# Chapter 26
# Malvina's Maternal Forebears

Malvina's mother Toba was born in 1904 in Opole, Lyloobeener goobehrnyeh, the government or district of Lublin, in present-day Poland. This part of Poland was incorporated to Russia at the end of the eighteenth century when Poland, as a whole, was annexed in three separate partitions by Prussia, Austria and Russia. After the First World War, Poland was re-established, as an independent nation. Thus, Toba was a Russian subject when she was born, as was also Malvina's father who was born in 1902. They had been Polish citizens for less than a decade when they left for Cuba in 1922 and 1923 respectively.

The earliest generations I heard any stories about were those of Malvina's maternal grandparents. It is interesting to note that Malvina's parents had very so little to relate about the generations that came before them. The reason are that Toba's father, Volf Naiman, had been widowed and was no longer a young man when she was born. Also, her grandparents were no longer alive. In the case of Malvina's father, he was the youngest of all his siblings, and heard little from his parents about his forebears. He was born when both his mother and father were already in middle age. He too never knew his grandparents. In fact, his father was orphaned very young and was raised by an uncle and he never knew his parents, let alone his grandparents.

Malvina's grandfather, her mother Toba's father, was probably born in the 1870s, I assume, in Opole. His name was Volf Naiman. Volf is the Yiddish translation of the name Ze'ev in Hebrew, meaning wolf. The family name as pronounced in Opole Yiddish is Naiman [Nigh-man or Nye-man]. The syllable NAI presents a problem because of the differences in the pronunciation of the Yiddish vowels in the various regions of Poland and Russia. If NAI is an Opole version of the Litvak or Ukrainian NEY, then the meaning of the syllable is "sew" implying that the meaning of Naiman is SEWMAN, tailor. This seems very unlikely, because the usual word for one who sews, that is a tailor, is SHNAIDER or Shnahder in Podolia. I conclude that the syllable NAI, means "new," and pronounced exactly the same in Polish, Litvak and Ukrainian-Podolian Yiddish. This being the being the case, I suggest that NAIMAN is the Yiddish version of the German Neumann or the English Newman.

Another source of confusion with regard to the name is that the letter "J" is used in the Polish spelling. "J" is the Polish equivalent of the letter "I." Malvina's uncle Abish arrived in Guatemala with papers made out in the name of Abish NAJMAN. In Spanish the "J" is pronounced as a guttural like the "ch" in the Scottish "loch." I use the "kh" for this sound in transliterating Yiddish into English. In Miami, Malvina's cousin Willy Najman's name is pronounced as Nakhman, a not uncommon

Hebrew name and one borne by the famous medieval rabbi and talmudical scholar Nakhmanides [Nahmanides], Moses ben Nahman (1194 - c. 1270), meaning son of Nakhman. The syllable "ides" is the Greek equivalent of "son of" as in Johnson or Ericsson, the son of John or son of Eric in Swedish or Norwegian;, or the "ovitch" in Russian as in Ivanovitch, the son of Ivan.

Volf Naiman had a number of children with his first wife. The only one I heard mentioned by name was Frimith who supposedly had a very strong character and a hot temper. I have no idea how many step-sisters and step-brothers Toba had. She always referred to them as "shteefsvesters," step-sisters. Curiously enough, I never heard her mention any step-bothers, implying that Volf and his first wife had no sons. The only other information I have about her "step-siblings" was that one sister who emigrated to America, probably about the same time Toba was born, committed suicide by "taking the gas." Toba never knew her, but she did meet her daughter Rosa Karp in the Bronx. Though older than Toba, Rosa Karp was actually her niece.

Toba also had some nieces, that is daughters of other step-sisters, two of whom I met in Rio de Janeiro on my way to Buenos Aires 1966 to attend the International Congress of Americanists. They were both about the same age as Toba, or a little older, and had married children. I also met two other step-sisters in Tel Aviv in 1970 when I was on a dig at a site near Safed.

Toba's mother, Shaindel, her father's second wife, was left a widow with about five young children when Volf died, probably in his early sixties, after having apparently contracted pneumonia. He must have been a very unusual man in view of the fact that his first wife's mother, Mahleh, continued to live with him after her daughter, an only child, died and he married again. She helped raise the new set of children he had with his second wife, Toba's mother, Shaindel, and Malvina's maternal grandmother. Malvina is named for dee bawbeh, grandmother, Mahleh, a gentle old lady who always reminded the children that the chickens should be fed with regularity because they were "shtimeh khai'es," dumb creatures, and so could not ask for food or say they were hungry.

Shaindel and Volf had five children: Moishe, the eldest, Toba, Yahnkel, Abish, and Khanahleh. Shaindel, Moishe and Khahnaleh all perished at the hands of the German Nazis during the war. Malvina's mother, her brother Yahnkel, Jacobo in Spanish, and her brother Abish were the only ones saved and who lived to have children and grandchildren of their own.

I know very little about Shaindel other than that she kept the family together. Volf had been a custom ladies' tailor. When he died, the children of his first wife were old enough to work and so began to do ready-made tailoring, mostly pants and coats to be sold to peasants in the many weekly fairs in the nearby surrounding villages. In time, the second set of children were old enough to work and continue in the same line. Malvina's father, who did not get along very well with his own father, left home and came to live and work with them Naiman family, eventually marrying Toba. It

was a co-operative family effort. Shaindel managed the household including a teacher who lived there to teach the children to read and write. She was the one around whom the life of the large family revolved. Shaindel and Mekhel Mendelsohn's father were brother and sister so that he and Toba were cousins.

When you [Sarah, Alexander, Charlie] were still small children you met Malvina's uncle Yahnkel-Jacobo when we were in Mexico in the spring of 1956. And of course you all knew Abish and his wife Jenny. Also, you still have contact with their children: Frieda, Reba, Moe were born in Guatemala and the eldest, Billy, was born in Germany in a displaced person's camp where his mother and father had taken refuge when the war was over. It was dangerous to go back to Poland because of the continuing hostility of the Poles toward Jews, especially those Jews, supposedly killed by the Nazis but who survived, whose properties they appropriated and were occupying not expecting them to come back from the dead.

Ahvreymel, Abraham, Diamond who arrived in Mexico with a passport in the name of a Sr. Faitlovich was another member of the family, actually a nephew of Toba, the son of an older step-sister. Charlie had occasion to know him directly when he was working in Oaxaca getting material together for his doctoral dissertation.

Another side note, Yahnkel arrived in Mexico with a false passport made out to Jacobo Maimon, almost Naiman. Both he and Ahvreymel came to Mexico via Cuba. Jacobo died in Mexico in the late 1960s. Toba died here in Durham in 1971. Ahvreymel and his wife Susana left Mexico and now [March 1995] live in Miami. Susana, of Sephardic Jewish descent, was born in Cuba. Interestingly enough, her maiden name was Rodriguez.

Toba's eldest brother Moishe, the one who never left Opole and who perished in the Holocaust, apparently was in charge of the tailoring shop where all the siblings worked. All I ever heard about him was that he had a very small upturned nose and was nicknamed "figeh nooz," [fig-nose. I also heard from Malvina's father that Moishe was hot tempered and once threatened him with a large pair of shears, an incident which affected him to the extent that he recalled it on more than one occasion.

Toba remembered her father, Volf, who died when she was still a very young child, with some affection. He was always immaculately dressed in well-cut suits, the hallmark of ladies' custom tailors. He was extremely polite and soft-spoken. It was her chore to wash the windows in the house, the number of which she remembered as about seventy odd panes of glass. She remembered that often as she was approaching the house with a bucket of water drawn from the public supply, very heavy for a small child to carry, he would come out of the house, take the bucket from her and carry it inside.

