

Lida

After 48 years, it is hard to remember and to reconstruct precisely the names of the people, streets, and institutions of Lida. I shall endeavor to do the best I can.

The Town

Lida was perhaps small in size but was important because of its location. Being close to the Russian border, we had a military air base and an army base. Incidentally, Lida was recently mentioned in connection with the Russian-American summit meeting held in Washington in December 1987. The Russians agreed there to remove some of their intermediate-range missiles from Europe. Lida was one of their missile sites.

For a small town, Lida had everything: charm, beautiful girls, ruins of a castle, a volunteer fire department, two movie houses, three hotels, a railroad station, many churches, one beautiful synagogue, and small houses of prayer in which tradesmen used to worship. It was a custom for tailors to pray in their own house of worship; the same for butchers, shoemakers, etc. We also had a Jewish hospital and a cemetery.

We had a factory that produced nails and wire and one that produced rubber boots and rubbers. We had a beer brewery, a flour mill, and a soap factory. As you can see Lida was a busy town.

In the center of town was a market where farmers used to come twice a week with their produce. As I recall, all the streets

merged at the market like a wheel with the spokes meeting in the center. The marketplace was in the form of a square and different shops and stores were there to serve the farmers and the people of the town. The better stores were on the main streets. The streets were cobblestone and clean. I remember drains and the streets painted with white calcium. I realize that this was done in order to kill bacteria.

Lida had a public gymnasium (high school) and a private business high school run by Pijarow, a Catholic order; I attended the latter. There were public grammar schools and two Hebrew schools—one a Talmud Torah and the other a Tarbut school. A Tarbut was a secular Hebrew day school with all subjects taught in Hebrew and with Polish and German taught as foreign subjects. These Hebrew schools were private, supported by the community and by parents. My sister, brother, and I attended the Tarbut school. The education we received there was in great measure responsible for our zeal and love of our people and of Zion.

The coming of spring was the most beautiful time of the year. The snow started to melt and we started to discard our winter clothing. People broke up the ice which had accumulated on the streets and sidewalks during the winter. The horse-drawn snow carriages became fewer and fewer. Spring ushered in Passover, which gave us a chance to get new shoes and clothing. Homes were cleaned and prepared for the joyful holiday. Summer was on the way and vacation from school was near.

The summer months were warm and dry. The wealthy people sent their children to camp. I was lucky that I was able to go one summer. I spent most summers around the house, swimming, playing ball, riding a borrowed bicycle, and active in Hanoar Hatzioni, a General Zionist youth group.

With the end of the summer, the High Holidays approached and so did school. With the onset of fall, the weather got nastier and nastier. Rain and some snow appeared, the days shortened, and the smell of winter was in the air. Then the snow started to get heavier and the temperature lower.

I do remember the first snowflakes; they were always so beautiful and clean. I would stand near the window and be mesmerized by the snow. In the winter, the windows were double with wads of cotton and alcohol placed between the two panes in order to keep the windows dry and frost free. As winter settled in, the streets became ice-packed and dirty from the weather and traffic. But the winter sleigh rides were a lot of fun, especially when girls were involved. And so the seasons went, on and on from year to year.

The places that stand out most clearly when I think of my city are the market, the ruins of the castle, the great synagogue, the railroad station, the fire station, the river in back of the cemetery, my parents' home, my father's place of business, and my father's parents' home and tavern. The synagogue was a brick and stone building; it was two stories high with many windows and a beautiful dome in the middle. Inside, the carved hand-made ark faced east. The pulpit in the middle of the synagogue opened from two sides, with brass-railed steps leading to it.

My father attended services there. As a young boy, I would join him, particularly on holidays. I remember two occasions vividly. Once my father was called to the bema for an aliya. He took me with him and put his tallis around the both of us. We were covered for the blessing of the Torah. I was thrilled, as it was the first time I had been covered by a tallis. In Poland, no tallis was worn until a man got married. Perhaps this was a good way to differentiate between married and single men.

The other episode that I remember was a prank that my friends and I did during the High Holidays. During the reading of the Torah, when the bema was crowded with people, we took the tzitzes and tied them together to the railing. When a man descended the steps, all the tallism went with him. Naturally, we were punished and thrown out of the place of worship.

