

June 7, 1994

Hello Everybody! Sylvia Strauss speaking from Norleston, trying to recall events in the lives of the Polk family and all the families connected with them, the Epsteins, the Vanes, the Strausses, the Harwoods and all the off shoots of these families.

If I have omitted mentioning people who you feel should have been included, or happenings which seemed to have been overlooked, it was either an innocent oversight or a lack of knowledge.

Trying to bring back into one's mind some of the significant times in so many people's lives spanning a period of over a century for some became a more monumental task than we realized when I agreed to take it on. Any omissions or errors within these pages are due to either memory lapses on my part or situations which occurred that I have been unfamiliar with, not because I didn't consider them important enough to mention.

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The very first person to begin with is our father.

Jacob Jarno-Polsky was born in Russia on Dec. 10, 1887, in the area called the Ukraine, close to a large city known as Kiev, in a small village named Talna. We were told that his father, Bernard, was a gentle, religious man, very tolerant and placid. His mother, Rose, was the stronger personality of the two, kind but practical, with a fiery disposition. I only heard Dad speak of his older brother Morris, his younger sister Bella and the sister who seemed to be the youngest, Sarah. The children all had beautiful auburn hair like their mother's although Jacob's hair was bright red in his youth and darkened to auburn as he aged. If there were more children in the family, these are the only ones I remember hearing about.

Jacob helped his father in the grain business beginning at the age of 10 and when he was a little older, he found extra work for himself after finishing his daily work for

P. 3. his father. With the money he earned for himself he would buy himself finer boots to wear or a better horse to ride. He was always trying to improve his lifestyle.

When he reached the age of about 16, his father chastised him for his need for such luxuries and Jacob resented it. He described himself to us as a hot-headed teenager and felt he had a right to spend his money anyway he chose. He left home and went to a member of his family (unknown to us) who had planned to leave for America but became ill and could not go. Jacob bought the ticket and sailed to New York. His name then became Jacob Polsky.

Years later when I was about 7, I personally remember Dad received word from someone from his home town that his parents were standing outside, in front of their home and 2 Russian soldiers rode by on horseback and, just for sport, gunned them down, killed them and went on their way. I remember the grief Dad suffered when he heard the news. He sat shiva according to

P.4 the orthodox ritual which impressed me because he was not particularly observant. He mourned for them deeply. I know he very much regretted his impulsive departure from home.

When Jacob reached N. Y. he had no knowledge of English and was penniless. He knew of an aunt there who might allow him to live with her and her family. Somehow, he found his way to her. She and her husband had several children and they could hardly support themselves. He was not welcomed enthusiastically. I believe, the year was 1904 in November, the day after Theodore Roosevelt was elected President. The economy was very bad. His aunt did allow him to stay.

He found work miles away after scouring a large part of the city looking for a job. He washed dishes in a restaurant for \$6.00 a week. Remember, there were no dishwashers then. He also (while looking for work) met some American Jewish boys about his age (17) who were in a bicycle club. They permitted him to join them, although he had no bicycle and spoke no English. He was

P.5 very anxious to learn and they must have been nice boys and apparently took a liking to him. He gradually learned to speak and, in fact, developed such language skill that I don't remember him ever having more than a very slight accent.

The economy did not improve and one morning when he arrived at work, his boss told him he had to lay him off because he could not afford to pay him. Dad had to walk all those miles back to his aunt's house. When he arrived there, and after knocking on the door for sometime, the woman across the hall told him his aunt & her family had moved out. His aunt had not told him of her plans. The neighbor took him in, fed him and allowed him to spend the night in her place. In the morning, he left and walked miles to the countryside. He was very despondent, as we can imagine. He slept in barns and worked at odd jobs for his food. He survived in that way until he found regular work again to support himself in the city.

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At 19 he met and married my mother, Dora, who had come from Austria. She was 20 when they were married. They opened a small shop and sold candy, newspapers, cigarettes, a few groceries, etc. She had 2 miscarriages and one still-born child before their son, Sam, was born. To better himself, Jacob became an apprentice in a trade school where he learned bricklaying. His instructor told him he wasn't very good and his dad said he wasn't ever going to be a bricklayer. He was going in the building business.

Detroit was becoming an automotive manufacturing center, it was known to have a booming economy. By this time, Sylvia had been born in N. J. They moved to Detroit with their 2 children. It was 1914 and he began to do mason contracting. He was very intelligent, as well as very ambitious and wanted his family to live well. Hilda was born in Detroit in 1917. Dad was doing well enough to buy a car. He brought my mother and Hilda home from the hospital in it. Soon after Hilda's birth in January, the U. S. entered World War I. Building became difficult because many men went into service and material and equipment were taken for war work.

P. 7. The government had priorities over all others. Near Battle Creek an army camp was under construction. He moved and Dad was employed supervising the building of barracks, officers' quarters and whatever was necessary to accommodate hundreds of soldiers. When the camp was completed, he drove them to the city and back and supported his family in that way until the war was over.

He moved back to Detroit when Dad bought equipment and hired a crew of bricklayers and laborers in order to resume his building contracting business. He earned an excellent reputation for his fine work, dependability and honesty, was making a more than adequate income.

He then were able to enjoy a beautiful home, fine furniture, love cars and a life style he wanted for us. He had live-in help and were able to travel. He never forgot his early years of struggle and often helped people in need. He helped to bring his brother, Morris

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P. 8. and his family to America and also his youngest sister, Sarah. He tried to bring Bella her husband and their son here, but Bella had become a doctor and her husband was a lawyer. They were well established in Russia and preferred staying there. Unfortunately, Sarah died in New York during the world wide flu epidemic in 1918. She was 20 and was engaged to be married. We also received the tragic news that Bella and her family were killed in a Bolshevick uprising.

