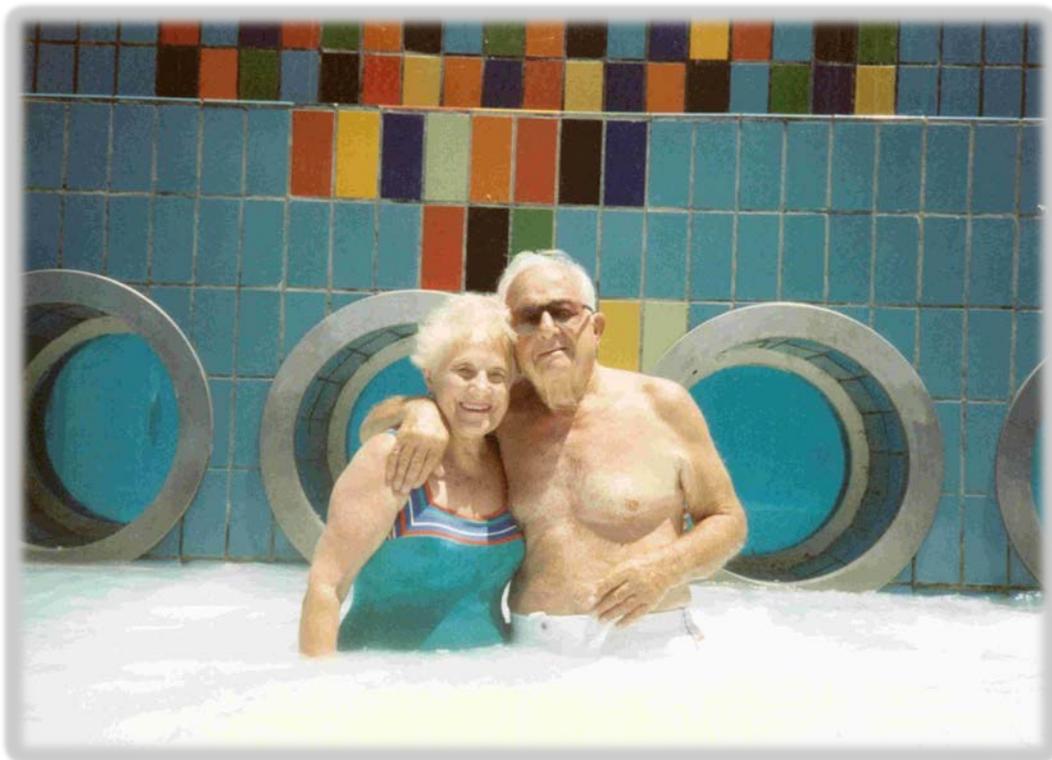


**Bronx Beauty Marries Londoner:
An Oral History of the Courtship and Marriage
of Jean Klein and Jack Rose**



By
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**Bronx Beauty Marries Londoner:
Jean's Story
1923-1928**

c. 1923 After my sister Fanny passed away, we closed the piano and moved away. We moved up to the Bronx where my father was a builder and we moved into one of the buildings that he built. During the summer we used to go away on vacation. My sister Rose used to go for the entire summer because her two children went to camp nearby. And my mother used to go there, I think, for the whole summer too.

1925 We went to a place called Nemerson's Hotel, up near Liberty, and the kids went to Roosevelt Camp which was maybe a half-hour's drive. At that hotel they had a five-piece girl's band. There were five girls. My sister Ida went two weeks when I went up there and we got very friendly with the girls, the musicians. They were mostly my sister's age, much older than I am.

Three of them were sisters and the younger one, also called Rose, was about my age. They lived in the Bronx and during the year the band played different places. Then they got a permanent job in a Chinese restaurant, in New York, Forty-something street. They played afternoons, Saturdays and Sundays, whatever. Rose met this chap, Sam, an Englishman, and he brought the fellows to the Chinese restaurant for dancing. Everything was dancing at the time. And she came back saying they were the nicest, most wonderful dancers. Very nice boys. We hadn't met any of them.

The East Endian: Cockney Apache

At that time we were planning our annual affair in our house. My father used to allow us one big function each year. The year before we had a Japanese party. This year we decided to have an Apache party. And I hadn't known these boys yet.

At the time I was going with a fellow. I was 18. I started dating at 16. But no late nights. I'd be home by 10:30, 11 o'clock, and I was very, very goody-two-shoes. Certainly nobody in those days would maul the girls like they do today. I wouldn't even allow them to kiss me. Eventually, it was kiss goodnight, you know. That was already the big deal. So I went with these fellows and I was very fortunate. Each one of them wanted to be my steady.

