THE KAHN STORY

At a recent family reunion Tami asked me to tell her about my mother. It occurred to me that none of my grandchildren ever knew my mother or my father. My children knew my mother, but not very well because she lived most of the time in Florida or California while they were young and then she died in 1970. My father died in 1939. It was also negligent of me not to take all of my grandchildren to Chilton and show them where I grew up, and more important, how I grew up. Even my own children don't know much about my past. The story that follows will attempt to tell the story of the Kahn family (as well as I can remember it, and also, as well as I know it).

All of you, whether you like it or not, have some *KAHN* blood in you. You, your children, your children's children, and so forth down the line will share the blood line and genes of those who have come before you. Some of you will read this and be interested in what you'll read; others might chuckle and think it's the ravings of an old man. But whatever, here goes.

I'm going to tell you about my mother's coming to America. Some of what you'll read will be fact, some will be gleaned from my memory of things my mother told me. My mother and Leo Wilensky's mother, Jenny, left their home and family in a little town in the Ukraine (Russia) called Chauchemsk, in the county of Mogilev. The family had a little store that sold piece goods and notions and some small clothing items. It was run by my grandmother and her daughters as they got old enough to work. My grandfather never worked in the store. He was a very pious man and spent his entire day in the Shule, studying and discussing the Jewish scriptures. This may seem odd to you, but throughout Jewish history this is the way it was with many families. Living in Russia was not easy for Jews. They could not own land. They were constantly at the mercy of the gentiles in their town. The Cossacks (an elite guard of horsemen in the Russian army) were known to imbibe in too much vodka and find great pleasure in riding through small towns and seeking out the Jews. Their favorite pleasure was finding pregnant Jewish women, and, using their sabers would slash their stomaches open and kill the fetus and the mother. These atrocities and others were part of an anti-semitic program that was constantly being carried out by many gentiles, and endorsed by the government in power at the time. These acts of violence against the Jews were called *Pogroms*. Life for Jews was not easy. Jewish young men were conscripted in the army and were given the worst of jobs, and worked so hard

they often died of being overworked and starved to death. Many young Jewish men, before they were to be drafted into the army, would chop off a toe, or mutilate their body in some other way so they would be unsuitable for military service. Most others escaped over the borders and fled the country, most of them eventually coming to America. That's how my father got here.

But back to my mother. Because life for the peasants, and especially poor Jews, was very difficult, many of the young people became active in the new movement to overthrow the Czar. These meetings were very secretive and usually took place in the woods outside the village. Most of these people were liberal in their thinking and became part of the new Communist movement. My mother's life was one of suffering, hard work and insecurity. This new socialistic movement was just what a person like her was looking for. (I believe my father was also active in the movement when he was growing up in Russia). As an aside, my mother once told me that in 1919, after the Russian revolution happened, had she and my dad had been able to afford it they would have moved back to Russia. That was what they had hoped for when they were young and now that it finally came to be they wanted to be part of the new history about to be made. Think what that would have meant. I would have been born in Russia, maybe lived there, married there and had a whole different group of children and grandchildren. Think about that for a moment.

Back to my mother again. I imagine that many hours of discussion took place to decide who would come to America and how the trip would be financed. Anyhow, the first to come was my mother and Jenny. They came by ship and landed at Ellis Island after a difficult trip over. Remember, these people were poor, uneducated, young (16 & 17), and scared. But, they were coming to America! This was the land of milk and honey. The streets were paved with gold. This is the way these people thought America was like. But, the really important thing that they were excited about was the fact that in this country they were free! They would no longer suffer oppression and discrimination. They could work hard and own land if they chose to. They could do anything they wanted to do as long as it was legal.

The word *freedom* was very important to my parents. I remember a situation once that bore this out. When World War II broke out Leo W. went into service as soon as he could get in. My father had died a few years before. Both of my sisters were married and living in Milwaukee. My mother and I were still living in Chilton. I felt very protective of her, and, in truth didn't really know anything about what this war was about and really was a lover, not a fighter. So, I had heard that farm people would be exempt from the draft. I suggested to my mother that maybe we

could buy a farm, and therefore I wouldn't have to go off to war. I wish all of you could have been in the room to hear her answer. In her broken English, she said that as a mother she felt that we should do everything possible to keep me from going to war. But if she were me she would have been in uniform as soon as her country *America* was in danger. I didn't know what freedom and liberty meant because I was born with it. I never lived without it. The only way to appreciate the true meaning of freedom was to live without it as she had. Needless to say, when my draft number came up I went off to war with a new feeling.

The two sisters came to Chicago from New York. They had a cousin living there. I don't know who it was, but it was necessary for someone to guarantee the livelihood of immigrants. Remember, they knew no English, only Yidish and Russian. My mother found work in the ladies garment industry as a sewing machine operator. She later sold hats in a retail store. They worked hard and saved most of their money. Little by little they saved enough to send for each of their siblings and their mother and father.

Life in Chicago was hard, but it was paradise compared to Russia. They lived with this cousin, and as others came over they lived in the same house. My mother told me that often times the beds were in use 24 hours a day. When one person got up another one went to sleep. Their social lives revolved around the *Arbertering*. In English this means the Workmans' Circle. Most of the women worked in the garment industry and they joined this group of fellow workers. This was somewhere around 1915, the years when the Amalgamated Clothing Workers union was being formed. Both my father and my mother were active in these early days of union organization. In fact the leader of the union in Chicago was a man named Sidney Hilman. My mother admired him a great deal. He was in charge of organizing the Chicago workers. The president of the union at that time was a man named Samuel Gompers and his office was in New York.

My mother told me a little about life in Chicago. She enjoyed going to hear opera, and talked about an opera singer named Chaliopin. (spelling?) She also talked about going to hear chasins that came to Chicago to perform.

I have heard two stories of how my mother and father got together. One story has it that they met at a labor rally, organizing workers. Another story is that my father was first attracted to Jenny. He and every other man with hot blood. My mother told me often of Jenny's beauty. She said that whenever she walked into a room every male head would turn to look at her. She was beautiful and knew it. She also knew how to flirt with men. Anyhow, the story goes that my dad took Jenny out first but didn't find her intellectually stimulating enough for him. But when he

came to their house he met my mother and took her out. I understand they were compatible from the start. They both were liberal in their political thinking. They were atheists. They were both revolutionaries in Russia. Culturally they were on the same path. As I came to know them as I grew up, I would say they made a great married couple. My mother was conservative in business. My father was a plunger. They argued all the time about business. Never about raising the children or about domestic issues.

They married in Chicago but always felt more comfortable in small towns. They first moved to a small town in Indiana called Veedersburg. It's interesting how these Jewish immigrants, with very little money and really no serious training in the retail business, found their way to small towns and into some sort of retail business; grocery stores, women's' clothing, or men's', or sometimes a combination of all of these. The catalyst for these people finding businesses was a business broker named Simon Hootner. He knew of businesses or empty stores that were for sale or rent throughout the Midwest. Anyhow, away to Veedersburg they went. My sister Blanche was born there, or in Chicago while they were living there. They had a small store that sold groceries and a little bit of clothing. It seems that while they were enjoying the life in their new town, Albert Glusker, my mother's baby brother, came to visit and took out one of the town girls. But, he being Jewish and the girl being gentile it irritated some of the rednecks in the area and one night my parents found a cross burning on their front lawn. Needless to say my parents sold out and moved back to Chicago.

There is an interesting story about my mother's brother, Albert. My mother's mother, my grandmother's first two children were boys, and each died in childbirth. Her next five children were girls and they were born healthy and survived. The last one born was Albert, and because of the experience my grandmother had with her first two sons, being afraid that God would do with him as "he" did with her first two, as soon as he was born she "sold" him to my mother. This way she ensured herself that God would not take him as he did to her other two sons. In reality that was not how he was raised, but in many ways my mother did feel a certain amount of responsibility for him. He was the only one in the family that got an education. My mother's sister, Mae, did go to grade school. But, <u>Albert!</u> He got the best of everything. Being the baby and the only boy in a family of five girls, he went to grade school, high school and to the University of Chicago, graduating with a law degree. By the way, scholastically he was brilliant. But he never seemed to be able to support his family very well. After graduating from the University at a very young age he took a job with a social agency. This didn't pay much. After a while my parents gave him a job running a store that we had in

Plymouth, Wis. This didn't work out very well so they helped him open a store in Waukesha. It was an automotive supply store in a great location in downtown Waukesha. He later moved to California. I'm telling this story about Albert to give you a bit of an insight into the type of people Joe and Anna Kahn were. If there was some one in the family that needed financial support, they were always ready to help. They didn't have any money to speak of. They had good credit at the bank because they always paid them when the notes were due. So when a family member needed help, Joe and Anna Kahn came to the rescue. Maybe some of the other sisters had more, but it was my mom and dad who came to the rescue. They were the ones who supported my grandmother and grandfather when they lived in Chicago. Maybe some of the other sisters helped, but most of it came from the Kahns. If you think about all of this generosity from my mother's side, that's one thing. But, think about it from my father's perspective. These weren't his people. They were his wife's. But, because of his being an extremely compassionate man, he understood full well, that, whenever someone needed help Joe Kahn was ready to help. When Jenny was divorced and had a nervous breakdown it was the Kahns who supported her wherevever she was; in an institution, in an apartment, taking care of her parents, and later, for many years living with us in Chilton as a mentally deranged person. None of the others came to her rescue; only Joe and Anna Kahn. As soon as Jenny started to have her problems, her son Leo W. came to live with the Kahns. Always the Kahns. Again, let me say, I'm not saying this in anyway to criticize the rest of my mother's sisters and their families. I'm relating these stories to let you know that the Kahn genes that all of you have in you are <u>special.</u>

Let's get back to Joe and Anna Kahn. Married in Chicago about 1915, moved to Veedersburg and back to Chicago. They still dreamed about living in a small town. They had a little store in Chicago and again called on their friend, Simon Hootner to see what he had available in a different small town. He came up with a vacant store building in Chilton, Wis, owned by Sam Levitan from Kiel, Wis. My mother and father packed their Chevrolet and took off for Chilton. But this time thy had a special passenger-me! I was about three years old, born in 1923, so this had to be in the summer of '26 or '27. I remember it was summer because of the sight of the heat vapor rising in the road ahead. My dad kept teasing that it was a lake on the road and I was always astonished to see it disappear as we approached it. They must have liked Chilton and the store with the apartment above it because the next thing I remember is that we sold our store in Chicago and moved to Chilton. Me, my dad and mom and my two sisters. I don't remember if Leo was living with us by then or not. But he must have been because he came to us when he was three years

old. So it was six of us and soon a beautiful German shepherd dog.

The store seemed very big to me. The apartment above it consisted of one bathroom, (it also served as the bathroom for anybody in the store that needed to use a toilet) two bedrooms, a sort of den, a living room, a dining room, and a kitchen. It also had an attic that had a bedroom constructed in the front part of it. The whole apartment was heated by a furnace and stoker in the basement. The only thing that wasn't heated was the bedroom in the attic. Guess who slept there. Leo and I. My mom and dad had the front bedroom and my sisters had the back bedroom. Leo and I, the unheated attic. It was hot in the summer. But the winters, wow! It was cold in our room. And when it snowed we always had snow on the floor because we slept with the window open. I remember we were warm when we slept because we had warm blankets on our beds. But, when we got up we made a mad dash downstairs.

I spent all of my childhood and teen years in Chilton and loved it. None of you ever lived in a small town except Blanche and Shellie; but just for a few short years when they were little. Chilton had a population of about 2,000 in the late 1920s and the population has not changed much in all these 60 some years. In the late 20s and 30s it was a busy town. The farmers would come to town on Saturday and also on Saturday night and the town would jump. It's the county seat of Calumet County and there was always a lot of activity there. Today it's a sleepy little county seat town. My sisters and Leo went to grade school right away. There was no kindergarten in town so one of the first things my little greenhorn mother did was to start a movement to get the school to add a kindergarten. I suspect she was not as interested in seeing her sonny boy start off with a good education as she was in having someone baby sit me for part of the day. My only memory of kindergarten was playing the tambourine and napping on our little "bankies."

