish community

to represent them at this Congress (together with Dr. Nathan Isaacs) was the owner of one of the most popular meeting places on the Hill—Hirsch's Book Store. He was learned in both traditional and modern subjects, a product of world renowned Lithuanian yeshivot, who had come to America at seventeen. He enrolled in the Etz Chayim Yeshiva in New York but did not receive ordination. In 1907, Hirsch came to Pittsburgh and opened his first book store on Franklin Street. After his marriage in 1910 he moved his store to Centre Avenue, the location most mentioned by our respondents. Hirsch's Book Store stocked both Yiddish and Hebrew books and all the Yiddish newspapers. Its location between the Zionist Institute and the Labor Lyceum made it a natural meeting place for Jews of all persuasions. Sometimes the arguments over politics even led to blows! Hirsch's Book Store continued to be a popular gathering place for Yiddish and Hebrew speaking Pittsburghers until Mr. Hirsch's death in 1952.

4. Overseas Relief

> I helped organize the People's Relief Committee here in Pittsburgh, one of the predecessors of the Joint (Distribution Committee).
>
> We had weekly collections at the Workmen's Circle for the People's Relief Committee for victims in Poland and Russia.

A number of respondents mentioned their active participation in the People's Relief Committee. These were mostly Workmen's Circle members. A number of relief committees had been organized in the wake of the 1903 Kishinev pogrom, but they had not lasted. The First World War set off another spurt of relief organizations which consolidated in November, 1914 as the Joint Distribution Committee of the American Funds for Jewish War Sufferers (JDC). Throughout the post-World War I period there was conflict between the various constituent groups. Some anti-Zionists opposed relief allocations for Palestine; contributors of large sums often criticized the masses for not giving enough and there was discord between the Orthodox and Reform.

> In 1919 we had conflicts with the *Yahudim*. When we

attempted to protest the Polish actions against the Jews at a mass meeting in the Lyceum Theatre, Rabbi Levy of the Temple started talking about all the other enslaved peoples. Abe Cahan, of the *Forward*, gave it to him.

CHAPTER TEN

AMERICANIZATION: AT HOME IN AMERICA

I felt like Columbus, going ahead to the New World, as I planned to bring my family over as soon as I could.

1. Adjustment

The process of Americanization began for most of our respondents while they were still in Europe. Some had naive ideas about American wealth and prosperity, but even the smallest *shtetlach* had, by the turn of the century, reports that gave a pretty realistic picture of conditions here. There was a constant exchange of letters and even an occasional visitor from abroad, enough to whet youthful appetites for the freedom to be experienced in the New World.

One respondent, who worked at first as a peddler then owned his own business, raised five doctor sons, owns his home and is an active participant in Jewish and community affairs, at eighty answered exuberantly when asked about his adjustment:

After five years I owned the United States.

Only one or two tended toward the "melting pot" or "assimilation" theories of adjustment. Most expressed their strong identification with the Jewish people and their desire to continue that identification in either religious or cultural terms.

I kept all the laws of the Torah at home and gave my children the best Jewish education.

I tried to keep the Yiddish language alive by speaking only

Yiddish at home.

Almost all speak English fluently, but most with an accent. Many also write English well, and a few have even published their writings in local periodicals. The process of learning the language was considered previously, but the concommitant process of learning about America was often mentioned by respondents associated with the Columbian Council School, the Columbian Council School and Settlement, and the Irene Kaufmann Settlement.

The Columbian Council was founded for the explicit purpose of helping the immigrant become Americanized. Early attempts at "Americanization" however, were not always favorably viewed by the newcomers. The fact that many of the founders of the Council were also connected with the Reform Congregation Rodef Sholom made it suspect in the eyes of some.

By the twenties these attitudes had begun to change. The newspaper published by the Irene Kaufmann Settlement, *Neighbors*, began to print a page in Yiddish. Dramatic clubs which performed in Yiddish met at the IKS. There were classes in Yiddish and an Orthodox minyan met in the building. The ranks of the Board of Directors of the IKS and the volunteers and paid workers were filled from among the immigrants themselves. Some of our respondents advanced from participating in clubs and debates to endowing scholarships for the next generation of youngsters to enter the IKS.

Another major institution which helped the immigrant adjust was one he had created himself—the *landsmanschaft*.

We never felt like refugees. We were always part of a family—uncles and aunts and dozens of cousins.

The family circles and *landsmanschaften* were backed up, in Pittsburgh, by the feeling of belonging to the Jewish community of Pittsburgh. From the earliest years of Eastern European immigration in the late sixties and early seventies, when Bobba Hannah Sandusky knew every Jewish (and often non-Jewish) family on the Hill and what their needs were, there had developed a network of ties among families. The outsider who spent some time with our respondents was amazed at their remembrance of marriages among families and groups from

different countries.

Thus, interviewing a man from Bialystok, one found that his nephew was married to the granddaughter of a well known rabbi from Lithuania, or talking to a woman approaching her hundredth birthday who came to Pittsburgh in 1905, one found that she was a cousin of the first Jew on the Franklin School Board, and part of a family tree with literally hundreds of descendants in the Pittsburgh area. Some respondents were surprised that the interviewers did not know the family backgrounds of all of their children's spouses, and went into them in great detail. On the other hand, many of our interviewers were themselves part of that great network and the respondents were able to place them in terms of relationships.

In a sense, then, the great body of our respondents were a part of a Pittsburgh, or Tri-State *landsmanschaft.* The feeling of being at home in Pittsburgh has been transferred to a feeling of being at home in America.

2. Child Rearing

> I had very little schooling but all my children went through college. I went to work as a child. My children went only after their schooling was complete.
>
> Families had four to six children. I remember one family of four or five children who lived in a little alley, Beebe Place, where Bedford and DeVilliers meet. Of those children one is an outstanding engineer and the others are educated too. They did it themselves—they were self-made. The immigrants had a very hard struggle but some of them and their children are leading business and professional people today. They had to struggle and it took them a long time. The fathers were poor but the children got an education on their own.

An important aspect of the process of Americanization was the tremendous educational achievement of the children of our respondents. Almost none of our respondents were college graduates—most of their children were. Many of the second generation have obtained advanced degrees and positions of importance in the academic and professional world. The parents recognized and stressed this process as the major difference

between their own upbringing and how their children were reared.

I was raised in great poverty and went to work at the age of ten in a box factory in Minsk. I had no schooling, even though my father was a rabbi. My children all went to school.

There was a great difference in how our children were raised. We were raised in poverty and they were raised in abundance. However, we did have to sacrifice to give all our sons a medical education and a musical education. We took out the telephone and used the money for piano lessons.

When I was a child the pigs roamed the streets, I lived like a dog—potatoes, bread and milk, no meat. I never saw a tomato, pineapple or orange. My child had a wonderful life—machinery, bicycles, ate well, took vitamins.

