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Growing up Jewish in the 15th ward: Recollections from the 1920s through the 1950s

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Growing Up Jewish in the 15th Ward:

*Recollections from the
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Cover photograph: Aaron Schor's Meat and Grocery Store, 604 Harrison Street

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Marvin L. Simner
Editor

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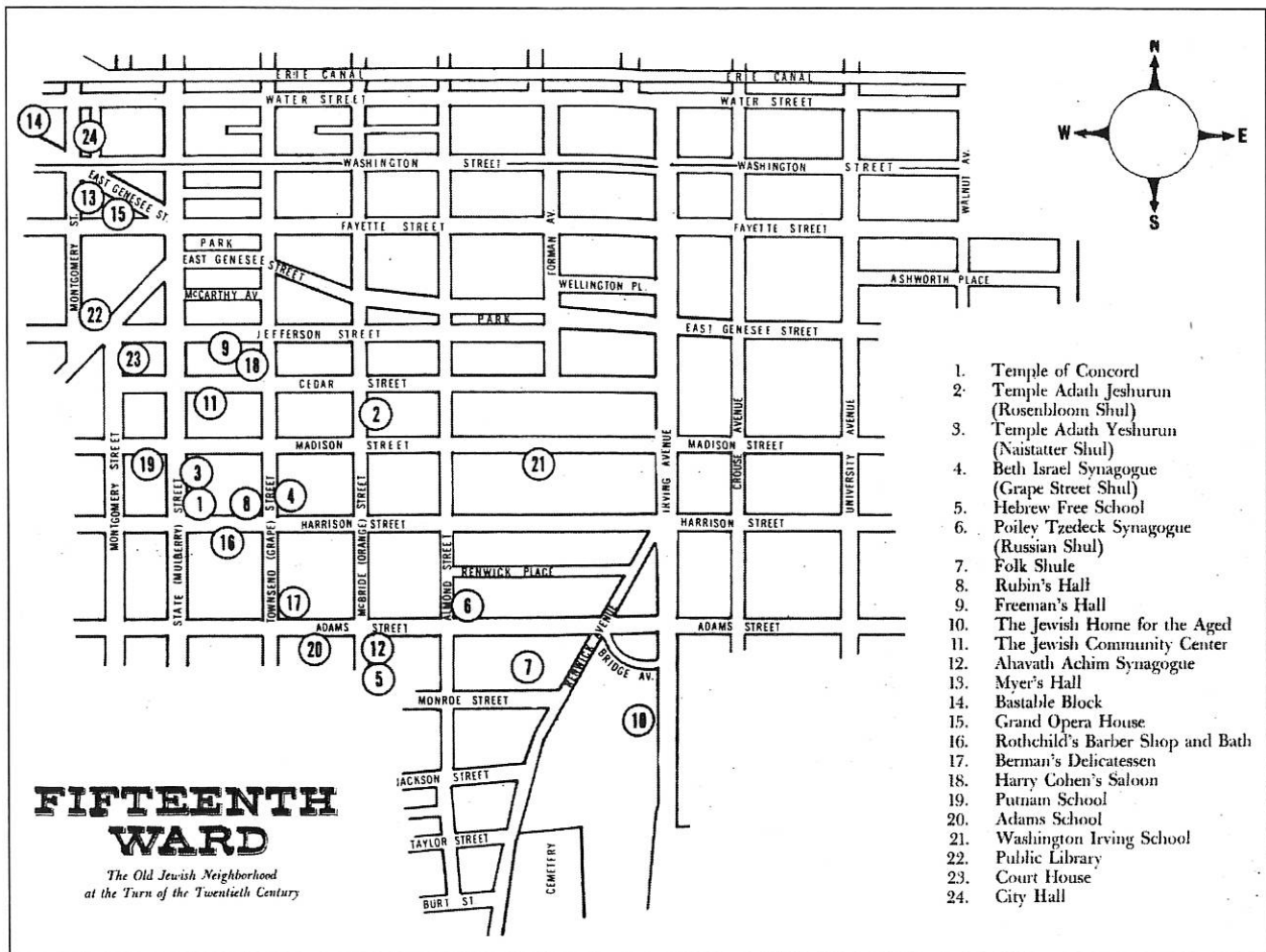
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For Sammy, my wonderful grandson.

From Zeyde

Preface

From the mid-1800s through the mid-to-late 1950s the original Jewish neighborhood in Syracuse was located in the 15th Ward, which was bordered by what is now East Water Street, Montgomery Street, East Adams, and University Avenue. Starting around the turn of the last century, the Jewish portion of the Ward was confined to an area of approximately 25 square blocks (see below). Within this area there existed three temples (Adath Jeshurun, Adath Yeshurun, Concord), three synagogues (Ahavath Achim, Beth Israel, Poiley Tzedek) and one shul (Folk) that served the religious needs of the Jewish community. There were also many Jewish grocery stores, restaurants, bakeries, pharmacies, physicians and dentists that served the more secular needs of the community. Generally speaking, the 15th Ward contained a highly self-sufficient, close-knit, and vibrant Jewish neighborhood. In a way, it was the Syracuse equivalent of New York's Lower East Side, minus the pushcarts.



(From Rudolph, 1970, reprinted with permission).

To fully appreciate the extremely compact nature of this neighborhood in terms of the housing and goods and services available to the Jewish community consider, for example, Harrison Street. By the 1940s, early 1950s, on the 700 block, which was between Almond Street and Irving Avenue there were more than 40 multi-family dwellings populated largely by Jewish tenants together with Pearson & Martin's Kosher Meat Market, Max's Dry Cleaning, Melzer's Delicatessen, and Stein's Candy Store. On the 500 and 600 blocks there was Hurwitz's Bicycle Repair Shop, Weinstein's Candy Store, Friedman's Barber Shop, Louis' Delicatessen, Miller's Dry Goods, Adler's Bakery, Bloom's Bakery, Kruth's Meat Market, Schor's Meat and Grocery Store, Bodow's Junk Yard, and Berman's Shoe Repair Shop. Around the corner on Almond Street was the Poiley Tzedek Synagogue, Besdin's Bakery, Herman's Grocery, and Isaac Berkman's Meat Market. Clearly, for those of us who grew up in the Ward, because most if not all of our needs could easily be satisfied within a very short walking distance from home, there really was no reason to venture very far beyond its boundaries.

Today that area no longer exists. By the late 1950s most of the Jews had left the Ward and by the late 1960s, early '70s, the majority of homes and businesses had been demolished as part of the federal urban renewal project.

In August, 2002, Hecky Alpert, Richard Wilkins and I met to discuss the possibility of forming a committee to produce a document dealing with a Jewish lifestyle that largely disappeared with the demise of the Ward. It was our belief that such a document, containing the personal reminiscences of those who had resided in the Ward, might prove useful to future historians as a sequel to the excellent works by B.G. Rudolph (1970) and Barbara Davis (1986) that dealt with the general history of the Jewish community in Syracuse.

To begin the process of collecting memories, an announcement outlining the project was placed in the September, 2002, issue of the Jewish Observer of Central New York. In the announcement a request was made for "people who would like to share their memories of schooling, shopping, fraternal organizations, athletic activities, the YMHA, or anything else of interest." The following month a meeting, attended by about 10 people, was held at the Syracuse Jewish Community Center to formulate plans for proceeding.

In response to the announcement, and as an outgrowth of the meeting, replies were received not only from a number of people in Syracuse but also from others as far away as Florida and California. Over the next year and a half a host of memories arrived in the form of letters, email messages, tape recordings, and phone calls. In January, 2004, a preliminary report of these accounts was circulated to all of the respondents followed by another announcement in the Jewish Observer. The purpose of the report and the announcement was to elicit additional recollections. As we had hoped, more replies were received. While many of these were extremely brief, over the years we received nearly 60 responses. Among the responses were eight letters or emails that contained quite detailed descriptions

of life in the Ward. With minor editorial changes, these have all been reproduced in their entirety and are chronologically arranged in Chapter One. The first three deal largely with the period spanning the 1920s and early 1930s. The remaining ones focus mainly on the mid-1930s through the early 1950s. Considered together I believe these letters offer, not only a reasonable picture of what life was like for those of us who grew up in the Ward during its final days, but also resonate with the richness and warmth that we all enjoyed as the result of having had this experience.

Chapter Two, on the other hand, is somewhat different. Here the material consists of a series of sketches or brief recollections organized around various topics which, in turn, amplify many of the themes addressed in the letters. As mentioned above, in the replies that we received many of the respondents commented, but only briefly, on such matters as family life, entertainment and shopping. Because these comments frequently contained additional personal and often humorous glimpses of what it meant to grow up in the Ward, or simply added another dimension to the material in the letters, these too have been included in this document. To avoid becoming redundant, however, the sketches, for the most part, are composite accounts and so, unlike the letters, they are not quotations that could be attributed to single individuals.

Owing to the fact that all of the information on the following pages resulted from memories of happenings more than 50 years ago, it was not unexpected that some inconsistencies would occur among the recollections regarding the location of certain stores, businesses, etc. Although these inconsistencies were not corrected in the body of this document, as an aid to future historians, the names and proper addresses of many of the businesses are given in the appendix.

Finally, because home cooked food has always been an integral part of the Jewish experience, the last chapter contains a few traditional recipes, reprinted with permission from the Temple Adath Yeshurun Sisterhood Cook Book (circa 1968). These were selected because they were favored by many of the residents and made use of ingredients that were widely used at the time (e.g., chicken livers, chicken fat, chopped herring, and prunes of course to help keep us regular). While not necessarily meeting today's nutritional standards, for those who would like to know, firsthand, what it was like growing up Jewish in the 15th Ward, what better way than to indulge, occasionally, in some of these delicacies. *Ess gezunt!*

In any undertaking such as this, it is always the case that a number of people are called upon and that many graciously gave of their time. I want to thank in particular Hecky Alpert, Barbara Keilin Buck, Celaine Finklestein Hershdorfer, Judie Cynkus Rice and Richard Wilkins whose individual efforts on behalf of this project were invaluable in bringing the project to fruition. I also want to thank Bette Siegel, editor of the Jewish Observer, for helping us by alerting the Jewish community to this undertaking. In addition,

I wish to acknowledge and express my sincere appreciation to all of the following who responded to our requests either by sending along memories or simply by offering encouragement: Selma Altfield, Miriam Bieling, Maureen Slive Anderson, Sid Bluman, Warren Bodow, Elaine Perlman Drogen, Lewis Engle, Phyllis Edelstein, Florence Feldman, Donald Fisher, JoAnn Grower, Sue Greenberg, Carl Hillsberg, Marlene Holstein, Sheldon Kall, Ed Katz, Lewis Kuppermann, Audrey LaForce, Gary Lavine, Barry Lewis, Hilbert Maloff, William Marcus, Shush Martin, Dave Melnicoff, Mike Meltzer, Hy Miller, Marilyn Miller, Marty Miller, Irwin Moss, Estelle Nemoy, Irving Newman, Leona Gruskin Rabson, Diane Rabson, Brian Reiser, Herb Reisman, Shirley Hodish Rifkin, Allen Rosenfeld, Arnold Rubenstein, Ernest Sarason, Selma Schwartz, Arnold Silverman, Phyllis Simner, Bob Silverman, Marvin Stein, Irv Wagner, Betsy Waldman, Franne Novak Wallace, Jack Wandner, Carol Richman Wandner, Edward Weisblott, George Wladis, Marilyn Zaleon, and Judy Steinberg Zimbal. Needless to say, without their input and support this document would not have been possible.