Following Toba was her brother Yahnkel, probably born in 1906 or a year or two later. He emigrated to Cuba where he married Shoshana. She was a Litvak and a well-educated woman who was a highly respected and an excellent school teacher. She taught Hebrew in one of the Jewish schools in Mexico City. They had but one

child, Adolfo, who had been named for Volf. In fact he dropped the Adolfo, a name his mother had picked when he was born, and now uses the name Wolf. Adolfito and his wife have two boys and live in Mexico where he works as a chemical engineer, I believe, for a Swiss company.

We all met Yahnkel, Malvina included, in Mexico for the first time in the Spring of 1956 when I was on Sabbatical leave from Duke University. We have a photograph, I believe a kodachrome slide, of Jacobo holding Alexander in his arms during a visit to Teotihuacán. The family resemblance is quite noticeable. Yahnkel was a spare man with jet black hair and dark eyes. He was addicted to coffee and cigarettes. I used to enjoy his company, especially at the Café Campoamor on Calle Bolivar where we would meet very frequently during the time we were in Mexico City that Spring of 1956. He and Ahvreymel, who was more like a brother than a cousin, operated a factory manufacturing wind-breakers. Ahvreymel was the travelling salesman who sold what they produced all over the Republic of Mexico.

Abish, the youngest of Toba's brothers, was born about 1910. Toba often related how she was the one designated to take care of him when he was small. She was only about six years older than him, yet she remembered carrying him about in her arms. I imagine this was when he was already a year old and she about seven.

Abish was the only member of the family in Opole who survived the war and the Holocaust. When the Germans invaded Poland and were approaching Opole, he ran off to Russia. There he was drafted into the Russian army. He fought at the Battle of Stalingrad which, as he often said, he survived as if by some miracle. Time and time again his company was wiped out, and each time he and a scant few other soldiers were the only survivors.

At the end of war, after being mustered out of the Russian army, where he lost most of his teeth because of a lack of salt in his diet during the years spent in military service, Abish made his way back to Opole hoping to occupy the family house again. He was warned not to enter the city because the Poles who were then residing in what had been an almost exclusively Jewish town, would kill him. So he kept going westward and ended up in a Displaced Persons Camp operated by the American army. There he met Jenny who had been sheltered and hidden from the German Nazis by a family of Russian peasants. She was still a teen-aged child when she fled from Poland as the Germans advanced. She learned to speak Russian fluently and also to sing many Russian folk songs. She had a beautiful contralto voice. Her son Moishe, Moe, inherited her talent. He looks and sounds "puro Mejicano," pure Mexican, when he sings Mexican rancheros in a rich baritone.

Willy or Billy Najman, who was born in the DP camp in Germany, was the first child of Abish and Jenny. He actually now uses the name Wolf, an English version of his Yiddish name Volf. The other children – Moe, Reba and Frieda – were all born in Guatemala.

Abish, Jenny and Billy arrived in Guatemala in 1947, a few months after Malvina, Sarah and I left. I believe it was through the American Red Cross that Malvina's parents heard of the Abish's survival. They then undertook to bring him and his wife and child to Guatemala. For a year or so they lived in Malvina's parent's house.

Abish worked in the tailoring shop where the ladies' coats were made and then sold in the store. When they had fully adjusted to life in Guatemala, they moved into their own quarters and Abish and Jenny started a business of their own, also making and selling ladies' coats. Jenny really had a gift for language. She learned to speak Spanish faultlessly and almost without a trace of a foreign accent.

Toba had a younger sister who was still a child when she left Opole. I believe her name was Khanah or Khanaleh. She was married just before the outbreak of the war in the Fall of 1939, after which she was never heard from again. She, along with the remaining members of the family and the entire Jewish community of Opole, perished at the hands of the Germans.

My mother-in-law, Toba, also had a number of relatives, actually nieces that were older than her in the United States. One was a family named Saltsman. They operated a ladies' hat factory in Putnam, Connecticut. I already mentioned a Rosa Karp who was the daughter of one of the oldest of Toba's step-sisters, the one who committed suicide many years ago on the Lower East Side of New York. I also mentioned two other nieces in Rio de Janeiro whom I met in 1966, and another two in Tel Aviv whom I met in 1970. There are also one or two nephews who live in Sao Paolo, Brazil, whom Malvina and her father met at Billy Najman's house in Miami in the late 1980s.

# Chapter 27
# Malvina's Paternal Forebears

As was the case with her maternal side of her family, nothing is known of the lives of her father's grandparents. I previously explained why this was so, particularly because her father was the youngest child born to his parents who were near or already in their middle years. I believe I also related how, once when Malvina and I were visiting her father in Deerfield Beach, Florida, she wanted him to tell us something of his family. I had a tape recorder which I had brought along for that purpose. When I asked him to begin by first mentioning the names of his grandparents, he was totally nonplussed realizing for the first time in his life that he did not know their names, not his mother's parents nor his father's either.

Malvina's father Oosher [Asher in Hebrew and English], aka Gedalyah, Gerardo and Gedale, was born in the winter of 1902 in Opole. His father, Sender, Alexander, was in America at the time and so his brother Laizer who was about twenty or so years old, went for the midwife when his mother was about to give birth. Sender Noodelman, sometimes given in Polish as Nadelman, Malvina's grandfather, had been orphaned while still a small child. He was brought up by an uncle, Mai'er fin Grahbovits, that is Mai'er from the village of Grahbovits, where he owned a small farm with rich, fertile, black earth, apparently good bottom land, on the Vahsel, the Vistula River.

I calculate that Sender was probably born about 1860, perhaps 1859 for the following reasons: Laizer, his first child, was born about 1882 when Sender was perhaps twenty years old or thereabouts. I suggest the years 1859 to 1860 when Sender was born because his son Laizer was mustered into the Russian army in 1903 when he reached the age of twenty-one, draft age in Tsarist Russia. Like my uncle Eedel, my father's older brother, Laizer also was about to be sent to the front during the Russo-Japanese War.

What I know of Malvina's paternal grandfather I heard mainly from my father-in-law Oosher who, it seems, was frequently at odds with his father, and in part from my mother-in-law, Toba. Sender married a near relative of Mai'er, I do not know if it was his sister, his niece, or his daughter, named Sooreh, Sarah, the same name as my own maternal grandmother.

Mai'er's family name was Flamenbaum, to give it a quasi-German spelling and which is translated as Plumtree. My father-in-law's name on his Guatemalan passport, as is customary in Spain and in Spanish-speaking countries, recorded both his father's and his mother's family names, viz., Gerardo Man Flamenbaum, which he sometimes shortened in Latin American style to Gerardo Man F. It seems then that his mother had the same family name as Mai'er, Flamenbaum. A son of Mai'er's, Yahnkiv who became Jack Flam in America when he shortened the family name, was

my father-in-law's first cousin. Thus Gerardo's mother could have been Mai'er's younger sister and an aunt of Jack Flam.

Sender and Sooreh were probably married a year or two before Malvina's uncle Laizer was born *circa* 1882 or so, and had five more children: Geetl or Gootsheh; Maryam; Neekha; Hindeh; and Malvina's father, Oosher.
Sooreh died just before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, and so was spared the fate of her husband and her daughters Maryam and Neekha who perished, probably in Aushwitz.

The details of how Maryam and Neekha, as well as their spouses and children died remain unknown. Yet, there is no doubt that they were killed by the Germans because they were never heard from again. Quite the contrary is true regarding the death of Malvina's grandfather who, without a shadow of a doubt, met his end in the ovens of Aushwitz.