The ruins of the castle were used primarily for military parades and sporting events. The local military base held many horse shows at the castle. Two soccer teams played games there

every week. One team was Jewish. I attended games at the castle quite often as I played soccer in school and in my spare time. The castle was built on a small hill. During the winter months, we used the hill for tobogganing. In the winter, the castle grounds became ice skating rinks and we skated after school and evenings. I skated quite well to the music.

Of the many functions held at the castle, two stand out in my mind. On the 12th of May, 1935, Marshall Joseph Pilsudski died. Pilsudski was a great Polish hero who fought the Russians and helped to liberate Poland after World War I. The day after his death, a memorial service was held on the grounds of the castle, the military participating. I was there as a member of the high school ROTC. The service was held in the evening by candlelight. It was quite impressive. I still remember it clearly.

The other occasion was Jabotinsky's visit to Lida in the middle thirties. Jabotinsky was a great speaker and leader in the Zionist world. At that time, he advocated and preached to the Jews of Poland to leave for Palestine because of the Nazi menace. What made his visit memorable was his delivery and the impact the speech made on the people. Perhaps because of his speech, I am right of center on Jewish issues.

I recall the railroad station because, during the first days of World War II, I was ordered to go there and help unload railroad cars. At that time, I was a member of the local militia. Later, I and some others were chosen to guard the station until the arrival of the Soviet troops. I remember the day the Russians came. We were told to put our rifles upside-down and to leave the station.

The fire station was located on the outskirts of the city, not far from my father's parents' house. After visiting with them, I made sure to stop at the fire station to watch the men practice. On the side of the main building was a tower where the men would jump and go down the ropes.

The fire equipment included some horse-drawn and some motorized fire engines. The fire department had its own or-

chestra; I must say it was a good one. The department was run by volunteers and by a few professionals. My father was an officer. The firemen always received me well because of my father's position. Many times when the siren blew, I would run to the fire and watch the men work. It was exciting. I am sure that, if not for the war, I would have become a volunteer fireman and followed in my father's footsteps.

The Lidjeka, a small river, ran through town. Two bridges crossed it. One, I remember, was behind a church and led to some small villages. The other was on the street where my parents owned a small factory that produced delicatessen. In the summer, we would bathe in the river where it flowed behind the Jewish cemetery. As youngsters, we felt weird going through the cemetery; especially when the high grass moved in the wind. We always ran to get to the river quickly. The shadows of the moving grass made me think of the dead moving around.

Near the river was my fathers' parents' house. It was a big wooden home divided into two parts. My father's sister, Ritza, lived in one part with her family: her husband, two sons and a daughter. I remember my Aunt Ritza to be a very beautiful woman. She was one of three daughters; my father was the only son. Ritza remained in Lida when the other two sisters went to Palestine. My uncle Zelig Schneider, Ritza's husband, was a Singer Sewing Machine salesman.

Ritza's family suffered terrible tragedies. In the middle thirties her son and my cousin, Lolka, was killed accidentally. Working in a shop, he was shot by someone cleaning a gun. There was a big funeral through the streets of the city. During World War II Tamara, Ritza's daughter, my older cousin, was killed by the Nazis. I was told that she and other girls were made to walk naked through the streets of the city before they were killed. Tamara was tall and beautiful like her mother. I do not remember my youngest cousin Chonka well.

The second part of the house was subdivided into residential quarters and a tavern. My father's parents owned the tavern,

a busy place. They served the farmers on their way to the market and on the way back. I will describe later my recollections of my paternal and maternal grandparents. At present, I am trying to describe places as I remember them.

What I remember most about my father's parents' house is not the most pleasant thing to remember, namely my grandmother lying dead surrounded by big candles and many people in the house. I was twelve years old at the time. The house was almost on the outskirts of town, near the hospital and cemetery. It was from there that I left Lida forever. It is strange. As I write this 48 years later, faces that I have long forgotten begin to appear in my mind, almost as if I were there now. It is a good feeling and a sad one.

My maternal grandparents rented their home. It was located in the center of town, not far from where my mother's sister and our family lived. The house was in a cul-de-sac, a minute away from the main street lined with stores. Across from the house was a small synagogue where my grandparents prayed. Further down the street lived a family related to my grandmother. They were in the dairy business and many chickens and geese ran around in their yard. They also used to make cheese.

My grandparents lived in a two-family wooden house, one story high with a little garden. It was a quiet and clean place. After my grandfather's death, I moved in to keep my grandmother company. Incidentally, my grandpa died a few months before my father's mother. It all happened just prior to my Bar Mitzvah.