In 1926, my mother was diagnosed as having cancer. She died at 40 on January 19, 1927. Dad was 39, Sam just became 15 I was 12 and Hilda had just had her 10th birthday on January 9, 1927, 10 days before my mother died.

Before we discuss our family's life in the years during Dad's second marriage, we really should talk about our lives as they were in his first marriage.

Dora came from Vienna at about the age of 17. She personified those traits inherent in many Viennese people. She loved to sing and had an operatic

P. 9. voice. She had a great sense of humor, laughed a lot and was a happy person. She loved her husband and children and was very affectionate towards them. Best of all, she was always anxious to help people - adults or children. She willingly listened to their joyous news or their difficult problems. If they needed money she willingly gave it. If someone was ill, she gladly sat with them at night so the parents (or whoever was the care taker) could get some rest. She was a great nurse by instinct. Everyone loved her and she loved the world.

As for her early life, she came from a family of 6 daughters. Their father died when they were young children. He were told that their mother was left with no means of supporting her family and was actually penniless. She managed to scrape together a few pennies, went to the market, bought needles, thread, shoelaces and such items and selling them from door to door. She barely managed to feed her children. She knew owners of some manor houses, so she arranged with

P. 10 them to allow each daughter to live with them as they reached 10 years of age. The girls were to help with taking care of the children plus various household chores in exchange for their room and board. As each child was old enough to earn her own living, she went out to work in whatever she excelled in. My mother was a splendid cook, an outstanding baker and a fine seamstress. She had no problem finding work. She was offered work for a tailor.

Her family had many tragedies. The oldest daughter, Rose, married and had a child but Rose died in childbirth. The second daughter, Pearl, married and was to raise her sister's baby but Pearl and her husband went to England on their honeymoon. Pearl, went horse back riding, was thrown from the horse and was killed. The grandmother raised the child, Shaindel. We never knew what became of her. Lena, the 3rd daughter, came to America, married, had one child, Pauline. Lena developed Leukemia when Pauline was 16. Lena died at age 36. The 4th daughter, Sadie, was engaged to be married. Her fiancé came to America, became a fine tailor and sent for Sadie. When she came here

P. 11. They married and had a son, Sam and a daughter, Florence. Their name was Stecker. They sent for Dora, the 5th child and the next to the youngest and Gussie who was the 6th and last child. Gussie married and had a son, Abe, who was later called Al and a daughter named Helen. Their last name was Roth. Dora, as you know had three children: Sam, Hilda and Sylvia. Those of our aunts who survived to come to this country all lived in New York. Our family moved to Detroit and remained there until many years later.

In 1924, when Sam was about 12, I was 10 and Hilda was 7, Dad bought a beautiful old home on a fine residential street which was gradually being built up with apartment buildings. Dad bought our home with the intention of moving the house to another neighborhood and putting up an apartment of his own. He planned on calling it "The Deborah" after my mother.

Moving a large 2 story home at any time was a complicated undertaking but at that time, it was a monumental effort.

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As well as I can remember and with my lack of knowledge taken into consideration, my description of the actual function might be questionable. I do remember that the bricks on the house had to be removed and the foundation had to be separated from the first floor, where the kitchen, dining room, living room, study and utility rooms were. Upstairs were about 4 or 5 bedrooms, bathroom, etc. Above that floor was the attic. After the foundation was separated from the rest of the structure, that large building would be mounted on a huge framework of steel which in turn was set down on heavy wheels. Horses were engaged to pull the entire contraption forward inches at a time. The new site was about 1 mile away. One must remember that plumbing connections, power, telephone - any mechanical devices had to be totally disengaged. Cooking, washing clothes, baths, radio, telephone, lights - any of the civilized conveniences we always took for granted were not available while the house was being moved.

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This Herculean task was to take two or three weeks to reach the permanent location, plus building the house back up again (the foundation was being prepared while the house was being moved) to make it habitable once again - installing all the equipment, etc. Of course we were going to have only the most modern and convenient utilities. Refrigerators were becoming a conversation piece. Modern ranges and ovens were becoming available. Stall showers with overhead sprays were already in use in new homes but Dad went one better. He had a shower overhead and what he called needle sprays on each side so our bodies could be sprayed while our head was being washed. All these things were to take time.

You could imagine our shock when my father told us we would move into a hotel until our house was reasonably comfortable to occupy. and our mother, genial and reasonable as she usually was, said "Nothing doing! There's no way to lock up the house

P. 14. while we're away from it. No hotel. We are staying right in this house while it's being moved. All my most treasured possessions are here and I will not allow them to be stolen or destroyed." Dad had hit a raw nerve that provoked her - her home! You guessed it. He lived in it during the re-upture of house and lives took place. However long it took it seemed 3 times longer than it was. Also bear in mind the city had to approve of a private family closing off whichever street our house was blocking. Dad got them to give him a permit to do it. Finally, nothing was as insupportable as the day when our house was right in front of the school Helda and I went to. Sam went to an other school by then. When I came into my class that morning and after the bell had rung, the first words out of my teacher's mouth were, "Does anyone know whose house is in the middle of the street in front of the school?" I ducked under the desk while the kids were pointing at me and laughing. Being the kind of a kid who hated to draw attention to myself, I almost died of shame and embarrassment. I did survive it

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as we all survived the many other experiences that confronted us. I must say that somehow my mother washed clothes, dragged water, prepared meals and kept us clean and healthy. We went to school and our lives, as far as we knew, never missed a beat. We never heard our mother utter a word of complaint. She knew it was her choice and she did her job.