A millionaire in the old country didn't live as good as a poor person here.

Some, however, felt that there had been no essential differences in the value systems of the way they had grown up and how they raised their children.

I raised my nine children the same way I was raised because I knew no other way of doing it.

Our children were raised with gentleness, kindness, understanding, just discipline and warmth—the same as in Europe.

There were a very few who felt that conditions here were not as favorable for their children as they had been for themselves.

In Russia I had not been poor. Here my children were born during the depression and I had to deny them many things. However, one of them graduated from high school and four from college.

A few raised the problems of anti-Semitism which they had not expected to encounter in America, and which were obstacles to their adjustment in society.

At Fifth Avenue High School the Eta Beta Pi fraternity was openly anti-Semitic. I made a speech criticizing them.

In South Hills the teacher called my son 'Jewboy.'

My children could not get into Teachers College, I suspect, because they were Jewish.

Some expressed the differences in child-rearing in negative terms.

Our children were spoiled more.

We were more strict in Europe. Girls were not allowed to go out with boys unchaperoned.

The more relaxed ways of America were viewed by others as a good thing.

I was not allowed to express myself as a child. My children were permitted to discuss things. One of them went to Oxford and is now a professor at Vassar. The other went to Princeton and Harvard.

One respondent raised her children the "American" way—according to a book.

I was very rigid and raised my children according to Dr. Holt's book on child rearing.

An important aspect of the immigrant Jews' methods of child rearing was their attitude toward mixed marriage. In this delicate area, our respondents were surprisingly frank. Very few of them approved of mixed marriages. A few said that their attitudes were neutral and that it depended on the couple concerned. One respondent was himself married to a non-Jew.

In general, our respondents were opposed to mixed marriage (where the non-Jewish partner did not convert) and even to intermarriage (where there was conversion) unless they themselves were affected.

My children are married to non-Jews and it does not really matter.

My daughter married a gentile but he converted.

My son married a gentile. I felt bad, but what can you do? Their children were Bar Mitzvah.

My convert-daughter-in-law is more active in Jewish affairs than a lot of women who are born Jews.

One respondent summed up the entire question of child rearing in America astutely and succinctly.

This is a different world in every sense. There is more money, more schooling, bigger and better homes, better clothing—but there is less discipline.

3. Military Service

One day I walked into the Irene Kaufmann Settlement just leisurely with the boys. Miss Heldman was sitting there and someone went over and registered for the draft. She said to me, "What about you?" "Well, I'm not a citizen, I intend to become one later." Miss Heldman said, "America is at war with Germany, it's your duty to register. You go to school here, all your activities are here, do you want to waive your rights as an alien?" So I listened to her and registered and received a certificate of citizenship at Camp Mead.

It would be wrong, however, to picture Jewish immigrant reaction to World War I wholeheartedly on the side of the Allies, at least before the United States entered the war. There was tremendous ambivalence about supporting Czarist Russia against Kaiser Franz Josef, the "Judenfreund." In addition, there was a strong Socialist anti-war movement.

Nevertheless, a large proportion of our male respondents served in the armed forces in the First World War (our youngest respondent who came in 1921 at the age of nine, served in the Air Force in the Second World War). Some were wounded and some were decorated.

I had been seriously wounded on June sixth and was recovering in a hospital in France. The *New York Herald* published a weekly for servicemen in France. They had death notices on one page. I saw my sergeant's name then my own name and address. Suddenly I realized it was my name. I showed the obituary notice to my captain, then he sent a telegram to my home. My family was sitting *shiva*, my father was in the Sneer Shul. Someone ran

to get him and everybody rejoiced. All the organizations I had belonged to were preparing a memorial to me. I was discharged from the hospital on October 15 and was supposed to go back to the front on November 12, 1918. I was saved by the Armistice.

I received a citation from the First Division—the Purple Heart and the Silver Star for gallantry in action.

Not all who were called got sent abroad. Some had rather unusual close calls.

I was called for service three times but was deferred because I was doing essential work for Railway Express. On November 11, 1918, I was called up and examined, but at 11:30 a.m. we saw something going on. News had come of the Armistice. At 2 p.m. the Captain came and said, "Boys, go home." I was sent home instead of to Camp Lee. I was sorry. I would have liked to have gone.

For some, the call to serve came at an inopportune time.

I was twenty-seven years old when I was drafted. I had a successful business going and I had to sell the business.

A major fringe benefit of being drafted into the army while an alien was that it conveyed rapid naturalization.

I became a citizen when I was drafted and my wife automatically became one too, although she was still in Europe.

I joined the Army in 1918 and immediately became a citizen.

I received my citizenship at Camp Lee, New Jersey and voted as soon as I returned home.

In 1918 I served in the U.S. Army in Europe. I received my final citizenship papers in Camp Lee in 1920, before I was discharged.

Another benefit for the immigrant was the chance to meet people from all over the United States, to travel, to improve one's English, and to meet American Jews who had become integrated into their communities. The Jewish Welfare Board provided these men with services.

The returning veterans were very active in the work of the YM&WHA and largely responsible for the revived fund raising

which led to the building on South Bellefield Avenue. Many of them carried over into civilian life their "esprit de corps" and joined the Jewish War Veterans.

> I became one of the organizers of the Jewish War Veterans and held a number of offices. I initiated the Good Will Dinner during Brotherhood Week.

Some of our female respondents were active in the various projects to support the war effort on the home front. They knitted, rolled bandages, collected money, and so on.

A few told with pride about their children's participation in the United States armed forces.

> My oldest son is a Major in the Air Force.

For others, this participation ended in tragedy. A number lost sons in World War II and the Korean War.

4. American Citizenship

> I love my country and the American Flag. It gave me everything I ever dreamed of or wanted. I was an American citizen, I made a living, raised my son, gave him an education, and saw him successful.

Most of our respondents were fully cognizant of and thankful for the principles of American democracy which allowed them freedom to develop economically and politically. They showed their appreciation by their acceptance of American citizenship.

> When my father became a citizen he sang La Marseillaise to the judge. He was a great believer in the ideals of the French Revolution—liberty, fraternity, and equality. He was a Socialist.

For those who did not acquire citizenship through their fathers, husbands, or by virtue of military service, naturalization meant study and preparation over a period of five years. At eighteen one could receive "first papers," and after at least five years residence in the United States, and passing a test in English and citizenship (these tests varied through the years

and were sometimes left up to the discretion of the judge), one received "final papers." After September 22, 1922, women could no longer become citizens on their husbands' papers, but had to pass the tests on their own. Neighbors, *landsleit*, Miss Heldman at the IKS, employers, the policeman on the beat—all became potential assistants in the naturalization process.