I only went out on Saturday nights at the beginning. Then, when I met somebody else that I liked better, the Saturday night fellow fell back to Wednesday and I started dating two fellows. I'd ease him out easy. You know. Then there was another boyfriend and so on. I went with a fellow six months or seven months and right away they wanted to become engaged and married. And then they're all at least four years older than me, or five. There wasn't too many. I mean, I would say, until I met Jack, no more than maybe four or five. Because I met Jack when I was 18.

So I said, "We're going to have a party." Our annual party. You know, it's a big thing because we used to have a lot of people. So Rose, the girl in the band, says, "Can I bring my boyfriend?" She went with this Englishman. He wasn't her steady yet, but she was going with him. And she was my age. So I said, "Yes."

The sister that played the drums, her nickname was Pussy for some reason. I can't even think of the other one's name. But Pussy wasn't dating or anything. She was just a musician. She was still going to school. Another girl was engaged. She lived two doors away from us and she got married right after that.

So I said, "Look. Anybody who isn't engaged, don't bring your boyfriend." Because each one had a boyfriend, like I had and Rose wanted to invite these English fellows. She said, "They're wonderful dancers and you're going to like them." So that's what happened. When I think back, I think I had a lot of nerve, because I was the youngest of the whole group.

So we wrote out our invitations, the date and where the party will be taking place and so on. It was an Apache party and we had black cards and white ink, skull and cross-bones. I asked Rose for five or six names, which she gave me. They all lived in mid-Manhattan.

The type of a party that we had was like a nightclub. We had checkered tablecloths and we had candles in the bottles. Like in the Village. You know, the candle stuff was dripping all over the thing. Two of the girls were cigarette girls walking around like in a nightclub saying "Cigars, cigarettes." The band was playing.

My father said the only thing he's going to allow them to have is some whiskey. So my father says, "I'll give you some." He had bottles that looked like cigars, but they had glass in them. So he filled them up, like two dozen of them and put them in a cigar box. Like a two-dozen cigar box. And it was in my room.

Well, the invited fellows invited the whole group! And they came. Was about eight or nine of them, or 10, I don't remember exactly. I know an awful lot of uninvited ones came. And each one had a jug of wine because of Prohibition. They stopped off at a speakeasy, had a couple of drinks themselves, and then they bought wine, those gallon things, you know. And they came.

It was a real cold, snowy December day. And they went up to into our room to take their coats off and whatever, and they spied the whiskey bottles. They were such Beau Brummells, so sophisticated, and they spotted them. They drank the whiskey out and left them empty. Then they closed them like they didn't touch it.

They were already half-drunk when they came down to the party and before you knew it, half the fellows were drunk. We had stairs leading to the first floor and they were laying on the stairs. All over. The only ones that weren't drunk were Jack, Sam, and Jack's cousin, who was a married man. He had two children. We didn't know that, but Jack brought him over. Later on we found out. But he was a gentleman. Sam was his name too. So the two Sams and Jack were the only sober ones and they tried to keep the others in line.

Around 9 o'clock two policemen came to the house. It was a sergeant and a regular officer. My father called them in and says, "Yes, can I help you?" And the sergeant says, "Yes. We got a complaint that there's an awful lot of noise coming from your house." So my father said, "Well, there's a party going on. My wife and myself are the chaperons." And he says, "It's only 9 o'clock. It's early in the evening. It's a Saturday night." He says, "It's not so terrible. People don't go to sleep at that hour."

So the sergeant says, "You're right. But they say it's very, very boisterous." It wasn't. It was very quiet. And my father took them into the living room, sat them down, and gave them each a drink, which they gladly took. And the sergeant says, "You know what?" So he says, "Let them continue." My father said, "Look. Saturday night, before 12 o'clock, it's ridiculous to complain. But I assure you, by 12 o'clock it'll be over or very quiet." And that's just what happened.

Half of the fellows were drunk already. The party started early, about 7, 8 o'clock. The policemen didn't see them. The party was downstairs in the basement. We lived in the flight above. They left and then my father came down. He told them, he says, "Look. I just got a

complaint. We better keep it low. Otherwise they'll be back." Jack heard. But nothing happened.

Then, one of the fellows went up to my mother's room. He was so drunk. He laid down on her bed and fell fast asleep with his foot up near the dresser and he kept banging it. It was all brand new furniture because we were only living there a short time, just about two years. Well, they were furious with him. I'm talking about Jack and Sam, Rose's boyfriend. They took him downstairs and called a cab and, before the cab came, they threw him face down in the snow to revive him. He was out. Well, the next day he called and he apologized, this fellow that was so terribly drunk.