In the late 1940s Malvina's mother and father were in New York where they attended a meeting of the Opoler Farai'en [a social and benevolent club or a society of former residents of Opole, that is *lantsman, lantslait*]. There they met a man who had just arrived from Poland. He who related he saw the Germans load Sender and many other elderly Jews into a wagon and drive them away. That was the last time Sender and the other old men were ever seen again. I do not know the date when this happened. At least, it was never told me, probably because the man who witnessed this scene did not remember it or did not mention it to my father-in-law and mother-in-law.

I have already mentioned that Malvina had occasion to know her aunt Gootsheh. Just before the outbreak of the war, Gerardo brought her to Guatemala from Israel, still Palestine then. She had left Poland some years previously when her husband died. While still a young girl, she left home in Opole and went to Warsaw. According to my mother-in-law she worked there as a maid. She imparted this information as if it was a secret which my father-in-law would rather had not been known.

The truth is, that other than an early marriage, there was even less of a viable future for Jewish girls than for boys in the shteytl. After the First World War, many radical social changes were developing as if by spontaneous generation in the Jewish communities of Poland and Russia, changes which brought about discontinuities with age-old traditions and a break with nineteenth-century conventions. Communism spelled the end of shteytl life in Russia, not only for economic reasons, but also for reasons of safety as well.

The same forces operated in Poland so that life in the shteytl became untenable, especially so for the younger generation. Had the doors of the United States been open to let them in and doors of Russia open to let them out, the greater majority of the Jews of Russia and Poland would have fled to the United States in the decade of the 1920's. In Russia the young people were drawn to the capital cities of

Kiev, Moscow, Leningrad and in Poland the majority went to Warsaw. A lesser number, driven mostly by the hopelessness of their situation in post-war Poland and the impossibility of entering the United States, chose second best and went to Cuba and Mexico in the main, and in lesser numbers to Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, countries all more or less in the vicinity of the United States.

The case of Malvina's parents is a micro-example of this trend, as is the demography of each of the Jewish communities in Central America which I know from first hand experience. Many Polish Jews also found their way to some of the South American countries, particularly Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and to countries of the "southern cone" – Argentina, Chile, Uruguay – of which I know only in the most general terms

Gerardo always spoke with pride of his oldest sister Gootsheh who lived in Warsaw where she was very well off financially. She lived in a cosmopolitan capital-city manner quite distinct from the circumscribed provincial customs of a small town like Opole. She was probably born in the mid-1880s and a young woman when she left home to go to Warsaw. Gerardo's earliest recollections of her are from when she was first married and residing in Odessa before the war when he was still a child. By the time she was living in Warsaw, the capital of the new Poland after the war, he was already in his late teens.

According to my mother-in-law, Gootsheh married her employer. His family name was Lipnik. When his wife died he already had grown children who were as old or even older than Gootsheh. According to Gerardo Mr. Lipnik was a wealthy merchant before the Russian revolution, probably a "perveenyeh geeldeh kohpets."

I learned about this special rank given to highly capitalized merchants from my father. Because of their widespread mercantile activities this class of merchants, deemed useful to the country, though they were Jews were given the privilege of residing outside and beyond the borders of the "Pale of Settlement," including Moscow and "Peytyerboorg," Petersburg.

After the 1914-1918 War and the Russian revolution, Mr. Lipnik lost his fortune and returned to Warsaw by which time he was already an old man. His grown sons, according to Gerardo, remained in Russia. One or two, I do not remember how many, were university professors in communist Russia.

Gootsheh and Mr. Lipnik had two children, a girl, Lola, and a son, Lutek. Note the two names, no longer Yiddish as they would have been had they been born in a shteytl like Opole. In fact, the creation of Poland as an independent country witnessed the rebirth and rise of Polish nationalism which had been suppressed since the end of the eighteenth century. This new sense of pride in being Polish, unshackled and freed from the repressive policies of Tsarist Russia, fostered a strong awareness of national identity and patriotism bordering on chauvinism among the gentile Polish elite which many of the "modern emancipated" Jews shared emulated.

An outward manifestation that they too felt patriotically Polish, "emancipated" Jews spoke Polish among themselves to the exclusion of Yiddish, of which they were ashamed, frequently feigning ignorance of the tongue of their ancestors. But the Polish peasantry, as well as the gentile working class Poles, were not impressed and still considered the Jews as interlopers and exploiters of the Polish people. They did not eschew their traditional and ingrained antisemitism which they had imbibed with their mother's milk, witness of which they demonstrated when many willingly chose to co-operate with the Germans in the extermination of Jews, even those who spoke Polish and, after the war, threaten with violent death those survivors who dared return to their homes in the villages of their birth, as happened in the case of Toba's brother Abish.

These ultra-national passions, as I mention above, were also felt by a small class Jews who believed they were no longer hampered by the quasi-medieval shackles of shteytl life which they had thrown off. They were Poles of the Jewish faith. Many of these new "national-Polish" Jews lived in Warsaw. In the main, they were of small shteytl origin, of which they were not particularly proud and had eschewed the customs of traditional Jewish small-town life. They thus felt it proper to join the gentile Poles in celebrating the rebirth of Poland liberated from Tsarist despotism and, after the Russian Revolution, from communist oppression.

There was no doubt in their minds that they were Poles, that is Polish citizens of the Jewish or Hebrew persuasion, Poles of the Jewish faith. The Jewish-Polish nationalists began to speak Polish to the exclusion of Yiddish, to leave off strict observance of traditional Jewish religious practices, and began to enter the liberal professions— law, engineering, medicine, university professors— to the disquiet and sometimes vocal protests and disapprobation of the gentile Poles. And, as a token of their Polish citizenship and Polish identity, they even gave their children two sets of names— just as we do here in the United States and elsewhere— the usual Hebrew or Yiddish names by which they were known within the family or in the synagogue, but also names by which they were known in the secular world. Polish names were used in official documents, viz.: Lola, Lutek, and even Malvina, though her parents hardly had any Polish national feelings or love for Poland which they were happy to run from. Jews in the small towns, Opole included, fell on even worse times after the rebirth of Poland than during Tsarist days.

I was never learned when Mr. Lipnik, Gootsheh's husband, died. It must have been in the late 1920s or early 1930s when Gerardo and Toba were already established in Guatemala. Gootsheh's daughter Lola was a married woman at the outbreak of the Second World War and had one child, a girl I believe. I remember seeing a photograph of her with her child in Guatemala. Her husband was an engineer who had obtained his degree in Paris.

Before the war, as I know from my own experience when I was there during the summer and early fall of 1939, Paris seemed to be to be full young Polish Jews

studying at the university or some technical school. Almost all were reluctant to go back to Poland where they very well knew that their training and education would certainly be superfluous and that they would hardly be able to make a living with their degrees in medicine or engineering.

Paris was teeming with young Jews, not only from Poland, but also from Hungary, Rumania, Austria and Germany. Some were students, but all preferred not to go home. They were marking time, so it seemed, waiting for an opportunity to emigrate to the United States as a first choice. The Jewish students from Poland were in an even more untenable position. They knew securing an entry visa to the United States was absolutely out of the question. During the mid-1930s when it was still believed that war could be avoided by appeasement of Hitler, many Polish-Jewish students had no other recourse but to go home.

Poland, at that time was actually a "third world country" not wholly capital-intensive industrialized. It was not uncommon for farmers to use draft animals to work their labor intensive farms because they never earned enough to have a surplus to invest in tractors or other mechanical labor-saving machinery.. The economic situation in Poland was extremely bad and those who were able to leave, left. Malvina's parents and thousands and thousands of Polish Jews settled in Cuba, Central and South America before the outbreak of war in 1939.

But it was mainly the working-class shteytl Jews who fled Poland, not the foreign-educated top-heavy class of "modern Jews" who considered themselves the "intelligentsia" and members of the Polish "elite" speaking Polish to the exclusion of Yiddish and who had shed a much as they could of the shteytl mores short of deserting Judaism itself. So they went back to Poland with French university degrees only to find that there were very few opportunities to practice the professions for which they had been trained.