A final word of gratitude goes to the Onondaga Historical Association Museum and Research Center for permission to reproduce many of the photographs that appear on the following pages. I am particularly indebted to Michael Flanagan, Archivist and Research Center Manager, and Sarah Kozma, Research Associate, both of whom were extremely generous in devoting their time and expertise in helping us locate the few existing photographs of the Jewish portion of the Ward, taken in the 1930s, early '40s, that were in the Center's vast collection.

Marvin L. Simner

December, 2006

Chapter One:

Detailed Recollections

~ Letter 1 ~

When I think about Syracuse, and my growing up years in the "Ward" during the mid-'20s, I have wonderful warm memories and will try to share many of them with you.

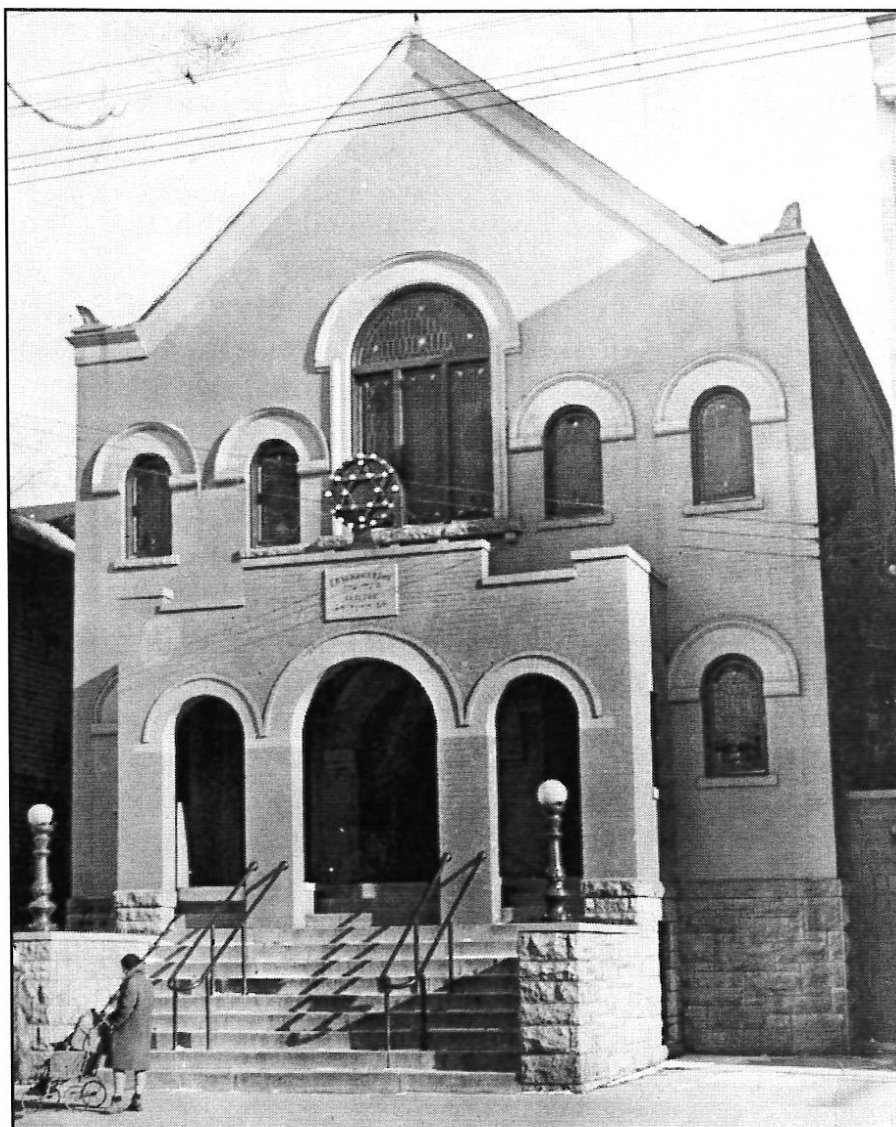
I lived on Renwick Place when I was a small child. Our house was right next door to Shapiro's grocery store on the corner of Almond Street and Renwick Place. Much of my young life was spent in Shapiro's. Mrs. Shapiro was the grandmother I never had, she and her daughters spoiled me and showed me off to their customers. I remember going with Ada to make the grocery deliveries. Ada always stopped at a particular bakery and bought both of us a delicious snack. When I grew up I realized that my snack, which I can still see and smell, was Danish pastry. We didn't call it that back then, they were just baked goods. Whenever I see a strawberry or cherry Danish I remember the grocery store and my wonderful childhood on Renwick Place. I also remember that every Friday when I came home from school, the back hall smelled just wonderful. Our neighbor upstairs (another Mrs. Shapiro) baked the most delicious putter kuchen. Just talking about it brings tears to my eyes.

Our house was right next to the Poiley Tzedek Synagogue (Russian Shul), and on Succos (not Succoth) the members would reach through a break in the fence and give me kichel and other goodies. I also remember the soda man who delivered to the grocery store. I would stand by his truck until I ended up with my every-so-often ration of one bottle of soda. What a "shnorer" I was. I also remember waiting for summer when the ice cream company would deliver the cooler to the grocery store. That first Eskimo Pie of the season was the most delicious thing I ever ate.

Although Renwick Place was only one block long, if I think about it I could probably go right down the street and name almost everyone who lived there and very nearby. There were many entertainers and wannabees. For instance, there was Ada L. who was a fabulous tap dancer and Baby Arlene, who sang and danced. Both frequently entertained at organizational affairs and at charitable programs. Around the corner on Almond Street there was Little Miss Hannah who had her own radio show. I wanted to be Shirley Temple, but I didn't have curly hair, and couldn't sing or dance so I settled for something else. I took

elocution lessons at the Alderman/Perlmutter Dramatic School and piano lessons from Professor I.M. Schumann whose daughter, Henrietta, was a concert pianist in New York.

My father had a store on Adams and McBride. Next to my father's store was Ben Ami's Barber Shop. Across the street was Guido's Grocery, and up the street, Steinberg's Dress Shop where I remember going shopping with my mother for a dress for my younger brother's Bar Mitzvah. Even though we had moved from Renwick Place when I was around 10 years old, that was still the place to shop.



Poiley Tzedek Synagogue

My father had to move his store when the Government projects were built on McBride Street. His new store was on Harrison Street next to another barber shop, Jimmy the barber. Jimmy's, a hub of activity, was the place to play the daily "numbers." Berman's Ice House

was also up the street and there were so many others in that area that it boggles my mind trying to remember them all. Down the street was Phil's Delicatessen where I spent a lot of time after we moved from Renwick Place. I understand that his corned beef was "out of this world" but my favorite was a salami sandwich with lettuce and tomato covered with Russian dressing. I believe it was 15 cents with lettuce and tomato, otherwise, it was 10 cents.

On the corner across from my father's store was Chocolate's Smoke Shop. Of course, what went on in the "back room" was common knowledge. Many Damon Runyonesque characters frequented Chocolates, and since I spent a lot of time at my father's store after school, I got to know many of these lovable characters. There was Socko, Hank the Doughboy, Moe the Toe, and so many others. Further up Harrison Street was another smoke shop, Label's, and around the corner was the G and H Department Store, Mr. and Mrs. G were the owners. I still remember that she always called her husband by his last name. I never knew if he had a first name.

My main form of transportation on days when I didn't get a ride, was on roller skates, which I wore to the bus stop, took off when I got on the bus, and put on again when I got off. I wore these to my piano lessons, my Yiddish lessons, and my elocution lessons. When the skates got a little older, my brothers would confiscate them so that they could use the wheels to make scooters. At that time you could buy a pair of skates at the five and ten cent store for about 25 cents.

When it was time for me to attend junior high, I went to Nottingham. At that time the junior high students attended class in the afternoon while the senior high students had class in the morning. For senior high, however, I transferred from Nottingham to Central where both of my brothers were going. I got a ride in the morning when my father went to his store, and after school I walked to the store where I did my homework.

While at Central I had a wonderful time under the tutorship of "Pop" Walsh, who was the music and dramatic instructor. I was in the orchestra and played a mean triangle. There were also two pianists in the orchestra and when one was playing piano the other was in charge of the triangle. "Pop" also directed musical shows at Central and I had the greatest time being part of that experience.

After two years at Central, since I had friends at Nottingham through my association with the "Y" on Cedar Street, I transferred back to Nottingham. I remember the wonderful dances at the "Y" on Sunday nights where my friends and I would spend many a Sunday evening. We were also members of Club Council which was an organization that consisted of members from various clubs, fraternities and sororities. Back then, sororities and fraternities were allowed in high school and they formed a great part of our active social life. While still in high school I had a part time job at the Jewish Chronicle, which was one

of two Jewish oriented newspapers in Syracuse at the time. The other newspaper was the Jewish Ledger.

In conjunction with my activities on Club Council, I wrote a column for both papers. It probably wasn't at the same time...but then who knows?

Selma Altfield

~ Letter 2 ~

We came as immigrants, a family of five, from Mlaw, Poland, in December, 1922. Our first homes were on South Townsend Street and then on Almond Street. My family went to the Talmud Torah on McBride Street; others in the neighborhood went to the Folk Shule.

I have many fond memories of my childhood in the Ward during the 1920s. I remember attending a summer program in Wilson Park where I took part in various arts and crafts activities, acted in a little musical play as well as in some dramatic productions. I also remember attending a summer camp called Kan-ya-ti-yo, which offered two sessions: July for boys and August for girls.

During the year our lives mainly revolved around activities at the Jewish Community Center on Cedar Street. How very lucky we were. The JCC¹ had a gym and other rooms



Jewish Community Center

where we could also participate in arts and crafts, put on plays and hold dances. As a teenager I was part of a club for 15-17 year old girls called Varda Zion led by Rabbi Braude's daughter, Sadie. We often planned dances and invited fine young Jewish fellows from our neighborhood. We were always well behaved and never contended with drinking or drugs; the dances were always chaperoned. And, oh yes, in the summer Thorden Park was a favorite spot for swimming and attending entertainment that was occasionally provided by the city. To this day I remain friends with some of the children I met in grade one.

Franne Novak Wallace

~ Letter 3 ~

Gone...all gone is the 15th Ward as I remember it, that part of the city in which I was born and in which I spent my youth from 1917 to 1934. It lives on only in my memory and the memories of the few people still alive who also lived there then.

In those days people who lived in the Ward were known as "swampers." Until 1820, with the opening of the Erie Canal and the draining of the Syracuse swamps in 1822, that area of the city was mainly swampland.

Within the perimeter of the Ward were establishments of all varieties: grocery stores, meat markets, bakeries and fish markets; shoe, dress, and hat stores; toy, hardware and electrical supply stores; second hand shops, a bicycle shop, restaurants, sandwich shops, ice cream parlors, theatres and schools. There were also synagogues and churches, lumber yards, junk yards and a cemetery. What more did one need? And now, it's all gone! The hustle and bustle, the noise and smells, all torn down and destroyed. The mystic of it lives on only in the minds and hearts of the few "swampers" who are left.

Among my earliest memories is the Emma Willard Kindergarten situated on East Adams Street between what was then Orange and Grape Street. Built just for the purpose of being a kindergarten, for me it was a fairytale building and a fascinating place. On the floor there were painted lines for the games we played. It was furnished with child sized chairs and low tables where the children sat to color, cut and paste various projects. There was, of course, an adult sized desk and chair for the teacher and a piano where we all gathered 'round to sing songs. Since it was just around the corner from the house in which we were living at the time, I'd follow the other children to school. I was only four years old...not old enough to enrol. I went there so often, however, that the teacher finally allowed me to stay. Because I was so young and the entrance age for first grade was six, I remained for two years. Thus I became one of the only children who ever failed kindergarten!