> My father and I became citizens together, in 1911. An Irish policeman was our witness.
>
> I was naturalized through marriage to an American citizen in 1910. I remember the suffrage movement very well. I voted as soon as I could.
>
> I got my first papers through my husband and my second papers on my own.
>
> I went to the old Post Office in 1923 and got my papers.

For a few, getting citizenship papers was very complicated, often because of irregularities resulting from their escape from Europe.

> In 1922, when I came, the wife did not automatically get citizenship with her husband. Miss Heldman advised me not to start the process because I had sneaked across the border from Russia to Roumania and my papers were not in order. She was afraid they would deport me.
>
> But I wanted to be a citizen very much. I went down to the City-County Building and applied. They asked me for my marriage license which was in Russian, but I was listed as a Roumanian. I studied the questions and failed the examination once. I came back a month later and passed. They asked me how come I was from Roumania and my marriage license was in Russian. I said to them, "If you get married in one city here, can't you move to another city?" They said I was right, and gave me my citizenship papers.

5. Political Activity

When asked about party affiliation, most respondents answered quite frankly. A few hesitated about revealing former Socialist Party or Communist Party membership, but were not pressed, even when such knowledge was available to the

interviewer from other sources. Although no statistical study was made, a substantial percentage of those immigrants who came during the early period were Republicans. This was also true of those who lived outside the metropolitan area.

My husband voted for Teddy Roosevelt. We are Republicans. They don't have war. The Democrats are all mixed up.

I became a citizen in 1913 and voted that year for Teddy Roosevelt.

I joined the Republican Party. In those days it was the only one that counted in Pittsburgh. I was always active in campaigns. In 1913 Adolph Edlis, a Jew, became City Treasurer.

I voted for Taft because he was good for the Jews.

I voted Republican. I just thought that was the only Party.

I voted for Harding the first year of women's suffrage. I was a Republican and am one to this day!

I was President of the Republican Club and a Precinct Committeeman in Sharon. I initiated the Republican Club Lincoln Day dinners fifty years ago.

Some respondents gave a personal reason for party affiliation.

I joined the Republican Party because the family did.

I was a Democrat but switched to Republican to vote in the primaries for Jerome Edlis, a son of Adolph Edlis, who was a friend of mine.

More respondents were Democrats than were Republicans. Some crossed over with Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

First I was a Republican, then a Democrat. I went with the town.

I was a Republican because my boss was a Republican, but I switched to Democrat with FDR because of what he promised to do for people.

I became a Democrat because my son said it was best for the Jews.

I voted for Wilson because I felt that the Democratic Party goals suited my beliefs. I served as a Registration Board member in the Third Ward.

A politician living downstairs had registered me with a

Republican Club. I told him no and registered Democrat.

I voted Democratic because it was better for the laboring classes except that in 1924 I voted for La Follette.

I have always voted the Democratic ticket because it is more liberal.

One summed it up thus:

I voted Democrat because I felt democratic.

Some who had been members of the Socialist Party told about their membership.

Julius Weissberg of the Workmen's Circle helped me to get my citizenship papers. I belonged to the Socialist Party and voted their ticket in 1912.

Some were rather cynical about party politics.

I belong to the Democrats but who knows why. One is as good at the other!

I did not become politically active because I saw politicians paying people for their votes.

Along with the factual material on political affiliation, there were a number of anecdotes dealing with Jewish political figures, often told by respondents with a great deal of relish.

Around 1902–3 some anti-Semitic circulars were thrown into Jewish stores that opened on Sunday and closed on Shabbos, warning them that they should not desecrate the Sabbath (meaning Sunday) or there would be repercussions. Solly Mazer, the son of Simon Mazer, called a mass meeting in the Roumanian shul. He said, "First this, then pogroms." We decided that next Sunday, everybody who kept open would be arrested. Shalom Frankel, from Tolchin, was an alderman, and he arrested everybody, especially the non-Jews, the firemen, everybody. After that they let us alone.

When Joe Armstrong was Mayor, he appointed the first Jewish magistrate, Ike Weinstein. It was the talk of the town. When he sat there at the police station, the captain came and whispered in

his ear. He pushed him away and yelled, 'Don't shooshke me in mine ear!'

In 1916, when Taft was running against Wilson, Rubin the constable had a bet on with Obernau. Rubin lost and he had to wheel Obernau in a wheelbarrow from the Central Avenue Police Station to downtown.

Non-Jewish political figures who had lived in the Hill District were also mentioned fondly.

David Lawrence was my next door neighbor for many years. We were very good friends and neighbors.

A Jewish immigrant who had achieved great honors and was elected to Harrisburg by the Hill District, Adolph Edlis, was mentioned most frequently. Our respondents saw him as one of their own and were very proud of legislation he sponsored.

IN CONCLUSION

There are at least two goals for an oral history project: The first goal may be objective—to recreate and preserve a record of the past where documentary records do not exist; and the second goal may be subjective—to learn how one's immediate ancestors acted and reacted within the framework of recorded history.

The oral history project sponsored by the Pittsburgh Section of the National Council of Jewish Women had both of these goals placed before it. On the one hand, there is no complete written history of the Pittsburgh Jewish Community for the period after 1890. Thus, to recreate this fairly recent past, one must go to those members of the community still living and record the past from their memories. The collective memories of some hundreds of old people can then be organized and analyzed into a systematic progression of events. That is what has been attempted. At the same time, all of the individual questionnaires and tapes have been preserved to serve as source material for future studies of the period.

The subjective aspect of the National Council of Jewish Women's goals is integrally bound up with the very beginnings of the Council. Founded in 1893, its purpose was to help Americanize the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who were then coming in masses to the United States. As the Columbian Council, the Pittsburgh Section of the NCJW was a major agency for Americanization here and was behind the establishment of the most important tool for adjustment—the evening school.

The early leaders of Columbian Council were American-born or German-born women identified with the established Jewish community. Today, much of the leadership and membership of the NCJW is of Eastern European origin. The women of the Pittsburgh Section thus identify with the oral history of their

parents and grandparents as well as with the agency that helped Americanize them. This subjective aspect was clearly seen in the fact that many of the interviewers found rich resource material among their own relatives. Some heard for the first time the dramatic story of how their families came to America, where they lived, how they earned a living, how they educated their children, and so on.

One vexing question was not completely answered: Why did these early immigrants come to Pittsburgh? The answers of our respondents revealed a uniform pattern—most of them came *to* somebody, a relative or a *landsman* who had already established a foothold in Pittsburgh. Since the first Lithuanian Jews came during the Civil War era, we had no way of questioning those original immigrants. From discussions with the American-born children and grandchildren of these first Eastern European immigrants one gets the impression that the first few settlers were related, or at least came from the same province of Lithuania.