Let me tell you about our store. It was called THE FARMERS EXCHANGE STORE. A good part of our business was done with farmers. We sold groceries, piece goods, work clothes and a little dress clothes for men. In those days there was no men's sportswear as we know it today. We sold all kinds of women's items, including a ready to wear department (dresses to you). This department was upstairs next to our apartment. We also had a complete shoe department. You can see that it was more than a little store. It was by far "our" biggest venture to date. In selling to farmers we bought from them their products that they wanted to sell: chickens, eggs, lard, and cattle hides. They would bring these items in and my father would pay them in cash, or they could take what they got out in trade in the store. In later years we had our own money. If a farmer took cash he

got a few cents less for the products he sold us. If he took our money (we called them due bills) he would get a penny or two more per dozen of eggs, etc. (An interesting note about these "due bills." These were coins my dad had minted just for Kahn's. They were in $.25, $.50 $1.00 and $5.00 denominations. These coins were circulated by everybody in the community. Nobody ever questioned the soundness of this money. They used it to pay for things they bought from others, etc.) Every Monday morning the phone would ring and the wholesale egg buyers would call to try to buy the eggs etc. that my dad had accumulated from the previous week. Because my dad would follow the market daily in the Milwaukee Sentinal he constantly updated what he would pay the farmers. The other merchants in Chilton would call my dad daily to find out what he was paying and follow suit. When the wholesale buyers would call my dad on Monday the haggling was amazing over a quarter or a half a cent a dozen for eggs. When he finally agreed on a price they would send their truck from Milwaukee, Sheboygan or Green Bay to pick up the eggs. We usually had a couple hundred 30 dozen crates of eggs, plus lard, chickens and hides. He was an expert in the art of getting the most for what he sold them. You must remember, this was in the heart of the depression. A nickle was a lot of money. The half cent a dozen more he got for the 6,000 dozen eggs was $30.00, and that was a lot of money in those days. I think he also took a great deal of pride in "outsmarting" them. One of the reasons they wanted Joe Kahn's eggs is because they knew they had been candelled with great care and that he had them properly separated by size and grade. To those of you who don't know the word "candelled", it is a process where each egg is held up to a bright light in a small box with an opening the size of an egg and examined to see if the yoke was clear or had blood. They were also separated for size. We had one man who took care of this work.

My mother and father worked side by side in the store. They were truly equal partners. Their job descriptions were clearly defined, not on paper but they each knew what they were responsible for. I'm saying this sort of with tongue in cheek. My father took care of the groceries, the egg buying and selling and all the other things that went along with groceries. He also was the buyer of the men's clothing, and the men's shoes. My mother handled the piece goods, notions and all the women's and children's items. Remember, the women's department was much larger than the men's. The main item in the men's department was bib overalls that the farmers wore. We carried Lee bibs and a cheaper brand. Because my father was a very aggressive merchant, he was always running a promotion of one sort or another. Some of the favorite items he looked for to promote were bib overalls, brooms, bread, ring bologna and anything else he could buy cheap and sell cheap. He was always looking for a good overall at a good price. And he

didn't mind bargaining with the wholesaler on the price of the garment. He would often pay $1.65 for bib overalls, plus freight, and promote them for some event for $1.69. Those were the days when we didn't have the "6% law" which says a retailer must make at least 6% on every item he sells, unless it's on clearance items.

One of my favorite times was Christmas time when we put up big displays of bulk Christmas candies from Brache Candies. I also remember with fondness the big sack of salted in the shell peanuts. I never walked past it without taking a handful. Or when the bing cherries were in season and whenever I passed the box took a "few." We had a warehouse behind the store where we stored 50 pound bags of flour and egg mash and laying mash. The first was used by our customers for baking. The other two were sold to farmers to feed to their chickens, either to have them lay eggs that would be used to produce chickens or that could be sold for human consumption. Don't ask me how it worked, but it must have because we sure sold a lot of it. The mash was dry and in 100 pound bags and was mixed with water by the farmer. My dad would buy these three items by the car load (train car) and we would load them off the car into our truck and off load them in the wearhouse. When we were in our teens Leo and I would help the guys that worked for us do this. We would throw the 50 pound bags to each other in a chain. The 100 pounders we hoisted on our shoulders. My mother once remarked to me that I shouldn't lift one of my children when they were small because I might injure myself. I asked her why she never worried when I helped unload the 50 and 100 lb. bags?

Talking about flour reminds me of another story. Just before WWII, in about the summer of 1938, we took a trip to Minneapolis to visit my dads sister Mete` and her family. We spent a day or two there and just when we were going to start back Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia. To my dad this meant the beginning of WWII . This meant, along with many other things, that wholesale prices would rise. Between Minneapolis and Milwaukee there were a couple of flour mills. We stopped at a few of them and my dad was able to buy a few cars of flour at the old prices. When the flour was delivered they tried to charge him the prevailing price at delivery time and he refused to pay that price and they sued him. Instead of getting a good attorney to handle the case he chose to use Lou Bensman's (my sister Blanche's husband) brother, Morris, who by the way was an attorney but not actively practicing, but was working with his father in the retail furniture business in Milwaukee. (Some sentence) Needless to say they had a good attorney, and, needless to say we lost the case.

I just mentioned my father's sister Mete`. Because one thing reminds me of another my mind gets sidetracked, and therefore the story is going to get sidetracked and will come out *mishmashed.* But so what, a Pulitzer prize I won't win. Anyhow lets talk a little about my dad and his family. I am sorry to tell you I know very little about my father,s history. I know he came from a small town in the Ukraine. I don't know the name or anything about his life there. I don't even know when he came to America or how he got here. I do know he had two sisters; Mete` and Chasheriva. Mete` lived in Minneapolis with her second husband. Chasheriva lived in Brooklyn. They each had children but we never kept in contact with them. We did visit the Brooklyn bunch once and they came to Wisconsin once that I remember. Mete's husband in Minneapolis was a tailor and not doing well so my mom and dad set them up in a store in Greenleaf, Wis., halfway between Denmark (that's where the Cherins lived, about 10 miles from Green Bay) and Chilton. They made a living there but that's about all. He wasn't much of a merchant and they soon pulled out and went where? The group in New York must still be there but I don't know where. I'm sure his two sisters are no longer living, but their children must be. I'm going to try to track then down and see if they know some of the missing parts to my dad's history.

I've heard two stories about my dad's trip to America. One is that he escaped over the border of Russia to come here and he got as far as England and ran out of money. He supposedly worked until he earned enough to complete the journey. The other story is that he came here, and going through Ellis Island was examined by the Doctors, and they found something and sent him back to England. He then made his way back after curing the problem. Whichever story is true I'm glad he came here and married my mother. He was the most compassionate man I ever knew. Whenever we wanted something we always asked my dad. My mother almost always said no, my dad almost always said yes. He was the eternal optimist. He always thought big. In the height of the depression he found out that a store in Plymouth, that had been occupied by a chain department store, was empty and he decided to rent the building. It was a bigger store than the one in Chilton. When they finished remodeling the store, it had a complete men's clothing department, run by a man named Oscar Brachman. He was an old time clothing man and I think he took the job because our store was next door to a tavern. Poor Oscar. Every time someone was looking for him he was just coming back to the store from next door. All of the other departments were beautifully laid out with their own separate managers. The shoe department, the ready to wear, the children's all well done. In the middle of the store we had a separate register and after every sale the salesperson had to come to this register to complete the sale. It was caged in for security. We had two little old

because his [illegible]
ashamed to [illegible]

ladies working for us. They were leftovers from the old store that had been there before. They didn't walk, they shuffled. You could *plotz* watching them make the trip from their department to the register and back again. My mother and father used to argue about firing them. When my dad would complain about them, my mother always told him he should fire them. She knew he never could. We also had a grocery department and also took in eggs etc. from farmers. One thing I'll never forget is that Plymouth was well known for it's three houses of prostitution. They bought their groceries from us and we delivered them. There was always an argument among the men in the grocery department on who was going to make the delivery today. The girls were gorgeous. I remember one in particular who used to come in named Dynamite.

A short time after they opened the Plymouth store my dad bought a big red semi-truck. He had the name Kahn's painted on each side in huge silver letters. A little story about this big semi. We made the trip from Chilton to Milwaukee to load up groceries from the wholesale houses there, and then back to Chilton. More than a few times the truck was high-jacked by moonshiners. Remember, these were the days of prohibition and the manufacture of all beer and whisky was illegal. All they took off the truck was the 100 pound bags of sugar. They needed the sugar and it was rationed all during the war. We could buy it and sell it to our customers, one pound per coupon. The moonshiners didn't get any stamps or coupons and needed sugar to make whisky.

It was also about this time that my dad would get tired out easily. Our local Doctor didn't know what it was so my mom and dad went to the Mayo clinic, where they discovered he had Lukemia, cancer of the blood. There was no treatment for it then and my mother was told to not push him and have him rest each day. They told her that at most he would live another four years. So, with two stores in towns 25 miles apart and a dress store in the uptown section of Chilton, I forgot to mention, my mother tried to make some semblance of order. I don't have to tell you that they were heavily in debt to the banks and to their suppliers and the depression was still on. My mother ran the store in Plymouth, first with the help of Albert Glusker, and when that didn't work out, my brother-in-law, Leo Brodsky, was asked to join the store, even though he was a pharmacist working for Walgreens in Chicago. My father stayed in Chilton and ran that store, taking his nap every afternoon.

I am reminded of a cute little story about my mother in the days of the Plymouth store. She often times took the train that ran between Chilton and Plymouth when she went to work in the morning. Someone from the store there would pick her up at the depot and bring her to work. Then about 6 PM they would drive her to the depot for her trip back to Chilton.

There were a number of times she would fall asleep and miss the stop at Chilton and I'd have to drive to Hilbert to pick her up. These were not easy times for my mother. In 1935 or '36 when they went to the Mayo Clinic and she was told that my dad had no more than four years to live, and the new store that she really didn't want, and tremendous amount of debt they acquired, must have taken a toll on her. I didn't know about my dad's sickness. I'm not sure any of my siblings did either. I think my mother bore all of this by herself. She was a strong woman. My dad had a stroke in early December, 1939, and they drove him to Columbia Hospital in Milwaukee where he died.

I have never seen my mother in a position or condition where she just seemed not to be able to cope. She was in that state now when my father died. My memory of her was sitting in a chair for hours and not talking or moving. She lost a daughter a few years later and took that in the Anna Kahn stride. She faced the loss and went on to do what she had to do. My father's death seemed to immobilize her.

After my father died they had a creditors meeting in our house. She owed a lot of money and the creditors were worried about when they would get paid, or, would they get paid. Remember, they were all men and they didn't have a lot of faith in a woman being able pay off the debt. One of the bankers made a disparaging remark about my father and my mother let him have it with both barrels. In front of all these high powered credit people she told him "You shouldn't mention Joe Kahn's name out of your mouth. You, who runs around with any woman you can lay your hands on should be [illegible] didn't have a will [illegible] Bensman, told him he didn't need one. My mother and Sam Cherin (Ruth Turim's father in Denmark) came up with a plan to take care of the creditors. Those that would wait 3 years to get paid would get their money in full. Those that didn't trust my mother to be able to pay them off would get their money at once; but only 50 cents on the dollar. Some took their money right away and some waited. Those that waited collected all their money in full in the three years. We sold the store in Plymouth to Harold Craig's parents, Mr. & Mrs. Abe Golberg from Milwaukee. The way they were able to pay those that wanted their money at once was for Sam Cherin to borrow the money at the bank. Then my mother paid back that loan plus all the other creditors. The war was under way in Europe and wholesale prices were starting to rise. What this means to retailers is they are able to raise their retail prices to reflect the new wholesale prices. This enabled my mother to do more business and to make more money and help her pay back her creditors.