In later years, the kindergarten was housed in a regular school and my fairytale building became the home of House's soft drink company.

When we moved from Orange to Jackson Street I remember the Wilson playground which took up a whole city square block between Orange and Almond. In the playground there were two swimming pools, a deep one for people who could swim and a shallow one for children and other non-swimmers. To be allowed to swim in the deeper pool, one had to prove to the lifeguard that one could swim the width of the pool. Between the pools there was a downstairs bathhouse where we could change clothes. Upstairs children were taught various crafts during the summer at no cost.

In the winter the park was flooded for ice-skating. The bathhouse became a heated room where skates could be donned or where one could change into shoes and boots, or just warm up.

Also in the park there was a ball field, a merry-go-round (which some children pushed while others rode), and a "shoot-a-shoot" which was a tall metal slide with a ladder. If you put a piece of wax paper on the slide to sit on, the ride was even faster.

When a new swimming pool was built in Thorden Park, we'd often walk there on pleasant days to swim and bask in the sun on the beautiful lawn adjacent to the pool. An outdoor amphitheater had also been built in the park where many different performances were given, again free of charge.

Across from Wilson Park, on Orange between Jackson and Taylor there was a blacksmith shop, which was a fascinating place. You could watch from the doorway, which was always open in the summertime, while the blacksmith heated steel bars red hot and hammered them into horseshoes. Maybe it was because my father was a blacksmith that the place intrigued me so.

When I was older I learned that a person who shoes horses is called a farrier and the one who does ornamental ironwork, as my father did, is known as a blacksmith. In later years when we read the poem "The Village Blacksmith" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the picture of that blacksmith shop, by then long gone, came to mind.

Nearby was Andrew Jackson School, a square, red brick building located in the middle of the block on Jackson Street between Almond and Orange. It housed six grades, three classes on the first floor and three on the second floor. In those days the classes were divided into two sections, with half a school grade in each (e.g., 1-1, 1-2, 2-1, 2-2, etc.). In the event a child had to repeat a grade, they only had to repeat the half they failed.

Also in those days it was thought to be wrong for a child to be left-handed, which I was.

Because my first grade teacher would slap me with a ruler whenever I wrote with my left hand, I learned to write with my right hand. Despite my teacher, though, I continued to do almost everything else with the left.

While I was in one of the lower grades (was it third?) we were taken to the Carnegie Library on Montgomery Street, across from what is now Columbus Circle (the statue of Columbus wasn't there at the time, only the circle). There I discovered heaven! Books! Rooms and rooms with shelves and shelves filled with books. One room was set aside for children where we were given cards which gave us permission to withdraw books. Thereafter, the library became almost a second home to me.

Eventually we moved back to Orange near the corner of East Adams. Because in those days one could walk the streets in safety, without fear, I'd walk down Orange past Bloom's Bakery, which was across the street from the two fish markets belonging to the Saslow brothers, past the synagogue and Fineberg's Grocery, to Harrison Street. Then I'd walk up Harrison past Adler's Bakery, past Hurwitz Bicycle Shop, past the B & B Delicatessen, which was on the corner of Grape and Harrison, turn right and walk down Grape.

At Cedar I turned left, past the Jewish Community Center to Montgomery Street, past the Court House to the Library. Sometimes, while there, I'd go upstairs (up those marvellous, impressive marble steps) to the second floor where, in glass enclosed cases, were displayed various antique and artistic articles. Then up the wooden staircase to the third floor to the museum, where one could wander around and gaze at the statue of Venus DiMilo, the shining armour of a knight of old, cases of lovely artifacts and beautiful paintings which hung on the walls. Then, downstairs again where I'd check out as many books as I was allowed, go home, bury my nose in a book and read to my heart's content, living one adventure after another.

Andrew Jackson was the school I attended until the second half of fifth grade. At that time I remember hearing of a new school, Washington Irving, which was located on a site between Irving Avenue, Harrison Street, Madison Street, and Almond Street. A lovely brand new building which had classrooms for eight grades, a gymnasium, a kindergarten and, on the third floor, "Open Air" classrooms for children who weren't well enough to attend regular classes. Did they have T.B.? I don't know.

Since we had moved again but now to Almond Street (we moved around a lot, but always remained in the Ward) I was eligible to attend either Jackson or Washington Irving. Since I disliked the fifth grade teacher at Jackson with a passion (she constantly compared me with my older sister who she had in a prior class), I gladly chose to transfer to Washington Irving.

I also remember that if a child with a passing report card went to the drugstore on

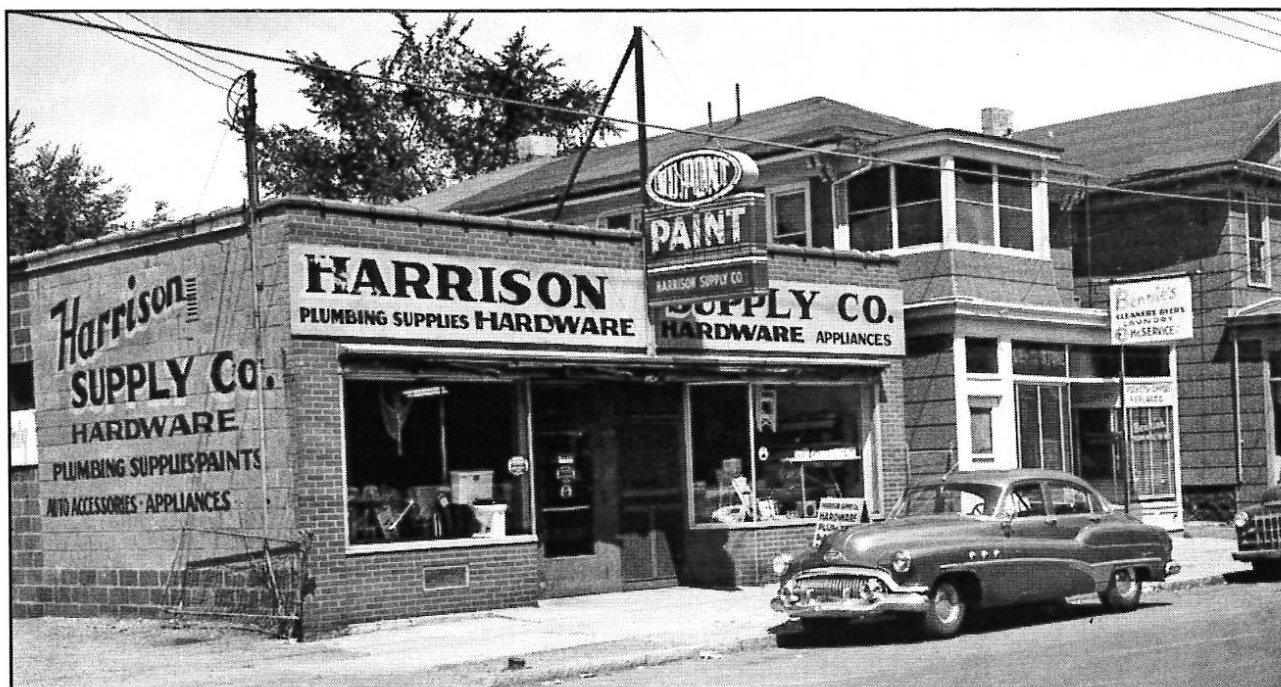
promotion day, they were given a free ice cream cone. The drugstore was on the corner of Jackson and Grape. Was it Rosenberg's or Rothchild's, I'm not sure.



Washington Irving School

For us, as kids, living in the 15th Ward in those days was fun. We were poor, but we didn't know it. There was no television to inform us of all the niceties we could have (or things the merchants thought we should buy). No radio either, just a wind up "gramophone" on which we could play records.

Before the great depression of '29, and into the '30s, when my father had steady work, we'd go to the 'show' on Saturdays at the Regent Theater on East Genesee near Irving Avenue (the Regent is now the home of Syracuse Stage). Again, we'd walk down Orange Street, past Bloom's Bakery, Fineberg's Grocery, several synagogues and the large hardware store (Harrison Supply) which was near the corner of Harrison and Orange to East Genesee, then past Foreman Park to the theater. We had 15 cents each. Five cents for a bag of popcorn and ten cents for admission to the show. Every Saturday there would be a feature picture, news reels and a serial. Only part of the serial was shown each week, breaking off where the heroine was left tied to the railroad track by the villain as a train approached, or locked in a burning building, or hanging from a cliff. Would the hero, 'Hairbreadth Harry' arrive in time to save her? We had to return the following week to find out. It was all very thrilling!



Harrison Supply Co., 519 Harrison Street

Evenings after supper we'd gather outside to play such games as hide-and-seek, fox and geese, red rover, hop-scotch, or jump rope among many others. Kids weren't fat in those days. We got our exercise and entertainment playing games and walking wherever we went.

On days like the 4th of July or Halloween, the older boys created excitement for the whole neighborhood. They'd gather anything combustible which they could find or steal, such as boxes, furniture from porches and even an occasional huckster's wagon, and build huge piles in the middle of the street or where two streets intersected; not just one, but several on various street intersections setting fire to one at a time. When the firemen came rushing to douse one fire, the boys would run to another corner to ignite the pile which they had made there. While it was entertaining for the younger folk, it sure wasn't for the people whose possessions were destroyed or for the firemen who were kept busy dousing the fires.

About the time I was in the seventh or eighth grade, we were introduced to the Huntington Club. A settlement house for girls on East Onondaga Street across from the Catholic Diocese. Girls were organized into groups called clubs. We'd have meetings, parties, put on plays and play basketball or volley ball. Huntington Club had a summer camp on the Bradley Brook reservoir where one could spend a week or two for a nominal fee, swimming, hiking, playing sports, participating in crafts, and singing songs around the campfire at night.

So many of the pupils who attended high school in those days wanted to attend Blodgett Vocational where they could learn either office and business skills or vocational-industrial trades. Built to house 1000 students, the school was often overcrowded with 2,500 enrolled mainly because the other high schools specialized in teaching college preparatory courses, although few during the depression era could afford to attend college. To alleviate the crush somewhat, Putnam School, which was situated on the corner of State and Madison Streets, became an annex to Blodgett. Ninth and tenth year business students began high school there and then transferred to the main building on Oswego Street.

There was much more to the 15th Ward than I have written here. For instance, there were hucksters (vegetable and fruit vendors) and peddlers who plied the streets with their horses and wagons, calling out their wares and barely making a living by selling to housewives from door to door, or by collecting junk to sell to the scrap yards for a few pennies. And there was the iceman who brought ice for the iceboxes, stopping at houses that had a card in the window. The amount of ice needed was shown in the upper corner of the card.

There was also the medicine man who came occasionally. He sold Indian herb concoctions from the back of his truck. With him was an Indian who would perform a little dance to the beat of a drum. Then the vendor would make his pitch, display glass jugs that contained various noxious creatures, like a huge tapeworm that he told us could be inhabiting your body. His herbal medicines were supposed to be a cure-all for whatever ailed you. My mother bought some once and gave us a taste. After one sip of the horrible, bitter stuff, I told her I'd rather die.

As we grew older we also grew out of our section of the city. Our horizons expanded, but while living in the Ward, that city within a city, we really needed nothing else.