One of the major problems to be worked out when dealing with oral history is the question of authenticity. One cannot substantiate all of the material nor can one expect personal reminiscences to conform to the standards of accuracy of historical texts. This problem, of course, was anticipated from the very beginning of our study. While we were concerned with recreating a way of life, long gone, we were constantly aware that our respondents were depending upon memory for this reconstruction, that memory could be deceiving, that each individual saw events as they affected him and as they impinged upon his own life. Thus, if a woman told us that she had voted for Teddy Roosevelt in 1912, we did not attack the veracity of her statement by proving to her that women did not have the vote in 1912. The statement was recorded, but the interviewer then made a note in the margin, questioning the statement.

Much more difficult to substantiate were statements dealing with Pittsburgh Jewish community affairs. Thus, we were often faced with contradictory statements by two individuals dealing with the founding of congregations, their developmental histories and internal controversies. Many statements which could be interpreted as defaming the character of an individual remain on the tapes and were not set down in the text. Furthermore, the Pittsburgh *Jewish Criterion* could not neces-

sarily be relied upon as an objective source for the early years of Eastern European immigration because it was often the spokesman for the established German Jewish community. Many of the events of this period were recorded in the Yiddish newspaper, the *Volksfreund.*

Wherever possible, statements by respondents were checked for accuracy in existing documents. In the course of verification, many interesting sources were uncovered. More general works were also found to have critical material relevant to the history of the Pittsburgh Jewish community. The annual reports of Carnegie Library which provided information about the Wylie Avenue branch in the Hill District, the city directories, plot maps, and the yearbooks of the Columbian Council, National Council of Jewish Women, and the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies are housed in the Pennsylvania Room of Carnegie Library. Here too, are the only extant copies of *Neighbors,* published by the Irene Kaufmann Settlement between 1923 and 1928.

The newly organized Archives of an Industrial Society, a part of the Special Collections of Hillman Library, is another important source for research into Pittsburgh Jewish history. Mr. Frank Zabrowsky, the Librarian, helped us examine the collections of documents presented by the NCJW and other local Jewish organizations. Of particular importance for our study were the newly acquired collection of minute books of the Public School Boards which were recently unearthed by Mrs. Carolyn Shumacher, a graduate student in the History Department. It was from the minute books of the Franklin Sub-District School Board that we were able to document the beginnings of public evening schools for immigrants.

The specifically Jewish collections in the libraries of Rodef Shalom, Temple Sinai, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and the Hebrew Institute also were sources of data.

Occasionally, a respondent would digress or go into greater detail in answering a question than the questionnaire required. Some of these digressions, however, were the very flesh and blood of the interview. Events and personalities came alive, for which almost no documentation exists.

In reviewing the tapes and questionnaires we often discovered forgotten facts about Pittsburgh's past. For example, an entire Jewish trade flourished in Pittsburgh, and died half a century

ago—the stogy industry. Grandchildren of former stogy workers who grew up in typical middle-class Jewish homes were suddenly confronted with the harsh realities of their grandmother's childhoods—girls working at the age of nine from dawn to dusk for thirty-five cents a day, hiding from the factory inspectors, yet hoping that they would be found, so that they would be sent to school. These facts are available in the Pittsburgh survey of 1907, but our respondents, in the jargon of our times, "tell it like it was." No yellow-paged document can vie with the sound of a seventy-year old voice explaining how a nine-year old girl could strip tobacco leaves and roll stogies.

Certain gaps in our history could not be filled from our present resources. For example, there exists no satisfactory roster of the immigrant Jewish population of Pittsburgh. Accordingly, we depended for respondents upon word-of-mouth and active recruiting in various centers where elderly Jews live and congregate. Our study could not be derived from a sample of all Jews who immigrated to Pittsburgh during the years 1890–1924. We also do not have an adequate representation of the German Jews who immigrated to Pittsburgh; unfortunately our recruitment in this area was insufficient.

Another group which may be under-represented are those who do not speak English well.

In preparing this book, these limitations were taken into consideration. Attempts were made to supplement data relevant to synagogues, religious behavior, etc., wherever possible.

An important achievement of this project, and one with pragmatic applications elsewhere, is the revelation of an invaluable and little utilized research tool—the volunteer worker. Women of various backgrounds and education participated in the in-service training sessions, learned how to conduct and tape interviews, read books about Jewish history, and went out into the field. The questionnaire was drawn up by volunteers, the pilot studies were made by volunteers, and evaluations and refinements of the questionnaires were made by volunteers. All the actual recording and data collection were done by volunteers. This prodigious effort resulted in the mass of material which was used to write this book.

APPENDIX

THE JEWS IN PITTSBURGH
AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

One must go back to 1654 for the first significant date in the history of Jews in America, allowing for the possibility that there were Jews in Columbus' crew, and that single individuals may have found their way to one of the original settlements. But in 1654, 23 Jews fleeing the Portuguese Inquisition in Recife, South America, came to New Amsterdam and sought refuge among the Dutch settlers there. Thus began the creation of a significant minority group that was destined to reach the number of five and one half million by mid-20th century, and to include statesmen, scientists, artists, teachers, Nobel Prize winners and Supreme Court justices. They settled in Newport as well as in New Amsterdam, in Philadelphia and other centers, gradually moving westward on foot or horse, in covered wagons and eventually by train to the new frontiers which beckoned to the bold and venturesome ones among them. So they came to the Gateway in Western Pennsylvania and surged on to Cincinnati, down the Mississippi and on beyond its tributaries, eventually reaching the West Coast along with other pioneers. Some moved on and some stayed so that by the time the Civil War ended, there was scarcely a city or town that did not harbor some Jews, and that did not enjoy the benefit of Jewish industry, zeal and enthusiasm. And wherever they settled they established Jewish institutions.

In the decades after the Civil War, a great surge of immigration brought this country thousands of Jews fleeing the persecution and privation in Eastern Europe. They were largely educated only in traditional Hebraic scholarship. And they were

poor. They turned to such occupations as the needle trades which could be pursued without much investment. And they reacted to the pressures of exploitation by organizing trade unions that were destined to become the models of labor organization in the country. Inevitably the majority of Jews settled in the large cities. And one of these cities was Pittsburgh.

One cannot survey the history of the Jewish community of Pittsburgh without taking proper note of the role of William Penn, noted 17th century British Quaker, whose courageous expression of dissent from the state church led to the recognition of basic freedoms. In 1681 he received from King Charles II a charter for "all that tract or parte of land in America . . . [boundaries stated] into a province and Seigniorie, and doe call itt Pensilvania, and so from henceforth wee will have itt called." Penn was made governor of the province to be ruled under a special law which made provision for the preservation of English law with special protection for Quakers. He soon (1683) made a treaty with the Indians which assured good relations between the newcomers and the natives. And he set a pattern of toleration of dissent which affected the subsequent history of the province and encouraged settlement by small and varied sects of the Christian Church, as well as by occasional venturesome Jews, who settled in the scattered communities. As the city of Philadelphia became a populous and prosperous Quaker City, Jews came there to live in the friendly milieu. Known generally as Israelites, they were favored friends of the Bible-reading Quakers, and a number of those early settlers became significant members of the community, leaders in the business and social life of the City of Brotherly Love. While the number of Jews in the whole of colonial America totaled but 250 in 1700, the number grew to 2500 by the time of the Revolutionary War. Of these, 500 lived in Philadelphia.