Meantime, during the party, Jack and I, we danced, you know. He came over to me. He says, "I'd like to take you out." He says, "Would you like to go out tomorrow night? I want to see you tomorrow night." I said, "No. We have to baby-sit for my sister." My sister Rose's maid was off and Beverly and Charlie, her kids, were little children. So my sister Ida said, "With all the food we have, we'll have another party in my sister's house."

So we invited three other fellows or four fellows. There was Ida and myself and the two older sisters and another one, one of the band, the pianist. We were all together, four or five couples. They came around the following evening and we had big spread and all that. You know, my sister had a big place. We had a piano, so the girls were playing the piano, and the violinist had a violin. We were having another ball.

My father didn't know who was coming over the next night. But Jack made a date with me. Jack said that he wanted to see me. So I says, "You know. You can't come to my house. My father knows all the fellows that were drunk. He doesn't know who or what, but he did say after you all left, 'Where did you get the bunch of bums like that? That have the nerve to drink that way.'" He was furious, my father. He says, "I'm not going to let you have these parties anymore." This was about the third party in a row we had.

Jack says, "I'll come to the house and I'll take my chances." He came. My father looked him over, trying to recognize him, whether he was one of the drunk ones. I tell you, I never saw Jack so embarrassed. My father says, "Even if he wasn't drunk, just to be friends of the fellows that don't know how to behave themselves when they come to somebody's home." He didn't want me to go out with him. It took many, many times for him to come up to the house before my father really believed that he was respectable.

Dangerous Dating

1926 I didn't go out with Jack that much because I was going out with other fellows. He didn't know that I was going out with the others. I didn't break off with all my friends that I had.

Right from the start Jack had to be a Saturday because he got into trouble with the union. At the time we were going out, maybe a month or so, the furriers were striking and the union cracked down on any scabs. Well, he wasn't going to be a scab in New York, but, you know, he was always bright and he was a manipulator. He knew just what to do and he always made a living because of that.

He went out to Long Island, out to Amityville. Near Farmingdale, around there. The Ku Klux Klan was big there but they didn't even know what a Jew looked like. He went out there and brought two or three of his friends with him. He rented a loft and in the boardinghouse he took a room. Everything was fine, as far as he was concerned.

I don't know how they worked it but they made the coats and then they were assembled in New York. It had to be done on the QT, you know, like on a Saturday or Sunday, not on a weekday. The unions knew that he was scabbing somewhere but they didn't know where. The

strong-arming fellows were really after him so he couldn't be seen. The word got around that if they catch him, they're going to kill him.

So he said, "I'll call you on Wednesday and come in on Saturday." So he called me on Wednesday, just to talk to me, and I used to meet him down in New York at a hotel, the Astor Hotel, in the lobby on Saturday night. Then we'd go out, go to the theater or whatever, went to dinner and so on, and then he took me home. He always took cabs. He slept at the Luxor Baths, a great, big place on Forty-something street. It's still in existence. Early in the morning he took the train, a Pennsylvania Station train. So nobody got to see him and he was able to do that for quite a few months. That's why he had to be my Saturday night date.

I liked him. He made a wonderful appearance and he spoke with that English accent and he really was a man about town. He was 22, but he acted like he was 28. He was always mature. I didn't even know he was that young until a long time later. I thought he was much older than that. He didn't compare with the other fellows that I knew. The other fellows were much younger than him. Some of them were the same age but they just didn't compare. Anyway, I liked him.

Hangups

One night, about two months later, we had tickets for the theater. My sister, two of my friends, and me. We were standing around waiting for Jack's call and he was having trouble. He had those wall telephones, you know, out in the country where you had to wind to get the operator and the operator's sleeping or eating or something. It just took a long time. They said to me, "Look. We're going to miss the show."

Then the phone rings. He gets on the phone and we were kind of late. He says, "Jean?" I says, "Yeah. Jack?" He says, "Yes." I says, "Make it snappy." I says, "We have tickets for the Broadway show and we have to take the subway down, and we're going to be late." And I told him who was waiting. He didn't even give me a chance to finish. He says, "Don't let me stop you." And he hangs up on me. That didn't sit too good with me. Anyway, we got to the show, even though the curtain was up already and the show started.