My mother's sister lived on the main street in a brick building on a corner. She and her husband ran a cafe, serving pastries, ice cream, and coffee. They had music for dancing. It was the nicest cafe in town, attended by the officers of the military and by the upper classes.

The long main street was called Suwalska. The banks, movies, post office, fire station, churches, city hall, and most of the better stores were located there. The other important street was the 3rd of May Street, commemorating the date Poland

became independent in 1918. It was on this street that my parents had their place of business.

My parents owned a provisions store, located on the corner of 3rd of May Street and Mackiewiczza Street. The latter street was named in honor of a great Polish author and was where we lived. On the 3rd of May Street were the gymnasium (high school), the jail, and other stores. People lived near the stores or above them.

My parents' store was in a two story brick building. On the second floor was a fine hotel. Next to the store was one of the better eating places. A barbershop and a drug store were in the same block. Across from the store was a small park with benches and flowers. On the side of the park was a stand for the horse buggies which provided transportation.

As I recall, my parents' store had two large display windows, one facing the 3rd of May Street and the other Mackiewiczza. Inside the store, facing the entrance, was a counter with scales and a cash register. The walls were tiled in white. Salami, bologna, and other goods produced by my father were hung for display on the walls. I remember this vividly and can still smell and taste the delicious meat products, especially the salamis made of goose meat and liver (we know this as liverwurst). The store also carried a better selection of fruits of the season.

My mother spent most of her time in the store, inasmuch as my father was in charge of production and distribution to other stores. I used to spend my spare time in the store helping out and helping myself to samples of the different products.

I recall one incident while I was in the store with my father. A well-to-do customer came in and asked the price of an item. My father told him a higher price than normally charged. After a few minutes of bargaining, the price came down to the price charged everyone. After the man left, I asked my father why he quoted the higher price originally. I never forgot the answer he gave. "This man likes to bargain and would like to be the winner." So my father made the man feel good and at the same time received the price charged to all other customers.

I will never forget the barber shop next to my parents' store. I don't remember how old I was, probably in my early teens. My father took me in and told the barber to give me a shave. That was the first shave I had ever had. I felt that with that first shave I became a man.

In a building across the street from the store was a small hotel. On the top floor was a private club, run by the fire department, where the club members played cards. My father participated quite a bit, much to the consternation of my mother.

I am writing all this because none of it any longer exists. I feel this period of time cannot be duplicated. I want you to imagine that you were there with me.

As I write about the physical description of Lida, names and faces become more vivid to me. The names I mention must sound funny to an American, but these were the names used in Poland and it is important not to forget them. The recollections I describe are my own. Other people who were there may have different perspectives. I say this after glancing through a book written about Lida in memoriam to the people killed by the Germans. So I want to emphasize again and again that the descriptions are mine and mine only.

The Jewish Community

The Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv provides the following information on the history of the Jewish community in Lida:

LIDA, TOWN IN GRODNO OBLAST (STATE), BELORUSSIAN S.S.R.

According to a decision of 1623 by the Lithuanian Council the Jewish community of Lida was subordinated to Grodno Kahal (Council). The files of the Lithuanian financial commission contain records of the quarrels between the Lida Kahal and the Jews of the neighboring villages. In 1766, there were 1167 Jewish poll tax payers in Lida and the vicinity. The community numbered 567 (73.6% of the total population) in 1817; 1980 in 1847, 5166 (68%) in 1897 when there were 24,813 Jews (12.3%) in the whole district; and 5419 (40.4%) in the town, with 16,551 (8.5%) in the district in 1921.

In the 1880s, the 13 prayerhouses in the town were grouped in one large square; they were all damaged in a fire. Until World War II, the Butchers' synagogue contained an ark with original ancient doors. In 1921, there were 302 Jewish work shops in Lida, over half of them family enterprises. There were 37 Jewish farms in Lida in 1927. Between the two world wars, the community maintained a secular elementary school and a children's home, both affiliated to a central yiddish school organization. There was also a Tarbut school.

Among Rabbis of Lida were R. David R. Ayeh Leib of Lida (later in Amsterdam). His son Pethaniah, and his grandson, the Tzaddik David Benjamin, R. Elijah Sohick (Elinke Lider) officiated in the nineteenth century and I. J. Reines, the Mizrachi leader, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The latter founded a modern Yeshivah in Lida which functioned until World War I.