In the summer of 1940 or '41 I drove to Green Bay for a date with someone I now can't remember. I drove home the next

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morning to find my mother in front of our store, crying. I jumped out of the car and asked what was wrong and she told me that our basement was flooded. There had been a lot of rain the past few days and the river rose high enough to cause the sewers to back up in many of the houses. This is what the flood meant to us. We always bought large quantities of canned goods and other grocery items that we could store in the basement under the store. We bought more than we needed at once because we paid less the more we bought. I ran down to the basement to see what was going on and I couldn't believe my eyes. Hundreds of cans without labels were floating in waist deep water. Cases of soap were sudsing. Dry cereals were all wet. It was a mess. But we lived through that too. After the water receded we cleaned out the basement and whatever we could salvage, we did. We had a sale on canned goods. The price was good. The only problem was the customer didn't know what was in the can. It could be peaches, it could be peas.

Leo was in Madison at this time. The next year, 1941, I graduated from high school and I went to college and Leo stayed home and helped my mom. It was in late '41 or early '42 that I got a call from Leo on a Sunday morning that there had been a small fire in the store and if I could come home he thought it would be a good idea. I caught the next bus I could and came back home. I couldn't believe my eyes. It wasn't a small fire. It was a total loss. There was one side of the building standing and that was all. Everything else was smoldering in the basement. Not only did we lose our business, we lost our home because we lived above the store. Leo and I had a collection of Jazz records and had them stacked on top of each other. That's how we found them, but all melted together. And a sad comment on top of the tragedy was the fact that we didn't have enough fire insurance. Our store was right across the street from the fire station and my mother was advised that even though she was increasing her inventory because of possible shortages and rising prices it was foolish to spend more money for fire insurance because the volunteer fire station was right across the street. Anyhow my mother survived that too and rented an empty store building a block away and stocked that as a brand new store. I had read an article in "Progressive Grocer" that a man named Max Kohl had opened a brand new store in Milwaukee that featured self-service grocery shopping with carts. We drove to Milwaukee and with a six foot ruler and pencil and paper I laid out a copy of that store, fixtures, aisles and all. We duplicated that store in our new location in Chilton. It included, besides the clothing departments, the first self-service grocery department in Calumet County. Only trouble is that it took our customers a while to get used to shopping that way. They were in the habit of standing on the other side of the counter and reading off their list, one item at a time.

My mother had guts. She was a strong woman. One or two Christmas eves later that store caught on fire and burned to the ground. I am sure that that fire was started by someone who had been to Midnight Mass and heard how the Jews killed Christ and was going to show the Jews what he could do. They never caught the person, I don't know that anybody ever really tried to find him. This too she survived. Her next move was to buy a small building in town and open up a much smaller store there. Both Leo and I were in service by then. By the way, the first fire was caused by a short in an adding machine electric cord in our office.

In 1944 my sister Blanche was living in New York and not feeling good. She had an eye removed a few years before because they found cancer in that eye. Besides feeling tired all the time she also developed a bulge on her abdomen. They took her to the hospital to do an exploratory operation to see if they could find the problem. As soon as they opened her up they closed her up. Her liver was all cancerous and there was nothing they could do for her. Her husband, Lou, was a doctor with the V.A. in New York and he took a transfer and they moved back to Milwaukee. From the time they performed the operation to three months later, Blanche lost a tremendous amount of weight and was in constant pain. My mother came to Milwaukee to help take care of her and her two little children, Alan and Diane. I got an emergency furlough to see Blanche. She was in good spirits and liked to have me make her bed for her because I knew how to make the bottom sheet tight. She was so thin the wrinkles hurt her. Think of how difficult it was for my mother to be with her all the time with a cheery smile so that Blanche would not suspect anything was wrong. Blanche died soon after and my mother stayed on with Lou and helped take care of the house and kids. This death too she lived through.

After Blanche died and after helping Lou for a while she bought a building on Green Bay Ave, just south of Capitol Dr. It had four small stores on the ground level and four apartments upstairs. She opened a little store in one of the store spaces selling piece goods, notions and a little bit of this and a little bit of that. She also moved into one of the apartments. She stayed there for about ten years. Sylvia lived on tenth and Capitol, about two blocks from her and my mother spent a lot of time there enjoying their family. She also shared their sorrow when one of their twins, Bobby, died of a crib death. After a while we all talked her in to giving up her store and moving to Florida to enjoy some retirement. She finally did and I know she loved the beach and the water. A few years later she moved to California in the Los Angeles area to a retirement community called Leisure World. After a few happy years there, her memory started to fail and her health deteriorated so she moved in with Sylvia and Leo. After a

while this became unbearable and we put her in a nursing home where she died a short time later.

I have spent a great deal of time telling you about my mother; very little about my father. This is because he died when I was 16 years old. I spent a lot of good, quality time alone with my mother between the time I came home from Madison after one year there and the year later that I went off to war. They were both special people to me. I knew my father to be a happy man who loved to tell jokes to salesmen. He always seemed to be happy with a smile on his face. He was a great people person. Everybody loved him. He was a Mason. I think he was a Mason only for business reasons. He couldn't have been a believer because of their affiliation with God. But a Mason he was. When he died we brought his body back from Milwaukee for a Masonic tribute to him. All of the businesses in Chilton closed up the afternoon of the service. This was the first time and the only time this has ever happened there. I'm reminded of the many times he fed the hobos riding the rails when they came to the store looking for food. They knew Joe Kahn wouldn't turn them away. I remember the story he told about the time he went fishing with a customer in Lake Winnebago. When they got to where they were going to rent a boat, he saw a young man with about 6 fish that he had on a stringer. He offered the boy some money for the fish so that in case he didn't catch any he could come home to his family and show them "his" catch. It seems the boy was smarter than my father. My dad caught no fish and the fish that were supposed to be tied up at the dock were not there either. It seems this kid outsmarted the great "conniver." I was on the varsity basketball team in high school and one night in my senior year I looked up and was startled to see my dad in the stands. Leo B. had talked him into going to see his son play basketball. Again those were different times then. Parents didn't chase after their kids every time they're playing "T" ball or soccer or anything else. They worked. We played. I remember feeling good seeing him in the stands. I must mention one more thing about my father. He had high scruples and morals. I don't think he could ever cheat a person. I don't know if he ever did or not, I do know it would, somehow, be out of character for him. He was a short man, shorter that my mother. I think he had a bit of the Napoleonic Complex in him. I've mentioned before how he was an optimist. Nothing that he tried in business could possibly fail because Joe Kahn was running it. He liked <u>big.</u> The big red truck. The two big stores. The big Buicks he drove.

What more can I tell you about my mother that I haven't already said. She was a strong, domineering person. If Anna Kahn said it was snowing outside, don't bother looking, because even if the sun was shining and it was 80 degrees out, you would never convince her she was wrong. I never

heard her admit to a mistake. Yet, with all of her strength she was a very soft, compassionate human being. They had an interesting marriage. They argued a lot about business. My dad had a temper when he was pushed. But as soon as he got angry he forgot it 20 minutes later. He didn't carry a grudge; my mother did. She didn't yell like my dad could. But she would look you right in the eye and tell you exactly how she felt about you. If you played her dirty once, you never were forgiven and never got a second chance. These traits were primarily memories from their business dealings. I remember my dad raising his voice only once in anger at his children. My mother never showed the unforgiving trait in the house, only in business.

Enough about my parents. Let's talk about me. My earliest memories go back to living in Chicago. Let me say again, some of the things I relate really happened as I've told them; some are things that someone told me and I assume I remember it as fact. My life in Chicago lasted only three years, so I couldn't remember too much. I either remember, or my mother told me, that they had a black woman helping in the house and she really raised me from infancy on because my mother worked. I thought Mary was my mother. I remember the ride from Chicago with my parents to look at the store in Chilton. My next memory is being in Kindergarten. I recall a trip to New York to visit my dad's relatives. I didn't want to wear knickers anymore. I wanted long pants like the older boys wore. I remember the motor trip going through the mountains in Pennsylvania. Because the car would heat up as we climbed the mountain, my dad would pull off the side of the road and my mother would get out and put two large rocks we carried with us under the front wheels. This kept us from having to use the brakes so much while the car cooled off. The only other thing I remember, had a lasting effect on me. We took the boat trip out to see the Statue of Liberty. There was a long line to take the elevator to the top and my dad said we could climb up the stairs. The stairs were winding spiral iron stairs that you could see through and we got a little way up and I got scared and started to cry. The staircase was narrow and there was a steady stream of people behind us. There was no way to go back down. I remember my dad picked me up and carried me up to the top. I was scared and the higher we went the louder I screamed. I think that was the reason that I am afraid of heights to this day. Nothing else about that trip

My childhood in Chilton was fun. One exception. I had a loose tooth and my mother sent me down the street to Dr. Reinboldt, the dentist. He pulled out the tooth and as is prone to happen, it bled profusely and I ran in to the store crying. My mother made it all better. But I got even with him. I went over to his house a few blocks from the store and pulled up all of his tulips. Some of the things I

remember: I remember that my dad never gave us an allowance. He said whenever we needed money we should take it from the register. Just leave a note so Max Steudel could check the register the next morning. There was an empty field behind the store. We would play scrub softball. This is when two guys would be the captains and pick sides, one guy at a time from whoever was there. This is also the field where we would smoke cigarettes that I took from the store.

It's difficult to try to remember one's life in true chronological order. I don't remember much about grade school. I do remember the many times, almost every Sunday, that we drove to the Cherin's house or they came to ours. Denmark was about 40 miles from Chilton. Sam and Mary Cherin had the same type of store that we had. Sam and my dad bought together whenever they could to get a better price. I have fond memories of the Cherins. Ruth and I were about the same age and we all seemed to enjoy each other. My memory of the *old folks* was that they played cards and argued about business. One time Sam was berating Mary because she had to take such big markdowns on the dresses she bought. " If she bought them right she wouldn't have to mark them down so much." She replied "Oy Samke`, if only they were like bananas, when they spoiled and the flies started flying around them, we could just throw them out in the garbage like you do."

I do remember well my teens and high school. Let me say that I wasn't the best student. I really wasn't committed to studying. I was always having fun. I thoroughly enjoyed my teens. I don't remember ever having ups or downs. In high school I went out for basketball (played varsity for three years. Captain of the team one or two years), tennis, debate, extemporaneous speaking and band. In the band I played the baritone (euphonium) and was pretty good. When I played basketball our scores and play was different then they are today. First of all, after every point was scored, regular basket or free throw, we went back to the center for a center jump. The players weren't as tall as they are today, nor could they palm a basketball like they can today. They also couldn't jump like they can today. Nobody ever heard of dumping the ball in the hoop. All of our shots were set shots or layups. No one ever shot a one hand shot like they do now. Our scores were in the teens, 18 to 15 etc. I remember the first game I ever got into I stole the ball and went for the wrong basket. Luckily I missed the layup, and, running back up the court I passed our coach. He was part American Indian and had a temper to match. He was up on his feet shaking his fist at me. I really enjoyed playing in the band. We would go to band contests in different towns in our conference and were judged on our sound and ability. If we won that contest, we would move on to compete against other winners. The same was true in basketball. These

contests still go on today, with the finals ending up in Madison.

I remember an extemporaneous speaking contest in Plymouth one time. I had read an editorial in the Sheboygan Press that I thought was good and I wrote my speech around it. Needless to say it wasn't a great speech and really wasn't on a subject that I was real conversant with. My sister Sylvia had helped me rehearse it at home and was in the front row, along with my mother, at the *performance*. I started my speech with "Hark, the dogs of war are upon us!"------I couldn't remember the next line and looked at my poor sister for help and she was lip saying the next line, but in my frustration, I couldn't understand her. I fumbled through the rest and finally took my seat. The next one to speak was the representative from Plymouth High School, my genius cousin, Phil Glusker. You would have thought this was Clarence Darrow. Every word--perfect. Every phrase done to perfection. That was one of the low points in my life.