Gootsheh's son-in-law was one such unemployed engineer who found some makeshift job to earn a living. I believe it was in a retail store of some sort. According the stories which Gootsheh used to relate to Malvina's family when she lived with them in Guatemala, with a condescending air of superiority bordering on snobbery, that her daughter and son-in-law, "the engineer," moved in the highest echelons of Warsaw society, that is Jewish society. She was a very vain woman who believed the world revolved around her, so to speak, and was convinced that she shared in the glories of her university-educated son-in-law, despite the fact that he did not practice his engineering profession but had to work ia retail store to earn a living. In Warsaw, she boasted, she had enjoyed an extremely high-class life-style in contrast to the dull life she had in Guatemala where her activities were limited to contact with the unpretentious Polish Jewish community. In Warsaw she was frequently invited to the gatherings, soirees I suppose, along with son-in-law and his engineer and university-trained friends where she was sometimes treated as if she were "the belle of the ball" and accorded very special gracious attention by the distinguished guests. Once on

her return from one of her trips abroad, her engineer son-in-law and his engineer friends organized a party in her honor. She described how she entered the room coming down a flight of stairs to the applause of the elite and select cohort of guests.

What the reality of her life may have been, she never revealed. My father-in-law, Gerardo, suspected that she was not economically well-off having been widowed from an elderly husband who had lost his fortune in the Bolshevik revolution and who left her with two small children to raise. It would seem that she lived in a sort of fantasy-world and never imagined that she would one day experience the dreadful misfortune of losing both her children, as well as a son-in-law and a grandchild in the conflagration that consumed them and millions of others.

But I am getting ahead of the story. When Mr. Lipnik died, Gootsheh was left with the two children, Lola and Lutek, who were still rather young, probably in their early teens at most. In the halcyon days before the outbreak of the war in 1939, Gootsheh and the children used to visit her parents in Opole by way of taking a vacation in the country away from the big city. Opole was a sort of "dahtshah," country or vacation house, for her and her children. She was always the elegant, rich daughter visiting the modest home of her parents. Her children were so Polish-like, so unlike shteytl children, that some of the neighbors doubted that they were still practicing Jews. Gerardo told me the humorous story that during one visit an old woman grabbed Lutek, pulled down his pants to verify if he was circumcised. I suppose this tale may be accepted as an illustration of the rift that opened between the traditional Yiddish-speaking Jews of the shteytl and the emancipated Polish-speaking Jews of Warsaw.

I do not know what Gootsheh did to make a living after her husband died. After her daughter Lola married, she emigrated to Israel, perhaps in the mid-1930s. There she joined her younger sister Hindeh who, along with her husband Mai'er Englander, had been khalootsim, pioneers, since mid-1920. They were among the first settlers of Ramat Gan. I do not know how long Gootsheh remained there, but all the time she as in Israel she kept appealing to her younger brother, Gerardo, to help her. Anxious over her insecure situation, he offered to bring her to Guatemala. She accepted arriving there a year or so before the outbreak of the war and the German invasion of Poland.

Apparently, she had been having some sort of a liaison, relationship or courtship, with a man, Ze'ev Kahanah, aka Kahanovitch in Russia or Poland whence he had come. She did not tell Gerardo or Toba about this, that she and Mr. Kahanah had been seriously entertaining the idea of marriage before she left for Guatemala. According to Toba, she was "making herself interesting" for Mr. Kahanah who, it seems, was a somewhat hesitant at the time about matrimony. He was separated from his wife while he and Gootsheh were courting. He eventually divorced his wife and married Gootsheh on her return to Israel from Guatemala. Toba privately told

me that she believed Gootsheh was not altogether neutral or uninvolved in Ze'ev's plans to divorce his wife.

While she was still in Guatemala, both Gerardo and Toba kept urging Gootsheh to convince her children to leave Poland without delay because war was imminent and they would then not be able to leave. The plan was that Gerardo would go to Cuba and work out some sort of arrangement where Lola, her husband and child as well as Lutek, and also Toba's brother Abish, would gain entry to Cuba which was still open to immigrants from Poland.

Guatemala was closed entirely to Polish Jews at the time. In fact, the dictator Jorge Ubico, in imitation of Hitler's Nurenberg Laws, had emitted a decree barring immigrants who were members of "razas indeseables," undesirable races. The undesirables were those from the former Turkish empire and from Poland, meaning, of course, Sephardic and Polish Jews.

A similar law was in force in Panama, It had been emitted by the then president Arnulfo Arias in the late 1930s and was still operative when I came to Panama in 1941. After a strong protest from the United States embassy instigated at the request of the Jewish community of Panama, the provisions of the law were somewhat altered to include only the defenseless, disenfranchised, hardworking Chinese who grew all the vegetables consumed in Panama and who also operated grocery stores in some of the most God-forsaken isolated and remote corners of the Panamanian countryside and jungle. When the Chinese were despoiled of their little farm plots, there was a shortage of vegetables in the market of Panama city almost immediately.

I can verify this from personal experience. About all one found in the Panamanian markets were plantains, *plátanos*, ñame, yuca, rice, some tomatoes as big as grapefruit because they were so water-logged. There were no green or leafy vegetables at all. Within a year I ended up with incipient beri-beri, that is a vitamin B-12 deficiency. My health improved when I got a second job as ticket agent on the Transisthmian Railroad and so had privileges in the commissary of the Canal Zone where imported fruit, meat, milk and vegetables were available.

When the Chinese were declared to be one of the *razas prohibidas*, prohibited races, chaos resulted in the far off corners of Panama where the dirt-poor Chinese operated their miserable little grocery store. These frequently were the only source of food for the town at large— rice, beans, sugar, lard, and other necessities. In those remote villages, the people went hungry because the Panamanians did not have the experience or the training or mind-set to operate a business, let alone and grocery store whose customers lived for the most part in a non-money economy. In most of these little towns, especially in the jungle along the Tuira River in the Darien rain forest, coinage was scarce. Most of the customers were so impoverished they could only buy a centavo's worth of lard, a *quartillo*, one-quarter of a centavo, of flour, and a *medio*, two and one-half centavos, of this or that, the total bill perhaps amounting

to four or five centavos. Change in small coins was not always available. The ingenious Chinese merchants would then make change using little bits of paper with the value written in Chinese. In many towns, this paper scrip was the only coinage that circulated. When the Chinese grocery stores were expropriated, the Panamanians who took them over had no idea of how to adjust to the problem of the lack of "rolling money." Many lost their businesses and their customers were greatly distressed because they could no longer buy food a penny-worth at a time.

Gootsheh preferred her children to go to Guatemala, but that was absolutely impossible. Despite the pleading of Toba and Gerardo, Gootsheh would not agree to have her children go to Cuba first as an temporary measure to get them out of Poland. Her engineer son-in-law objected because of the climate in Cuba and he also preferred Guatemala. Talk to the wall! They did not see the volcanic cataclysm that was slowly simmering under their very feet which would eventually explode in an Armageddon which would not only destroy them, but also practically all the Jews of Poland and Russia, some six million among whom they would also number.

When the news reached Guatemala that Germany had invaded Poland in September of 1939, my mother-in-law recalled, Gootsheh was so overwrought that she stood near an wall and literally beat her head against it in frustration and sorrow. Her children were never heard from again. Gerardo received a post card from Lutek a few years later. He was drafted into the army, the Polish army I believe. He had been wounded and wrote the post card from a hospital in Russia where he was being treated. This was the first and only communication Gerardo had from Lutek who was never heard from again. The specific details of what happened to him can only be guessed. There was no doubt in Gerardo's and Toba's minds he did not survive. Toba suffered special anguish when she realized that her brother Abish was probably also dead and would have survived if Gootsheh had not rejected Gerardo's plan bring both her son and Abish to Cuba when it was still possible to do so before the outbreak of the war.