In 1940, the number of Jews in Lida had risen to 15,000. During the period of Soviet rule (1939–41), Jewish community institutions were closed, the activities of Jewish parties were forbidden, and the basis of the Jewish economy from the prewar period was demolished. A large part of the Jewish refugees from Western Poland who found shelter in Lida were deported to the Soviet interior in the summer of 1940. Groups of deportees were brought to Soviet camps in the Rybinsk area.

With the outbreak of the war between Germany and the USSR (June 22, 1941), the Germans bombed Lida. The center of the town, which was inhabited principally by Jews, was burned and there were hundreds of Jewish casualties. On July 5, 1941, the Germans collected the Jews of the city in the main square and took away all the Rabbis, Shochatim, doctors, and teachers—the leadership of the community—to near the village of Stoneiwickze where they were murdered; 200 men fell at that time.

In the autumn of 1941, the remaining Jews were concentrated in a special quarter and were joined by the Jews from Lipniszki, Juraciszki, Traby, and Duoly. On May 8, 1942, an action was carried out. Only 1250 people were left; all the rest were killed near the village of Stoniewicze. About 200 people succeeded in escaping the scene of the slaughter, returned to the Ghetto and told of the Germans' horrifying acts.

A group of youths succeeded in leaving the city on May 21, 1942, and entered the forests of Naliboki. The youth in the Ghetto also organized and armed themselves with weapons. At the end of 1942, contact was established with the Partisans in the Novogrudok area. The Jewish partisans from Lida fought with the unit of an experienced Jewish fighter, Tuvia Bielski, and another unit called "Iskra".

The Ghetto was destroyed on September 17–19, 1943. The city was liberated on July 5, 1944, and about 300 Jews were rescued. Most of those who had been with the partisans were mobi-

lized into the Soviet Army and continued to fight in Germany until the end of the war.

In the mid-1950s, the Jewish cemetery was confiscated and converted into a building site. The Jewish population of the town in 1970 was estimated at a few families.

In my time, the Jewish community of Lida was a diversified group including plain working people in trades and services, business people, professionals, and educators. The community was run by a committee called the Kehilla. The Kehilla was the spokesman for the people and was in charge of everything relating Jewish life in the town to the local government. If I remember correctly, the Kehilla taxed each Jewish family to maintain the institutions needed to maintain Jewish life.

The Jewish population was centered in the middle of town. We had our own public schools, both religious and secular Hebrew schools. We had Jewish doctors, lawyers, theatres, movies, and sports clubs. We also had a Jewish hospital, cemetery, and a home for the aged. I recall visiting the old-age home. I don't remember with whom I went, but I do remember very clearly that an old man put his hands above my head and blessed me in Hebrew. Perhaps his blessing was responsible for my survival.

Class distinctions, based mainly on education and wealth, were of great importance within the Jewish community. In my generation increased access to education began to break the old social barriers. Graduates of the high school left Lida for universities and did well. We had an assimilated group, who spoke only Polish and who attended Polish schools. I belonged to the other group, where we spoke Jewish amongst ourselves. Naturally, we spoke Polish when necessary. Within my group, the egalitarian ideals of the Zionist movement helped to close the class gap.

The Jewish community was ideologically divided between Zionists and anti-Zionists. Among the anti-Zionists were the Bund, the communists, the Territorialists, and most of the orthodox religious groups.

The Bund believed that socialism was the answer to Jewish survival. History has shown them to be wrong. The Bund were not communists; in fact the communists despised them. The communists themselves operated through underground cells; the Communist Party was illegal.

The Territorialists were willing to accept a Jewish homeland anywhere. Palestine did not have any special meaning to them. They considered Hebrew a dead language.

The orthodox religious groups generally opposed the creation of the State. One exception was the great Rabbi Reines, who founded the religious Zionist movement *Mizrachi*. For the record, Reines was also a great scholar and the head of a great Yeshiva in Lida.

The Zionist groups were divided from left to right; Hashomer Hatzair on the left, Hanoar Hatzioni in the center, Betar and Irgun Zvi Leumi way to the right. I was a member of the General Zionist Youth Group, Hanoar Hatzioni.

We believed that the people of Israel come first, party affiliations being secondary. In economics, we sought a State organized around free enterprise. In education, we aimed to avoid party-affiliated schools teaching party dogma. We also discouraged party-affiliated labor unions. I still believe in these objectives.