Our house, when it was finally in place and completed, was beautiful. New furniture was bought and placed where it was needed and everything was as modern as any home of that era could be. The kitchen had white tiled walls which were tiled $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way up, the floor was white tile, the appliances were the newest models and the room was sparkling and immaculate - ready for Mother to cook her scrumptious meals and bake her super special chollas, coffee cakes, strudels, pastries and anything one's heart desired.

Our summers were usually spent by our mother taking us to New York to visit her family and Dad. Sometimes we would go by sleeper train and sometimes Dad would drive us, stay a

P. 16. few days and he would drive back. Then Mother would take us to a resort in the Catskills for 2 or 3 weeks. There usually was a counsellor who had programs for the children, arts and crafts classes, swimming, ball games, whatever interested us. Mother did not play cards so she either read, walked or visited with her friends.

One summer, Dad drove up from Detroit to pick us up. It was 1926. We hadn't been in the resort very long. The day after we got home, I was playing on the porch with my friends and Mother came out and kissed me and said she was going away for a few days. I was a little disturbed but I went on playing. Two days later, we learned that she had surgery (the reason we left the resort earlier. She suspected it)

We knew it was serious because she never made a fuss about herself. Then Dad learned it was cancer. I was so frightened because she was so very sick. Dad went to see the biggest doctors in the country to see if they could save her but they gave him no hope.

Dad sold our beautiful home and the apartment he had named "The Deborah" after her.

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We moved into a different neighborhood and he rented a duplex. She died January 19, 1927. She had been dearly loved by her family and friends. Her death was a bitter blow to all of us. Dad, Sam, Hilda and I were lost souls.

Chapter II

At the end of June, 1927, Dad and Sam were going to drive Hilda & I to New York to spend the summer with Aunt Gussie & her family. The Saturday before we were to leave (we were to leave the following morning on Sunday) Dad took us to Boesky's on Twelfth St, a popular Deli, for lunch. As we were coming out of the restaurant a woman who was coming in stopped Dad to speak to him. She had recognized him from their youth in Russia and after he spoke to her for a few minutes, he did remember her. She questioned him about how we were getting along, etc. and he explained our circumstances to her. He also told her that we were driving to New York the next morning. She insisted that we postpone our trip until Monday morning because her son, Edward was getting married Sunday evening and she wanted

P. 18 Dad to come to the wedding. Her name was Anna Epstein. After Dad consulted Sam, Hilda and I, we felt we could leave Monday morning instead of Sunday and that he should go. This was probably one of the most important decisions we had ever made in our lives, because it changed everything for us forever. If we had left Baesky's 5 minutes earlier, Dad should not have met Anna and everything would really have been different for all of us.

Dad went to the wedding and most of the Epsteins were there from Indianapolis which is where most of them lived. Among them was Dad's 2nd wife to be.

Just think about it. David would not have been born, so of course there would have been no Elaine in our family, no Jay, no Steven, no Andy, no Richard Cantor, no Michael or Rebecca Cantor, no Mark Cantor, no Claire Rachel and no Jay Titkin and no wedding coming up on August 7, 1994.

Sam met Edith by going to New York, visiting Ada's cousin Ada Cohen

P. 19, who had a daughter Edith. Naturally, Sam couldn't have met and married Edith so there would have been no Donna, Richard or Jonathan or any of their children: Ben, Josh, Sam, Brian and Laura. There would also have been no Anarith in our life for Hilda to visit in Houston so she could not have gone to visit her where she met Nat. If that were the case, neither Ronnie nor Diane would have been born nor would Diane have married Ronnie Lepow and given birth to Jeffrey and Natalie. There's a possibility that I may not have married Ted because Ted came to see Dad in the evening at our home. He wanted to work for Dad. If Dad hadn't married Ada, we would not have been living there so he might not have met Dad. So I wouldn't have met Ted and there would not have been Dean or Dick. Sue Rosenbloom could not have met Dick and there would have been no Mark or Jennifer. But even if I had married Ted and Dean, Dick, Sue, Mark and Jennifer were in our family I would have had no reason to come to Houston so I would not have met

p. 20 Simon and married her and become the step-mother of David; Gary & Nadine and of course there would not have been Miryam, Julia, Shane, Marika and Aaron. In retrospect, Dick could not have married Sue because he would have had no reason to be in Houston, after all and we would have had no Mark and Jennifer.

Such far reaching events because 2 different people who came from Russia at different times happened to be in the same place at the same time and, for one, thank God they were so let's get on with our family history.

When Dad, Sam returned from N. Y. Dad was out walking one evening and met Belle Paul. She, her husband, Ananuth and David had moved to Detroit to live (from Indianapolis). They had met at the wedding. Belle invited him for dinner and he began to visit them frequently.

One week-end, Ada came to Detroit for a visit with Belle, her sister, and Dad happened to stop in to see the Pauls. They, too, remembered each other from the wedding. They went out together and spent a nice evening. She worked as a
comptometer

P. 21. operator in Indianapolis. After she left, the Pauls and Dad drove to Indianapolis for a week-end. There he met her parents, her mother's mother, Bubby Schwartz, and her brothers and sisters most of whom he had already met.

Hilda and I came home from N. Y. on Labor Day week-end and met Ada who was also there for the holiday week-end. By this time, she and Dad had decided to get married by the end of the year.