Miriam Bieling

~ Letter 4 ~

During my early years an important time for me was when we lived at home, but played at the YMHA, which was affectionately known as the "Y." I started going to the Y at the age of nine, in an era (the '30s) when there was not very much recreation at home. Radio was new and addictive, but confining for youngsters. When we said that we went to the "show" it meant going to the movies. Although movies were great, they cost money and were usually reserved for weekends. In fact, just talking about the movies was as much fun as going.

The Y was located on Cedar Street near downtown. By 1935 when the area had become fairly run-down, but the majority of lower income Jewish families still lived there, the Y was our country club. The kids in our neighborhood went there almost every day, except on Friday, and never during daylight hours on Saturday. Right after supper we would wrap our sneakers, shorts, a shirt, socks, and a jock strap (if you owned one) inside a rolled up towel. The boys met on the street, usually two or more, and walked the eight short blocks, making first a left turn for two blocks, then a right for four or five blocks, and finally a left onto Cedar then down half a block to the Y. Depending on the season, the evening was either dark, dusk or still light. Even when it was dark there was never any hesitation walking through this neighborhood at night. When we arrived there were usually many kids, mostly boys, who came for gym, to attend club meetings, or to play ping pong or to shoot pool.

No one, as I recall, paid any attention to the fact that the building was old, bigger than any house that we had lived in, and was once a large family home. Because it was a family home, at one time it had been remodelled and part of it had been converted into a gym as well as clubrooms for meetings. There was also a small hall for dances and plays. In the foyer I remember a large photograph of the man who had given his house to the community. The man was elderly, had white hair, was paunchy and unsmiling. His name was Louis Marshall.² I did not know anyone who ever asked about him, or why he was important, but we were told that he was a wealthy man who had lived in the house long ago.

The Y experienced many financial difficulties from the beginning. The difficulties were especially pronounced during World War I when funds were needed to alleviate the suffering of the Jews in Eastern Europe. The fact that there was a YMHA in the city, however, when people were still economically deprived was a blessing for those of us whose families had immigrated to the U.S., somehow lived through the depression, and were now intent on succeeding during the Roosevelt era.

During the forties the Y began to decline, in part due to changes resulting from the loss of young people who were called into military service, and in part due to the aging of the structure. By 1945 the building was no longer used, and any communal activities now took place at one of the synagogues. Sadly, the era of the Marshall family home as a communal center had ended.

Hecky Alpert

The A & B Pharmacy in the 15th Ward, seemed to me as a child in the '40s, to be a far more dangerous place than my father's pharmacy which was near Eastwood on James Street. Not that I was fearful for my safety. After all, I was with my father and his best friend, but the A & B atmosphere struck me in retrospect as akin to Rick's Café in the movie "Casablanca." The store's lighting was darker than Galloway's and the people didn't seem to smile very much. I always sensed that the things going on there were not necessarily related to dispensing prescriptions or serving chocolate sodas. I clearly remember somebody putting a punch board with numbers in my hand and showing me how to push the numbers out with a pin or stylus in order to win a prize.

Half a block east of the A & B, on a lot in back of Harrison Street was my grandfather's junk yard. I remember quite clearly my visits to his shop in the mid-1940s when I was eight or nine. My father would drive our blue Mercury to Harrison Street, pull into a long dirt driveway and park next to a decrepit truck.

My father and grandfather would talk about this or that while I wandered around the bailing machines, piles of odd-shaped scrap iron, old newspapers, and barrels of trash. When my father was ready to leave, my grandfather would press a dime into my hand and expect me to plant a kiss on his whiskered cheek.

Instead of getting right into the car, my father and I would walk a few paces up Harrison to Bloom's Bakery. Bloom's, in my memory, was the forerunner of the Snow Flake Bakery that thrived for many years in the '50s and '60s on East Fayette Street near Croly. Bloom's made the best half-moon cookies. After nearly 40 years living in and around New York City, I've yet to find a half-moon as good as the ones produced in Bloom's.

If you exited Bloom's, turned right and continued to walk east on Harrison you would arrive at Almond Street, the center of Jewish religious practice, and the location of Hymie's Bar and Grill which stood as an anchor on the corner of Harrison and Almond. Given the holy character of the block, this small establishment always seemed somewhat out of place.

I was Bar Mitzvahed in 1952 at Beth Hamedrosh Hagodel (Ahavath Achim), the major Orthodox shul in Syracuse, Commonly referred to by those with Yiddish backgrounds as "Shmedrish HaGud'l" its architecture dominated Almond Street and was presided over by Rabbi Yalow. I recall that down the block was another Orthodox shul, which seemed to me smaller, but good enough for the less devout Orthodox. Next to that was the Jewish Community Center, where I recall seeing my first Purim Shpiel, a replay of the Haman and Ester story performed by older kids, meaning the eleven and twelve year olds.

In 1947 the Bureau of Jewish Education opened its doors on East Genesee at Fellows.

A year or two later, the Jewish Community Center moved into an adjacent building. From that point on the days of the 15th Ward as the spiritual home of Syracuse's Jews were truly numbered. And now, of course, there is hardly anything left of the Ward which is why, I believe, this history is so important as a chronicle of the crucible of Jewish life in our city.

Warren Bodow

~ Letter 6 ~

The beginning years of my life were in the 15th Ward. It was where I had everything and anything I wanted and needed. It was the place where I gained my character, a sense of security from those who cared about me, and where I became capable of being independent because I could go anywhere in the area by myself. Unfortunately, today children cannot do this and it is sad to think that safety is no longer something to be taken for granted.

The 15th Ward was "MY WORLD." What could be better? Besides my parents, I had two bubbies and a great bubbie, two zeydes and all of my aunts, uncles, cousins and friends just minutes away. My activities, ventures, stores, play places, schools (Hebrew and English), were all within a short walking distance. The shuls were also down the street and around the corner.

The Russisha Shul (Poiley Tzedek) was our family shul, where I recall sliding down the banisters and sitting on the steps singing Christmas carols with one of my best friends. The Grape Street Shul is where I went to visit two of my grandparents, the Beth Hamedrosh Hagodel (Ahavath Achim) is where some of my friends went. On the High Holy Days I made the rounds from one to the other throughout the day. I look back on that time with very warm and comforting memories. I also have some not so pleasant memories of boys putting chestnuts in knotted handkerchiefs and hitting the girls on the head.

In our Shul the women sat upstairs and the men downstairs. The women in my family all sat in the front row with a brass rail in front of us. I used to lean over the rail to see my father, grandfather, uncles and cousins. I also recall that if I went downstairs to where the men were, the Shames would tell me to go back upstairs in a very authoritative tone. It is ironic that the family that sat on the other side of the bench next to my family when I was a child, was my future husband's family, which of course I didn't realize at the time. When I was little and I met his mother, she would tell me not to lean over the railing.

Many of my activities centered around the Jewish Community Center where I met my friends, played ping pong, and participated in plays. Wilson Park is where I went to swim in the summer and ice skate in the winter. Roller skates and my bicycle were my means of

transportation when I didn't feel like walking. My friends and I skated everywhere, stairs were no obstacle because we mastered going up and down without the need to take them off. Along the way we always saw people we knew and the neighborhood seemed to watch over us to make sure we were safe. It seemed that we knew everyone from one street to another, from one business to another, and we weren't afraid to say hello to anyone. When my brother was born I was ten and was allowed to take him for walks in the carriage, within what was probably a ten block radius, and my parents didn't need to worry.

On one of these walks, I remember how one of my best friends and I discovered what we thought of as our own private drinking fountain. (I think it was on Almond Street.) When we were skating we would stop, reach in, cup our hands and have a refreshing cold drink of water. One day we happened to mention this to one of our mothers, and to our shock, amazement and disappointment, found that our private drinking fountain was really the watering place for the horses that the hucksters used (it looked like a very large bathtub). Needless to say that ended our convenient drinking fountain.

As children we found many ways to have fun. In the winter we would collect Christmas trees, drag them to our yard, make a fort and play inside. We also used to sled down the Adams Street hill. It was actually two hills. We started at the top of Adams and Crouse and slid all the way down to Almond Street. There was very little traffic then, so it was clear sledding all the way, even across the roads. In the summer we played hop-scotch, jump rope, and steps (this involved throwing a ball at the steps outside our house and getting points according to where the ball hit, either inside the step or on the edge). We also played marbles, pick-up-sticks, cops and robbers, or we pretended we were movie stars

Often on Saturday my friends and I would make the rounds. First we would go to my grandfather's junk shop on Madison Street where I would get money for lunch, the movies, and snacks. We would stop at Kresges for a half full bag of pretzels that cost one penny, on to Little China for lunch and then on to the movies (sometimes we sat through the picture two or three times).

Places of importance to us were Albert's gas station, where we would get our roller skates tightened, Stein's candy and ice cream store, where for a penny you could buy almost anything: jelly beans, bubble gum, wax lips, wax soda bottles, malted milk balls, or little tins of fudge that we ate with little wooden spoons. Then there were the grocery stores, Doodles (on the corner of Harrison and Irving), Wilson's (on Adams Street), and Cashdin's (on the corner of Monroe and Almond) where I would stop on the way to the Folk Shule, which was where I went to Hebrew school. There was also Meltzer's Deli, Hurwitz's Bicycle Shop (where I got my first two wheeler), Mike Hurwitz's pharmacy and the bakeries (Besdin's, Volinsky's, the Co-operative) where you could get half-moon cookies, horns, stuffed onion rolls, and Russian black bread as well as corn bread.

I also recall the Rochester Sample Shoe Store on Genesee, which was where I got my school and Yom Tov shoes. I remember driving Sid Ashkin crazy because I wanted to keep putting my feet in the x-ray machine and he would tell me it was not good to do that too many times. When Yom Tov came, or a wedding, or a Bar Mitzvah, we went to Wells and Coverly on Salina Street. Every year children would receive a pie on their birthday from Wells and Coverly.

In those days many things were delivered to our house. I would wait for Asher Hurwitz to bring the coal because he was always so friendly and nice. In the summer my friends and I used the coal to write on the sidewalk and in the winter the ashes were used to prevent people from slipping on the ice. Mr. Brown delivered milk, we had an egg man, and then there were the hucksters: Mr. Gullop with his horse and wagon as well as Mr. Castle and Mr. Divinitz. I can still hear them calling out, cherries, strawberries, peaches; I always knew I was going to get a piece of fruit of my choice. Our insurance man also came to the house as did my pediatrician, Dr. Rosenberg. When Dr. Rosenberg came it usually meant a shot, a stick down the throat, a prescription for Cheracol cough syrup, or some other vile medicine. When I had a sore throat, my bubbe used to give me rock candy that came on a string and was so sweet that it would make me sick.

My favorite times, however, were spent with my grandmothers in preparation of Shabbat. We would go to Pearson's butcher shop and from there to the Shoychet where the chickens' heads would be chopped off. Then we would go to Saslows to buy fish to make gefilte fish. Next, they would often take me to the five and dime store to buy a new coloring book or sometimes, a paper doll book or just plain drawing paper and new crayons. When we returned from shopping they would let me do the baking for Shabbat. I helped them make challahs, the babka cakes, hard sugar cookies (I called them "Bubbe Cookies") which were cut out of dough using the glasses that held the yortzeit candles. Another tradition was making chicken soup. I often look back to those days and wish that it could be like that again when everyone was together.

Barbara Keilin Buck

~ Letter 7 ~

One of the most popular restaurants in the 15th Ward was Richman's College Inn, owned by Bernie and Herman Richman, which stood on the corner of East Genesee Street and Irving Avenue, near the Regent Theater. For more than 40 years it was a full service restaurant and delicatessen.