We wore uniforms like a scout movement; we had our own banners and a flag. We participated in parades on Polish holidays and on Jewish occasions such as Lag Ba'omer. We were trained in a spartan life. For example, we permitted no dancing except Zionist dancing such as the hora. We studied Jewish and Zionist history, the geography of Palestine, the flowers of that country, and everything else that pertained to Palestine. I joined the organization when I was eight years old and became one of its leaders in later years.

If I remember correctly, our movement split into two groups in 1935, General Zionist groups A and B; I belonged to group B. I really think that the break up was due more to personalities than to issues. The split occurred at a meeting in Lida. Many of our top national leaders were present.

Among them were Kolodny and Goldstein, who later moved to Israel and changed their names to Kol and Golan. Golan has held important positions in the Israeli government and parliament. In 1960, I met him in Jerusalem while I was there as a delegate to the 25th Zionist Congress. I showed him pictures I had of him and a group of us in Lida, during the split of our movement. He was so excited to see them that he made me give him the pictures to make copies for himself. He returned my pictures at a later date.

My Extended Family

My paternal grandparents were Moses and Zipora (as in the Bible) Manski. My Aunt Rose told me how my grandparents met each other. My grandmother was only sixteen years old when she was introduced to Moses. She was driven by her parents in a horse and buggy to look for a husband. They found my grandfather, who was a very handsome man. A match was made and they were married.

Zipora, I was told, came from a so-called "aristocratic" family. Her maiden name was Cyderowich. I called her Bobe Faige. I remember my father to be her favorite child, inasmuch as he was her eldest and only son. To Zipora, my father was never wrong. There were also three daughters. Zipora was a very strong person and domineering. She was a stout woman, sure of herself. She smoked and could and would take a hard drink. She ran the tavern which my grandparents owned.

Zipora died of cancer as a young woman, probably younger than sixty. She died in 1933, just before my Bar Mitzvah. My oldest son Chuck's Hebrew middle name is in memory of her. When Zipora died, my father travelled to Vilna to claim her body and brought her secretly to Lida for burial. She had been taken to Vilna to have an operation, which did not succeed. I understand the reason for the secrecy in bringing the body was the family's refusal to allow an autopsy to be performed.

I remember somewhat more about my grandfather Moses. After my grandmother's death, we spent more time with him. My grandfather was a tall man with a beard and was good looking. I remember that he used to buy apples and store them in a basement where they would freeze. He would then sell them. Some of these frozen apples were so sweet and delicious that when I came to the United States, I tried freezing apples to recapture the taste. But the experiment failed.

My grandfather made me tzitzes for my Bar Mitzvah. I remember him sitting in the kitchen in my house working on the tzitzes, according to Jewish law.

After my father left for the United States, my grandfather came to my house to celebrate the Passover seder with us. I don't remember my father ever having a seder in the traditional sense, so this stands out in my memory. The presence of my Zeide Moshe, as I used to call him, was always anticipated with great pleasure and joy. My middle son Mark is named after him.

It is with great sadness that this is all I can recall of my paternal grandparents. My grandfather was killed by the Nazis in 1941. May he and the others rest in peace.

Not long ago I found out that, in 1905, my grandfather Moses was in the United States. He left Russia with other men to escape the draft during the Russian-Japanese War. In those days a Jew serving in the Tsarist army felt in danger even if he was not sent to the front lines. Jews were afraid of serving in the Russian army, not for fear of being a soldier, but of breaking the Jewish laws by eating non-kosher food and having to work on the Sabbath. Moreover, the Russian Orthodox Church attempted to convert the Jews to Christianity. When the Tsar was overthrown and Kerensky became Prime Minister, the fear of conversion was eliminated and Jews flocked into the service to fight for Mother Russia. I do not want to give the impression that our people were afraid to serve in the military. Israel's army and its fighting spirit are proof that this is not so.

It is with great fondness that I remember my maternal grandparents, Joseph and Rasha Jerzewski. The fondness stems from the fact that I lived with the two of them for a time. After my grandfather's death in 1933, which occurred during the Passover holidays, I spent almost all my time with Bobe Rasha.

Zaide Joshe, as I used to call him, was known to others as Joseph the fisherman, as selling fish was his trade in his younger years. He was a man of medium build, with a long white beard. He wore a long black coat, and a yarmelche covered his head at all times. He was a peaceful man and very religious. In the years that I knew him, he was retired and was supported by his sons who were in the United States. He spent most of his time in the house of worship, which was located in the same courtyard where his apartment was housed. There he studied Torah and participated in the services three times a day. He was a man of integrity and a Talmudic scholar.