I never really studied very much. I did OK in school and was in the upper whatever of my class, but this was not a class of geniuses. Many of my classmates were farm kids who worked hard at their parent's farm and didn't spend much time with school work. Many of these same kids went on to take over those farms and expanded them and became very successful farmers. Many of them are now retired and their kids are running the farms. There were some bright kids in our class. I don't know what ever happened to them. We have a class reunion every 5 years and that's when I catch up on the news. Our next one will be our 55th year after my graduation in 1941.

Living in a small town had many advantages. If your were just average you could play in the band, basketball, whatever. You didn't compete against that many people. I could never play basketball against the high school kids today. One did not have to be outstanding to take part in all the extracurricular activities I was part of. That was really the fun part of school for me. My children will bear out the fact that I was always nudging them to go out for this, or go out for that, but go out for something. I do remember Shellie as a "bunnie" in her dance class, but that was before she got to school.

Socially I was a hit. I liked all of my acquaintances and they all liked me (I think)--(I hope). I always seemed to have a girl friend, even starting in grade school. I recall one New Year's eve when Phil Glusker was in Chilton and we went over to a little girl's house and played spin the bottle. We had little slips of paper; one was a kiss, one a hug and one a kiss and a hug. Very bold. It was just the three of us. I think we were around ten years old,...not in high school. I asked Phil one time if he remembered that

wonderful evening and he had no memory of it. Back to high school and my girl friends. There was one that I was dating steady for two years, I think. I was a basketball *hero*, and really BMOC. I remember one night, we had won our game, and we were on our way to a "malt" shop where we all hung out. It was a warm winter evening and it started to snow, great big heavy flakes. I really felt good that night, walking arm in arm with Eileen in that wonderful warm, snowy night.

For many summers my dad would rent a cottage at Elkhart Lake, usually for the entire summer. It was a beautiful cottage. The owner wanted my dad to buy it, but of course this was depression time and he didn't have any spare money for this. He would rather borrow money to open a new store. One of us would drive mom to work in Plymouth and my dad would drive to Chilton, which was 16 miles away. Plymouth was about 6 or 7 miles away. Then the rest of the day was ours. My dad did buy an outboard speed boat that we took out to the lake each summer. The first time I used it alone I opened it up to full throttle and did some kind of damage to the motor and we had to get it fixed. The boat was laid up for quite a while waiting for the motor to get repaired and returned. I have many happy memories of that cottage and our days at the lake. That's where I learned to like fishing. Many times I would go off in the boat and fish for hours. This cottage also became the center for family gatherings. Everybody in the family seemed to find their way there one time or another. Sometimes for a weekend, sometimes for a week or two and sometimes for most of the summer. The cottage had a screened-in porch the entire back of the house, which overlooked the lake. Often times there was a group of us sleeping out there on blankets or whatever. We didn't know from sleeping bags in those days. Those were happy, happy days for me. I guess we rented that cottage for about five summers and I think I was about 11 to about 16 years old.

I'd like to tell you about a trip to California we took in the summer of my Junior year in high school. My dad had died the previous December and I guess my mother had decided that she had mourned enough, so she decided that she and I would drive to the West coast. But in those days, with our extended family, one didn't go anywhere with a partially empty car. So my mother invited Aunt Mae and her two daughters, Miriam and Lea to join us, and away we went. Mind you I was just 17 years old and the only one of the five of us who knew how to drive a car. Remind me later to tell you how I came about learning how to drive. We had an uneventful trip until we hit the Rockies. Remember again, this was in 1940 before there was even a word like expressway. The roads were narrow, two lane roads, that were made up of one series of hairpin curves after another. My mother, of course, was sitting in the front passenger seat looking down her side to see straight down the mountainside. She was

sure I was going too fast, that I was too close to the edge, that at any moment we were going over the side. All in all it was a fun trip and Miriam and Lee and I still joke and laugh about it today.

The story about my learning to drive goes like this. We used to deliver groceries, etc. to customers who called in an order. When I was young I'd hang around the store when I wasn't out playing. Often times I'd go out with the guys when they were making the deliveries. Pretty soon they would let me steer the truck. Then they would let me shift the gears, while they worked the clutch. Then finally they let me drive a little and ultimately all the time that I wanted to. When I was about 14, my dad, not knowing anything about the truck episodes, decided it was time for him to teach me how to drive. We got in to the car and he explained how everything worked. He showed me by example and then let me try, expecting that I would strip the gears and goof up in all other ways that one can do the first time they try to drive a stick shift car. Well, I fooled him because I went smoothly from first, to second, and into third and away we went. He couldn't get over how smart I was and how easily I learned. He told my mother I was a genius. He never did know that I had been driving since I was 10 or 11.

I'm purging my brain for any other memories of those early teen years but nothing comes to mind at the moment. So lets go on to college. I arrived at Madison in September, 1941 and moved into one of the men's dorms called Chamberlain Hall. My roommate was a young man from Milwaukee whose name was Jerry Schlensky. We were never very close but I always liked him and see him every now and then today. I later met Frank Eisendrath in a math class and we became very good friends. The main reason for this is that we both loved to play ping pong and were pretty good at it. Often times we would go to the Union and play, and, when that closed up for the evening we would go to a pool hall on State Street that had a few ping pong tables and we would continue playing there until they closed up. This left very little time for serious studying.

Another thing that came between me and serious studying was girls. As soon as I got there I went to register for classes and found myself standing behind a lovely looking Jewish girl from Chicago, whose name was Helene Roseth. We got into a conversation and as soon as we finished registering I rented a canoe and we went canoeing on Lake Mendota. I had never been in a canoe before, but that didn't stop me. Nothing happened I'm happy to report. We started dating and she became my "steady." She lived at a house called Georgian Annex. There were lots of very lovely Jewish girls living there and I got to know them all. One of them was a girl named Marilyn Safer. After one semester my "steady" became

my "ex-steady," and my new "steady" became Marilyn. We went steady for the second semester and I really had a great time. We went to a number of formals together besides enjoying each other on ordinary occasions. What with the "steadies" and the ping pong, my grades were not outstanding. In fact, they were downright terrible and I was not invited back the following year. I went back to Chilton directly from college and worked in the store. I was there from the summer of '42 until I went in to service in the fall of '43. This was the period that I got to know my mother so well. We were together most of the time. My memory doesn't serve me well regarding my romance with Marilyn during this period. She remembers that period a lot better than I do. In fact all I remember about dating was one date with a girl from Green Bay and a new teacher in the local high school in Chilton that I took out a number of times. She was not a "steady."

This gets me to 1943 and off to war I go. I still don't know anything about the Jews in Europe, the Holocaust or anything that is happening in the world around me. I'm not clear on the reason for this. I'm sure I read the papers. But I went into service without really understanding the historical reason for this war. I'll tell you a story about my experience at the induction center in Milwaukee. I went through a physical exam and was given a paper instructing me to report to room_____. Can't remember the number. Anyhow, I get to that room and I see that it is staffed by navy people. A man at the door asked for my records and I said I had to speak to the man in charge of the room. He didn't want me to go around procedures and asked me why. I said it was personal and important. He showed me who the navy man was that I could talk to. Let me explain my dilemma. Since I went to a YMCA camp when I was about 10 or 12, and came out of a swimming exercise with bloodsuckers all over my legs I have had a fear of water that I'm unfamiliar with. In fact to this day I won't go into a swimming pool without first looking all around and in the pool to see that it doesn't have any crawlies in it or anything else that shouldn't be there. Back to the navy. When I walked in this room and saw the navy people I knew that I was going to serve my tour of duty in the navy. The first thing I thought of was being out in the ocean and being torpedoed and sinking and the captain yelling over the loudspeakers, "Abandon ship!". The thought of having to jump in that water with all the sharks and fish and who knows what else, really scared me. I went up to the man in charge and told him that my mother lost three brothers in the navy in World War I, and when she found out I was to serve in the navy I think it would kill her. I went on to tell him she was a widow and living alone. I really sold him well because he said the Navy was sorry to lose me and stamped my papers with a big "rejected for Navy duty," and sent me to another room which was staffed by army personnel. You now know two

foibles that I have. I'm afraid of heights and I'm afraid of unfamiliar water. So, I'm not perfect.

I was in service for a little over two years, and would like to take some time to tell you about that period of my life. I ended up at Jefferson Barracks, Mo., about an hour away from St. Louis. We were there for about six weeks and were given many tests. I must have done well because I was designated to become a navigator in the Army Air Force. The Air Force was not a separate branch of the armed forces then. They were part of the Army or the Navy. This was the place where we were given basic training. That's where you learn to become a soldier and forget about being a civilian. That was the term used to describe all people who were not in service. A few days before I was to leave there and go to Kent State for some preparatory college work, my nephew Bobby died and I got an emergency furlough to come home. When I got back to Jefferson Barracks my group had already shipped out to Kent State and I had to wait for the next group to finish their training. This group was assigned to go to Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill.

There is a theory in life that I am always thinking about. It is called "alternative decisions." This decision to go to Rock Island was not made by me. It was made for me by someone who controlled my life at that time. Had my nephew not died when he did I would have gone to Kent State and never gotten to Rock Island. Think how that would have impacted on your lives!

I'll get to your mother and grandmother in a little while. First, let me continue my career in the military. I was destined to finish my studying at Augustana in about 9 months and go on to navigation school. But, as luck would have it, they discovered they had enough navigators in training and they didn't need any more, so they closed down the program. Our little group was assembled and told of the new decision and given a list of other opportunities in the Air Force. I chose being a radio operator. I could see that that would be a relatively safe way to ride out the war. (I told you I'm not a fighter. I'm a lover.) We were all put on a train and not told where we were going. We all thought it was strange that we were going to the same place when we all chose different "careers". But we assumed it would be a distribution center and we would all be reassigned to our respective camps. What it turned out to be was Tyndal Field, Florida; a gunnery school for the Air Force. We all chose what we wanted. What we got was becoming gunners on airplanes and going into combat. After learning how to fire 50 caliber machine guns at flying airplanes, we were transferred to our new base to become part of a combat crew to "engage the enemy." I ended up at Clovis Air Base in Clovis, New Mexico. The field was a crew formation base for the brand new B-29 bomber. These were the largest

bombers that were flying at that time. The trouble is that they weren't flying that much. There always seemed to be some mechanical problem with them. So, even though they had about 100 '29s there, they could only get 10 or 12 up on any given day. So, what should have been a six week period became a nine month period. Our newly-formed crew spent most of the time loafing or playing ping pong. I got to be pretty good. Flying Air Force people got extra pay because it was supposedly more hazardous. To get this pay you had to fly at least 4 hours a month.