Perhaps their most famous sandwich was named after Dave Brodsky, a very well known insurance man in Syracuse. It consisted of roast beef, cole slaw and Russian dressing on

rye bread. Bernie made the Russian dressing with sweet chili sauce, ketchup, mayonnaise and chopped hard boiled egg. Another very popular dish was vegetable soup. Although it contained all of the usual vegetables, it was made from full bodied broth cubes consisting of stew beef and marrow bones. It was not unusual to see people coming in with glass jars to purchase soup for home consumption. Bernie's rice pudding was especially popular because it was made with a custard top, lots of raisins and cinnamon, then baked until the top was brown. What made the College Inn special was that everything was home cooked; no freezer food.

It was not unusual to see long lines outdoors on both sides of the restaurant, even during the coldest weather. At one time the Regent had live shows featuring well known entertainers. Following the shows the entertainers would often stop by the College Inn, stay long into the night reviewing their performances, enjoying show talk, giving autographs to fans and interviews to reporters. In addition to entertainers, others who frequented the College Inn were the players and fans following the Syracuse Nats basketball games. At lunch time medical professionals, teachers and business people often crowded the main dining room. On Sundays hundreds of Syracuse University students waited for their deliveries from the Inn.

Next to the Inn was a candy store run by a wonderful Greek couple named Helen and Harry. All of their candy was home made and prior to Thanksgiving and Christmas people would journey from miles around to buy their ribbon candy and chocolate sponge candy. Eventually the Richman's sold their building to Syracuse University. Today the Syracuse Stage and the Syracuse University Theater Complex are on the site once occupied by the candy store and the College Inn.

Carol Richman Wandner

~ Letter 8 ~

World War II affected all of our lives in the Central New York area, with Madison Barracks in Sacketts Harbor on Lake Ontario and Camp Drum, Griffiths Air Force Base, and others in nearby locations. Our fathers were in the service and our mothers were left at home to raise us, luckily, with large and supportive families close by.

I was born in Syracuse in 1939, but shortly thereafter my family moved to Watertown and then to Sacketts Harbor where I was raised until 1944 while my father was in the military. Once back in Syracuse my mother and I lived on East Castle Street below the University. When my father returned from the military he opened the Imperial Tailor and Dry Cleaners on Tallman Street which was around the corner from Schwarz's hardware store on South Avenue. Schwarz's was owned by my uncle.

Every Saturday my mother would take me, first for lunch, and then to help my father in his shop on Tallman. Often we would have lunch in the Mizpah Restaurant, with its light green tables, or in the tea room of Edwards, Dey Brother's, or Chappell's department store. Lunch at the Far East Restaurant, the Little China Restaurant, or Child's was also always a treat. Sometimes we even went to Schrafts, which was elegant because they served sandwiches on crust-trimmed white bread and ice cream in silver cups with hot fudge. After lunch, and before leaving for my father's shop, we would often stop to visit family friends who worked at Rudolph's Jewellers on Salina Street, or Mrs. Netter's Hat Shoppe. If I needed shoes we would go to the Park Brannock Store to have my feet X-rayed in their machine. We only bought Stride Rite shoes, of course.

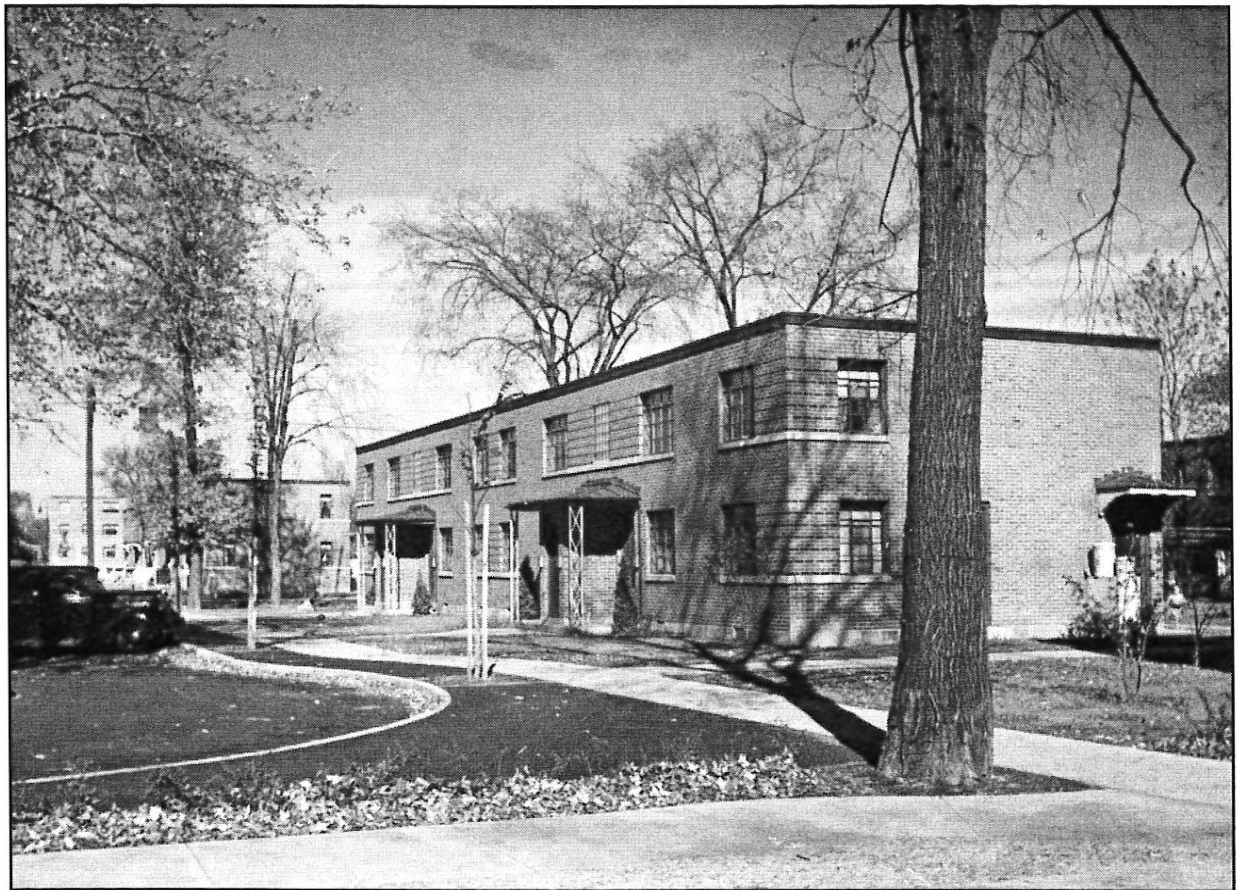
Although I started kindergarten in Sacketts Harbor, when we returned to Syracuse, and as the result of many later moves, I attended Danforth, Croton and Merrick Schools on the South Side, then Washington Irving on Harrison Street, and Madison School on Madison Street. As families in the Ward moved further east, their children normally attended Ed Smith School or Charles Andrews before going to Nottingham High School.



Madison School

Families who remained in the Ward typically sent their children to Central High School, home of Lincoln Auditorium where we attended and/or took part in city-wide vocal and instrumental performances. I remember in the late '40s attending the operetta Hiawatha put on by children in the fourth and fifth grades from schools throughout the city. I also remember buying tickets to see Shelley Berman on stage in the '50s.

We moved from East Castle Street to my grandparent's three story home on Almond Street, which was across from Pioneer Homes.³ There we shared a flat with my grandparents and one of my uncles. There were two other families in the building and, as I recall, my aunt ran a small nursery in the basement of her building in Pioneer Homes. I can still "feel" the tiled floors and the cinder block walls.



Pioneer Homes

A block away from our home on Almond I remember a liquor store and Herman's Grocery store (with its pickle barrels) which was across the street from the Hebrew School we all attended. Next to Herman's was a Jewish bakery that had a memorable dark blue glass front under one of the windows. On Harrison below Almond Street there was another

bakery, but this one had a pale green glass front. And then there was Meltzer's Bicycle Shop also on Harrison with an overwhelming display of shiny, colorful two wheelers, tricycles, etc. I was always entranced by the display, but never had a new bike. Instead, my dad bought a used bike and painted it by hand. I was just as thrilled.

East of Almond and up Harrison toward Irving Avenue there were two large multi-family houses where many of my friends lived. And next to the houses was Stein's Candy Store where we happily dug into the little chocolate "pies" of fudge in tiny serrated tin cups and popped the metal caps off bottles of Royal Crown Cola, peeling back the cork hoping to find a winner. On the corner of Harrison and Irving was Meltzer's Sandwich Shop, where we received "a little shtick" as we stood at the counter ordering their wonderful sandwiches.

I also remember Martin's Kosher Meat Market at the corner of Harrison and Almond which was owned by my cousin. During the High Holy Days, when we walked to Ahavath Achim Synagogue on Almond Street, my cousin and some of his friends would stand outside the Synagogue during a break from the service. He often took many of us children to his market (it was always exciting to walk inside, slipping and sliding on the wood shavings that covered the floor) and cut a "shtickle" of salami or bologna for us on his immense meat slicer. Then it was back to the shul to enjoy sliding down the double railings on the broad front steps. During our early teens we walked from shul to shul. This was a fall ritual for us, going up and down the hills grasping the iron railings along the streets.

Inside our Synagogue the women sat separate from the men, and families "owned" their own seats for a lifetime. My grandfather even had his own handmade wooden "desk" surface and a brace at his seat so that he could place his open prayer books in front of him as he sat or stood in prayer during all those hours. As a young child I was always fascinated by the people who stood for the Yahrzeit prayers, feeling a mixture of sadness and curiosity about the people they were mourning; death was a mystery to me and the Holocaust was virtually unknown, at least to me, at the time.

Major Jewish Holy Days were spent in the warmth of our families: Hanukkah, for example, with latkes and Motts Apple Sauce followed by a sumptuous brisket dinner. After dinner we played with dreydls on the living room floor while our uncles tossed pennies to us. And we didn't put electric menorahs in the windows, it just wasn't done!

During Purim there was always a carnival in our shul or in the Jewish Community Center with game booths and costume parades, everyone participated. Our groggers were colorful noisemakers, either round metal ones or rectangular ones that clacked. At home hamentashen was the order of the night, always served with a "glezel" tea with a teaspoon inside the glass to cool the water.

Pesach was an extra special time since my parents' home had the largest dining room. We crowded around the pedestal table (with the long claw feet) and the three adjacent card tables forming a line of people that extended well out into the living room. The children, of course, were always located at the end of the line. What I remember most about the Sedar, however, was my father as he conducted the service with his melodic voice and Polish Ashkenazi pronunciations of the Hebrew. I also recall the wine spills on the sparkling white tablecloth, the freshly ground horseradish and the homemade gefilte fish, made partially from fish that some of my uncles had caught up north. The Sedar would extend late into the night even though there might have been school or work the next day, which meant that matzoh sandwiches would be in our lunch bags.

On Shabbos my father would close his shop early and come home to the comfort of my mother and me lighting the candles and making birhkot over the sweet wine and rich challah. Relatives often joined us for shabbos dinners, which consisted of chicken, mushroom, or bean and barley soup, chopped liver, and either brisket, chicken, or veal cutlets for the main meal. This was always accompanied by such delicacies as kugel, gefilte fish, and kasha varnishkes with grebenes. Of course there was always the bottle of Canada Dry gingerale on the table and at the end of the meal there was always dessert (jello, pudding, or cakes) followed by more tea. Like every other household we used Sweet-Touch-Nee tea⁴ in bags from a little red tin box. For the children, milk was served a couple of hours later.