I was 13 years old. We had a live-in maid and a housekeeper but I felt a keen sense of responsibility for running the house. I had become very nervous and fearful that something would happen to Dad, Sam and Hilda. When they came home later than they usually did I was sure they were in an accident. Sam and Hilda resented my questioning them about why they were late and Dad understood what my feelings were. When Dad told me he and Ada were to be married, I was greatly relieved.

We went to Indianapolis for Thanksgiving and met the family. We already knew the Pauls. I liked them all very

P. 22 much, I especially liked Abe and Fan. They treated us as if we really belonged to the family.

I would like to put all the Epsteins in the order of their age. Their father seemed to be called B. I. which were the initials of his first and second name. He had been married before and his first wife died and left 2 small children, Julius and Libby. He remarried Fanny Schwa. This was her first marriage. They had 8 children between them but one of them died. They raised 7 children. Julius lived in Detroit with his wife, Anna, of the wedding fame. They had 3 children, Edward who got married at the wedding, Fred and Leona. They all eventually moved to California so we knew them only a short time. Then there was Libby, who married Louis Glauer. They had 5 children. Gertrude, the oldest, married Weiss but they were divorced years later and had had no children. The Glauers all lived in Detroit.

From B. I.'s second marriage, 1st was Sam who later lived in Detroit with his wife Pearl and 2 sons, Lester and Morris Harry. Actually, for years we knew

P. 23. nothing more about them because we heard that there had been a rift in the family when they were all much younger. There was no relationship any longer between the rest of the family and Sam & Pearl. Ada told me she had been married to Pearl's brother. She was 20 when they were married and by the time she was 23, she had had 2 miscarriages & her husband had died and left her a widow at 23.

Next in line was Belle. As I've already mentioned, she was married to Morris. He came from Manchester, England to Indianapolis, where he had an aunt. His mother had died in England. His father continued to live in Manchester but Morris and his younger sister came to Indianapolis. She eventually married and moved to Chicago. I loved Morris very much. He was very kind to me. I will speak of him again later. When the Pauls moved to Detroit our two families had a very warm relationship.

Anaruth went to Florida and met Aaron Gordon, went to visit him in Houston and ultimately married him and of

P. 24 course, moved to Houston. They have 3 sons, Daniel, Tom and Jimmy, all married now. David Paul went to U of M, graduated as a Mechanical Engineer. World War II was in action when he finished college, so he went into service as an officer. When he was discharged after the armistice, he met and married Rosalie. They have twin boys, Jeff and Hal, Linda (the oldest child and only girl) and Howard. They all lived in Detroit for years but later, in their lives, they moved to Denver.

Next in line after Belle was Ada and I already spoke of her sad first marriage. We will speak much more about her a little later in this history.

Next to Ada was Abe and Fanny and at the time we met them they had a baby girl, Genesis. She lives in Florida with her husband. I think she has 2 daughters but we know very little about them although we exchange New Year's cards with Genesis. Abe and Fanny also had a son when Genesis was, I think, 3. His name is also David - David Epstein. He is married, has children and lives in Indianapolis. I've only met him 2 or 3 times but never

P. 25, his children.

The child that died was Lazar Lawrence in English and he was next in line to Abe. I believe he was 16 years old when he died.

Ruth Burman was next in line, was married to Al Burman and had 2 children, Leonard and Paula. Leonard became a doctor, married, moved to California and I believe he has children but I don't know them. Paula married, I think she has 2 sons and then was divorced. She is now remarried and we met her husband but never her children. We see her and her husband at family affairs Ruth and Paula always lived in Indianapolis. Ruth died 2 or 3 months ago.

Bryna was next to Ruth. She was not married at the time we met her. She and her mother moved to Detroit and lived at times with our parents and at times with the Pauls. She worked as a book-keeper and through her work, she met Ben Atlas and they were married. Not long after she was married, her mother died. Ben's father had died many years before. Bryna had a daughter she named

P. 26. Faygabeth, after both her parents, Mar-
vyn was born when Faygabeth was about
3. They lived in Detroit. Bryna & I became
good friends. She died in about 1965. I was
very sad about her passing.

Alex was next in line to Bryna and
the youngest child. He always lived in
Indianapolis, married a girl named
 Sylvia and they had one son, Barry. He
moved to Dallas but I never met him. Alex
died quite young.

After Dad & Ella were married, as we
(the Polk children) grew up and got to know
the Epstein family and they got to know us,
we became one whole devoted family.

The year before my mother died,
just before she became ill, Dad had
started making plans to build a very
exclusive apartment building in the
area of Detroit where the General Motors
building and also Fisher Body office building
were located. He had been buying land
near there in preparation for under-
taking this project. It was to have the
newest and finest convenience equip-
ment of that time. He had wanted to do
this for years and finally was able to

P. 27. seriously make plans for its construction. When it was completed in late 1926, just at the time my mother learned of her illness, it contained 96 units, an elaborately furnished lobby, a switchboard operated by telephone operators and two elevators one with an operator and one without. The individual apartments were very elaborate for their time and the occupants commented on how much they enjoyed living there. Some were executives from General Motors and Fisher Body.

Dad could have been very proud of his achievement. He was the one man in the city at that time who had undertaken such a project without any other investors. However with my mother becoming so ill at that same time, he took no pleasure in it.

Also, early in 1926, Dad had our name legally changed to Polk. He changed his own name to Jack E. Polk, the E stood for the first initial of his Hebrew name. The reason he changed our name was because Detroit had a very large Polish settlement. Polsky was a very popular Polish name with an "i" at the end rather than a "y." He was

P. 28 constantly being badgered by Polish organizations and charities for contributions, etc., etc. Thereafter we were Sam, Sylvia and Hilda Park.