The next night, the phone rings and I answered it. I recognized his voice, the English "hello." Even the "hello" sounded like a limey. I said, "Oh." I says, "Who is this? Jack?" He says, "Yes. Don't you recognize my voice?" So I didn't even answer him. Bang! Down went the receiver. And that did it, because he was very angry at me, which I can understand. A little snip of a kid hangs up on him. He didn't call again.

I used to see Rose all the time, the one that was going with Sam. She says the boys come down, have lunch or dinner at the Chinese restaurant, and dance and all that. She said Jack's always asking about me. "How is Jean? How's she look?" And this and that and the other thing. And I was all ears when she used to tell me that.

About five months later, the sisters were making a shower in somebody's home for Rose. She was the first one to get married. By that time I was going with a very nice fellow by the name of Sam. I always had them in reserve, you know. I wasn't a run-around but I always had a date on a Saturday night and on Wednesdays. Those were the two nights I would go out. Wednesday was an early night. Saturday, a little later. I never stayed out late. The latest I ever stayed out was 12 o'clock. And so, I took my date to the party.

I knew Jack's going to be there and when I got there, he came over to me and started talking to me. This was right before New Year's. So he said, "What are you doing New Year's Eve?" I said, "I have an appointment." And I did. I had planned to go out with an older fellow, I think he was about 25 or 28, that I was seeing. We met through some people and he liked me.

He kept calling me up and finally I went out with him. He was already a well-established fellow. He had money and he took taxis every time. He had a very big New Year's Eve function in New York with elegant people. It was a big thing for me, for a young kid. So we made that date, maybe two months before New Year's.

So Jack was romancing me at this party. He must of had a couple of drinks or something. There was a piece of furniture, I think it was a trunk. Yeah. He sat me up on the trunk and he was trying to talk me out of going out New Year's Eve with — it wasn't even the fellow that I was with that night, it was another one. And I said, "No." I said, "When I make an appointment I don't break it." I says, "How dare you even tell me that. I haven't heard from you in six months. Now you tell me I should break appointments just to go out with you? Are you kidding?" And it didn't work.

In the meantime, the other fellow was at the party and I was neglecting him. I says to Jack, "You know, you have a lot of nerve. I brought a date and you're carrying on." I says, "You know, it's very embarrassing." But he didn't care. I think he had a couple of drinks. Well, he didn't get to first base, but the fellow that took me was annoyed and took me home. Later on, when I was engaged to Jack already, that fellow came and tried to talk me out of it.

So, that was the end of it. We didn't make up. And I went home with the other fellow, which I was dating. And I went to that New Year's Eve affair and it was elegant. It was a formal. It was everything just right. But I didn't date that fellow. He used to come round the house once in a while and I wouldn't go out with him.

By the Light of the Silvery Moon

1927

Then I have to jump to June because, all I know, every time Rose came back to me she'd say, Jack always wanted to know "What is Jean doing?", "Does Rose see me?" and "How do I look?", bup, bup, bup. And I was all ears, you know. So, for Rose's wedding, I told her, "I'm going to come without a date." I knew that she would sit me with Jack. I was glad to see him. He looked great and we danced. Oh, I was glad. That's why I didn't take my boyfriend, the current boyfriend. And he was glad to see me. So we danced.

And he says, "You know, for this summer, in July, I'm going to be down in Brighton Beach." He and his cousin and another fellow took an apartment. So I laughed. "You know," I says, "my sister, Ida, and another girl, Clare, the three of us took an apartment right around the corner from yours." So it was like *versheft* [?], like it had to be. Like it was destined.

He was so delighted. The weekend after Rose's wedding was July Fourth weekend. You know, she had a June wedding. And we went out to the beach and Jack was there and that's the first date I had with him. We were on the beach together and then we went out to dinner and all that. And we're walking on the boardwalk with a big moon when he proposed to me. He wanted to be my steady and he'd like to keep company. Just wanted I shouldn't see anybody else but him. He is the fellow. And I said, "Alright."

That was only a few weeks after we made up. I hadn't seen him for a year and a half, but he says he knew that I was the one that he wanted to marry when he first met me. But there was a big moon and I always used to kid him later on, "That moon did you in." Every time I saw the moon I'd say, "See that moon? That was your downfall."

Then he started courting me because I'm his girl. And he was a big sport. By that time, the strike was over and he was back in New York. He was making a tremendous salary by comparison. He had a lovely place. I never was in his place. I wasn't the kind of girl to go visiting fellows in their apartments but from what he told me about these places, you know, he was making a lot of money.