Gootsheh went back to Israel [Palestine] and married Ze'ev Kahanah. Malvina saw her once again, and I for the first time, when she and her husband came to Durham for a short visit in the late 1950s or early 1960s. I no longer remember the date of their visit, but it was before 1968 when Malvina and I were in Israel, by which time both Ze'ev and Gootsheh was no longer living. I remember Ze'ev as a handsome man, small of stature, an intelligent man and quite cosmopolitan in his general outlook. He had immigrated to Palestine, probably as far back as the 1920s, bringing some capital with him from Poland, that is from Beeyelaroosyah, White Russia, now Belarus, and spoke Yiddish with a mild Litvak accent.

He settled in Tel Aviv and invested his money in an orange grove. In those days Tel Aviv was still a small city with many orange groves in the near vicinity. In the 1920s, it is interesting to note, Los Angeles in far-off southern California was also surrounded by open country dotted with orange groves. The orange grove in Tel Aviv

turned out to be the source of Ze'ev's income and capital growth for the rest of his life. He developed the orange grove into building plots which he sold piecemeal investing the profits in more land and real estate of various kinds. As Jewish immigration increased, his investment became more and more profitable, especially after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. He was already a wealthy man when he and Gootsheh married in the 1940s.

When he and Gootsheh were here in Durham visiting, I was in the process of negotiating the purchase of a lot in Duke Forest on the corner on Prince Street. I was hesitant about closing the deal with the real estate office of the university because the lot was prone to flooding. Ze'ev placed little importance on that fact and urged me to buy the lot because it was a bargain at $2,000 and at least half the price of most of the other lots the university had for sale. I have never forgotten his three words of wisdom, "Lahnd vahkst nit," land does not grow.

He was devoted to Gootsheh who seemed to have taken charge of his life, that is to be in command and was quite sure of herself. One would never guess, judging by her seemingly carefree and cheerful mien, the great tragedy she had suffered in her life, that of outliving her children. It had been in her power to save the lives of her children, her son-in-law and her one grandchild. At the time she was, of course no more clairvoyant than the rest the world of the fate that awaited the six million blameless people because of the rage and hatred of a charismatic lunatic. She could have saved "a whole world," as it is said in the Pirke Avoth, Sayings of the Fathers, instead she suffered the loss of that world. She and Ze'ev lived in harmony in Ramat Gan. He died first and she a while later, I believe it was in the mid-1960s.

Malvina's uncle Leyzer, the oldest of her father's siblings, immigrated to the United States about a year after Malvina's father was born, perhaps in 1903 or 1904. He was already a married man. His wife's name was Pereleh. She was from a shteytl close to Opole. They lived at first on the Lower East Side where Leyzer told me that, in addition to working as an "oprayter," operator or tailor in a clothing factory, he also operated a restaurant where Pereleh was the cook and he served the meals. The clientele were by and large were young immigrant Jewish bachelors. I believe I related something about such a restaurant where my father took his meals when he first arrived in New York. I do not know how long Laizer had this restaurant, nor how long he lived in New York before moving to Missouri. Pereleh had some close relatives in Springfield, Missouri, where he and Pereleh went to live. He opened a shoe store and made a living of sorts. He was not very enthusiastic about spending his days in a store and even less interested in learning the intricacies and principles required to make the business profitable. He was a very sociable, easy-going, straightforward man and soon had a coterie of friends, among whom I was told were many non-Jews, including the sheriff, with whom he enjoyed playing pinochle.

Laizer and Pereleh were childless for about twenty years or so before, as if by some miracle, they finally had a son, Benny. He was born in Springfield more or less

the same year as Malvina in Havana, about 1925 or perhaps a year or two later. During the Depression of the 1930s, times were especially difficult for Leyzer and his family. Urged by some friends, Opole lantslait, they came back to New York and settled in an apartment in the Bronx. They were immediately at home there and melded into a community comprised of lantslait from Opole in the neighborhood.

Laizer went to work in the clothing factory of a distant relative of Pereleh, Fadel. He had a ladies' coat factory in the "garment district," West 38th Street and Seventh Avenue in Manhattan. Malvina's father came to New York on a buying trip in the late 1930s. The oldest and the youngest siblings, the two brothers, twenty years apart in age, met for the first time as adults after a separation of at least thirty-five years. Later on, in 1944 to be exact, Malvina went to New York and lived with them in the Bronx. She found a job as a bi-lingual secretary with Parke-Davis on Canal Street in lower Manhattan requiring about an hour or more on the IRT subway to get there. She lived with them until she entered Dickinson College in the Fall of 1944.

Leyzer was a very decent and extremely generous man, without any guile or deviousness in him. He would sometimes go into a neighborhood store and buy something he had no need for in order to "give the man a show." He was devoted to Malvina whom he came to consider as his own child and even played that role with my parents when Malvina an I were engaged to be married. My parents had not met Malvina's parents yet, and did not until after we were married when they took a trip to New York. Leyzer assumed the role of "mekhitin," father of the bride with my mother and father. He considered himself as a surrogate for his brother, Malvina's father, and so my parents were his "makhetunim."* When Malvina's parents met my parents for the first time, they found it difficult to call my father-in-law mekhitin or my mother-in-law makheteynisteh because these titles had been preempted by Leyzer and to a lesser extent, Pereleh.

Leyzer came to visit us here in Durham not long after we arrived in the Fall of 1947. I still remember him standing in the doorway of the prefabricated house on Markham Avenue loaded with all sorts of presents, including an enormous kosher salami. My parents had much in common with him, being more or less of the same age and the same background. They always harbored warm and good feelings for him. He died in the mid 1950s from a botched-up prostate operation. Pereleh, who had suffered a stroke and had to be placed in a nursing home, died not long after.

When Malvina's youngest sister, Lily, married Eugene Bell in 1952, we all went to the wedding which Leyzer also attended. I remember him pleading with

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* Note! The two sets of parents of a married couple are related to each other through their children and are "makhetoonim;" each father is a "mekhitin" and each mother is a "makheteynisteh."

Malvina to accompany him to visit Pereleh. Malvina, of course, went remembering that Pereleh had also treated her as if she were a daughter.

The other sibling of Gerardo who managed to survive the Holocaust was Hindeh, the penultimate, next to last, child born to Sender and Sooreh. Gerardo was the youngest child. Hindeh emigrated to what was then Palestine with her husband, Mai'er Englander. They were true pioneer, khahlootsim, who had a very hard life during those trying times of the 1920s. Mai'er's father owned a piece of land in Ramat Gan when it was still a wasteland. He divided the land among his sons, including Mai'er.

Malvina and I met Hindeh and Mai'er for the first time in 1968 during a Sabbatical leave when we visited Israel after spending some time in Spain where I had been doing some research on *mudéjar* architecture. At that time, I heard some stories from Mai'er about their early life as pioneers in Israel. They operated a small farm growing strawberries which they supplied to local markets nearby, principally in Tel Aviv. The work was grueling and at the same time fraught with danger of Arab attack. As they worked the field, they had to be continually armed. The strawberry plants had to be watered constantly during the growing season. There was no source of water on the property itself, so they had to haul water up the hill to the strawberry patches with donkeys from the "wadi" down below. Mai'er spoke very good English with only a trace of a foreign accent. Apparently he learned to speak English from his contacts with the British during the time of the Mandate, the nature of which I do not know.