As a young boy, I visited my grandparents quite often; my house was located just a few minutes away. Anytime I wanted money to go to the movies and my parents refused me, I would ask my grandmother for the pennies needed to buy a ticket. She would turn toward my Zeida and tell him to give me the money. He would put his hand in his pants pocket, take out a coin purse, and give me the ticket money. While doing so, he would look at me and smile. That smile still remains with me when I think of him.

Unfortunately, my grandfather died prior to my Bar Mitzvah in 1933. I was present in his house when he died. There I saw a man take a feather and put it to my grandfather's nose to see if the feather moved. When it did not move, my grandfather was pronounced dead. He died in his own bed quietly at the age of 83. Because he was a very religious man, the funeral stopped in front of the house of prayer that he attended so faithfully every day. The doors were opened wide while a special prayer was said.

My grandmother Rasha was a medium size woman, quiet and pious. She attended services every Saturday like a clock.

My relationship with her was much closer than with my other grandparents. I lived with her and, after she gave up her apartment, she moved in with us. She was with us during the Polish-German War, the Soviet occupation, and our flight from Lida to Lithuania. We gave our youngest son Richard the Hebrew name Rashe in her memory.

Rasha never interfered in our daily life while in our house. She became ill prior to the war; she had hardening of the arteries and became forgetful. While in Lithuania, she lived with us. By that time, she was in her eighties and feeble. Unable to travel further, Rasha stayed in Lithuania with cousins when we left for Japan and the U.S.A. In 1941, after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazis killed her, our cousins, and all the Jewish population of Ejszyski. Thus, my maternal grandmother and my paternal grandfather were both fated to be murdered by the Germans. We should never forget this.

My grandparents Joseph and Rasha had six children, one of whom became my mother. Mother had two brothers. The older one was Willie. The younger was Bennie. Mother's three sisters were Alice, Esther, and Shura.

Of the children, only my mother and my aunt Esther lived in Lida. Esther lived with her husband Boris Budin, their son Mitchell, and daughter Fancia. My cousin Fancia died in her teens after a short illness. Her death occurred in the same year in which my cousin Lolka was shot. The loss of my two cousins was a terrible shock to our family.

Esther, Boris, and Mitchell left Lida about the same time that we did, going to Vilna and then to Japan. They were sent to Shanghai after Pearl Harbor and were interned there until after the end of the War. My uncle Boris passed away in Shanghai and was buried there. After the War, Esther and Mitchell came to the United States and settled in Boston. My aunt Esther passed away a few years ago. My cousin Mitchell is married and now lives in Braintree, Massachusetts.

Aunts Shura and Alice and uncles Willie and Bennie had all gone to the United States much earlier. Shura, Alice, and

Willie left from Russia prior to World War I and settled in Boston. Uncle Bennie left from Lida in the early 1920s and joined his brother and sisters in Boston.

Shura was the oldest in the family. She never married and died in the early 1920s. I knew very little about her. I have been told that Uncle Willie served in World War I. After the war he opened in Boston a Jewish restaurant called the Prime Restaurant. He married Sadie Baker in the early nineteen thirties. They had three children, Jordan, Herbert, and Janice.

My Aunt Alice married Philip Marcus. They were childless. Uncle Philip worked in the Prime until his death. Uncle Bennie, who was the youngest in the family, became a partner in the Prime. He came to visit his parents in Lida in 1932 and found his bride there. He married Fanny Benjaminovitch on that trip. They had two sons, Edward and Joel, both of whom now live in the Boston area.

The Prime Restaurant played a major role in the life of our family. My father worked there from the time he came to the States in 1937 until he was able to purchase his own restaurant, the New York Cafeteria in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston. While working at the Prime, he moonlighted as a waiter at weddings and other Jewish affairs held at hotels and catering halls.

To conclude this Chapter, I must go back to my father's three sisters. Two settled in Palestine. The first to go was my Aunt Rose. She settled in Tel Aviv in 1922, married Yakov Sadoff and had two sons, Uri and Itzchak. My father's youngest sister Chaika Sobol went to Palestine in the late 1920s. She married late in life and had no children.

I have previously mentioned the third sister, Ritza. She remained in Lida, where she was killed in World War II. My parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts are now all gone. It is up to me and to future generations to keep our heritage alive.