After Dad and Ada were married for some time, Hilda and I became more comfortable about calling Ada "Mother". Hereafter in this history or perhaps we may also call it a "memoir", Ada will be called Mother.

Dad and Mother had a baby boy they named Bernard Ross after both of Dad's parents. He was born September 28, 1930. We dearly loved him and he was a great joy to us.

When he was 4 months old, the end of November, 1931, he developed kidney poisoning. There were no miracle drugs at that time. Had there been, his life would have been saved. He died in February, 1932 and we were all heart-broken. (I have tears in my eyes now!) It was a terrible loss for us, during the depths of the depression and Dad was struggling to keep his bills paid. He had already been despondent and when Bernard died, we didn't think we would be able to survive. Thank God, within a few months Mother was pregnant again. On March 1, 1933, David was born. Never was a baby more welcome. We loved him dearly and were so excited when he arrived.

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Ted and I were engaged before David was born. I had graduated high school in June, 1932. I couldn't continue school because money was so scarce. I couldn't find work to pay tuition and buy books. I finally found a job on Saturdays for half a day - 11:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. for \$1.00 - 1.50 only because Dad talked to them first. It gave me money for the week for car fares to continue looking for work. I was 18 and they thought I was 44 and they laughed at me. We planned on being married September, 1932 but then Ted lost his job because his company closed. He sold magazines for some ridiculous sum but it was all that was available. Lawyers were grateful if they made \$5⁰⁰ a week.

Dad had to sell the "Polk Manor" because he couldn't keep it occupied. As part of the sale, he had to accept an old building in downtown Detroit. He had it completely renovated, evicted some trashy tenants and hired a manager. People who worked downtown were happy to rent clean apartments in a well kept building occupied by decent tenants. The rent from that building supported our family during the depression. In fact, Dad let Ted have one rent free. The banks closed in 1933. The little money some people had, they lost in the banks.

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One morning in the middle of January, 1934, David woke up very sick. He could not breathe. Dad called our pediatrician, Dr. Cohen and he came immediately, bringing with him the head doctor of Children's Hospital in Detroit. David had a rare type of pneumonia. His was the 6th case in the city. The other 5 had died. David was rushed to the hospital and we were hysterical. Thank God, by 10:00 P. M. the fever broke and he began to improve. By the following morning, David had recovered fully except that he was very weak. They brought him home that morning and in a few days, he was his same darling self again.

Ted finally got a job in the Internal Revenue, so we had set a wedding date for February 11, 1934. Once we knew David was fine we went ahead with our plans. We were married on the date we had decided on.

Sam, our brother, received his Master's Degree and found work immediately teaching high school English. He later also taught night school English at Wayne State U. Several years later, on one of his trips to New York, he met Edith Cohen as

P. 31 has already been mentioned. Edith was a student at Columbia working towards her P. H. D. degree. She visited us in Detroit and she and Sam became engaged. They were married in New York.

Europe and England were at war with Germany then. On December 7, 1941 (Sam's birthday) the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the U. S. went to war. I had a good friend who had joined the navy and was killed that day. (Years later, when Simon and I went to Hawaii, we saw his name on a memorial plaque along with hundreds of other names. It really upset me.) Sam eventually went into service and Edith went to live in the city near where he was stationed. When the war was over in 1945, they came back to Detroit to live and Donna was born. Sam resumed his teaching position. Richard was born in due time and eventually Jonathan.

Donna graduated from the University of Michigan, met and married Allen Lipson and they moved to Cleveland, Ohio. After Richard completed his schooling, he needed to do his military

P.32. obligation and then met Aileen.
Before they were married, Sam had
a heart attack and passed away. Jon-
athan graduated from U of M. and
recently married. Donna has 2 sons,
Ben and Josh and Richard and Aileen
have 3 children, Sam, Brean and Laura.
Jonathan has no children at this time.
Donna was divorced a few years ago.

Hilda came to Houston to visit
Anarith and Aaron and while she was
there she met Mr. Nathan Harwood who
lived there. Nat (as he was called) was
exempt from military service because
he had an ear impairment. They were
married in 1942 and Houston was their
home. They had a son, Ronnie, in 1945.
Diane, their daughter was born in 1947.
Ronnie went to the U of T and Diane
went to U. of T. Ronnie had no military ob-
ligation because he developed a heart pro-
blem and died in January 1979. Then Nat
had a heart attack and died in November, 1979.
It was a sad and difficult year for both
Hilda and Diane and I might add for the
rest of us. Hilda had had 2 years of college
after she had graduated from high

P.33, school. She was going to Wayne State U. and had to drop out because of the depression. She took a commercial course and found a government job. Years later when Diane and Ronnie were in their teens, she enrolled in U of W and graduated "Magna Cum Laude" with a degree in math. She taught high school math for several years and then retired from teaching. Diane married Ronnie Lepow in 1968. He is a first cousin of Sue Lane, Dick's wife - 2 cousins married 2 cousins. They have 2 children Jeffrey and Natalie. Jeffrey now attends U. of Arizona.

During the years our country was at war, the economy was booming. The factories were producing army trucks, jeeps, ambulances, ammunition, uniforms, and wartime needs. Many, many people who were not in service or who had handicaps became employable because the need for workers was so great. People were making more money than they had ever made and wanted to buy items which they had had to do without previously. However, the government priorities were the primary considerations so factories were limited on the amount of peace-time items

P. 34. that could be manufactured to enable the production of wartime wares be given top consideration!

Suddenly, luxury merchandise was on the market for those who wanted to sell furs, jewelry, fine homes, sumptuous furnishings, etc and for those who wanted to buy them.