Mai'er and Hindeh had three daughters: the eldest Miriam, the second, Adeena and the youngest, Zivah. When we all five of us returned from Spain in the Fall of 1961, we met Adeena and her husband, Roman, an importer of Japanese pearls. They were then living in Forest Hills in Queens, New York. We met the other two daughters and their children at the same time we met their parents in Israel in the Spring of 1968.

Miriam's husband, David Levin, was in the military. I believe he was a lieutenant colonel. He served on the staff of the miliary attaché of the Israeli embassy in Washington in 1969 or 1970. Miriam and her husband and children came to visit Malvina's parents who were living in Durham and the time,. and so we met them once again.

Hindeh's youngest daughter, Zivah, was a vivacious girl when Malvina and I saw her in 1968. She was married to a man from Rumania. They had three children: a boy Tevyeh; and twin daughters who were very handsome and had won some beauty contest or, supposedly, I do not remember the details exactly, they appeared as models in some advertisements in the local press.

Mai'er died shortly before I was in Israel again in the summer of 1970 working on an archaeological excavation near Safed. Hindeh continued occupying the house in Ramat Gan located directly opposite a chocolate candy factory, the Elite. It

was a three-story house with some stores on the ground floor and apartments above, one of which was occupied by the Englander family. Hindeh and Mai'er once operated a café in one of the stores which they had sold some years before Malvina and I met them for the first time in 1968. The building house was actually constructed on the land where they had once farmed strawberries. Hindeh visited Durham briefly in 1971 having been invited here by Gerardo and Toba. Her visit was marred for her, as it was for all of us, by the sudden death of Malvina's mother, Toba.

Of the other two siblings of my father-in-law, his sisters Maryam and Neekheh, I know very little indeed. Both met their end in the ovens of Aushwitz. Malvina's sister Tere, I believe, resembled Maram. At least, so it seemed to me from the one photograph I once saw of her among the family photographs in Guatemala.

Maryam apparently married late, and if Gerardo was aware of any of the details of her life since he left Opole, he did not reveal any. In fact, he rarely spoke about her at all. It seemed to me, from what he told me on the few rare occasions he spoke about Maryam, that Sender and Sooreh had cause for some anxieties regarding her, the cause of which Gerardo either did not know in detail, or if he did, he chose not to talk about the matter. Maryam had no children as far as I could learn.

The other sister, Neekheh, was married to a man whom Gerardo affectionately referred to as Shmeeleleh, Shmeel in the diminutive form. The use of diminutive of names was almost universal in Opole Yiddish-- Oosherel, Tobaleh, Mahleleh, Rayzeleh, Yahnkeleh, Avreymeleh. I remember a photograph of Neekheh and her family. Her husband, Shmeeleleh, had a short pointed beard. He was a handsome man with a refined and almost poetic look on his face. According to Gerardo, he had a "character of silk." Gerardo always bemoaned the ill-starred fate that befell Neekheh and her family. They could have been saved because they were planning to go to Brazil. Their plans were thwarted as they were getting ready to leave because war broke out. They were stranded in Poland when Germany invaded Poland in the fall of 1939. And so, Neekheh and her family shared the same ill-fated destiny as Sender, Gootsheh's children and Maryam, as well as those members of Toba's family, including her old mother Shaindel, who remained behind in Poland to be counted among the "Six Million."

You all - Sarah, Alexander, Charlie— were adults when Malvina's father, your grandfather Oosher, died a scant two years ago. You also had known him since you were children— at first during our annual visits to Guatemala and later to Miami, also right here in Durham from the early 1950s onward especially during the late 1960s and early 1970s when he and your grandmother Toba lived in Durham. After her death in 1971, he returned to live in Florida.

The point is, you knew your grandfather Oosher-Gerardo from personal contact during the last forty or so years of his life. Of the period of his life during his childhood and early manhood before immigrating to Cuba and Guatemala, you have

heard very little. However, I know something of his life before Malvina and I were married in 1945, based on the stories and events he himself related to me over a period of about forty-eight years or so. The memories of events which were uppermost in his mind all of his life, most of which were about his experience with his father Sender, he repeated over and over again so that they became as palpable to me as if I had been present when they were transpiring.

When Gerardo was born his father, Sender, was probably in his middle or late forties and away in America working in a clothing factory in New York. Sender lived very frugally in order to save as much money as possible. He had not yet decided to remain in America permanently and for his family to join him or for him to return to Poland. In either case his plan was to save as much money as he could and be prepared for either, to remain or to return..

Sender came to America twice as an immigrant, and both times he fled from America which he considered to be a Sodom. Twice he returned to Opole after finding it impossible to adjust to the "non-kosher" secular habits the Jewish immigrants acquired and which he rejected out of hand as unclean. He could not brook the harried, secular way of life in America, actually that of the younger Jewish immigrants free from parental and shteytl constraints. It was extremely difficult to earn a living in America and, at the same time, observe every jot and tittle of religious ritual as well as still hold fast to one's "yidishkait," Jewish morality, ethical behavior and religious practices.

Gerardo told me that his father Sender's disillusionment with Jewish life fell to an absolute nadir one day when he saw with his own eyes that the Opole housewife in whose flat he rented a room, a woman noted for piety and strict observance of religious practices back home, removed the meat she was "koshering" from the salt before the prescribed thirty minutes and cooked it.** Sender happened to be home that day when he observed this pious and observant lantsfroo, paisana in Spanish, remove the meat from the salt after only about twenty minutes instead of the prescribed half hour, about ten or so minutes less than required. Sender was shocked and astounded concluding that America was a Sodom indeed. If this woman, noted as one of the most observant and pious women in Opole, could have become so lax and careless, what could he expect from those who had been less than devout in Poland, from those who had not been too punctual in other religious observances? Disheartened and downcast about how "trey,f" unclean, America was, he went back to Poland and never returned. Had he remained in America the first time he came, Malvina's father would have been born here. But Sender's destiny, and the destiny

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** Note! It is forbidden for Jews to eat blood. Before meat may be consumed, all the blood must first be removed. This is done by spreading coarse salt on the meat to absorb the blood. After being in salt for half an four, the meat is washed with water and only then may then be cooked and eaten.

of all those family members who he feared would be lost as Jews if he brought them to America, was to perish at the hands of a heartless Haman.

The last time Sender was in America, Leyzer was also in New York having fled Poland before being sent to the front in the Russo-Japanese War. Before leaving, Sender asked him to return to Poland with him and not be contaminated by the unclean American life. Leyzer once told me about this suggestion of his father. He said he would have obeyed had they been in Opole. But this was America, and without being disrespectful, he said to his father, "You can go back if you wish, but I am staying here." This must have happened in 1904 or perhaps later by 1905. What a fateful choice! Had Leyzer gone back with his father to Poland, he and Pereleh too, and possibly their son Benny, born after twenty years of marriage, would have ended in Aushwitz.

When Sender returned to Opole after leaving America for the second time, Gerardo may have been perhaps three or four or even five years old. Unfortunately, his earliest memory of his father whom he met for the first time on his return from America, was negative. Gerardo never forgot the incident which he repeated to me on a number of occasions. It seems that he was asking for a groschen or two from Sender who did not quite understand. The child was persistent and so Sender asked his wife Sooreh, "Voos vil der ying?" What does the young man want.*** His mother clarified saying, "Er vil a tsikerel." He wants a sweet, a candy.

Gerardo said he remembered clearly his father's reaction to his request for some candy. He could hardly have been more than three or four years old then. Sender could not believe what he was hearing, such an outrageous demand from a child. He answered angrily with a question, "Er vil a tsikerl?," as if the request was outrageous.