Many were Sephardic Jews with roots in Western Europe and in the West Indies. There were also among them Ashkenazic Jews who had ventured away from the eastern centers of Jewish life. There were prosperous merchants of whom David Franks was the leading one. He had brought over from Bavaria his two cousins, the Gratz brothers, who joined him in his successful ventures.

The history of city of Pittsburgh goes back to 1758. It was a

time when the area consisted of quiet, tree-covered hills and valleys, sloping to the two rivers, the Allegheny and Monongahela, which joined to form a third, the Ohio, already noted as the highway to the Mississippi, and called "The Gateway to the West." There were very few men in the region. Most of the native Indians had been cut down in the French and Indian Wars, which centered on Fort Duquesne located advantageously at the juncture of the three rivers. In 1758, the British under General Forbes took possession of the Fort and drove the French out. A small force was stationed there which negotiated a treaty with the remaining Delaware Indians. An elaborate fortification was then constructed and named Fort Pitt, for the distinguished statesman at that time dominating the political scene in England. Small wooden cabins were soon built and clustered around the security of the fort. Trading posts were set up by representatives of the companies further east, for trading with the Indians and supplying pioneers bent on further journeys to the west and south.

It was to such trading posts that wealthy Philadelphia merchant David Franks sent his pack trains of covered wagons loaded with yard goods, coats, laces, rugs, textiles, guns, necessities for housewives . . . needles, pins, medicine, and "sundries" for trade with the Indians who gave them furs in exchange. Individual peddlers also came by horse and wagon carrying the necessaries of living to the hardy settlers in the scattered log cabins along the roads and pikes. The hardships of such excursions were taken for granted by the bold men who picked their way cautiously over the mountains or along the river banks to the "point." Also drawn to the new settlement were workers in leather and fur, glass makers, rope makers, and those with other manual skills. Some worked harmoniously with the Indian Agent, George Croghan. He was the one who sent liquor and guns to the Indians along with other goods, as the settlers pushed further west and grasped at land grants and privileges.

We learn from letters in the archives of the American Jewish Historical Society that Jews who made these journeys carried messages to others who often longed for news of their own families; they asked about the calendar of Jewish holidays or the *Yahrzeit* of a parent's death. While many returned to their home bases, others decided to stay. And we begin to find the

names of Jewish settlers in references written at the time.

Into the Pittsburgh area came Jews not only from Philadelphia, but also from Lancaster, for example, where Joseph Simon, a leading citizen, traded with the Indians on the site of Fort Pitt in 1749. We know that he had numerous daughters, and mindful of his heritage, he married them off to the promising young Jewish agents from the Franks and Gratz establishments. In Philadelphia records, Simon's name appears as one of the landowners in the Pittsburgh area as early as 1758. The map indicates a road called "Frankstown Road," doubtless named for the family whose agents traveled its path most frequently. Contemporary maps also show significant plots in the neighborhood now called Wilkinsburg, but then labeled "Jewstown." And 1,500 acres along Sewickly Creek belonged to the Gratz brothers of Philadelphia and were properly called "Gratztown." These were subsequently sold.

Early records of Rodef Shalom Congregation refer to a small number of Jews from Baden, Bavaria, and Wurtemberg who came from 1838 to 1844. Unfortunately most early public records were destroyed in the fire of 1845 which consumed the wooden structures that comprised downtown Pittsburgh.

They were sturdy souls who ventured across the rugged terrain of Pennsylvania during the early decades of the 19th century to emerging Pittsburgh. Close to sources of iron and coal, it was natural that basic industries began to develop there. The new city was the hub of a great economic wheel which exploited natural resources as well as the travel means of rivers and roads. The fabrication of iron, glass, and boats drew skilled workers, who in turn needed varied supplies for living and trading. Among the many skills and services needed, the Jews found a place for their abilities. By the 1830's, we hear of Salomon Schoyer, a lawyer who adapted to the new environment by converting to Presbyterianism and marrying with a Christian. By 1870 he was President of the Duquesne Club. But there were others more devoted to the heritage of the past. As early as 1842 formal services requiring a minyan were held in private homes. In 1847 the Beth Almon Society was formed to purchase land on Troy Hill for the first Jewish cemetery. In 1848 the first synagogue was founded under the name of Shaare Shamayim, with Rev. Bernard Mannheim as leader, soon replaced by Rev. Moses Sulzbach. In 1849 there is first mention

of a "minyan" of the Beth Almon Society which met in a hall over the Vigilant Fire Engine House on Third Street between Wood and Market.

During the 1850's the preponderance of Jewish immigration came from Germany, but immigrants came also from Lithuania, Poland, and Russia; some by way of Holland and England. There were differences concerning ritual, the Germans clinging to their language for sermons and records, but adapting more readily to change in ritual and practices such as praying bare headed and with mixed seating. Congregation Rodef Shalom was founded about 1854, and hired Reverend Armhold. In 1861 the two congregations were united under the name Rodef Shalom and in 1862 this group erected the first synagogue in the city on Hancock Street (later Eighth Street).

When Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise visited Pittsburgh in 1863, he suggested that Rodef Shalom adopt his "Minhag America." A majority of the members, mostly German Jews, voted to drop Orthodoxy. The minority, the Polanders, resigned.

Led by Gustave Grafner they met in various homes, and in 1864 were chartered as "Etz Hayim" (Tree of Life). They later purchased an available church building at the corner of Ross and Fourth, and called their synagogue "Fink's schule" until the end of the century in honor of the devoted layman who led the services. Like other Jewish congregations in the country, they had no rabbi. They contented themselves with Readers.

In 1860 Rodef Shalom hired a young immigrant from England named Josiah Cohen as its first English teacher of the parochial school. He became a practicing lawyer and later a distinguished judge, eventually a venerable and venerated leader of the community. But he was always identified with Rodef Shalom Congregation as well as other educational institutions.

In the '50's, with the building of railroads across the Alleghenies, the number of new arrivals increased. Young Jews came from Germany. Many of them turned to the needle trades, especially after the invention of the sewing machine stimulated mass production of clothing. In Pittsburgh as in other American cities, the clothing business, earlier controlled by English and Irish workers, came predominantly into the hands of enterprising Jews. But the list of occupations in the '60's and '70's was varied. There were Jewish boat builders, carpenters, bricklayers, a piano maker, a glass manufacturer, drovers, grocers,

jewelers, bookkeepers, and many peddlers.