When the armistice came in 1945, first in Europe and later in Japan, Americans who were not in service became aware of the tortuous devastations, the turmoil that occurred during the war. Most of all, everyone was learning of the Holocaust in Germany and the Eastern European countries. The gas chambers, the concentration camps, of the millions of people who were killed and maimed - not only those on the battlefield but also innocent victims of tyranny and insanity. Thank God, until I met Simon, I could be grateful that no one in our family were subjected to such horrors.

Although our brother Sam was in service, he was not shipped overseas. He taught illiterates after his basic training was over and went to Washington, D. C. to become

P. 35 a member of an honorary corps, called Ceremonial Attachment, those who paraded in President Roosevelt's funeral cortege, etc.

David Paul was in the air force and was never shipped overseas, either. He was an officer and, I believe, an instructor.

When David Paul reached age 15, in 1948, Dad had a heart attack and he, Mother and Dad decided to move to Tuscon. They waited for David to finish his school year and they left. They had been advised that the climate in Tuscon would be good for Dad's health. In October Dad had another attack which was fatal. Mother and David brought him back to Detroit for burial, went back to sell their home and ship their belongings to Detroit and returned to take up their life there. When David graduated from high school he went to Wayne State University in Detroit and after a year or two, he decided to enlist in the army to get his military duty behind him. At that time, it was every able-bodied young man's duty to his country. He had met Elaine and wanted to concentrate on his chosen career when he was finished with service. He enlisted in the finance

P.36 division.

Before he enlisted, while he was still at Wayne State, Dick was being Bar-Mitzvahed at the Whittier in Detroit. I asked David if he cared to bring a date. I asked him, in fact, if he knew someone he could bring and he promptly said he did and he brought Elaine. It was a mutual first meeting for our family and her.

After his first year in service and before he was being shipped overseas to Germany, he came home on leave and they were married Dec. 27, 1954. He was away for 1 more year, I believe, and he and Elaine bought a home on Fern and he started working as an accountant during the day and went to school at night to become a C.P.A. First Jay was born and I believe less than 2 years later, Steven was born.

Ted and I decided to move to Houston in 1960. Dean was working in New York as a fashion photographer. He had gone to Mich. State U. in Lansing, graduated from Wayne State and was fulfilling his military obligation by joining the National Guard while attending school. It was a different system than what David had done.

P. 37. In this system, in order to continue going to school and graduating, he was able to go to a military meeting once a week and then, in the summers, he went to an army camp for two weeks. When he graduated, he went to an army camp for 6 months and then he was finished. After he was out of service he went to Kansas City to work for an advertising firm and sold Britannica Encyclopedias alright. I don't know how it happened but he became fascinated with fashion photography, he trained in New York and then went in for himself. New York's economy began to worsen and he moved to Houston. Money in Houston was also getting tight. He became very depressed. Sept. 14, 1987 he had a heart attack and died, breaking his mother's heart forever after.

There is no appropriate place to describe the near tragedy that almost befell the Vane family but it was, if nothing else, an experience for people raising children to learn by. On the first mild Sunday we had had that winter, Mar. 17, 1945, we took Dean and Dick for a drive in the country. Dean was 11, Dick was close to 6. It was the first time we allowed Dick to sit in the back with Dean.

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I was in the front, half turned around watching them and looked into my purse to get some tissue when I heard this horrible scream from Dean. What I saw turned my blood cold (No seat felts in those days, remember) Dick told me later he wanted to throw some paper out of the window and instead of grabbing the window handle, he grabbed the door handle. Door at that time swung out instead of the other way and I saw him hanging on the open door and I tried to catch him but he was blown out into the path of an oncoming car. We had been riding in the center road. I was screaming so hard Ted didn't know what was happening. He looked in the back and saw the door wide open so he quickly got over to the pass on the edge. I then jumped out and rolled a few feet because the car was going quite fast as I jumped. I could hear Dick crying so I knew he was alive. I ran down the middle road with my arms up to alert the drivers to come to a stop. Dick's head was right on the line dividing the lanes and I was terrified that they would drive over his head but thankfully all cars stopped. The car that had been behind us couldn't stop quickly enough to

P. 39 avoid running over Dick. He drove over him in the only place on his body that he could have survived. It was the pelvic area which protected some of the vital organs. The bones in the pelvic frame were crushed but they mended perfectly. I will not dwell on the horrors we went through until we knew he would live and/or walk again. We got him to an emergency city hospital. Our doctor came right out immediately a wonderful young man who helped us immeasurably during that trying time. There were days of doubts and days of encouragement. We finally knew he would have no permanent damage and he did fully recover. He was so wonderfully good through it all.

When Uncle Morris (Cunt Belle's husband) heard about the accident, he came over to see us when he knew we were at home from our stays at the hospital with Dick. He asked us about Dick's progress and then he put his hand out to shake mine before leaving and I realized he had left money in my hand. I looked at him in surprise and he quickly shook his head to warn me not to say anything. When he left, I counted ^{the} money and there was \$500⁰⁰. It may not seem like much today,

P. 40. but it was a lot then. He was by no means a wealthy man. He had a men's wear shop and made a decent living but he worked very hard for it. When I called him to tell him that, under the present circumstances, I didn't know when we could repay him, he answered very gruffly, "Who said anything about you repaying me?" He did repay him but as I write this there are tears in my eyes. He did so many dear sweet things for us without ever saying a word about any of it to anybody. I thought my heart would break when he developed Bright's Disease and died. I shall love him forever. I have told his children about him and they said they did not know that side of his personality.