Well, we had a wonderful summer. He used to work, because in the summertime they make the coats, and he used to come out to the beach in the evenings, weekends, holidays, whatever. I was working too. I lived at home during the week and used to come out there Friday night or Saturday morning and we'd stay there till Sunday night. Every weekend he took me home by cab, from Brighton to the Bronx, which was \$6, \$8, \$10, whatever it was. Well, that was a huge amount of money in those days but that's how he was. He was a very big sport.

When we went to the restaurant, it was always the best. While we were eating or whatever, he'd sit there and draw on the tablecloth, with ink yet, which will never come out. In those days I was all dressed up and always had matching hats. He used to draw very well and my face was on those cloths with the hats. He even did that after we were married. It was romantic. It's kind of silly today.

I had a good time. He showed me a great time. The other fellows used to take the subway when we went anywhere. Here, he took cabs.

When he started courting me he said, "I want to give you a hundred dollars a week to put away towards our nest egg." Because he used to spend it. My next door neighbor when we first got married, he was a superintendent of the sanitation department and she was a school teacher, and I think the school teachers were getting \$35 a week. Jack was getting 150 plus overtime. So it was like \$300 when he got through. He was making a lot of money.

Making Plans

So, he gave me a hundred dollars a week and, about two months later, when I saved up about a thousand dollars, twelve hundred dollars, whatever it was, he got friendly with my father. My father liked him already by that time because he was really a gentleman and he dressed fantastically. He must of had 20 suits. So he spoke to my father. He said he'd like to get married that following December. It's slow at that time in the fur business.

My father said, "Well, Jean has an older sister." Ida was three years older than me. Jack knew that. Everybody was supposed to get married more or less in order. So my father started working on Ida. She liked all Jack's friends, that type, you know, Beau Brummells. But the fellows that liked her, she didn't like. So my father says to Ida, "Look. You better make up your mind. I'm going to give you one year. I spoke to Jean and Jack and they decided they want to wait until you get married, but it's not going to be more that one more year."

That December, Jack gave me a ring. He was going home to see his parents. I used to tease him. He was so bashful. We were walking across the road going to the movies one night and, in the middle of the road, he slips the ring on my finger. He was shy that way. Then he said, "I'm going home. My mother's hasn't been well." There were letters and all that. So I says, "Sure. You want to make sure that I don't go out on a date." And I did not go out on a date. And he went home. He was away for about three, four weeks.

1928

So that's what we did. The following summer, when I went up for vacation for two weeks, up in Nemerson's where my folks used to go, Jack came up for the two weekends. He liked horseback riding so one time he took a horse out for a ride. After he was finished he passed near the stables and the horse ran into the stables and almost chopped his head off. He said luckily he ducked all the way down, otherwise he wouldn't be here. He was really frightened. That was a terrible thing. So that was an incident that he remembers and I remember all the time.

We used to take long walks. It was a very nice place. We used to have dancing at night and entertainment and all that. And then he'd go home Sunday evening. He had to go by train

because it was a two or three hour trip. And Ida didn't find anybody. So my father says, "This is it."

"Bronx Beauty Marries Londoner"

That's when we started making plans for the following December. I didn't want a Saturday night wedding. On Saturday nights, the rabbi has a lot of weddings. The year before, my very closest friend, who was three years older than me and lived in Brooklyn, got married on a Saturday. I was the maid of honor. By the time the rabbi came, it was 1 o'clock or 2 o'clock in the morning. It was terrible. We sat down to dinner a quarter to 4 in the morning. My family was all invited. My mother and father, my sisters. I almost fainted too, you know, wearing high heels, standing there. Jack was at the wedding. We were keeping company then.

So I said, "Never will I get married on a Saturday night." So we picked a weekday. We didn't want the wedding Christmas Eve. So the weekday we picked was the day after Christmas, a Wednesday, which was wonderful. It was an early affair. It was called for 6 o'clock and nobody saw me in the bridal gown, you know, until the ceremony. It was at a hotel in Broadway and 135th Street. It was a hotel, but outside they had fellows dressed in costumes, like in England, like footmen.

My father was active in the synagogue. He was the president and he had gone to many, many functions given by the people. Since he didn't have any weddings in the six years that we lived there, he had to invite an awful lot of important people. It was a very big affair. I think we had about three hundred people there. So he went to town. Everything was formal. My father was very comfortable. He had a lot of money and all these years he didn't have any expenses with brides, so he splurged on mine.