Our lives certainly seemed defined by the rich cooking of our mothers, aunts, and grandmothers. And today, my best loved recipes come not just from the women in my family, but from the wonderful Syracuse Jewish cookbooks compiled by Hadassah and Temple Adath among others.

From Almond Street we moved to 807 Harrison Street and into our own flat. Here we had three bedrooms, a large kitchen, one bathroom, a large dining room and living room (the living room had a glass front door leading to the hall). There was also a back porch and back staircase where we stored food and winter gear; we shared this storage area with the family upstairs.

The advent of television in the late 1940s was critical to us at the time. We had our first tiny set in 1948, with a piece of colored plastic on the screen which provided a tone of color. The children's programs were captivating: the Howdy Doody Show with Clarabelle and Princess Summerfallwinterspring, Let's Pretend, Buzz Corbett Space Cadet, and Miss Frances of Ding Dong School. When we weren't watching television we often played games, especially during the winter, such as Authors, Scrabble, Dominoes, Chinese Checkers, and Monopoly. We also had Erector Sets, chemistry sets, wooden spools for knitting lengths of yarn, doll houses with miniature furniture, coloring books, comic books,

record players with big spindles for our 45s, and anything else you could dream of that was sold at Bardeen's or Conde's Toy Store.

Around 1950 we moved once more but this time it was from the Ward to the east side of the city. Despite the move, on Sunday mornings my father and uncle would drive back to the Ward and shop at Bloom's, Besdin's, Adler's, or Volinsky's bakery for fresh bread and rolls. They also stopped at the Jewish markets where they would buy white fish, lox, herring, or sardines and kippers layered with onions...always a feast. Once home my father would make eggs and lox while my mother added french toast to our breakfast. Her breakfast repertoire also included waffles (using an electric waffle maker, of course) and pans of sizzling Beef Frye, to satisfy our craving for a bacon look-a-like.

Because of this last move I attended Nottingham during my junior and senior high school years. By then the Jewish Community Center had moved from Cedar Street to East Genesee near Fellows. While in high school I remember walking with my friends, arm-in-arm at night down the street, holding hat pins in front of us, to attend the nighttime meetings of the B'Nai Brith Girls and Iota Phi, which was a Jewish sorority. Many of us also belonged to Young Judea, a girls' group dedicated to Israel and our Jewish way of life. We also attended the fraternity and sorority dances held downtown at Hotel Syracuse in the early to mid-1950s, with orchestras, corsages, dance programs, and yearbooks full of ads expressing good wishes from local businesses, family and friends. After the dances we would often go to the Villa for pizza.

During the winter we enjoyed ice-skating at Drumlins and in the summer we taught each other to smoke cigarettes after school on Westcott Street at Pop Welch's. I should also mention the counter at Miller's Pharmacy which had become the center of activity for those who lived in this new Jewish neighborhood in the Salt Springs Road area.

Judie Cynkus Rice

Chapter Two:

Brief Recollections

Family Life

a) Yiddish

My parents immigrated to this country around 1910 and settled in Syracuse because they had "mishpoche" here. Neither of my parents were really Americanized and like so many immigrants they retained many of the old world habits and customs. I had a working agreement with my mother, she spoke to me in Yiddish and I answered in English. It worked out pretty well. I speak a decent Yiddish even today.

At an early age I learned to distinguish private from public Yiddish. My grandmother, who emigrated from Lithuania in 1896, made wonderful cookies. Aside from taste, they had an interesting shape and, at home, we always referred to them by the appropriate Yiddish expression. One day we had a guest, I believe I was six at the time, and I remember running into the kitchen where everyone was gathered, including the guest, and asking for a "tuchas cookie." How was I to know that certain Yiddish words were for household use only.

I remember hearing fractured combinations of English and Yiddish (Ynglish) throughout my childhood. In fact I remember my grandmother, who spoke mainly Yiddish, saying "vindy" when referring to "window" and thinking at the time that windy was the true Yiddish word for window. It was not until years later when I used windy, during a request to a another Yiddish speaking person to open a window, that I learned I was mistaken.

b) traditional beliefs

When I was a child I recall hearing my aunt, who was my mother's older sister and who lived with us, pacing the floor outside my bedroom and bemoaning the fact that my mother was already married while my aunt was not. According to Jewish tradition it was expected that the oldest sister will marry first, preferably around age 20. If a woman marries by this age, her fertility will be long-lived, after this her fertility will decline accordingly. Apparently this belief had been passed on by my grandparents to all of their children. I was

told many years later that my parent's wedding was not a happy occasion because my mother still had two older unmarried sisters.

When I was very young my parents lived with my grandmother who always kept a kashering board in the kitchen. Whenever my parents bought meat, the meat would be placed on the board, covered in kosher salt, and allowed to drain. All the blood had to be removed. When my parents moved to their own apartment, like many others who left the Ward, we no longer followed this practice.

c) the household

We heated with coal. In the basement there was a huge octopus of a furnace. I recall my father going downstairs several times each week to shovel coal. It was a place where no one went without an adult because it was very large, dark, full of cobwebs and roaches. Not only were there roaches in the basement, but also in the kitchen, especially in the cupboards. If memory serves me correctly, I believe they put roach powder all around the kitchen. Although the cooking odors were wonderful, by today's standards, it was certainly not the healthiest of rooms.

We lived near Adams Street in a two bedroom flat that rented for \$40 per month. I remember my mother taking me to Pioneer Homes to visit my aunt and her family. There were a lot of Jews living there at the time. In fact, anybody who was anybody lived in Pioneer Homes on Almond Street at one time or another, or so I thought.

Who could afford a telephone with a private line. We had a party line like everyone else. How did we know when the phone call was for us? Who cared! We listened anyway, it was better than radio.

I'll tell you why my parents bought a house. We lived in a three room apartment, a living room, a bedroom, and a kitchen. I slept in the living room. It wasn't bad because it was the nicest room in the apartment. But my parents thought I should have my own bedroom. So they looked for a four room apartment. And they found one. But the landlady had one restriction. No one can flush the toilet after nine o'clock because she was a light sleeper. So they bought a house where we could flush at our leisure.

d) meals

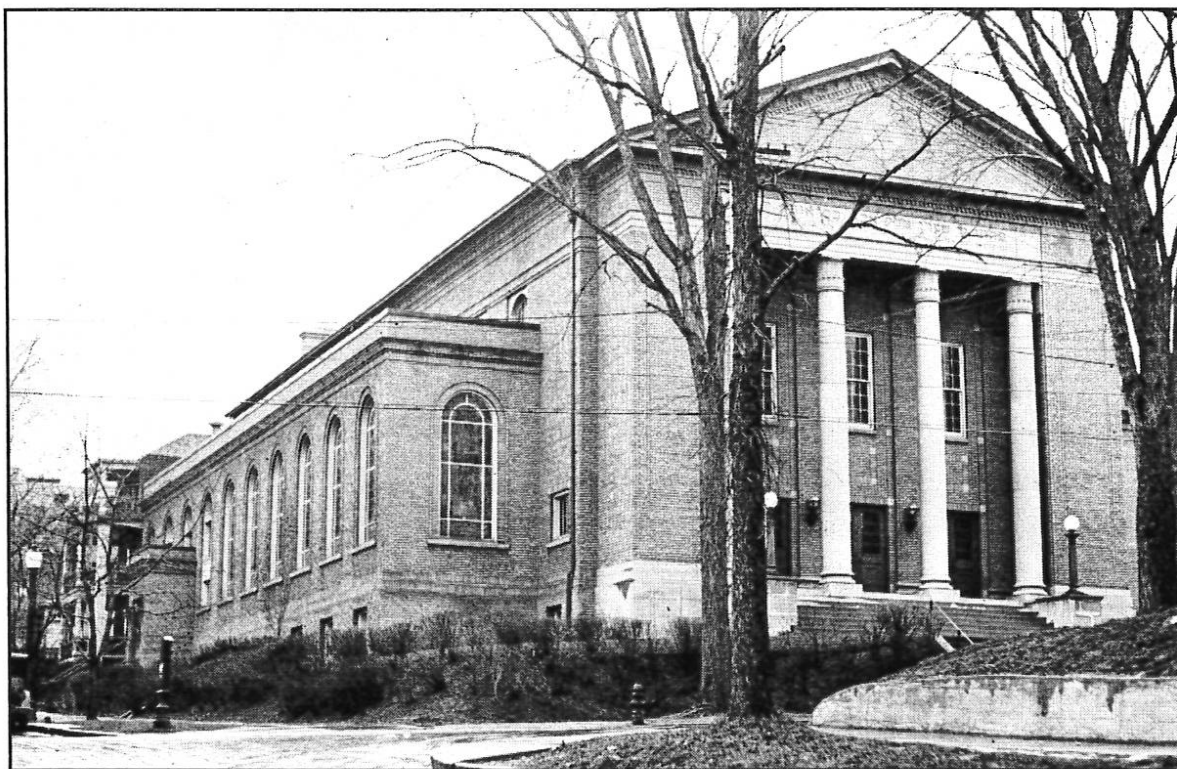
The food that emerged from that kitchen, to this day I remember: very well done and delicious. The meat fell off the bone. Nothing ever arrived on our plate that anyone could mistake for alive. What I remember most though is the ketchup and apple sauce. Ketchup

went into and onto everything. The meat was cooked with ketchup, the chicken was cooked with ketchup, and if you didn't add enough when cooking, the bottle was always on the table to add more, which most of us did. As for the apple sauce, that had one purpose and one purpose only: to cool off the food. It was always eaten with the meal in case anything was too hot. I remember my state of shock when I learned later that some people actually served apple sauce for dessert. Apple sauce is for cooling and nothing else!

Occasionally we had guests for supper, mostly family. Because kosher meat was expensive and our income was limited, being frugal was the order of the day. I recall my mother sitting at the kitchen table, calculating how many slices each person would eat, the width of each slice, then multiplying that figure by the number of guests. This told her how much meat to buy. I have no idea how she converted inches into pounds. Maybe the butcher helped her.

Synagogues and Hebrew School

I lived across from Poiley Tzedek on Almond Street. When we moved to Cumberland Avenue we joined Temple Adath Yeshurun. I went to Hebrew School there two days each week, Saturday service, Sunday minyan, and Sunday school. We used to take a bus home



Temple Adath Yeshurun

from the corner of Fayette and Crouse in all kinds of weather and darkness. It was across from Roy's Grill. Our parents didn't like this and Harry Goldberg from City Taxi came to our rescue. He provided taxis to take us home for a very modest fee. We bought coupons.

When I went to Hebrew School at Temple Adath I remember having my ear twisted whenever I wasn't learning Hebrew fast enough. In those days it seemed that the preferred method of teaching was through punishment, embarrassment and ridicule. Perhaps this is why I still have difficulty with Hebrew.

The principal of the Hebrew School at Temple Adath was Alex Pollack. I guess his pay wasn't very high. To make a living aside from teaching, he sold freezer plans, pots and pans, tomb stones, and whatever, but he was an excellent teacher.