Architecture is a 5 year course at U. of M. After completing 4 years, Dick came to Houston for the summer to live with me until his term started again. Ted was still up north winding up his business. In addition to working for a builder, Dick was helping me to get settled in our rented house. He also was trying to research his opportunities that might be available to him when he graduated and had his degree. I really had preferred waiting to move when Ted could come with me.

P.41. but he was so insistent, that I did as he asked. Regk went back to U of M. in the beginning of September, 1960 for his final year. Ted came here in November. He bought (or so he said) 3 trucks which he equipped for catering food to factory workers and schools for teachers and students. He opened an office and work place. The food was ordered from companies that did such work. They delivered it to his location. He employed and trained 3 women to drive and serve the food. He told me he expected to have 12 trucks before the year was over and I was very pleased that he was so satisfied with business.

The official date we moved to Houston was August 1, 1960. He wasn't here then but we paid rent then, put a phone in established a business location then, all this under his own name, of course. The laws in Texas state that one must live here for one year in order to be a resident. As a resident, there are community property laws that, should divorces take place, all property obtained during the marriage are split equally for each marital partner. In my stupid, unsuspecting innocence, I had not realized that he had been secreting money away for years.

P. 42. He had been in the building business in Detroit with my cousin for years. They were making a lot of money because we were living very well. He must have had two sets of books because he must have actually made much more and beat my cousin, Sam Stecker out of as much as he reasonably could and had calculated a way to finally appear stone broke in Houston in anticipation of divorcing me.

The first I realized about this gruesome plot was when he changed his recently acquired sweet disposition to his former cruel self. August 24, ¹⁹⁶¹ he left for good and told me he was not returning. As I became aware of my situation I realized I was penniless - totally. I then enrolled in night school to take a typing course. I then found a job as secretary to an insurance agent. I learned the insurance Life and Health business & got my license to sell but I only did a little of that. By then flick was living in Houston and we shared an apartment and our expenses.

We were divorced in June, 1962. My lawyer was convinced I had no money.

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He had taken depositions, written the I.R.B. and various places in Detroit and received very negative comments. Ted had been Division Chief of Income Tax and knew the ropes. By then, I was so glad to get rid of him that I didn't care if I starved to death. I was willing to give up the fight. Two weeks later we heard he got married. I called my lawyer just to tell him as a matter of interest and he blasphemed at him and wanted to find him and beat him up. It turned out O.K. though. I kept my sons and he rarely ever saw them. I got my great husband and we 'we had a good life together.

In 1963, Dick met Sue Rosenbloom. In January, 1964, they became engaged. Sue's aunt knew Simon. His wife had died in her sleep some a year before after having open heart surgery. Sue's aunt gave Simon my phone number and the first time I met him I knew he was the one I had met a number of men by then but I was not interested. Pretty strange for an 80 year old woman writing romance into a family history but so it was. He had 3 children, Nevada almost 16, Gary, almost 15

P. 44, and Nadine, Dick and Sue were married June 21, 1964 (30 years ago). Simon and I were married August 13, 1964 (almost 30 years ago). Sue taught school for 3 years and then had Mark and Jennifer.

I was happier to have David, Gary & Nadine than they were to have me. They tried in every way to get rid of me but I stuck. They finally decided after having a rough time together and after getting to know each other that we liked each other after all. Simon and I decided we did as well with our teenagers as most parents of teenagers did with theirs.

David and Elaine's children are all grown now. Elaine has retired from her position as a plastic surgeon and is now enjoying resuming her life as housewife, mother and a great-grandmother. She attends lectures, travels with David and sees her friends for lunch when she can. Her former boss is a friend as well as a client of David so they take very interesting trips with him and his wife. Not a bad life for two old people. I'm married Mark Canton who has 3 lovable children from a previous marriage. Rebecca about 12, Michael about 10 and Richard about 8.

2. Now Mark and Joy have contributed
Clarice Rachel to our family and we
thank them for expected pleasures from
all 4. Joy has a real estate license and
when time permits she sells homes. Mark is
a patent attorney.

Steven is working hard and, I believe,
successfully and happily in Air Condition-
ing. He also works very hard to entertain
his aunts Nelda and Sylvia who accomodate
him with mandle bread and meat blintzes.

Andy graduated college and is going
to night school for a graduate degree
working for the Jewish Federation. She's
getting ready to marry Dr. Jay Nitzkin -
a dentist on August 7, 1994. They seem
quite right together.

Dick and Sue have two grown
children, Mark and Jennifer. When they were
sufficiently grown, Sue went back to
college for her Master's Degree. She works
in a school district testing children with
various learning disabilities.

Mark graduated from George Wash-
ington University as a journalist, worked
at it for 2 years and then came back to Texas
and enrolled in the L. B. J. School of

P. 46, Public Affairs, where he earned his Master's Degree (in Austin, TX) in May, 1994. He is now working for a company which gathers information all over the country from state legislatures. The company has subscribers for such information.

Jennifer just received her Liberal Arts Degree in May, 1994 at U. of Texas and will enter Southern Methodist U. for her Master's Degree with her eye on her P. H. D. in Psychology.

These are the people we met when we first came into the Epstein family:

- Gone - Grandma and Grandpa Epstein ^{and} Bobby
- Gone - Julius and Anna Epstein Schwartz
- Gone - Sam and Pearl Epstein
- Gone - Belle and Morris Paul
- Gone - Ada and Jack Polk
- Gone - Abe and Fanny Epstein
- Gone - Louis and Libby Glasier
- Gone - Ruth and Al Burman
- Gone - Breyna Atlas (I don't know about Ben)
- Gone - Alexand and Sylvia
- Gone but by no means forgotten in order of age
- Gone - Hilda's husband, Nat Harwood
- Gone - Sam Polk, our brother
- Gone - Sean Jane, my son
- Gone - Ronald Harwood, Hilda's son.