Because we didn't get enough time in B-29s, we flew in some B-17s they had at the field. One day we were given the assignment to fly an officer up to Pierre, South Dakota, refuel, return over Denver, and then south to Clovis. We had radio clearance all the way. There were some storms reported on our route home. About 15 minutes out of Pierre, heading west, we ran into an awful storm. We hit a big air current that shoved our plane around like it was a toy. The jolt knocked out the compass and the radio. The navigator had no idea which direction we were flying and the radio operator couldn't make contact with anyone. We flew up higher to get over the clouds so the navigator could get a fix on the stars. Also, we figured we might be near the Rockies so we wanted to be above them. We put on our oxygen masks and waited. We gunners had nothing to do except stay out of the way, try to stay warm, and hope our pilot would get us out of this mess. After quite a while the radio operator thought he heard a call from Akron. They thought this meant we were near Akron, Ohio. Those of you who know geography know that Akron, Ohio and Denver are not close to each other. We gunners were discussing this issue, but figured the geniuses in front knew what they were doing. Little did we know. All of a sudden the pilot saw a break in the clouds and saw some lights on the ground. He literally dove the plane down so as not to lose sight of the ground. This act later got him demoted and he was never to command a plane again, because he used a B-17 in a manner it wasn't designed for. We flew around close to the ground hoping to see something. What I don't know. The pilot took the plane up to about 2000 feet and said that anyone who wanted to jump and land by parachute could, but he was going to try to land the plane on a straight road he saw. It was raining and sleeting and we all decided to ride it down with him. We all prepared for the crash landing, when all of a sudden he pulled the plane up and announced that he saw what looked like a lighted runway. What had happened was this. We had been flashing SOS signals with our landing lights, and a navy radio man was home on furlough. Seeing our plight, he alerted the sheriff and they got the town out to line up their cars in such a way to form a runway with their car lights. The fact that it was in a corn field didn't seem to matter. We came down in a wheels up landing. The first thing we hit was a telephone pole that clipped a wing.

The next thing was a chicken coop filled with chickens. We then landed safely and got out of the plane as fast as we could. The only injury was when the pilot caught his ring on something when he crawled out the window, and cut his finger. The town was a small town called Liberal, Kansas. We were real heroes. Put up in the local hotel, etc. The next morning we were bused to an air base 30 miles away and flown back to Clovis.

Back at Clovis the entire crew was dismantled. We were each assigned to a different crew. I ended up on a crew that was fantastic. Every man a pro. Our pilot was Capt. Sam Hanford. He was tall and had very large hands. I would have flown anywhere with him. By the way, when we got back to the base at Clovis we were each given psychological testing. It seems that once you crash land or parachute out of a plane while in training, you are given the choice of not flying anymore. I liked that and told the psychologist that I was afraid to fly. I envisioned a nice cushy job in the states. He informed me that all unessential ground people were being gathered up and sent to the infantry to fight in the Battle of the Bulge that was happening then in Europe. I think he saw through my bluff, and I changed my story and told him I was ready to fly again. I couldn't see myself out in the cold forest, carrying a rifle and maybe getting shot at to boot.

Our crew trained together for a few more months. By this time they had taken care of most of the mechanical problems on the 29s and we got to train on them as we were supposed to in the beginning. A number of times our bomb run was over Los Angeles; not with actual bombs but with a camera attached to the bomb sight to see how accurate we were. Los Angeles was not as spread out as it is today.

We left there for a Mather Field, a base near Sacramento. This was where we were given our plane, our flight plan and our destination. Our first stop was Hawaii. We loaded up with pineapple juice and left the next morning for a tiny little island named Kwajalein,in the Marshal Islands. This was our first taste of a war. The marines had taken the island from the Japanese earlier and there were remnants of a battle all over; destroyed planes, tanks, trucks etc. I finally realized this war was for real. From there we flew to our base on Saipan, an island in the Marianas. We flew 13 missions over Japan from Saipan.

I'd like to talk a little about some of my experiences there. The first mission I went on was an incendiary raid over Tokyo. As we approached the island we could see a glow in the sky. It grew larger and brighter as we got closer. Many 29s before us had already dropped their bombs. As we approached our drop zone it was apparent to me that the

entire city was on fire. Tokyo was not as populated as it is today. It also did not have as many skyscrapers as today. I will never forget that sight. I kept thinking of the women and children that must have burned that night. To this day I am reminded of that night by some unrelated incident or another. On one mission to Osaka naval base we were supposed to bomb the harbor installations. That day we couldn't fly our own plane because of some problem so we flew an auxiliary plane. It was slower and the bombardier miscalculated and dropped the bombs so they landed in the bay, about 300 yards out of the harbor installations. It was our job as gunners to watch the bombs go down and evaluate their accuracy to the target. It so happens that our bombardier was the only other Jew on our crew and he was very unfriendly to me. He was an officer and I wasn't. Anyhow I stopped trying to talk with him after my first or second rebuff. But <u>now!</u> This was my chance to give it to him. When the captain asked us for the bomb report on the way back to Saipan I said that he bombed the water and probably killed hundreds of fish. The captain pleaded with me to change my story. I kept him and the bombardier on hold until we got on the ground and finally told them I would go along with them when we were interrogated. That was my way of getting back at this guy. We had another mission over Osaka and there were a few Japanese ships in the bay. They shot brightly colored flack at us. It was beautiful. One time we were on another incendiary raid over Tokyo and a piece of tin from a shack got caught in the updraft caused by the fire and it flattened out on the leading edge of our wing on my side. We were running low on fuel because of strong headwinds so we had to land at Iwo Jima. The radio operator had radioed ahead to say that we were landing there and also told about the piece of tin attached to our wing. When we pulled up to our spot on the runway there were large group of people waiting for our plane to come to a stop because they wanted a piece of the tin. It seems that this was the first souvenir of Japan to be brought back. None of us were interested in it. We did get our crew's name and an accompanying story in "Stars and Stripes" about that piece of tin.

Our missions were about 12 hours long. We were over water all the way to Japan, go inland to our target, drop our bombs, turn around and go back over the Pacific to Saipan. Other than the flack that we saw, the bomb runs were not difficult. Most of the time the flack was not even close to us. Because it was close to the end of the war, Japan was almost out of fuel and were able to mount very few fighter planes to try and hit our bombers. The only time I saw one was on one of our missions and we were flying in four-four plane formations. So, in reality, there were 16 planes flying together. All of a sudden a Japanese fighter came up in the middle of this group to try to hit the lead plane. All of us in the 16 planes who had a shot at him opened fire

and he just blew up when he was hit. None of us could take credit for the "kill" because there were so many guns aimed at him. Each one of us could control 8 fifty caliber machine guns, so there had to be at least 128 machine guns firing at him.

Life on Saipan was lazy and sort of boring when we didn't have a mission to fly. We'd sit around playing cards, listening to records, reading and just kill time. There was no town to go to. What was left of the town that was nearest to us was almost a ghost town. There were still some Japanese soldiers holed up in caves on the Island but they were watched by some of our Marines and never bothered us. They finally surrendered well after the war ended. I forgot to tell you about one of our missions that I'll always remember. For an airplane to take off in the easiest manner they are always headed into the wind. This one night we were scheduled to take off at midnight so we would hit our target at about 6 AM. There was always a breeze blowing so taking off was never a problem. This particular night there was no breeze or wind of any kind. There were hundreds of planes loaded and ready for takeoff and we all just sat there. After a couple of hours they decided that there was enough of a wind to take off. We took off about two in the morning. It was pitch black and the pilot couldn't seem to get the plane to rise. We were flying just over the water, maybe 20 to 30 feet over the waves. I sat in my seat, looking out my plastic bubble, watching the waves right below me. It seemed that we flew this way forever. I'm sure it lasted no longer that 20 minutes, or so, but it seemed an eternity. I was a bit scared that night.

Not much else to tell of my war experiences. I served for a little over two years, finally trained as a gunner and performed my function one time, and that time probably didn't hit the enemy. Anyway, after flying 13 missions, the high command decided that we were an outstanding crew and that we should be further trained to become a lead crew. (A lead crew is the plane that is the first one in a formation that drops his bombs, and then all others in that formation drop theirs at the same time.) All lead crews were sent back to the states for further training. We arrived at what is today known as Edwards Air Base, in the middle of the Mojave Desert. After completing two weeks of our training the two atomic bombs were dropped and the war ended. There was no reason to send us back and we had accumulated enough discharge points so we were discharged and sent home.

Now that the "war" is over let's get back to the ongoing saga of the Albion story. Remember how I was shipped to Rock Island to go to Augustana College. Our group was to be housed in a large home on this small campus. The group that had just finished their schooling was packing up to vacate

the house as we were getting ready to move in. I noticed one Jewish looking face and started talking with him to find out about the community and did he know any Jewish girls there. He said there were quite a few and they were frequent hostesses at the USO in Rock Island. In fact he had a list of those he had dated and knew and he wouldn't need it anymore. So he gave it to me. He also told me there had been a dance at the Fort Armstrong Hotel the night before as a going away party for his group, and most of these girls were there.

The next night we could leave the college and it was a free night. I took out his list and started to make my calls. The first one I called was not home. The next one had a date for that evening and the third one was a girl named Onalee Harris. She answered the phone and I told her my name and started my "pitch." "I'm sure you don't remember me, but I met you last night at the dance at the Fort Armstrong Hotel." I was right, she didn't remember me. So I then asked her if she would like to go to a movie that night. She said fine and I said "Good, how would you like to meet me at the Fort Armstrong Hotel?" She said she never meets any man anywhere except at her home and she slammed the phone down in my ear. I collected my thoughts and called her back and apologized and asked her out again, this time saying I would pick her up at her house. I got to her house and her dad came to the door to let me in. I talked with him and her mother for a few minutes when she started down the stairs. She had a black dress on and plastic toeless and heelless shoes. Her hair was long and shining black. I think I fell in love with her at that first sight. We went to a movie and then had a coke and talked and talked. All of a sudden I looked at my watch and was horrified to find I only had 15 minutes to get back to my dorm or I would get a demerit for being late for house check. We ran out and I hailed a cab and gave the cabbie extra money to take her home and told her I would call her again. I hailed the next cab and got back in time. Onalee told me later how impressed she was with me on how I handled the situation. Little did she know that I was an experienced "cab" man from Chilton. We dated a few more times after that and she left for a month to be with her sister Leota, in Texas. After she got back we started seeing each other on a steady basis. My buddies were angry with me because I had abandoned them in favor of a steady girl. I soon shipped out and we started corresponding. I think, with the month that she was gone, and the fact that we could get off "base" only one or two nights on weekends, we really didn't go out more than ten or twelve times. But our romance seemed to blossom through the mails. I came home on a furlough once before I went overseas and routed my trip through Rock Island to see her. We corresponded all the three months I was in Saipan. I used to include a couple of sticks of gum in each letter because civilians couldn't get any, but I could get it at the PX.

Anyhow, after I was discharged, I went to R.I. to visit and we talked seriously about marriage. Onalee came to Milwaukee and I introduced her to my mother. That was some welcome! My mother didn't think anyone, especially an Orthodox girl, was right for her son. Also you have to remember that Anna Kahn did not pick this girl for me. That alone was a drawback. Anyhow Onalee went back to R.I. and I decided to buy her an engagement ring. My mother gave me the money. Now, in thinking back on this, that must have been a tough thing for her to do. Onalee came back to Milwaukee and we went out to eat and went down to the lakefront and I gave her the ring. We were now officially engaged! The next morning when Onalee and I came in to breakfast I said to my mom "well, Onalee and I are now official and we're going to get married." My mother's warm words of welcome to her new daughter-in-law-to-be, were, "Well, if that's what you want," and went right on with her cooking. Onalee went back to R.I. and my mother spent the next few months convincing me that Onalee Harris was not the right girl for me. Because she was such a positive, forceful person, and, because I was so tied to her apron strings, I let her talk me out of the engagement, and went down to R.I. to break off the engagement and to get my ring back. God, was I ever unsure of myself at that age. Even after two years in service. This was in fall of 1945. Leo came home and we both went to Madison in January of '46. We put in one semester. By the way, I was admitted as a sophomore because of the courses I took at Augustana and the credit they gave us for serving in the military.

My Mother had said that if both Leo and I came back safe and sound we were going to take a long trip to the west coast. (By the way, Leo's experience in the war was not as pleasant as mine. He was on B-24s, stationed in Italy, and his targets were over Germany. The German fighter planes were plentiful and the flack was heavy and his plane was shot up twice. He had to parachute out over enemy territory. He was reported missing in action, but he found his way back to Italy both times.)