The Hebrew Benevolent Society was organized in 1854 to aid transient Jews. Among recruits for the army fighting in the Civil War, there were ten Jews from Pittsburgh. Jewish men and women cooperated with the local "Sanitary Commission" which served soldiers prior to the creation of the Red Cross.

The Hebrew Ladies Aid Society organized in 1856 to perform traditional mitzvoth—visiting the sick and watching the dead. Oft-mentioned are the names of Mrs. Pauline Frank, Mrs. Lena Bachman, Mrs. Rosalia Rauh, Mrs. Rosalia Bierman, Mrs. Henrietta Hanauer.

The military needs of the country stimulated local industry—and there began that trend to industrialization which carried Pittsburgh to its role, not only as Gateway to the West, but more distinctly as "Workshop of the World." It was a workshop that needed men, not only their brains, but their hands and muscles as well. Amidst the general population in 1877, there were 2,000 Jews. The stream of general immigration from Europe swollen by hundreds of thousands who landed in New York, carried them by rail to the lure of jobs in mines and mills and factories around Pittsburgh. And the number of Jewish immigrants was greatly increased by the outbreak of violence against Jews in the cities of Russia. Following the pogroms of 1881, there was virtual flight by young Jews who faced the reality of the frustrated life under the Czar and the actual danger of attack in the streets. Jews securely established in London and New York undertook to finance the emigration from storm-clouded Russia, and to receive the newcomers at Castle Garden. Very early, a planned program of dispersal was initiated to halt the growing congestion in New York City.

Naturally, many of the eager young men were directed toward Pittsburgh, and there a local committee formed in 1880 by the merger of two earlier groups, the United Hebrew Relief Association, assisted the impecunious strangers. Food baskets were distributed to them, silver dollars were given on Thursday nights in anticipation of the Sabbath. Small loans were provided by the Hebrew Free Loan Society, and the process of Americanization was begun. Many a sturdy beginner took up his basket of "notions" and proceeded to the business of selling. As soon as possible, he bought a pack of more significant merchandise and walked to the city's borders. When he began

acquiring a route of customers, with the necessary dollars, he would buy a horse and wagon and from that point was really off on the great American adventure. With the accumulation of reserves, he would send back to the old country travel tickets for wife and children. With their help he often opened a store—either in the city or suburbs. And from these beginnings, large businesses, even the great department stores in Pittsburgh (as elsewhere) grew. From 1880 to 1920, the local commercial scene was brightened by the development of Kaufmann's, Rosenbaum's, Kaufmann and Baer's (later Gimbels) and Frank and Seder's. These great institutions testified to the industry, thrift and business acumen of those earlier settlers, largely of German background, and with more urbane and cultured manners than the Easterners. Although they fulfilled the Judaic mandate of "Zedakah," care of their needy brethren, there was an aloofness which separated them socially from the impoverished provincial newcomers who had suffered suppression and exclusion for many centuries in the shtetl in Eastern Europe. There they had found solace only in devotion to study of the ancient texts and fulfillment of the mandate of Orthodox ritual. Thus they became in many senses the custodians of the ancient culture of the Jews.

In America, they were separated from other Americans by language, manners, religious practices and beliefs. Inevitably they soon established small Orthodox synagogues even reflecting divergence among themselves, on the basis of different accents as well as theological emphasis. Soon there was a Russian, a Hungarian, a Roumanian, a Galician, a Polish Shul, etc. Rabbi Moses Simon Sivitz was the first Eastern European Orthodox rabbi who came to Pittsburgh in 1888. They all agreed on one thing, their abhorrence of the extremism of the Reform movement as expressed in Rodef Shalom's services. There the full implications of the Pittsburgh Platform enunciated in 1885 by a conference of representatives of American Reform congregations, were carried out. The Orthodox looked with disapproval upon the minimal use of Hebrew, the truncated prayers, the limited calendar, the family pews, the uncovered heads, and the quiet decorum which seemed too much like the mood of Protestant worship.

The separation carried over also into institutional life. While the Council of Jewish Women rendered great service to the new

immigrants, especially in English language teaching, nevertheless it was controlled almost exclusively by the "German" element. Under the guidance of Rabbi Aaron M. Ashinsky who came to the community in 1901 as rabbi of the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol and Beth Jacob Synagogues, a House of Shelter, Home for the Aged, Hebrew Free Burial Association, Hebrew Institute and other traditional institutions were created and conducted according to Orthodox practice. An orator of great power, Rabbi Ashinsky played an important role in creating interest in Zionist organizations—the Tiphereth Zion, the American Zionist movement, and Hadassah. The Hebrew Ladies Hospital Association, led by Mrs. Barnett Davis, eventually created the Montefiore Hospital.

The earliest records of Pittsburgh tell us that Jews lived on Second and Third Streets near the Point. Later, moving up the primary routes, they established themselves at Ross Street beyond Grant Street, and then further outward to what came to be known as "The Hill." Not surprisingly, those who could afford the luxury of better living moved away from the noise, crowding and intrusions of the Hill. Many of the earlier settlers found homes in what was then called the city of Allegheny on the north side of the Allegheny River, a pleasant, tree-shaded area away from the growing turbulence of the industrial city. These well-to-do German Jews crossed the river not only for business but also to attend services and religious school at the Rodef Shalom Temple on Hancock Street. But the majority of newcomers, arriving with the increased volume of the 80's and 90's, found themselves on the Hill, from which the earlier Scotch and Irish and Germans progressively retreated. On the streets could be heard the variegated broken accents of the several Eastern countries from which the young men and women came. They stood on street corners as "hucksters" of fruits and vegetables, they pushed carts of dry-goods from the burgeoning small wholesale houses on Fifth Avenue and they carried their packs of merchandise on their backs as they moved out toward the suburbs, sometimes spending the week there, returning for the Sabbath and holidays. They and their families lived in small red-brick houses that lined the streets—some climbing toward the Bluff overlooking the Monongahela River, others moving up Washington, Chatham, Logan Streets, eventually also up Dinwiddie Street which was one of the last to yield its trees. For

a long time, Centre Avenue retained some dignity and importance, with white-stone front stoops and window trims on its brick houses.

When the Irene Kaufmann Settlement was built in 1909, it continued the work of the Columbian Council School created in 1895 by the Council of Jewish Women. As the ferment of growth and change stirred on the Hill, Jewish families increased in number, and the needed facilities blossomed—grocery stores, bakery and butcher shops, dry goods, shoes, clothing, candy stores, and book stores emerged.