I am paraphrasing Gerardo's version of what happened and as he remembered the incident. Sender refused to give the child the groschen or two to buy a sweet, and Gerardo never forgot it. He still felt pained and hurt by his father's miserly character every time he related the story to me, when he was about forty-five years old. The first few times I heard this story, I sensed he harbored a strong feeling of resentment against his father, a resentment which lessened somewhat in later years.

Gerardo often told me that his father was very tightfisted and frugal, a man who counted every penny spent in the house, who never gave him any spending money or ever paid him any wages though he worked alongside him. Gerardo was already in his 80s when his mood toward his father changed to one of compassion, and even pity when he recalled how hard his father worked to earn a living for the

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*** Note! He did not say "Voos vil doos kind," what does the child want.] His mother clarified saying, "Er vil a tsikerel." [He wants a sweet, a candy.

family and how pious and honest he was, how profoundly, even fanatically, observant he was of all the commandments, mitzvoth, with which he voluntarily burdened himself.

Yet, though he sometimes said he appreciated the reasons why his father seemed so cold to him, and though he even began to admit that he understood and sympathized why his father was the way he was, Gerardo never once ever admitted that it was possible that he had misjudged his father, or that the father might have possibly been right and the son wrong!

According to my mother-in-law Toba, Sender was a hard, puritanical and righteous man, probably because he was an orphan, and had never experienced a mother's love. In fact, she also was of the opinion that Oosher and his father Sender were almost always at odds with each other, because Sender was absent from home when Oosher was a little boy. Though she did not say it with these words, I imagine she meant to say that they had never had the opportunity to bond as is natural when the father is present during the crucial early years of the child.

His mother, Sooreh, according to Gerardo, was of a totally different character. She was self-effacing, very generous and gentle woman. Whenever she threatened to whip Oosher with the broom. she was never able to find it. When she finished preparing the Sabbath meal for then family each Friday afternoon, she would spoon out portions into a number of small pots she kept specially for that purpose. She would then carry these pots, each with a portion of the Sabbath meal distributing them among the poor, mainly those men who studied and slept in the "bes medresh," the synagogue, and other poor people. His father, of course, agreed with this generosity, though he was more than frugal with regard to his own needs.

As an example of Sender's frugality, even stinginess, Gerardo told me the following story more than once. When he was a young boy, he and his friends would go sliding or sledding during the winter. I am assuming that these were the conditions, ice and/or snow, which I base on the meaning the Yiddish word "glitch." The translation of "glitch" is slide or to slide. Glitch seems to have entered American English meaning a difficulty or an error, something unexpected that causes trouble. At any rate, Oosher and his friends would go sledding in the snow or sliding on the ice and then come back home with ruddy cheeks and ravenously hungry. On one such occasion he heard his father shout to his mother " Sooreh, bahawlt doos broit, er kihmt fin glitch." Sarah, hide the bread, he is coming home from sliding on the ice.

Frequently, my mother-in-law Toba would edit and explain the undercurrents beneath the stories Oosher told me about his father. The problem, she said, was that Oosher never get to know his father when he was a child. The principal reason was that when Oosher was born Sender was already a middle-aged man and no longer had any patience to pay any attention to a little child. Also, he was so burdened with making a living that he rarely had the luxury of freedom from care so that he could

think about such intangible matters as being demonstrative or showing affection. Also, Sender was away in America during Oosher's first formative and crucial years.

Gerardo was not one who willingly took to writing letters. He would think of saying something to someone far off and even voice what he would write in a letter. Having thought about the contents of the letter and having spoken about it, would leave him with the sense that he had actually written and mailed it to the person concerned. The fact is, though Oosher thought often of his father and mother, he rarely wrote them. But Toba once told me that when she heard that Sender and Soorheh were destitute and suffering severe deprivations of even basic necessities, she occasionally wrote and sent them some money. This was in the 1930s when they were old and helpless.

Gerardo told me that he once received a letter from his father in which the old man asked him for forgiveness for all the wrongs he might have done him when he was a child and a young man in Opole. I was very touched, and even perturbed, that a father would ask a son forgiveness. I still cannot believe this was so. It may be that Gerardo looked upon the receipt of a letter from his father as a tacit plea for forgiveness. The letter in question might have been in answer to one that Toba had written Sender and in which she had included some cash. I conjectured that Sender's letter of apology, if it existed at all, intended to demonstrate he appreciated his son's generosity.

In later years, Gerardo tended to speak of his father without the animosity of previous years. He spoke of his father with some measure of objectivity, as if he were standing aside observing himself and his father so many years ago. He spoke with warm feelings and even compassion bordering on pity about his father's hard life which he remembered from his childhood. I sensed that he experienced some measure of disappointment over the fact that he and his father had so many differences so many years ago.

Once he was able to put aside in his mind, but still not forget, the wrongs he felt were done him, he actually spoke with pride and admiration of his father's decency, his honesty and how hard he worked all his life. He admitted that, in effect, his father had lived a life of piety and purity and selflessness with regard to his own personal needs. Unfortunately and regrettably, according to Oosher, Sender had been too other-worldly and far too deeply immersed in righteous living at any cost, even to living on bread and milk, and even less, during the week when he was away selling in the daily markets of the peasant villages around Opole. Never once was he tempted, or even think of consuming any "treyf," unclean and forbidden food. Oosher extolled his father's piety, a man who never failed to perform his daily religious offices and prayers, always careful to execute every jot and tittle of the mitzvahs. A man clean of body and mind, but a strict man, not only for others, but most of all for himself. These then were the qualities Oosher ascribed to his father and, at the same

time always never forgot and even resented the wrongs he believed his father had visited on him.

Sender made a living sewing pants and coats of the type preferred by peasants. The pants and coats were made at home. When sufficient stock was accumulated, Sender would sell them at the weekly fairs or markets held in surrounding peasant villages. When Gerardo was old enough, probably from the age of nine or ten, he used to accompany his father. They were absent from home most of the working week, for about four or five days, and return home Friday to prepare for the Sabbath. All week long, Sender would eat only bread and fruit and perhaps boil some noodles to eat with milk, always careful not to touch unclean, non-kosher, "treyf," food. It was a very hard life going from town to town. Oosher never told me where they slept while on the road. I imagine right near their stands so as to keep watch over the merchandise.

Before setting out to sell in the peasant village markets, Sender would hire a "bahlagooleh," coachman, and his horse-drawn wagon to carry the goods from town to town on market days. There were other itinerant merchants who sold a variety of goods and made the same circuit of towns. They all would vie with each other to secure the best locations in the village marketplaces where they would set up their stands with the goods for sale. The first to arrive at the marketplace got first choice where to set up his stand. As the caravan of wagons approached a village, the merchants would run ahead to select the best spots for business. Sender, who was very fleet of foot and could outrun the competition, would speed ahead of all the others with his long flowing grey beard flying in the wind while holding a stick to mark the place for his stand. Invariably he would be the first to arrive at the village marketplace and wait there until Oosher and the coachman with the horse and wagon arrived.

Mekhel Mendelsohn once took a trip back to Opole for visit and brought back a photograph of Sender in the marketplace of one of the towns on his weekly circuit where he sold the pants and jackets he sewed himself. His stand where he displayed his goods, was no more than a few boards supported on two saw-horses. His stock of merchandise seemed very meager. It was not piled up very high on the stand before which he stood when Mekhel took the picture. What a sad, sad picture, indeed! A few paltry bits of merchandise on a makeshift table out in the open air. One wonders how Sender earned a living from such a pitifully small stock of clothing which he produced himself bent over a sewing machine at home when he was not going from town market to town market gypsy-like during the better part of each week?