Ida was my maid of honor and Jack's brother was his best man. Jack says, he'd like to have his friends as ushers because we were having a formal thing. So we had 10 ushers. Five and five they walked down, with the walking sticks, with the high hats. We had no bridesmaids. It was the most formal wedding I've ever been to. It was magnificent.

After the ceremony, when we all sat down, we had the usual thing, the bride's first dance with the husband and then the parents and all that. We had entertainment during the courses. They had an eight-foot figure dressed as a bride and a ladder inside where a singer sang all the love songs to everybody. It was magnificent. She had a wonderful voice and she had my bouquet of flowers. After she got through singing, two little doors in the front opened up and two dancers came out. They were ballet dancers. There was a girl and a fellow and they danced. I have never been to such a beautiful wedding.

We got write-ups where it tells about the wedding, the wonderful entertainment and all that. "Bronx beauty marries Londoner," was the headline. The Bronx had a Bronx Home News. It was a big paper, a daily paper. The Bronx is a big place. And there was two columns. One was about me and one was about the wedding. They had a picture of me. Jack carried that picture around in his wallet until it fell apart. Imagine, there's thousands of papers but he had only one. We cut out only one.

Well, anyway. Everything broke up by 1 o'clock, but Jack and I left maybe a half-hour before to go to the Empire Hotel at 66th Street and Broadway. 65th, 66th. We stayed there one night before we took the train to Toronto for our honeymoon. I got dressed in my civilian clothes, my daytime clothes, and we left.

**Coming Up Rose:
Jack's Story
1903-1928**

*I really don't know how to start because I have no patience.
It is a virtue I have always lacked. I have always wanted to
do today what I could do tomorrow.*

* * *

*I'm only going to talk about things that won't hurt me,
my conscience, you know what I mean?*

Birth

1903 I was born July 18, 1903 in the East End of London on a street off Commercial St. My father's name was Louis and my mother's name was Ann. My brother's name was Michael. He was born March 21, 1901, making him two years older than me. In those days most women gave birth at home, not in hospitals. They have midwives that came. A lot of people did not register births. Half of them never even put down dates or anything. That was the custom years ago. Our mother died when I was about two years of age, but I did not remember my mother. My brother who was four claimed he did. I always felt bad about that.

Father

My father, Louis, was born in Austria, in a place called Lemberg. Actually, the region is called Galicia and then it was part of Austria-Hungary. Later it was part of Poland and the town was called Lwow. Now it's in the Ukraine in the Soviet Union and the town is called Lvov. Anyway, his father wanted him to be a rabbi or a lawyer, or doctor, whatever it was, because he thought he was a bright fellow as a kid and spoke several languages. But my father didn't want it. And they disagreed and he left as a young fellow and went to London. He must have been very young — about twenty, twenty-one. From London he went to America, but he didn't like it so he went back to London where he met my mother and got married.

My father seldom spoke about his family. I know he had a brother who also came from Austria to London. But he didn't like London, and so he went to Budapest. My father and his brother didn't stay in touch and I doubt if I ever knew him. My brother and I did not know our grandparents either. When I was going to America, though, my father told me that one of the family — I think it was the daughter of his brother, or something like that — was married to the biggest film-maker in Los Angeles and I should look him up. So I just took the name and address and threw it away. When am I going to look them up?

When my father left home he learned a trade and became a barber. He used to have a barbershop and a tobacconist. Later he went into the wholesale business as a sideline. His suppliers were department stores that used to reject merchandise. If they don't sell after six months or whatever the ruling is, they would tip him off. And he used to sell job lots to all these flea markets, like in Petticoat Lane. He used to have

connections with the people who own the pushcarts. He could talk anybody out of anything.

My father was also a gambler. He used to go to the dogs and horses. Mostly the horses.

Aunts in Austria

1905

When I was about two years old and my brother was about four years old, my mother had to go to the Carpathian mountains which was in Austria as she needed the air there. She must have had TB. Well, she died in Austria and my father was unable to take care of us. So he decided to send us to Austria as we had two aunts, my mother's sisters, who lived near each other. My brother and I only spoke English and they spoke mostly Austrian, although I learned a few Austrian words over time. Anyway, we didn't know their names so we called one "Little Aunt" and the other "Big Aunt".

The two aunts had husbands but I don't know if they had children. I was too young to remember. Anyway, the two brother-in-laws had a barber shop and ran the store between them. We slept on the floor in the store. There was rats running around so they used to tie a cloth around our ears, so we couldn't hear them. It's the truth.