Chapter III

I would like now to talk about my husband, Simon and the Strauss family.

He was born in a village called Wack-
enbecken, near Hanau which is not far
from Frankfurt am Main, all in Germany.
He is the middle of 3 sons, the oldest is
Ernest and the youngest is Lou (short for Ludwig).
I believe they had a happy life with their
parents and were very close to their grand-
mother, aunts, uncles and some cousins.
Then their father developed cancer and died
when Simon was 12 years old (in 1929). It
was a traumatic experience for him. He
became the father figure in his family and
helped his mother as much as he was
able. In 1933, Hitler came into power and
the Jews began to recognize their crucial
position. Simon knew a young woman
whose sister lived in New York, so he
eventually encouraged Ernest to marry her.
Ernest and Rose went to New York to live. They
have 1 daughter, Judy, who has 5 children.
Rose just passed away last month. Then
Simon made various inquiries about
Ludwig's safety. After much effort, Simon

P. 48. was able to ensconce him on a ship bound for Israel. Lou was then 15 years old and knew no language he could speak in Israel, then called Palestine. He knew no one there at all and was leaving his mother, brothers and family, as far as he knew, forever. It is almost inconceivable, today to absorb such an experience at any age, much less at 15 but at least he would be alive. Shortly after his brothers were safely dispatched, Simon was picked up by the Gestapo and sent to Buchenwald - a concentration camp. His mother was alone and spent every minute and hour of her days trying to get him released. She was not permitted to buy food, ride on buses, to be befriended by anyone especially if he was not Jewish - on pain of death for either or both of them. Finally, after promising that she would send Simon to another country, he was released after spending 13 weeks in the camp. She went to a member of her family and Simon went to London.

When reporting to his Enemy Alien Control Depot, a titled lady doing volunteer work asked him to come to her manor house. She first employed him as one of her gardeners who worked on her grounds. Later he became her

P. 49, secretary. A year after arriving there, she helped him get to the U. S. She arranged his transportation and gave him money. In New York, he applied for citizenship papers as soon as it was permitted and immediately was drafted into the army where he served 4½ years. I believe the year was 1940. After W. W. II was over and he was discharged, he came back to N. Y. and learned that his mother had died in a concentration camp as well as many other members of his family.

In N. Y. he met and married Miriam Silverman. They didn't care for New York, so they moved to Houston. As has already been mentioned, they had 3 children. Miriam developed a heart problem after they had been married 17 years. After having open-heart surgery, she died in her sleep the night of Gary's 13th birthday. He had had his Bar Mitzvah two weeks earlier.

Simon and I were married almost 2 years later. Simon was then in a credit business but disliked it. After being married 2 years, he went into the Office Coffee Service business and was happier in it. He struggled through the first 2 or 3 years and then business improved considerably.

P. 50 which pleased him.

Davida went to the U. of Houston and in her 3rd year, she went to the American University in Aix-en-Provence, France. She was going to get credits at U of H for her courses in France. She took side trips on week-ends to Europe and after the school term had ended, she went to Israel. On her return to Houston, she met Robert Belgrad who had come from New Orleans after graduating college. He had accepted a position in an oil company and was working here. She finished her schooling and they were married. Robert took his Master's Degree in Public Health and they have been living in Maryland for many years. They have one son, Aaron. Robert works for the Federal Gov't and Davida left teaching and is the administrator of a small hospital.

Gary was awarded a scholarship at the University of Pennsylvania and after he graduated from there, he came to Texas and enrolled at the U. of Texas Law School. After receiving his law degree, he married Jennifer Benson and they moved to Seattle, Wash. Jennifer took her Master's Degree at Washington State U. in Social Work.

51.

Gary practices International Law in a firm in which he has become a partner. Jennifer is working with terminally ill patients. They have 2 children, Shane, 15, in a private school and Marika, 11 1/2, in a private school. Both children are very good students. They are sports enthusiasts in skiing, soccer, basketball, etc.

Nadine went to U. of Texas and after 3 years there, she went to Israel for 6 months and then travelled in Europe. She met Pierre Terlinchamp in Florence, Italy. He was from Belgium. When she returned, she resumed her schooling at U. of Texas. He came to the U. S. and after they were married, he moved to Austin and enrolled at U. T. She graduated with a degree in Special Education and taught there until Pierre graduated with a degree in Chemistry. They then moved to Houston. He worked in Simon's business and she was pregnant and had Miriam. Three years later, Julia was born. Miriam is very talented in art and writing. She will soon be 15. Julia is almost 12, is an excellent athlete and an outstanding student.

P.52 Nadine and Pierre moved to Seattle several years ago. Nadine is now executive director of a synagogue. She is very well liked and has made many wonderful friends there.

Unfortunately she and Pierre were just divorced.

Conclusion

Simon and I are doing fine. I just became 80 and Simon gave a wonderful celebration for that occasion. We had many out of town guests and it was very memorable.

Simon is 77 and still doing his exercises, walking miles and enjoying his activities in his health club and with his buddies. I am actively involved in Hadassah and like it very much. I still am entertaining our friends and family. Simon continues to own and operate a smaller version of the industrial wiper business.

We've been to Europe several times and also to Israel and the Orient. We travel to Washington D.C. and Seattle and to Detroit, New York and perhaps elsewhere again soon.