We finished the semester in early June and got ready for our trip. Again, it was not prudent to go in a half full car so Helen Newmark was invited to join us. She was one of my mother's favorite nieces and she would make a fourth for bridge at night. We drove to Los Angeles in about five days because Leo and I were in Phil Glusker's wedding party. We spent a few days in L.A. and started a leisurely drive up the coast of California. We spent a few nights in San Fransisco and again went up the coast into Oregon and Washington. There were no freeways then so our trip was really fun. We stopped wherever we felt like it, and stayed as long as we felt like it. We went on to Victoria, British Columbia, back down and back up to Canada to the Canadian Rockies. There were many memorable moments of this trip

that I will never forget. The couple of nights at Radium Hot Springs, swimming in the heavy sulphur water. The nights at Lake Louise and the sumptuous dining in their dining room overlooking the Glacier. All in all we were on the road for about two months.

All this time, especially near the end of our trip I kept thinking of Onalee. I couldn't get her out of my mind and couldn't wait to see her. There was no question in my mind now. As soon as we got home I told my mother, and again I went to buy a ring. I called Onalee, took the train to R.I. and proposed for the second time. This was in late July of 1945. Her mother was marrying off a daughter, Sarreta, on September 15th at their home in R.I., so we figured the house would be torn apart for that wedding, we would make ours on Wednesday, the 18th. Also I had to get to Madison in a few days to register for classes.

Our wedding was beautiful. It was a warm September day and all of our families were there. Mr. Bensman, Lou's father, taught me the Hebrew words the man says when he gives the ring to his bride. I remember them to this day. I learned them in about ten minutes. They are the only Hebrew words I know. After the wedding we drove to Chicago and spent our honeymoon at the Edgewater Beach Hotel. (It has since been torn down.) The next morning we had a leisurely, sumptuous breakfast and drove to Madison so that I could register for classes. By the way, there were literally no apartments to be had for married students, so my mother gave me $5,000 as a down payment on a duplex on Mill Street. We lived there until I graduated. I went to school on the GI bill. We got $50 a month as a student. This was one of the good things that congress did. It took any Veteran that wanted to go to college and made it possible for him to go. Think of how far $50 a month would go today. There is an interesting story about a raise I got from the $50, to $75 a month. I always dreaded the walk up Bascom Hill to classes. I had callouses on my feet all of my life and figured I could use that as an excuse to get a parking pass to enable me to park on top of the hill. I made an appointment with the Veterans' Administration people in Madison and a doctor listened to my story and examined my feet. He decided they were bad and talked into his Dictaphone machine describing my callouses in medical terms. He then told me I would be entitled to a disability payment and I would hear from the VA. I told him I didn't want a disability payment, I just wanted a parking pass for on top of Bascom Hill. He said he couldn't help me with that. About a month later I got a letter from the VA telling me I had been awarded a 10% disability and my pay for going to school would be increased from $50 a month to $75. In the next ten years I was called in at various times to see if I was still entitled to the disability payment and they always figured I was. On every one of these occasions

I tried to have them stop it but they wouldn't listen to me. To this day I get a check every month.

One year and a day after we were married Blanche was born. I sold shoes part-time and Onalee worked in a children' store until she was too big to work. Ruth and Sol Turim were in school at the same time and Stan was born a little after Blanche was born. We really knew about birth control! Those were not the smartest of times to have children. Leo was also in school at the same time and we all graduated in June of '48. Sol from Pharmacy school, Leo from Law school, and me with a degree in Business Administration. Away we went to make our mark in the world. We all moved back to Milwaukee. Onalee and I sold our duplex in Madison and bought a house in Whitefish Bay, on Kent, just south of Silver Spring. Before we moved I had interviews with people who came to colleges to look for future employees. I was offered a job with Gimbels, and with Hill's Department Store on Mitchell Street. It was part of Federated Department Stores and they claimed their management team was old, and young people with talent would move up fast. Well, I knew I was the best so I went to work with them. I was on a training program and worked in all facets of the operation. By the way, my salary was $50 a week. Certainly better than the $75 a month I got while in school. One day in August, three months after starting at Hill's, my mother called me and said a salesman who did business with her in her store on Green Bay Ave., told her about a little store that was for sale in Menomonee Falls. None of us had ever heard of Menomonee Falls or knew exactly where it was. It was a Friday night, August 11th, Onalee's birthday and we were going out that night. So Leo and my mother went to look at the store that evening. It was closed so all they could see was what they saw through the show windows. The next day was Saturday and I had to work, so Sunday morning Onalee, Anna Kahn and I repeated the excursion. Of course the store was closed on Sunday so again we peaked in the show window. (By the way, by this time my mother and Onalee had made peace with each other. They really weren't comfortable with each other. One of their problems was they were very much alike in many ways. They were both strong- willed, and both head-strong. Sometimes it was difficult for me to be caught in the middle of these two domineering women.) Back to the store. On Monday we called the people in Milwaukee who owned the store and in a few days I was the owner of a Junior department store. The first day I walked in the store was the first day I owned it.

The store itself was 3500 sq. ft. The inventory was bits and pieces of merchandise. The only thing in ample supply were colored glass owls. Let me digress for a moment to tell you how I came up with money to buy the store. When my father died in 1939 he had an insurance policy for $5,000 on his life with me as the beneficiary. My mother had kept

this money in the bank for me, and with this money and another $5,000 my mother loaned me, I bought the store for $10,000. She also took me to Chicago to the wholesale houses she bought from, and not only introduced me to the principals, she told them to ship me on open credit. Notice, I said told them. Anna Kahn didn't ask many favors. And this is how I went into the retail business.

We figured we should really live in this small town as long as we made our living there. So we looked for a house to buy. We put an offer in on one we liked only to find out the next day the seller changed their mind and decided not to sell. So we put in an offer on another one. This house was the one we ultimately bought in Hiawatha Heights, about three blocks from the store. The husband of this family that was selling the house had been transferred to Cleveland and the wife stayed behind to sell the house. When I was to give her the money to seal the offer to purchase she didn't have an attorney so I suggested we could use the same one. I picked her up and we drove to the attorney's office and we completed the paper work. I drove her back to her house and she said, in a very hesitant way, that she wanted to tell me something but didn't know how to tell me. I asked, was there anything wrong with the house that she didn't tell me about. No that wasn't it. But she still didn't tell me what it was. Finally she blurted out that all of her neighbors came to her to plead with her to not sell the house to us. I, in my naive way, asked why. She blurted out, "Because you're Jewish!" I got steaming mad and told her I was buying the house and if they were unhappy they could all move out. We lived there until it was time for Blanche to go to Hebrew School, because the trip back and forth into Milwaukee was too much for Onalee. We sold the house and bought one on 53rd Street. All of those neighbors came to respect us and were friendly to us. In fact, the ringleader, Verna Pritzlaff, became a good friend. Her daughter Patty was our baby sitter for a while and worked in our store for a while. Shellie was born in Milwaukee while we were still living there. Our business grew and we made a nice living. Both Blanche and Shellie went through college while we were in business in Meno. Falls. Jeff went one year and decided he and college were not meant for each other and he came to work full time in the store.

I really enjoyed my business. It was never a chore to go to work. I enjoyed the employees that worked for us. The customers that shopped in our store were friends. You have to understand that owning a retail business and intermingling with people gave me a stage on which to practice my *schtick*. It was always fun for me. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Understand, there were plenty of tough times. There were many days when I was short of money and would play games with my creditors. I would send a large check to the wrong creditor and he would have to send it back to me

so I could send it to the right one with an apology. This gave me about a week extra to make up the shortage at the bank. A lot of the merchandise I bought carried an 8% discount and I would never pass that up. But, don't ever think that I didn't play the float at the bank to the maximum. Not because I wanted to use their money, but because I didn't have it! I finally bought the little shopping center we were in. By the way this was the first shopping center built in the state of Wisconsin. It was built in 1947, one year before I bought our little store in it. We kept enlarging the store until at one time we occupied everything except the shoe repair shop and the doctor's offices. With every enlargement came additional bank debt. Thank you F&M Bank! We also bought a women's store in West Bend that really never became profitable for us.

During this period I became very active in the community. I was head of the Chamber of Commerce for some time. I was on the YMCA board for a while. I was active in a big 75th Centennial we had. The biggest thrill for me was when I was asked to serve on the F&M bank board. The bank was then owned by the Goode family so a board member had very little authority or power. But finally in the late '60s and early '70s they wanted to get out and Dick Klug came up with the plan to buy them out. Dick and I were close then and I felt I had a some influence on some of the decisions he made in his rush for expansion. We later disagreed on something related to my business and we no longer were bosom buddies.

About the early '70s our business started to level off in volume and it started to lose money. Those were really tough times. I could do nothing right. No matter what I tried, it didn't work. By this time Onalee was in her own store in Brown Port. Every night I would come home and we would try to figure out what to do. There were many nights that I would toss and turn most of the night. The big problem was that almost all at once the major shopping centers started to take their toll on us. When Capitol Court was built it didn't bother us. Then when Mayfair went up, that didn't hurt. But when Northridge came on the scene, that spelled our demise. Onalee and I were in Bay Shore one day and we ran in to Bob Brill and he told me about a new business associate he had in New York. They specialized in helping people do going-out-of-business sales. He had just used them to run a relocation sale in Bay Shore. I kept the name, **April Marcus**, in the back of my head and a few months later when business went from bad to worse I called them.

The principals came out a few days later. I showed them my books, told them my story and they told me theirs. They would supply merchandise to me that I could sell at 40% markup. I would pay for it only after it sold. By intermingling that goods with my merchandise on sale I would

be able to sell off my inventory and pay all of my creditors and the bank off in full. They also had another facet to their business. After a merchant cleaned out his inventory and paid off his creditors, they would continue to supply you with merchandise on the same basis as before. You could maintain a 40% markup and not pay for the merchandise until it was sold. You paid them 7 1/2 % of the retail sales. Their strong point was men's tailored clothing. This is how I became a *maven* on men's clothing. To start this new venture with them you had to put up $25,000 and they would supply you with $75,000 worth of merchandise at cost. You could pay this extra $50,000 off over a three year period, $325 per week. At this time in my life I was completely free of debt. I had paid off the bank and all of my creditors. I also didn't have any money and very little net worth. So I went back to the F&M and borrowed the $25,00 to go into the men's clothing business.

While we were in the process of closing out our inventory we were also in the process of dismissing some old and trusted employees. These people were more than employees, they were friends that had been associated with us for years. These were difficult days for me. Probably the darkest period of my life. The only bright part of this period is that both Blanche and Shellie were married and living on their own, with their husbands to support them. By the early '70s we were down to two employees, Jeff and me. We had condensed the space we occupied before and now sold only men's suits, sportcoats, slacks and haberdashery items. We rented out the rest of the space in the center to other tenants as best we could. Jeff and I tried to make this new business go in our store in Meno. Falls by doing a lot of promoting but it just wasn't doing the volume I thought it should do. We decided to look for a different location. At that time downtown Milwaukee was where there was the heaviest concentration of suit-wearing men. We found a location on the corner of Broadway and Michigan and decided to move our business in there. Again, let me tell you my innermost feelings at that time. I was abandoning a store and a town that I loved for over 25 years. My net worth was down to almost nothing. The space in Menomonee Falls that I was vacating was in my building and there was no tenant in sight for it. To make my mortgage payments I had to come up with money out of my pocket to make up the shortage each month. And on top of all that, our business in downtown Milwaukee wasn't doing that great. In fact it was no better than it was in Meno. Falls. Our space that we occupied was in an old building that had not been used for quite some time. It had wooden floors and a high ceiling. Because it was an abandoned warehouse it was filthy. We cleaned it up before we opened.