My father sent us both with a pair of new shoes. In Europe, if you have a pair of shoes you're a rich person already. But they wouldn't allow us to wear the shoes on the weekdays, only on Saturdays and Sundays. They didn't realize that as you get older your feet grow and you can't wear the damn things anyway. They were so cheap, these people, but that was their custom.

Return to London

1906

After about six months or a year, when I was about three, our aunts did not want to take care of us no more. We knew because one day we picked up a little conversation that they didn't want us. They wrote to my father that they can't take care of us no more. Later they talked to us in a little Jewish and a little English they knew — most Europeans speak a little English — and they said that our father wants us back. He didn't want us back. Our aunts just did not want us no more, so they sent us back to London.

So they put labels on us, marking the destination, and wherever we went porters directed us. When we got to the coast we were put on a small freighter that was going to London and docked in London Docks which was not far from where we were going to live. Our father met us there with a barrow — here they call it a push cart. He put my brother and me on it and walked us to the families where he was going to put us. I was dropped off one place and my brother in another. It was just like we were orphans, both living in different places. We never lived together until my father married my stepmother.

Anyway, the people I lived with were wonderful people. I slept in the kitchen where they had a drop leaf. At night they put it up and put a pillow on it and a cover. My dad used to come by once a week and pay the people and also give me a few pennies to buy some candies. On Saturdays they used to give me a treat. They took me to *shul* and the husband took along some cake in a red handkerchief and I sat upstairs and ate it and waited until the service was over.

1908

One of the accidents that happened to me was one day there was a wedding in the *shul*. In those days they used to have carriages with horses. The driver used to sit at the

top. Well, I saw his whip and I pulled it for a joke and he whipped me just by shaking it and hit my eye and I lost my sight in that eye. Around the same time my brother broke his arm. I was about five and my brother must have been seven. As a matter of fact, he had a bad arm until he died. Some time later I found myself with my right hand underneath a small truck. I was taken to hospital but I still have the marks to remind me.

Stepmother

1910

I lived with those people until I was about seven years of age when my father married. At that time, I used to hang out with some boys a few streets away from where I lived. One day when it was raining I was sitting on the steps of my friend's house and a lady came by and took me and bought me a pair of shoes because my shoes had holes in them. The reason I went with the lady was because I had seen her with my dad. Well, that's the lady my father married. Her name was Millie.

That was a lucky day for us. That was when we started to live. We didn't have a lot of money but we had a good life. You know what I mean? We moved into a nice flat in a nice part of London. I loved her just like she was my real mother. In fact, this is the last time I will refer to her as my stepmother because I loved her so much. She was my mother, may she rest in peace.

My mother was religious. My father wasn't religious, I wasn't religious and I don't believe in it, but she kept a kosher home and everything. Her father was a rabbi and her brother was a dayan, which means next to the rabbi. She wouldn't eat on Yom Kippur. She came from that kind of background.

My brother and I were put into a school in the East End of London about 10 minutes walk. The name of the school was Old Castle St, between Old Castle Street and Goulston Street. We stayed there until we left the place. I remember next to the school was a public baths. Nobody in our position had showers so we used to go there once a week and pay two pennies. There were partitions dividing each bath and the bath was half filled with slightly warm water. Each bath had a number on it. Say mine was number nine. If we wanted more warm water, we would shout "Hot water, number nine!" or "Cold water, number nine!"

One day I did something wrong in school. Now, years ago when you did something wrong in school they used to cane you. In other words, they used to hit you on the hand with a cane. And some of the kids had devised a system of putting rosin, which is used for violins, on our hands so it wouldn't hurt so much when they hit us. Well, this time the master detected that I had that on, so he slapped me across the face. When I got home my mother asked me what the red mark was on my face. I said it was nothing. She didn't believe me and went out to talk to my friends and they told her what happened.

A day or two later, I was sitting at my desk when one of the boys said, "Look up" and there I saw my mother waiting to see the master. He called her in and asked her what she wanted. She asked him if he had hit me. When he said, "Yes" she slapped him across the face. Everybody was surprised, but the master was smart enough not to make an issue of it as he had done the same thing to a lot of the boys. My mother was devoted to us. Maybe because she was never married before. She was such a wonderful lady. It was our good fortune that she married our father but, unfortunately, it was her mistake, because he was flighty. A gambler.

Oxtail Soup

I had this friend Alfie Morrison. Alfred Morrison. Actually, his last name was Ostrosky. Alfie lost his father, and the mother married someone by the name of Morrison, that's where he got the name Morrison. Before his mother re-married, Alfie and his brother lived at a home for boys who were orphans or whose parents could not take care of them. It was a well-known Jewish home on the outskirts of London called Norwood Home. Jews supported that home. At the Norwood Home, they got a very cold education, but a very good one. Cold, with no family and no love.