And then there was Rev. Isaac Simon. He was a pillar in Temple Adath. He taught me my Bar Mitzvah lessons in the living room of his apartment. I remember he also sold Equitable life insurance on the side. In payment for his lessons, my parents purchased a \$2,000 policy for me. I imagine that was a common practice at the time. I also recall that he would pick us all up on Sunday mornings in his Olds and take us to Minyan and breakfast at the Temple (we were part of the Junior Congregation). He was a wonderful person, when he died we were let out of school to attend his funeral service in Temple Adath.

Holy Days

One of my enduring memories as a child, was walking from shul to shul during the High Holy Days. In fact, I think this is what many of us looked forward to because it was such fun. I remember also there were lots of cement stairs leading up to the front door of the shul that I used to play on and eat on during Yom Kippur. I was probably five years old and could get away with it.

I have vivid memories of the Passover Sedar. The children were all seated at an adjacent card table while the adults, seated at the larger dining room table, between prayers, discussed what seemed like endless episodes of daily life in the carpet business. I also remember sponge cake. Morning, noon, and night for eight days I ate sponge cake. Always the same, orange. While I could understand matzo, I never heard of the Jews leaving Egypt with piles of sponge cake. To this day, I can't stand sponge cake.

What do I remember about Shabbas at home. Be quiet! No radio, no noise, no playing, nothing! You shouldn't disturb the sanctity of the day. To a six year old, Shabbas was solitary confinement.

Jewish Names

Growing up in the Ward it seemed to me that no one of any importance had a real first name. Or maybe their first name was their last name. I don't know. There was Feinberg the chicken man, Stern the huckster, Hurwitz the coalman, Wexler the iceman, Ginsberg the milkman, and many others I don't recall.

Public School

In the 1940s I went to nursery school at the JCC on Cedar Street. Then I went to nursery school and most of kindergarten at Washington Irving. The nursery school at Washington Irving was operated by some parents and my mother was one. It was during the war around 1942 and they served us lunch. In May, 1944, we moved to Cumberland Avenue (UTOPIA).

I attended Madison Public School from kindergarten, in 1940, through the eighth grade. What I recall in detail about Madison is all of the fights, some of the odors, standing outside the classroom while others sang Christmas carols, and how happy I was to leave and attend Nottingham High School.



Madison School Kindergarten classroom

I remember one episode that occurred at Madison. The principal, Mr. Roberts, came into our classroom and announced that the school needed a janitor. We were told to tell our parents in case any were looking for work. At the time, the job of janitor was very low paying and low status. Because he knew that most of our parents were poor, I doubt that if Madison was in a higher income area, he would have made this announcement.

When I was in first grade in Madison, our teacher told us that we were going to play a word game. She printed two words on the blackboard: WILL and IS. We were told to pick the one that could be used as a person's first name. I quickly raised my hand, said "IS," and was promptly informed that I was wrong. How was I to know? After all, I had an uncle named Izzy. Apparently the teacher wasn't Jewish.

Entertainment

a) scouting

I was in Troop 40 of the boy scouts at Temple Adath Yeshurun. What I remember most was learning to tie knots (which I couldn't) and overnight camp at Ram's Gulch (where I froze).

b) day camp

I attended Camp Frensdorf in Thornden Park during the '40s. It was a Jewish day camp and every morning we sang "We welcome you to Camp Frensdorf, we're mighty glad you're here. We'll send the air reverberating with a mighty cheer, rah, rah, rah." I remember making "boondogels" out of "gimp." These were key chains. At the end of the summer I had more key chains than keys. We also made leather wallets. Why, I don't know, who had money?

c) overnight camp

Bradley Brook Summer Camp, boy what a time. I remember the ghost stories around the fire, "pink belly," the raids on wilderness at midnight, capture the flag, apple jelly at breakfast, and the little pink pills they told us they put in the lake to keep us from peeing. I don't think they worked.

One year at Bradley Brook Hecky came into the cabin with spots all over his face. Not knowing what they were I began touching them in my attempt to count them. He never

finished the camp period being sent home with chicken pox. The incubation period is about two weeks, that's when I came down with the same spots.

Sheldon was a counsellor at Bradley Brook. For a number of years he did the Indian lore, campfires, stories, throwing powder into the fires to bring about dramatic colors, and wore moccasins. Although he had a very bad complexion, I was smitten anyhow. We all had to have an extra blanket rolled up at the end of our cots, and it was called a jelly roll. Mine was called a Shelley roll.

d) radio, television, comic books and the movies

My favorite radio programs were Life of Riley, Baby Snooks, Fiber McGee and Molly, the Lone Ranger, Duffy's Tavern, Gangbusters and many others whose names I can't recall. What I do remember though is the one radio we had which was in the kitchen. Unfortunately, this was the busiest room in the apartment, especially it seemed when my programs were on. To listen I had to press one ear against the radio and periodically say "shhh." Because "shhh" only helped for a little while, the noise began again. Perhaps this is why I now have slightly better hearing in one ear than the other.

We had a colored television. Every evening, starting around 6:30, as I recall, we laid on the floor in the living room and watched test patterns until the shows came on. Of course it wasn't really colored (it was black and white). My parents bought a piece of colored plastic to cover the screen: blue on top, red in the middle, and green on the bottom. It was wonderful when the show featured a burning fire on a grassy lawn under a clear blue sky. Howdy Doody, Buffalo Bob, and Mr. I. Magination looked rather sickly though.

As children in the '40s we collected and traded comic books. I had a big pile under my desk. I remember some comic books were worth more than others at trading time. A Mutt and Jeff or Little Lulu was equal to two Superman. Business education began early in those days.

The Regent Theater was on Genesee Street. It was here that I watched Saturday afternoon matinees and got ringworm from leaning against the seats. Those of us who were infected with this terrible plague had to wear "stocking caps" cut from the tops of our mother's used hosiery. Without the caps we weren't allowed in school. With the caps, however, we were singled out as the "dirty ones" to be avoided. Three times each week I was excused early from Madison School so I could go to Washington Irving and sit under a blue light. I walked there with the other "untouchables." It was supposed to cure us. I also remember the other kids who went to the Regent. They got very involved in the movie and wouldn't leave their seats even when they had to. So we learned to lift our feet when little streams appeared on the floor.

e) bike hikes, clubs, sports and street games

During the '50s we all had bicycles and would go for "bike hikes." Mine was a Raleigh, all black with thin wheels. A real racer, or so I thought. But what I remember most was getting my pants caught in the chain and walking home holding the back up in the air.

I do believe that if we didn't have the YMHA on Cedar Street to go to, many of us would have ended up delinquents. There was basketball, Club Council, weekly dances where you had an opportunity to meet Jewish girls and develop relationships.

What I remember most about the Y on Cedar Street is its distinctive aroma. I guess it wasn't manly to use deodorant in those days.

I remember watching the Syracuse University football games on TV when we didn't have enough money to go and that was pretty bad because at that time the University sold season tickets to kids for a dollar.

My most vivid memory of the football games during the '40s and '50s was digging a hole beneath one of the entrance gates at the stadium several days before a game. Of course we filled the hole with dirt so no one noticed. Then on game day we came in the morning, scooped out the loose dirt, crawled under the gate, and hid beneath the benches until the game started. I don't remember a single game, but I do remember the hole. What an adventure.

f) illicit activities

On the corner of Townsend and Harrison was Chocolate's. This was a card room run by a man named Chocolate (I never knew his real name). He was a big heavy guy and always wore a hat.

One summer, when my sister was 15 or so, she went to work in George Coleman's ice cream parlor and sandwich shop. Actually, the facility was a front for a gambling 'joint', but that section was in the back and didn't involve the front section at all.

The apartment houses on Grape Street were brick and bordered the sidewalk. Women sat behind curtained windows and tapped on them when a man walked by. Yes, I noticed and wondered why.

I didn't really grow up in the Ward, but I did live on Stadium Place, which was near the Ward, until 1930. At that time the area had many bootleggers making bathtub liquor. Many of the young boys used to help make the so-called liquor. They were paid a bit of money

to stir the mixture in the bathtubs and help bottle it. There were many policemen who used to come around, not to arrest anyone, but to buy the booze. I remember being frightened when I saw a policeman going into the house next door. I really didn't know what was going on, but in later years I heard many of my friends talk about those days of prohibition. On the corner of Raynor Ave. and Stadium Place there was a family, I don't remember their name. One night there was a loud bang. We didn't know what had happened, but the next day we learned that one of the brothers had been shot and killed.

Politics

If I remember correctly, Syracuse was a hotbed of Jewish political activity. The Workmen's Circle, which promoted Yiddish culture, was Socialist-leaning; the International Workers' Order group was Communist-leaning, and there were the Labor Zionists (Poale Tzion). The IWO formed out of the Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring group in the 1920s. They generally followed the Communist party line, and were organized by ethnicity. Jews formed the largest group. The IWO was dissolved in 1954 during the Red scare.

Health Care

Mike Hurwitz at the A and B Pharmacy on Harrison Street always took care of us. If he couldn't make us better the next stop was Dr. Rosenberg in the Medical Arts building on East Genesee Street. I remember his examining room with the long table, the tongue depressor and saying ahhh, the ear exam, and when we left, the candy he gave us which made us want to return.

The Enema: every bathroom had a bag. Ours was orange and hung from the door, always ready to treat the childhood stomach ache. And there was a system: "Mom it hurts!" Quick, grab him, rush to the bathroom, lay him on the floor, turn him over, insert the nozzle. And then the water came, at first warm and gentle and then in torrents. As soon as I reached the near breaking point, hands from all sides placed me on the toilet. Timing was everything. Although I never saw it, I'm certain they practised. If they were off by even a nanosecond I would squirt like a punctured balloon all over the walls, the floor, and even them. To this day, I believe they were experts in the science of colon irrigation long before it became a medical speciality.

From the 1940s I remember David, who was four and lived in our building but in an apartment up three flights of stairs. His mother must have kept up with all the latest child rearing health fads. Every four or five hours she would lean out the third story window and shout "Dave its time." Regardless of what we were playing, David had to stop, go upstairs,

and sit on the toilet. Years later I learned that this was supposed to keep him regular. I guess he sat there until one of them gave up.

We didn't have a shower, only a bathtub, so who bathed. On a daily basis you only washed what showed. In the summer that meant up to the elbows, or maybe a little higher, in the winter, up to the wrists. Approximately once a week my mother would fill the tub. I would enter with boats and other things to keep me entertained and leave only when I was cleaner than the water.

Jobs

I began delivering newspapers in March, 1945, three months after my Bar Mitzvah. I continued the route until the fall of 1948 when I got a job at the Corner Store on the "Hill." I picked up the papers from a station on McBride between Harrison and Madison. The station was run by Morris Freedman until his death, when his son Albie took over.

My paper route was on a small street near Genesee. It was here, when I collected and went into the apartments, that I fell in love with the smell of frying bacon. It was also here that I saw, for the first time, a woman breast feeding. I didn't know what she was doing. But she looked happy, so I wasn't concerned.

I delivered papers five days a week after school. It was an evening paper but on Sundays it became a morning paper and so I had to get up at 3:30 a.m. Before delivering the Sunday paper I would go to Besdin's Bakery and buy a bag of jelly donuts that I would eat as I delivered my papers. I remember collecting money from my customers on Fridays and loved the ones who gave me a tip, most did not.

There was a junk yard on Harrison Street that bought newspaper. The reason for my memory is that I recall being told that the owner paid a certain amount per 100, and so I brought him 100 sheets and asked for my money. How was I, a nine year old, to know that he meant 100 pounds. That was my first and last venture into the junk business.