So what happened to make it successful, you ask. I'll tell you. After about a couple of years of struggling, I was in New York doing some buying at April Marcus. I was walking

out with Morty April's stepson, Billy, and asked him how come he and his partner are so successful, and I was just shleppinmg along. He answered, "TELEVISION, TELEVISION, TELEVISION!" I sat at LaGuardia, waiting for my plane, and figured out how much I would be spending on advertising for September through December that year. Ursula was doing what little advertising I was doing at that time. She worked for Joe Balistreri. I called a meeting and announced to both of them that for that period we were going to triple our advertising dollars! And, we were going to do it all in television! And, we were going to produce a TV commercial that sold a concept, not an item price commercial! They both thought I had lost my mind. I figured I would try this last hurrah, and if it worked I'd be a hero. If it didn't I could always get a job driving a bus. I went back to the F&M and borrowed enough money to cut the commercial and to buy enough air time to sell the message. That's how Perry Crawford and I got started. It was a sloppy production but it did the job. It was the first television commercial in this market place that talked about men's clothing. Each month's volume was way over projection and we were off and running. Sometimes business decisions turn out to be successful because of the timing, and sometimes you have to be lucky.

Sometime later Bruce and Blanche called and wanted to talk. They came to Milwaukee and told me that their business in Chicago was N.G. and could I use Bruce in our business. It was at this time that I was interested in opening a second store and I said yes. He commuted from Chicago for some time and I taught him the retail clothing business. We opened the Brookfield store and it did well. Then sometime later we opened the South store and did well. We closed our "dumpy" downtown store and moved it to Brown Deer. And it did well. We also tried a store in Appelton and it didn't do well so we closed it up after a year and opened the Mequon store. Now we're anticipating opening a store in downtown Milwaukee soon. I think it will do well. This year, January 1, 1993, I decided to retire and Bruce is now the CEO and COO. The business suffered in 1990 and 1991 but now has made a dramatic turn-a-round and is doing well again.

I've left the best part of my story for the end. This is the history of my family, Onalee, Blanche, Shellie and Jeff, plus the addition of all of my wonderful grandchildren, Scott, Kevin, Chad, Tami, Harrison and Tina.

I've told you how Onalee and I met and all about our wedding, etc. We started our life together in Madison. I went to school and Onalee went to work. Blanche was born one year and a day after we were married. She was a joy to behold. But, were we nervous with her. Onalee was so protective of her that she made people wear hospital masks when they held her. That really went over big with my

mother. I remember once, we had her out in her buggy and it was sort of a crisp Fall day and we ran into a friend who wanted to see the baby. I remember digging one layer after another off until we found her. God forbid a breeze or particle of dust would come in contact with our Blanche. Many a night I studied by rocking her in the buggy with my foot and studying at the same time. We weren't sure if we were burping her right; we really weren't sure of anything. Despite our bungling she grew up to be a fine child and a lovely young woman. One time, when she was just a few months old, we went to visit Onalee's mother and father in Rock Island. Blanche had a terrible cough that sounded like a dog's bark. My mother-in-law recommended that we take her to see the pediatrician that she used for her children. We did, and he discovered that Blanche had a fast heartbeat and made an immediate appointment for us at Children's Hospital in Chicago. That was the beginning of a long relationship with Dr. Gibson. He diagnosed her problem as a congenital heart condition that couldn't be cured and said we should treat her as an ordinary child. The only thing we should not let her do was competitive sports when she got older. Despite the fact that we were such overprotective parents for Blanche, we didn't hover over her like I thought we would. We pretty much let her control her own exercise and physical stress. She would stop doing whatever it was she was doing when she got tired. Today, Blanche seems to run nonstop. She has more energy than most people.

I'll tell you of an incident that happened to us when we left the doctor's office in Rock Island. We were both in terrible anguish over the fear of what we were just told by the doctor. We got in the elevator and started down. When we got to the ground floor, the elevator was supposed to stop and let us out. It didn't stop but slowly dropped down to the basement and landed with a jolt. Luckily no one was hurt. No Chuck, we didn't sue.

I mentioned Onalee's mother and father. I'd like to spend a little time and tell you about them. After all, their blood and genes also run through your veins. My children remember them, but their children didn't ever know them. My father-in-law, Nathan (Nate) Harris, was a nice, simple man. He didn't have a lot of ambition or energy. His life was overshadowed by a dominating older brother. Ben controlled his life as he did his own children. But Nate was a very pleasant person with a good sense of humor. I enjoyed being with him. He told me often that I got the best of the three daughters. I never disagreed with him on that point. He was the most frugal person I had ever met. Before he spent a nickle he would think very carefully, and then try to figure out a way he could maybe save somewhere else. Shellie, I think that some of his genes snuck into you. But your mother also was a wee bit conservative with money. True story----One time we had come to visit from Madison and we

had a chest we brought with us. We would fill it with ice and my mother-in-law would load it up with kosher meat to take back with us. This one time, Ben was over visiting and I said I was going down to the corner gas station to buy a bag of ice. A bag of ice at that time cost 25 cents. Ben thought it was foolish to spend 25 cents when I could drive over to Bettendorf to their friend who had a meat processing plant and get the ice for nothing. Nate and Ben had a discussion on the subject for a few minutes. At first I thought they were joking. They weren't. They were dead serious. At that time I was a student earning $75 a month. Ben was a millionaire and Nate wasn't altogether a poor man. Guess what I did. I thanked them for the offer and I went down to the gas station and bought my bag of ice. I'm sure they thought I was a real spender.

My mother-in-law, Ida, was one of the nicest people I ever knew. When I first came into the family I thought she was a fake type of person. She was always complimenting her children. She told them how pretty they looked today. She told them how pretty their hair was, how well they put their outfits together that day. She was like that with her children and with anybody else that she was fond of. And she was fond of most people. The only one she really was not fond of was Ben Harris. I thought all of this praise was false. I came from a house where my mother never gave any of us a compliment. She might praise us to someone else, but never to us directly. So when I heard Ida Harris dish it out constantly I didn't buy it. But as I got to know her I saw that it was sincere. She was that type of person. She truly loved most of the people she knew. She was one of the most outstanding people in my life and I came to love and respect her a great deal. She always had a sincere smile on her face. The genes you all inherited from her should make you kind and loving people. I think all of you are. Thank you, Ida Harris.

Boy, I sure do wander. A year after Blanche was born, I finished college and we moved to Whitefish Bay. Onalee and I were very happy in our new roles. I went to work every day at Hill's and she was happy to be a mother and homemaker. I think what really made Onalee the happiest at this time in our lives was the fact that I was finally finished with school and was doing what I was supposed to be doing, making a living and supporting my family. She never really was very enthusiastic about my spending two years of our married life in college instead of earning a living. To Onalee work was the thing. She went to college for one year in Davenport after graduating from high school, but it was not for her. She couldn't wait to go to work and to become independent! Remember, always breathing down her neck was Ben Harris, telling every member of her family what to do and when to do it. She couldn't wait to get out from under his control. Working and earning her own money gave her great

satisfaction and independence. The domineering presence of Ben Harris and the weak presence of Nate Harris made for a strange relationship between Onalee and her father. In fact she didn't have a great deal of respect for him.

We sold our house in Whitefish Bay and moved to Menomonee Falls. Our house there was much smaller. Our house in the Bay was a Mickelson home with a living room, kitchen, dining room and powder room down, and three bedrooms and a bath upstairs. We paid about $15,000 for it. We paid $10,000 for the one in Meno. Falls. It had a living room, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, a full bath and powder room all on one floor. I think the total square feet was around twelve hundred. It was a small house and only three blocks from our store. This enabled Onalee to do the thing that gave her a great source of pleasure-work. She would come to work in the store as often as she could get a sitter for Blanche, and later for Shellie. She loved the store. This became a bit of a sore spot for me. Onalee could not just be there. She had to be in control. I remember one time I had asked one of our employees to do something and when it didn't get done I discovered that Onalee had asked them to do something else. We had a "discussion" and I told her that only one of us could be the boss. If she wanted to be it I would let her run the store and I would go out and find a job elsewhere. If I were to be the boss then she would have to work under me. That's the way it worked from that day on. Let me say that it wasn't always as smooth as it should have been. There were many days when Onalee would exercise a wee bit more control than she should have and we would have a "discussion." We were always trying to figure out a position of responsibility for her so that she could be in charge of something. Like my mother and father, we were two opposites. I was the eternal optimist, she was the pessimist. Anytime I wanted to do something of a gambling nature with the business, she always would argue against it and would always ask "What if-----?'" There were many moments of friction between us but I loved her with all my heart. I think I loved her more than she loved me. Who knows?

The first year in business we did $78,000. Not a lot of money but I drew my $50 a week. Our lives in Meno. Falls were happy, but there was always that feeling of being the only Jew in an entire town of gentiles. It didn't bother me at work, but I think it bothered Onalee around our neighborhood. By the way I never told her about the incident that occurred with the woman who sold us our house regarding all the neighbors asking to keep the Jews out. That's not true. I did tell her many years later. She never was quite at ease in the neighborhood, although she became friendly with our neighbors. In fact we became rather fond of one young couple who were our age. Both Shellie and Jeff were born while we lived in Meno. Falls. By the way none of

our children were born in the daytime. They were all born between 12 and 4 AM. I think it was between Blanche and Shellie, that Onalee had a miscarriage. Our doctor didn't check us for the RH factor. Onalee was negative and I was positive. This was a new thing they were starting to do and had he known about it he could have taken care of the problem. The miscarriage really hit Onalee hard. I don't remember what month she was in nor do I remember the sex of the baby we lost. But she was really broken up about it. Whenever we talked about it she told me it was the same as losing a child.

By the time we had Shellie, Onalee had taken the necessary steps to discount the RH problem. Shellie was born with very little problem.In fact she never really gave us any serious concern. Blanche had the heart problem that was a constant source of worry for us. But along came Shellie, sweet and docile. She was always a *Geshmock* type of child. Then finally we had a son. When Jeff was born our clerks in Meno. Falls put a big sign across the windows saying "IT'S A BOY!" I remember Jeff was long and skinny. He never liked to stay in his crib. He was constantly crawling out of it and we'd find him sleeping in all different places.

It was about this time that Blanche was ready for Hebrew School and we moved to the West side of Milwaukee, on 56th Street, 2 or 3 blocks south of Capitol Dr. This was a larger and older house. It had some charm to it. This is where we lived while the children went to grade school at 53rd Street School. About the time Blanche was ready to go to high school we bought a lot in Fox Point, on Crossway Road, and had Leo W. build us a house. My children know the house. But for my grandchildren's sake this was a lovely home. It had a large kitchen with a breakfast nook, a large den, a living room and dining room and a powder room. Also a 2 way fireplace, living room and den. A separate wing was devoted to bedrooms. There was a master bedroom for the master and his mistress. A bedroom for each of the girls, with a full bath in between. Jeff's bedroom had to share our bath. It was a lovely home that was only two blocks from their grade school. Blanche was off to Nicolet and Shellie and Jeff off to Peter Stornmoth grade school. I commuted every day to our store in Menomonee Falls. I never minded the ride. In fact I enjoyed it. As soon as the kids were off to school, Onalee would jump in her car and join me at the store. She loved working in the store. Whether it was trimming the window, doing the books, buying the women's clothing or whatever job she had at the moment, she was in her glory. But her most fun was when she was selling. I think this was her greatest love. About noon we would go out to lunch and have a great time, either eating alone or with some of the other business people we knew. Think about the fact that other than the ten years she was in business for herself, we were together

almost 24 hours every day. I loved it. I think she did too.

I talked about Onalee's love of selling. I'll tell you a story. We were in business in downtown Milwaukee, selling men's clothing, and Onalee had given up her store in Brown Port Shopping Center and was back working with me. One day a good friend, Don Mechelke, called me and said he was coming downtown, to buy some clothes and go out to lunch with me. I said fine. I got tied up with a salesman so when he came in I turned him over to Onalee and asked her to help him find "some suits." I came out about an hour later and she had 7 suits picked out for him. Don and I went out for lunch and Onalee went home, as she usually did about that time. When Don and I got back to the store we discussed his selection. Of course he didn't need 7 suits so we started to eliminate them, one by one. Don is a builder and developer and always spent a lot of money on his clothes. We ended up with two suits. When I got home that night the first question Onalee asked me was "Well, how many suits did Don buy?" When I told her two she really gave it to me for underselling him. She said "I knew I should have stayed. I would have sold him at least 5!" The truth is that she was probably right. She was a fantastic salesman.