The number of synagogues multiplied, a few becoming large and significant, others remained small and intimate though all were definitely Orthodox. It was later, near the close of World War I, that a Sephardic congregation of Jews from Holland opened its doors to preserve the distinctive Sephardic ritual. Several of the synagogues purchased land on city borders for cemetery use. And not surprisingly there was a ritual bath (mikveh) in the center of the community. Thanks to the direction of Rabbi Sivitz, a Hebrew school (Talmud Torah) was established and sustained for many years. And under the guidance of the dynamic Rabbi Ashinsky and the Educational Director, Israel Abrams, the Hebrew Institute was created, designed to attract and hold a goodly number of youth who would continue the tradition of Hebraic scholarship in a modern structure and under more progressive pedagogy.

Another facet of the Jewish community was to become visible after the turn of the century when the Workmen's Circle, in 1904, took its place among the varied organizations on the Hill. Some of its proponents, Julius Weisberg, Nathan Malyn, Sam Oshry, brought from the larger industrial centers of Russia an articulated labor point of view. Many of them were ideological socialists, looking askance at the formalized religious practices of the older generation. They met generally in Turner Hall on Forbes Street and then in the Labor Lyceum on Miller Street. They brought noted lecturers to this city, discussed provocative books, promoted political candidates and consistently supported organized labor even though the number of so-called "Jewish unions" in this city was small and destined to decline.

The youngsters attended classes in the local elementary schools near their homes—Forbes School near the Bluff, and Miller School, and Franklin School. The one high school that

was to hold the loyalty of hundreds of graduates for many years was Central High School, later to be supplanted by Fifth Avenue and Schenley. There was a competitive spirit among the youths of varied ethnic and religious backgrounds. Jewish boys encountered frequent evidence of the old world prejudice. Ball games often ended up in fist-fights, with rough and tumble battles beyond the claims of sport. But the spirit of combat was as hearty as it was rugged. And parents, remembering the one-sided attacks in Russia, wiped the brows of their young fighters with hidden gratification. And some of them cast quizzical glances at the youths who argued about Socialism on the sidewalks.

In the streets, the sounds of the city were everywhere to be heard—the cries of the hucksters hawking their wares, the shouts of young boys playing ball or "Run Sheep Run" and little girls engaged in hop-scotch and other play; the chatter of women, and the noise of wagon wheels and the clop clop of horses' hooves moving on the cobbled pavements. The streets echoed with the busy life of the day as the people savoring the freedom of the New World willingly performed the work which was its price. While black-hatted and bearded men carried their prayer shawls in velvet bags to the synagogue, they looked with obvious disapproval on the shouting youths who played games of ball or hockey and "wasted" time and energy away from the halls of study. And all the while, imbued with hope and ambition, young parents labored from early morning often until late at night to support their families and to accumulate the reserves necessary for improvement and advancement. Families crowded the rooms of the small houses and often took in paying boarders. Some women did work on sewing or millinery, even some very young girls found jobs in the small stogy factories. The ancient love of learning had taken on a new aspect. Under the sunlight of the American way—of democracy—of free education, of opportunity, most Jewish parents nursed the hope of sending their sons to college and watching them become professionals—more specifically doctors or lawyers. For their daughters, their hopes were slower in blossoming—but for them too, they envisioned roles as teachers and bookkeepers, all of this a mere introduction to the eventual marriage to a young professional who could be counted on to augment the dignity of the family and enhance its status.

When the great surge of immigration began in 1880, there were about 2500 Jews in Pittsburgh. By 1905 the number became 15,000 and by 1912 there were 35,000 Jews largely housed on the Hill, a teeming community bursting the seams of the old neighborhood.

Already the native generation of boys was playing football with school teams and basketball at the Irene Kaufmann Settlement where they were also testing their powers in debating and acting. As soon as they could afford it the parents wanted to escape the dismal, littered streets and alleys and sought housing in more spacious and pleasant neighborhoods. Some stopped in the Oakland district, more began moving toward East End and Highland Park, and many eventually came to Squirrel Hill. By the end of the first World War there were 60,000 Jews in Pittsburgh—the largest number ever registered in the area. And then, like all other American centers, Pittsburgh was affected by the virtual closing of the gates when the "quota system" in immigration became operative in 1924. By that date the Jewish community was able to see in its own compass the widest range of economic status and intellectual achievement. While a high percentage aimed for education and advancement, there were some who were trapped in the backwaters of the ghetto where failure, ill health and questionable practices took their toll. And on every side was preponderant evidence of firm adherence to the Jewish traditions of the past, social responsibility, family loyalty and sobriety.

There were several leading department stores under Jewish ownership, a number of significant factories, as well as wholesale and retail firms. But most of the people were engaged in small, family-operated businesses, providing modest livelihoods. Centre Avenue and Fifth Avenue were alive with the hustle and bustle of the growing community. While the older generation communicated in the variegated accents of their native Yiddish, the youth were bilingual—speaking Yiddish to parents and English to associates. And while the chorus of voices on the streets reached a climax when Sabbath preparations were made on Thursday evening and Friday, near the fish and meat markets, the traditional collection of charity took place on the sidewalks where dedicated individuals shook their tin "Zedakah" boxes in the faces of housewives busy buying

provisions. It was a custom from the past which persisted into the decades of a century of change during which formalized and professionalized philanthropy was taking its place, including care of the aged, the sick, children and youth.

In 1912 the various organized charity groups were brought together in a Federation of Jewish Philanthropies which received general support but more especially the beneficence of the wealthier Jews, chiefly German, many of whom had lost touch with Hebraic learning but retained respect for the Jewish mitzvoth of their parents and grandparents. Accordingly, there was available for service to the community the Gusky Orphanage on the North Side, the Irene Kaufmann Settlement on the Hill, the Montefiore Hospital whose original building on Centre Avenue was later supplanted by a magnificent structure in Oakland; the Jewish Home for Aged moved from Aliquippa Street to Brown's Hill with the flowing lawns and beautiful mansion overlooking the river. And on the Hill there were new arrivals which gradually changed its image, the sounds and sights of Italian and Syrian arrivals and the increasing number of Negroes, each group bringing its own cultural variations and problems.

In about 25 years there was almost total transfer of the Jewish population from the Hill to East End and Squirrel Hill, although there was only a trickle of immigration after the first World War. With the help of the automobile which was everywhere now in evidence, the number of families which moved to the East End was so great that by 1925 there were two large congregations, the Conservative B'nai Israel on Negley Avenue, and the Orthodox Adath Jeshurun on Margaretta Street. Shortly thereafter, Jews began to move to the section known as Squirrel Hill where some of the German Jews had quietly settled for a while. They found many small homes on the numerous streets south of Forbes and gradually also larger homes on wider avenues and residential areas north of Forbes. Gradually the constellation of auxiliary services and institutions appeared in both communities but the basic philanthropies, including family case work, continued for many years to be managed from headquarters downtown on Fernando Street.

The outward trend marked a growing economic security, increasing ratios of college-educated youth, and expanding evidences of acculturation in patterns of living and in the arts.