Gerardo always spoke of his father's lithe and handsome body which he remembered when he saw him each week when they went to the baths in preparation for the Sabbath. In the "svits," sweat bath, Sender could withstand the most extreme heat. In was customary to immerse oneself into the mikveh, the pool, after the sweat bath to cool off and close one's pores before drying and dressing to go home. During

the winter, the water would often freeze in the mikveh where one also performed the ritual ablutions of cleanliness in preparation for the Sabbath. According to Gerardo, on more than one occasion Sender broke the ice on the surface and then plunged in.

Gerardo also helped his father in another business activity, one quite distant from tailoring. Sender had some experience in farming when he lived on the farm of Mai'er of Grabowitz after he was orphaned. He also had a special talent for raising fruit and knew a great deal about fruit trees, particularly plum trees. As a supplement to his tailoring, he would buy up a crop of plums from a farmer when the trees were in blossom. He knew how to estimate the size of the crop the trees would bear by inspecting the blossoms.

On that basis, he would pay the farmer in advance for the crop. The agreement was that Sender had to harvest the plums himself when they were ripe for picking. He also had to care for the crop beginning with the blossoms right through the months while the fruit was ripening. Since he had already invested his capital in "futures," he literally had live out in the orchard so that the fruit would not be pilfered. After harvesting the plums, they were then dried to produce prunes which Sender sold wholesale, where I do not know. Gerardo never told me this detail, but I assume it was in Lublin and/or in Warsaw.

Gerardo never was very enthusiastic about this type of work or farming of any kind which he considered demeaning. I remember when he heard that his grandson Allan Bell wanted to be a farmer on a kibbutz in Israel, he was upset and said so to Allan himself. It is not surprising then that Gerardo was a most reluctant helper for his father. He hated camping out in the orchard while watching the plums ripen and taking care that they not be stolen.

Sender probably needed his son to help him because at that time, 1910 - 1921, he was already a man in his fifties and early sixties while Oosher was still in his teens. This probably explains why he was less than enthusiastic to help his father at the weekly village markets as well as with the plum crop and its conversion to prunes.

The gulf between father and son was exacerbated when Oosher was already a grown man at the end of the First World War. The great differences in age became a factor that only widened the gulf in point of view each held. Sender was an old and worn-out man looking more to the past than the future. Oosher was a young man who realized his future in Poland was hopeless. He wanted no part of his father's past or Poland's future. He felt thwarted by the demands of religious observance. He rebelled and joined the Bund, a secular Jewish socialist political party. He considered his father's obsession with religious observance as archaic.

He also spurned his father's backwardness in economic matters. For example, he related that Sender returned from the United States with what then was considered a fortune in Opole. Sender decided that tailoring and going to village markets was too difficult for him and, besides, one hardly made a living from that

sort of enterprise. So, since he was now a wealthy man, he decided to lend money on interest and make a living that way. But according to Oosher, Sender lent his money to worst "dead beats" in Opole who never repaid their loans. The end result was that he lost most of the money he had sweated and starved to earn in New York. This money episode must have taken place soon after Sender came back to Opole, perhaps in 1904 or 1905, the time when Leyzer refused to accompany him preferring to remain in America.

It is interesting that Gerardo told me of his father's aborted attempt to be a money lender as if he was already a grown man. Gerardo told me that he advised his father that it was foolishness on his part to be lending money to those poor impoverished borrowers who patently would never be able to repay the loans. But his father would not listen to him. When Gerardo told me this story for the first time, I assumed that he was already a grown man with some experience in money matters and so I agreed that Sender should have taken his son's advice.

But now, in retrospect as I am writing this on February 6, 1995, so many years after having heard the story for the first time, and making the simple arithmetic calculation of how old Oosher must have been when his father lost his money in bad loans, probably just before the First World War, say 1905 to about 1915 at most, Oosher was between three and twelve years old. I must conclude, therefore, that Oosher's tale was anachronistic. The advice he supposedly gave his father must have been more a creation of his imagination than in fact. A frustrated hope became a reality in his mind many years later. He was probably lamenting what might have been had his father been less trusting and more astute in business matters.

If he did in fact caution his father's about his bad judgement in extending loans, it would imply that Oosher was already extremely knowledgeable about matters of finance when he was under ten years old, or at most twelve years old. It must be that he came to believe as true what he had imagined and belived he had he given his father advice. Knowing his father's character, he concluded that he surely would have rejected it out of hand. Thinking of it, made it so.

This is a Jewish characteristic, the conviction that words are imbued with a material reality. God created the world, not by any physical deed, but merely by saying it into existence—Let there be light, and there was light! The mistakes that Sender made in the past would have been rectified if they had only been made later when Oosher was in his twenties, and if Sender would have taken his son's advice. So the story is an account of what Sender should have done.

Oosher also told me that the little money that his father still had left when the First World War broke out was actually in Russian rubles. Sender kept the money hidden in the house. He was confident that Russia would win the war. Gerardo, who was twelve years old in 1914 and fifteen years old at the beginning of the Russian Revolution, pleaded with Sender to get rid of those rubles which he said would soon

be worthless. Here again I believe this story is anachronistic, not unless Oosher knew beforehand that revolutionary turmoil would overturn the Tsarist regime and that, consequently, the rubles his father was hoarding would become worthless. Be that so or not so, in his mind while telling me this tale, Gerardo was certain that his father was stubborn and once again rejected his advice. It never occurred to me to question the veracity of these stories, nor did it ever occur to me to make the calculation of Gerardo's age when he was giving his father good advice which the old man turned down.

There was another incident which Oosher related how he and his unmarried sisters were embarrassed because of their father's bizarre behavior. Apparently, Sender never forgot his life on his uncle's farm and longed for the pastoral life. Oosher and his sisters would blush with shame when they saw their father with a shovel and a bucket going about the streets scooping up horse droppings to use as fertilizer. Though Gerardo did not tell me this, it may have been that Sender was tilling a little plot of land somewhere on the outskirts of Opole. He may have been growing some vegetables. Gerardo did not elaborate. He still was embarrassed by his father's frugal habits, especially that of collecting horse manure which, Gerardo was certain, earned him the disdain and contempt of the Jews of Opole.

The tensions and misunderstandings between father and son came to a climax, probably by about 1920 when Gerardo was about eighteen years old. He never related the exact incident which led to Oosher's departure from his father's house and going to live with the Naiman family. In fact, he passed over the causes why he left home and concentrated on stories how he worked with the Naiman brothers and sisters and how he reorganized and improved their tailoring operations in ready-to-wear clothing. When he left home his father was in his sixties and had to fend for himself without the help of his son. This must have been a devastating blow for the old man who found himself and his wife all alone and in unforeseen difficult circumstances without the help of their son. All of their children were already married and out of the house. Oosher was the youngest child and his sudden departure while still unmarried was apparently unexpected. Sender and Sooreh were left alone. They were doubtlessly lonely, but at least all of the children, except Gootsheh, lived in Opole. Oosher never returned to live in his parents' house while he was still unmarried. His parents' loneliness was, no doubt, exacerbated when he and Toba were married about 1922 and left Opole forever.

My mother-in-law Toba frequently lamented the rift between Ooosher and his father. She was the one who wrote his parents once in a while and also sent them money from time to time. My father-in-law grew mellower through the years with regard to the stories about his father. His resentment for the wrongs he believed his father visited on him, changed to compassion, and even an understanding of the difficult his father's life had been. His disdain for his father's stiff-neckedness and his father's rigorous unquestioning adherence to religious observance changed to

admiration and respect. He was proud of his father's unswerving and steadfast convictions, his strength of character and resignation to the inevitable.

The rest of the story of your maternal grandfather – Oosher, Gedalyah, Gerardo, Gedale– you all know from direct personal experience. He and your maternal grandmother and your mother's sister Tere, now lie in the Durham Hebrew Cemetery, the gates of which were designed by Sarah.