Our years in the house in Fox Point were some of the happiest years for the Kahn family. These were the years when the children were in grade school, then Nicolet and then on to college. Then little by little each of the children brought their respective spouses home to meet us. We grew to love Bruce, Chuck and Susan as our own children. Some of the happiest times for us was when we all got together for some occasion or another. And as each new grandchild was added to the family we took a great delight in each new addition. We have three wonderful children and six super grandchildren, each one different, each an individual person, and yet, each a little bit alike in some ways. The only thing that flawed this picture is the fact that your mother and grandmother didn't live long enough to get all the additional pleasure that each of you brings to the family every day of your lives.

In the early '70s Onalee and I were riding around on a lovely Sunday and we came across a new development called Whitman Place. It was the first condominium project of its kind in the Milwaukee area. We walked through the model and fell in love with it. But Onalee wouldn't share a unit with just any stranger as her neighbor so she hit upon the Hearsts. Their daughter, Beth, had been killed in an auto accident a few months before and Onalee figured it would be good for them to get out of their house and the memories of Beth, so she set about selling them on the idea of selling their house and buying the unit next to ours. They were sort of in that mindset anyway, and Onalee, being the super

salesman that she was, convinced them that that was exactly what they should do---and they did. So we sold our house in Fox Point and the two of us moved in to our new smaller condo in Mequon. We loved living there. It was small enough so that it wasn't a burden to take care of, but large enough so that we didn't feel cramped. We had 13 very happy years there. These were the years the grandchildren were being born and that gave us much pleasure.

Then our world fell apart. Our favorite pastime was biking. We first were tandem bikers, but Onalee always teased that the only scenery she ever saw was my back. We graduated to individual bikes and would often get up early and go for a bike ride before breakfast and work. As was our habit we rode, not for strenuous exercise, but for leisurely enjoyment and companionship. I always biked on the outside and when we were going to turn I'd say "Turning right or turning left", when we were approaching an intersection. This one lovely summer morning in 1984 we were out biking near Lake Michigan, and, as we were coming on to an intersection I said "Turning right". Evidently Onalee thought I said left because as we came to the intersection I turned right and she turned left, and we collided. We were going very slow and we both tipped over. Nothing serious I thought. I got up and helped Onalee stand and she couldn't put any weight on her left leg. What had happened, we later found out, is that she put out her left leg to break the fall and shattered the bones in her knee. After extensive surgery by an excellent knee doctor, she was given a good prognosis. She was put in a cast and told to stay off her leg for a certain period of time. She learned to use crutches and was getting along well. After a while she could bear a little weight on her leg and she started physical therapy. It was hard but she was determined and was making excellent progress. On the morning of October 4th, 1984, she was exercising on the stationary bike, and watching the TODAY show. I came in, kissed her good-by, and told her how proud I was of her for the effort she was putting forth. Jeff, Bruce and I had a meeting that morning before we went to the store. We got to the store and I was told that the Mequon police were trying to get in touch with me. I called and was told that Onalee's car was found in the Milwaukee River
but they hadn't found her. Jeff and I rushed out to find that they had found her floating in the river and had taken her to St. Michael's Hospital. When we got there we found out that she was dead. Her car had run off the road into the shallow river. She evidently tried to get out and lost her footing and drowned. This was the biggest shock I ever faced. I lost my wife of 38 years and the best friend I ever had. This was the darkest hour of my life. My children and their mates were a great help to me at this time, even though they too suffered a great loss. But, this is the reality of life, people die. All of us will die some day.

Death, if we look at it for what it in truth is, a natural occurrence, we can understand it better. The loss is something else. As much as we understand death and come face to face with it, the loss of a loved one is the hardest thing we have to overcome. But we learn to live with it and we go on with our lives.

I returned to work the day after Onalee's funeral and resumed my pattern of living, but now alone. I adjusted to my new lifestyle very quickly. I received many cards and letters of condolence and after a period of time one throws them away. They had served their purpose. But I kept one. This was one from Marilyn Hurwitz, my old college sweetheart from 1942. I thought I would never remarry. I was growing very content with my way of life. Understand, life alone has some advantages. You never have to consider another person before making a decision. I could come and go as I pleased. I could do almost anything I wanted to do. The only drawback was that I didn't really want to do much of anything, except go to work and come home and relax. After I got my children off my back and got them to realize I didn't have to have dinner at their house every night, I settled into a simple way of life. I have always made my own breakfast, juice and cold cereal and milk. Lunches were never a big thing for me. I could eat or not, no big deal. And for suppers I made things like a wedge of lettuce with dressing, and peanut butter and cheese sandwiches and milk. I'd read the paper, watch TV and go to bed at about 10:30, read until I couldn't keep my eyes open, and fall asleep. I was very content with this way of life. Then one Saturday afternoon, at work, I went across the street to have a sandwich with Sherwood Alper and the waitress swooped down on me and gave me a kiss on the mouth and wished me a happy holiday. It was right before Christmas, 1984. That kiss got some juices flowing that I thought were dormant. I came home, had my normal sumptuous dinner and sat down to read the paper. The kiss kept coming to mind and I took out Marilyn's condolence letter, found her phone number and called her. We went out to dinner the next night and I was as nervous as a high school freshman on his first date. This was the first time I had been with another woman in 38 years. But the evening went very well. I felt very comfortable with Marilyn. We came back to her apartment and spent the rest of the evening talking about our respective mates. She was leaving for California two days later so I told her to call me when she got back. She was gone for a month and this is the month I got into all sorts of trouble. I started "dating" my old widow friends and a couple of new ones I was fixed up with. I was up late and coming to work tired almost every day. When Marilyn came home she called and we went out to dinner again. It was very pleasant. When I went to say goodnight she asked when she'd see me again. I, like a stupid jerk, took out my pocket calender I always carried with me and tried to figure out when I had a free

night. I was pretty well *booked* and when I suggested a night about four nights away she said, "Listen, let's forget it. I don't want to be another name in your little black book." I asked her what she meant and she said, "Just what I said." The next night I cancelled my date and cancelled all the rest that I had and I guess I was going steady again. Our going steady again blossomed into a new relationship and I have found love and happiness for the second time in my life. I remarried on May 25, 1985, a little over seven months after Onalee died. As I said before I never thought I'd marry again, but I'm glad I did because I now have a happy married life for the second time in my life. I guess being a single fella just ain't for me!

We sold Marilyn's house in Milwaukee and my first house in Whitman Place and bought a newer, larger one there. I started taking off more time in the winter and we bought a small house in Scottsdale, Arizona. For some reason I didn't enjoy it there. We sold that house and bought one in Palm Desert, California, right on a golf course. We love it there in the winter, (I miss seeing my children and grandchildren), and we love it in Milwaukee in the summer. For the moment we have the best of both worlds and are very happy. Last year I made it official and retired from KAHN'S. I can't believe I'm saying this, but I don't miss it at all. I guess there comes a time in our lives when we are ready to let go of yesterday. It happened very easily for me

I guess that brings me pretty well up to date. I've had a very happy 70 years (I bet I was happy even as an infant.) I've had two good marriages. I have three wonderful children whom I love dearly and I know love me back. They have given me six marvelous grandchildren whom I love dearly and wish good health and happiness for all their lives. I want for nothing. I envy no one. If I die tomorrow I will have lived a good life.

I'm sure I've left out some things that later I'll recall and wish I had remembered to include. Maybe I'll write an addendum some day. I hope I've not offended any of my relatives. I told it as I saw it and remembered it. I'm sure I've made some mistakes and omissions.

I want to give a special thanks to Marilyn for the excellent and tedious job of editing this momentous piece of literature.

My children pretty well know me and what I stand for. For my grandchildren, Scott, Kevin, Chad, Tami, Harrison and Tina, I'd like to copy some words and thoughts that I think are important to live with:

---Thomas Jefferson said, "In matters of style, swim with the current. In matters of principle stand like a rock."

---Victor Frankel in his book, THE LAST OF THE HUMAN FREEDOMS, says "Each of us has the ability to choose one's attitude at any given time under any given set of circumstances."

---Fear makes come true that which one is afraid of, even if only in our imagination. When we fear something it takes it's toll on our mind and body, just as if that which we fear, had, in fact, come true. (Author unknown.)

---The principle of sacrificed alternatives suggests that whenever we make a decision to take an action, we are, at the same time, sacrificing a number of alternatives.

---Happiness is a by-product of keeping busy and doing good work.

---In making a decision--measure three times, make the cut, and never look back.

---Carpe` Diem--SEIZE THE DAY!

Finished August 13, 1993

With all my love,

P.S. I'm enclosing an old MILWAUKEE JOURNAL article about an immigrant family, Marilyn's family, to give you a perspective on why Russian Jews wanted to come to America.

COMES FROM RUSSIA SO THAT CHILDREN MAY GET EDUCATION

January 31, 1914



JACOB MILAVSKY AND HIS FAMILY.

[Snapped at Union Depot by The Journal Photographer.]

"I come to free America so that my children may have the education and opportunity Russia denies them."

These were the words of Jacob Milavsky as he sat with his wife and six children at the Sabbath meal in the home of Max Zucker, 714 Galena-st, his brother-in-law, Friday night. The family had just arrived from Kiev, Russia. They lived only a few blocks from Mendel Beilis, and passed through the days before and after the trial, in daily fear that the baffled Anti-Semites would rise in another dread pogrom, or slaughter, of the Jews.

Lives in Terror There.

"What we have experienced these years would be almost unbelievable to you," said Mr. Milavsky, to The Journal reporter. "Russia will not let us leave, neither will she let us stay. She keeps us moving, and we are subject to persecution continually. Why, during the massacres several years ago, we had to live for six months in the country to escape the mobs. We have tried many a time to get away, but could not obtain passports until just now. And it is, my son, who will not come over until May when the contract under which he is working for a bank expires, will have to leave Kiev because, now that I am gone, he has lost his right of residence. I was tolerated because I have a trade. I am an upholsterer.

"My children have been fortunate in being among the chosen per cent admitted to the Russian schools. But some of them are ready for the university, yet they cannot attend because they are Jews. That is why I have come to free America, where, I am told, the poorest child has the same chance for the best education as the richest, and where a man's religion does not bar him from advanecement.

"I guess everyone knows about the Beilis trial and its outcome. But maybe they don't know that, while the jury was debating, crowds of anti-Semites held services in a church nearby, praying for the murdered boy Yuschinsky, and hoping that a verdict against Beilis would give them an excuse for another massacre. Even when the verdict freeing him was returned they tried to stir up trouble, and if it had not been for the government's threat that any disturber on either side would be heavily fined or imprisoned there would have been violence."

Beilis Won't Exploit Suffering.

"Efforts were made to get Beilis to come to America, but when he found that he would be expected to tell his story on the vaudeville stage he said, 'No, I do not want to exploit my misery. Indeed, it is not I but the Jewish people who have been tried. I don't want to make money from their suffering.' So Baron Rothschild obtained a farm for him in Palestine and there he will live."

Mr. Milavsky's family includes Bertha, an artist; Sarah, a piano teacher; Eda, Louis, Raphael and Sadie, the baby. The son in Russia is Benjamin.

The arrival of the family was an especially joyful event for Mrs. Zucker and Max Krasnovsky, 606 Ninth-st. Mrs. Milavsky is their sister and they had not seen her for more than twenty years. The family will make their home with Mrs. Krasnovsky.

Corrections:
Eda - Lydia
Sadie - Sonia

Mrs. David — mother of