During the 1940s, like many others who lived in the Ward, my father was a self-employed travelling salesman. In those days that meant he had customers in rural areas surrounding Syracuse. He visited them once a week and took orders, mostly for clothing since shopping centers didn't exist. The next week he would return with the back seat of his car full of merchandise. The customers bought on credit so he would collect small amounts every Saturday. The reason for Saturday, is that most of the customers were farmers who also worked in factories and payday was Friday. If he missed a Saturday, by the following Monday their pay was gone and he would have to wait another week for his money.

shopping

For me, growing up in the '40s and '50s, the 15th Ward belonged to another time. My occasional visits to the Ward for shopping (I lived in the Salt Springs Road area) felt like mini-vacations, or expeditions, where people dressed differently, spoke another language (Yiddish or Southern Black), and in many ways treated you as a tourist. Because there were so many Jewish businesses in the Ward, to the African-Americans, Germans, Italians, and others who also lived in this area, the Ward was affectionately known as "Jew Town."

On the corner of Townsend was Williams Super Market across from G and H Department Store; my parents took us there for winter boots and some new clothing for the Holy Days. Across from G and H was Arthur Cohen's Linoleum and Appliance Store. I think every Jewish home had a piece of linoleum on the kitchen floor.

My favorite was Wallace's; being able to go to the big barrel and pick out my own super dill pickle, which I would munch on the way home. We walked everywhere.

We could always smell the bread from Besdin's Bakery and Herman's Creamery had the best cream cheese. I lived next door to both of them. Then there was the Co-Op Bakery on Harrison Street, later known as the Harrison Bakery. The late owner told me he had \$40 in his pocket when the Co-Op went broke. He had a partner who baked the bread and they would put the hot bread in his car and drive around to the restaurants selling the bread.

Boy do I remember Adler's, Bloom's, Besdin's, and Volinsky's bakeries, especially on Sunday mornings. That was when the aunts, the uncles, in fact the whole mishpoche, bought their pastries, loaves of fresh rye bread, and a bulke or two. They had this machine that cut the loaves into slices. For a seven year old, it was a sight to see.

Miscellaneous

What was the neighborhood like? It had character. Between the butcher shops, bakeries, grocery stores and junk yards there was always something to explore. In back of the houses were garages in need of repair, broken fences, and yards of mostly dirt and weeds. And no one minded if we built our own clubhouse or fort out of orange crates and other scrap materials that were plentiful throughout the neighborhood.



Backyard: 904 Harrison Street



Clubhouse in back of 502 Irving Avenue

In the '40s there was Horton's Drug Store at the corner of Madison and Almond Street. We went there for ice cream. If we didn't want ice cream we could wait and hope that Chris the popcorn man would come by and blow his high pitched whistle. He always wore a hat and the horse that pulled his wagon was kept next to Temple Adath on Harrison Street.

I remember standing on Harrison Street waiting for Chris. We would run after his wagon because he always threw popcorn at us. Who cared about the dirt, we gathered it from the road and ate. It was still hot and delicious.

Meltzer's Sandwich Shop was at the corner of Irving Ave. and Harrison Street. This was the central meeting place for members of the Ward from the thirties until the fifties, maybe even until the sixties. What wonderful latkes and corn beef sandwiches. And before Meltzer's there was Doodle's grocery store, same place. Here there was halavah in long blocks on the counter that Doodle cut into chunks and sold by the pound. A m'chaye!

Stein's Candy Emporium on Harrison Street. What a place! All the penny candy you could ever want along with colored sugar water in wax bottles, cartoon character tattoos that you could stick all over yourself, and those delicious little fruit-filled Blue Bird pies. Stein's was next door to the Saranat, a kosher restaurant that was never very busy, where we kids would gather and eat potato knishes because who could afford meat knishes.

Clarence Fineberg's store was on McBride Street across from the place where the chickens were slaughtered. I recall visiting this place in the early '40s and seeing the women seated on a long bench in front of an equally long sink. Chickens were hanging from hooks over the sink while they "drained" and the women were plucking the feathers. Such was the assembly line kashering process.

Chapter Three:

Traditional Recipes

Brisket in Chicken Broth

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 (3-3 1/2lb.) brisket | 3 medium carrots, cut in chunks |
| 1 chicken bouillon cube | 3 stalks celery, cut in chunks |
| to make 1 c. broth | 3 medium onions, cut in chunks |

Simmer vegetables in one cup of broth for 1/2 hour. Add brisket over vegetables. Cover and cook over low heat until tender with fork; between 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Serves 5-6.

Karen Arbeit

Tongue with Raisin Sauce

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1/2 c. brown sugar | 2 Tbsp. vinegar |
| 1 tsp. mustard | 1/4 tsp. lemon rind, grated |
| 1 Tbsp. flour | 1/2 c. water |
| 2 Tbsp. lemon juice | 1/3 c. seedless raisins |

Cook, cool and slice pickled tongue as usual. Mix brown sugar, mustard and flour. Add vinegar, lemon juice and rind, water and raisins. Cook over low heat, simmering the tongue in sauce long and slowly to mix seasonings. Sauce should be doubled for large tongue.

Naomi Abramson

Chicken Liver and Egg Barley Casserole

1 (8 oz.) pkg. egg barley	1/2 lb. mushrooms
1/2 lb. chicken liver	6 Tbsp. chicken fat
1 onion, grated	

Cook barley as directed on package. Saute livers, onion and mushrooms in 2 tablespoons of chicken fat for 10 minutes. Mix with barley. Pour rest of chicken fat with mixture and put into casserole. Dot with fat. Bake at 300 degrees for one hour.

Evelyn Leffert

Chopped Herring in Wine Sauce

1 small can herring in wine sauce	1 peeled apple
1 slice of challah	2 hard-boiled eggs
	1/2 tsp. peanut oil

Put herring in chopping bowl (over sliced bread). Take food chopper, add eggs, apple and herring; grind, then remove and mix well. Add peanut oil. Makes two cans of chopped herring.

Florence Dana

Gefilte Fish Casserole

4 large pieces of gefilte fish	1 carrot, sliced
1 box frozen mixed vegetables	1 small onion, diced
	1 pt. sour cream

Put fish into pot of cold water; add carrot and onion. Bring to a boil and drain. Cook vegetables until almost tender and drain. Grease shallow baking dish. Place fish in dish and cover with cooked mixed vegetables. Dab generously with butter. Cover with sour cream in a manner similar to frosting a cake. Bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Serve hot.

Mrs. Paul Greenhouse

Flaumen Tsimmes

3 medium size sweet potatoes	2 Tbsp. shortening
1/2 lb. prunes	lemon juice to taste
3 c. water	salt to taste
	brown sugar to taste

Peel the potatoes and cut into one inch cubes. Pit the prunes and cut into quarters. Place potatoes and prunes in saucepan and cover with water; add shortening and salt. Stew slowly for about one hour. Season with lemon juice and brown sugar; continue stewing until all water is absorbed. Serve hot or cold. Serves six to eight.

NYS Branch Women's League

Lukshen Pudding

1 lb. broad noodles	1/2 lb. cottage cheese
6 eggs, beaten	6 Tbsp. sugar
1/2 lb. butter	1 pt. sour cream
1/2 lb. cream cheese	1 tsp. cinnamon

Boil noodles; toss with all ingredients and pour into 12 x 9 inch pan. Top with crumpled sugar frosted flakes. Use 2 tablespoons of white sugar to 1 tablespoon of brown sugar and sprinkle over flakes. Dot with butter. Bake at 350 degrees 45 minutes.

Beverly Cooper

Potato Latkes

6 medium potatoes	1/2 tsp. pepper
1 small onion	1/4 c. flour
2 Tbsp. sour cream	1/2 c. bread crumbs
1 tsp. salt	oil or shortening
2 eggs	

Grate potatoes with onion, either by hand or blender. Drain excess water. Add sour cream quickly to keep the potatoes white. Add eggs, flour and crumbs, salt and pepper. Mix well. Fry in hot oil, turning when golden brown. Can be frozen and reheated in low oven for about 15 to 20 minutes.

NYS Branch Women's League

Sponge Cake

9 eggs, separated	1/2 c. potato starch
1 c. sugar	1 c. orange juice
1/2 c. cake flour	1/2 tsp. salt

Sift together cake flour and potato starch. Beat whites with 1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Set aside. Beat the yolks with 1/2 cup sugar and orange juice for a full 20 minutes. Stir flour mixture into egg yolks. Fold whites into yolk mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour in tube pan. Cool upside down on soda bottle.

Alice Rosen

Appendix

Below are the names and addresses of many of the Jewish businesses, bakeries, etc. that were mentioned in this document and that were located in what was the main shopping area of the 15th Ward. The addresses were obtained from a copy of the Syracuse City Directory published around 1945. While other businesses were also mentioned and were said to be located in the same area (e.g., Chocolates, Jimmy the barber), unfortunately, their addresses could not be found.

Businesses:

Ben Ami's Barber Shop, 707 Harrison St.; Bernstein's Junk Yard, 610½ Harrison St.; Bodow's Junk Yard, 614 Harrison St.; G & H Company Dry Goods Store, 804 South Townsend St.; Grubman 's Department Store, 536 Harrison St.; Horton's Drug Store, 615 Almond St.; Hurwitz Bicycle Repair, 510 Harrison Street; Rosenberg's Pharmacy, 972 South State St.; Rothschild's Pharmacy, 1268 South State St.; Stein's Confectionary, 789 Harrison St.; Steinberg's Clothing, 609 East Adams St.

Bakeries:

Adler's Bakery, 530 Harrison St.; Besdin Bakery, 824 Almond St.; Bloom Brother's Bakery, 620 Harrison St.; Purity Co-operative Bakery, 512 Harrison St.; Volinsky's Bakery, 821 South McBride St.

Grocery, Fish and/or Meat Markets:

B & B Food Store, 602 Harrison St.; Derwin's Food Market, 516 Irving Ave.; Fineberg's Grocery, 811 South McBride St.; Galinsky's Fish Market, 611 East Adams, St.; Herman's Grocery Store, 826 Almond St.; Kruth's Meat Market, 532 Harrison St.; Pearson & Martin's Meats, 701 Harrison; Wilson's Grocery, 733 East Adams St.; Wallace's Food Market, 600 Harrison St.

Restaurants:

B & B Restaurant, 80-805 South Townsend St.; Lavine's Restaurant, 431 East Adams St.; Louis' Delicatessen, 528 Harrison St.; Meltzer's Delicatessen, 709 Harrison St.

Editor's Notes

¹ The JCC and the YMHA/YWHA were both located at same address, 222 Cedar Street. The photograph of the Jewish Community Center was reproduced with permission from Rudolph, 1970.

² Louis Marshall was an extremely influential and nationally regarded Jewish lawyer. He was perhaps the most distinguished constitutional lawyer of his day and was best known for his role as a social activist and reformer. He fought against the immigration quota system, anti-Semitic publications such as Henry Ford's Dearborn Independent, and for the civil liberties of all minority groups. A photograph of the Marshall home appears on page 8.

³ Pioneer Homes was a low rent Syracuse housing project. In the 1940s many Jewish families resided in Pioneer Homes.

⁴ As a child I remember wondering what this odd name, Swee-Touch-Nee, meant and why it was used on boxes of tea. I recently learned that the name derived from a phonetic version of the original Russian name [zvetouchny] which had appeared in the Cyrillic alphabet on the little red tin boxes that were sold prior to World War I. The name itself is an adjective that means "flowery." Because the tea was Russian in origin and therefore might have been familiar to many immigrant families from Eastern Europe, perhaps this is why so many chose this brand. The boxes, today, are collectors items.

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