While the number of participants in the study of the sacred books dwindled, the number of Jewish teachers and professors in local schools and colleges increased. There were Jews in the symphony orchestra, Jewish artists among exhibitors, Jews in the judiciary, in the growing radio business, in the political arena, in real estate, and as always, Jews in retail businesses of every sort.

The 30's brought the tragic effects of Nazism in Germany culminating in World War II. The Pittsburgh Jewish community responded by receiving many hundreds of "German refugees" who were assisted in making adjustments and re-establishing roots in the city, eventually to become a valued segment of the community. Not only were the newcomers greeted warmly by the community, but the aroused concern led Pittsburgh Jewry to respond with fanatic zeal to the need for unprecedented sums of money for aid to the victims of Nazism wherever they could be reached; and for setting up facilities and services for resettlement and retraining, especially in Palestine.

It was during this decade also that the urgency of the need for a homeland produced a widespread reaction in the name of Zionism—the women through the health programs of Hadassah and Pioneer Women, the men through the general Zionist Organization, and the Labor group through Histadruth. The eventual disclosure of the horrors of the concentration camps and the gas chambers which swallowed up 6,000,000 dead found American Jewry united as never before both in the desire to help win the war and in the determination that "it shall never happen here." Sensitized by the experience of German Jewry, American national groups developed programs designed to counter evidences of anti-Semitism which had appeared in certain areas. The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Labor Committee and the Jewish War Veterans all stressed their "defense" programs and promoted education directed toward increased intercultural understanding and intergroup harmony. Stemming from the New York headquarters, local offices sprang up in the large cities, of which Pittsburgh was one. It brought together the efforts of all groups under one roof and one board. By the end of World War II, the program of the Pittsburgh Jewish Community Relations Council moved to a more dynamic stance in the pursuit of

human rights legislation and soon inevitably became involved in the complex of race relations and the fight against discrimination in all its forms.

The end of the war brought a momentary pause in the breathless struggle focused on Nazism and its cost to humanity and especially to the remaining Jewry of the world. The American segment was now greatest in number, in wealth and in power. The Pittsburgh group, like those in other large centers, had stepped into the role of mature, responsible leadership. A new generation, largely American born and educated, and largely of Eastern European origin, took over the reins of management of the Federation as a series of annual fund-raising campaigns challenged the ingenuity and the generosity of Pittsburgh Jewry. From the gloomy death picture in Europe, eyes were turned toward the hope-filled spectacle of the long-deferred homeland in Palestine. And when in 1948 the establishment of the State of Israel became a reality, hearts were quickened everywhere, and the sense of kinship coupled with pride and joy was evident at the many meetings of the United Jewish Appeal as well as the specific groups in Pittsburgh.

Locally the change in geographic location which has been described had parallelled an obvious change in economic status. The list of dependent Jewish families had shrunk to a residual category of unfortunates. There was little call at this time on the Free Loan Association for assistance in setting up petty business ventures; it turned rather to responding to requests for help in purchasing a car needed for a salesman's travels, or even a scholarship loan for a student. One very evident reaction to the period of Hitlerian genocide was a re-awakening of interest in Jewish education. Improved Hebrew schools were in demand, and came to be re-established with better curricula and better trained teachers. The Hebrew Institute moved to Squirrel Hill where it eventually acquired a fine modern building. Hillel Academy, an all-day school combining religious and secular education, was founded. The Yeshiva Achei Temimim-Nehama Minsky School also offered the traditional Orthodox curriculum. And all flourished. The numerous synagogues and temples conducted classes for all age groups, including also adult education . . . all designed to improve self-knowledge of the Jew and to repair the break in traditional learning which had

threatened the immigrant generation during the period prior to World War II.

At mid-century, the Jewish population of Pittsburgh was stabilized at about 50,000, having fallen from its earlier peak of 60,000. And it was at this time also that it became evident that Jews, like the rest of Pittsburghers, were engaged in a migration to the suburbs, even though most of them were content with the residential patterns in East End and Squirrel Hill and with new apartment dwellings. They sought more fresh air, larger lawns, and reputedly better schools. The men joined in the lengthening lines of commuting cars driving through tunnels and parkways to the office buildings of the metropolis. Their wives, too, also spent many hours at the steering wheel as they transported their young to schools, music lessons, dental appointments, and other essential engagements. City dwellers and suburbanites had taken on the manners and practices of the affluent society. By the 60's the Jewish suburban population to the east was sufficient to warrant the creation of the Parkway Jewish Center and the Reform Temple David in Monroeville; to the south, Temple Emmanuel had become a mainstay in Mt. Lebanon; and Temple Beth El was established in St. Clair Township. Everywhere Jewish women played an active role in Sisterhoods, in PTA's, in branches of the League of Women Voters, and in the American Association of University Women, while the men found outlets for surplus energies in Volunteer Fire Departments (as in Eastmont), in veterans' activities and in Boards of Trade. Inevitably, also, all the familiar Jewish organizations set up branches wherever new communities came into being. There was a network of communal institutions and a crowded calendar of activities.

The central organization for the total community in the 60's was the United Jewish Federation which has followed the population movement by erecting a modern building in a central location on McKee Place in Oakland. It houses administrative offices of the fund, Community Relations, Family and Children's Services, a School for Advanced Jewish Studies, and significantly, a computer system to service all of them. The Federation also acquired two Anglo-Jewish publications and merged them under the name *The Jewish Chronicle,* which carries not only institutional news and policies, but also a resume of the affairs of world Jewry.

As the weeks and months of the 60's moved relentlessly toward a new decade, the image of Pittsburgh Jewry revealed certain sharply defined features. There are few candidates for the free food-basket distribution by Lechem Aniyum, though the ancestral practice still survives in a very limited way. Welfare work focuses more specifically on care of the aged, on marriage counselling, and on child guidance programs for the emotionally disturbed. Larger sums are allocated to Jewish education. A significant effort is directed toward improvement of opportunities for housing and employment of Negroes. In all city high schools, Jewish students are much in evidence in civic activities, and in the local colleges and universities, Jewish boys and girls in goodly numbers may be seen wearing visible evidences of their new role as protestors against the rigid attitudes toward dress and opinion of their parents' generation, as well as against the practices of racial discrimination.

Although the doors of membership in the Duquesne Club and the Twentieth Century Club were closed until recently to Jewish men and women, there are ample facilities for luxurious recreation and social activities for those Jews desiring them. Statistical studies still show a lack of Jewish names in the "Executive Suite" of the large corporations, but many of the newer industrial developments in electronics, engineering, construction, chains of supermarkets and the like are planned and operated by Jews. This new class of wealth shares in the joys of travel, collecting books, and art objects, supporting the Symphony Orchestra, and the Opera Society. There is an appreciable number of inter-marriages among the young. And at the same time there is a deep and passionate sense of kinship with Israeli youth, as well as with the disadvantaged peoples of the world.

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