When Alfie was about six or seven, he was in the same class as me and he was my best friend. But, he was a sick boy. One time the teacher recommended he get oxtail soup, so I made a collection for him and we bought him the soup. He never forgot me.

When Alfie got older he started to do some business in London and was very successful. He was very clever. He had kiosks, small window shops, in Underground stations like Piccadilly and Oxford Street. He went and opened up about ten or fifteen of them. And he was making a good living at it. And he had his daughter manage a couple of them.

Then all of a sudden he decided that he couldn't get along with his wife. He divorced his first wife, sold most of them — he gave his daughter a couple of them — and he went to Johannesburg, South Africa. His brother had gone there and done very well in the trucking business. Then he went to Toronto, Canada where he married a woman named Hilda. They had a daughter named Estelle who married a guy name Merv McCarthy who have a daughter named Francis.

Many years later when we lived in Manhattan Beach, he called quite a few Jack Roses and finally found me. He was happy. He spoke to Jean on the phone and we renewed our friendship. So some times we used to go to Toronto and visit. He was one man that did not forget.

Drawing

In school I was not a good student. Most subjects I didn't comprehend. I wasn't good at arithmetic, I wasn't good at algebra. All I knew was, when you go into business, you got to get "one percent": if it costs you a pound, I know you got to get two pound. I'm joking.

I was good in only one subject, drawing. And also this type of work like with the plaster, making mountains and making little boats and all that. I used to make drawings on the slate. I also drew funny faces on my school papers. I would draw pictures of the teacher scratching his head. I named him "Scabby Louis", because his name was "Louis" and he used to scratch his head a lot.

Once I got a prize for drawing a picture of a house. The windows were lit up, the sky was black, the moon was out shining bright and a cat was sitting on the roof meowing. The school presented me with a set of Dickens's works: Barnaby Rutch [?], the Old Curiosity Shop and others. The drawing was in the hall of the school until the school was demolished.

The drawing master liked my work and wanted me to take up black and white cartooning. As a matter of fact, he wanted to pay a few shillings a week so I could go to a place where they teach you. He even moved me up from Standard Five to Seven, which was the class most of the children left school and got a good character paper which

you had to show when you applied for a job. But my mother didn't want me to do it. She told me that an artist had long hair and starved — that you could not make a living by drawing. God bless her. She meant the best for me.

Matriculation

When I was a bad egg there, they made me sit in the corner, like Little Jack Horner, and put a mark on my card. They put you in the corner, you face the wall, and the class goes on. You're like a little moron. They don't do that now. The children were more in fear, years ago, when we were kids, than they are today.

1913

And once a week we used to go into the hall. All the children used to come in and the headmaster used to make a speech and he used to pick out the good boys and the bad boys. Once, when I was about eleven or twelve, he said to me, when it came to my name, my class, he said, "Jackie." "Jackie Rose," he says, "I've got to tell you something. Your best friend here is Jackie Coopersmith and he's going to matriculate," meaning he's going to go on to the next school. He's going to win a scholarship so he can go to top schools because his parents couldn't afford it. "And look at you. You're a dunce." You know what I mean? Only because I did that silly thing. I mean all I was interested in was drawing pictures and doodling. He said Jackie Coopersmith --who was actually two years older than me because my age was screwed up — is going to matriculate and he's going to be a big businessman and I'm going to work for him.

Lo and behold. We left school the same time and I went in the fur trade because of my scholastic ignorance. My mother put me in the fur trade. And Jackie Coopersmith didn't finish that school because of his uncle, who was a bookie. Instead, he went to work for big bookmakers, they give them a fancy name: turf accountants. And the firm that he was working for went sour and then when I had my first business, about four years later, when I was real hot, he came to work for me. Unfortunately his mind was not practical, like what I wanted. I tried to teach him to do the bookkeeping and to go for customers, but he couldn't learn the trade. So he worked for me about a year. His mind was too big for his hands. And if you don't have the mind you got to work with your hands. One part of your body has to function.

The moral of the story is: some people are suitable for education and some people are not capable of advancing with education because they haven't got the mind for it. But they can be very successful in things that they do because they're not sure of themselves and they go slower. And because they don't possess ego.

Bikes

During those years, my dad was a pretty good guy. But he had his way. Once my father was going to leave us alone and he said, if my brother and I behave ourselves and he comes home and there's been no trouble, he'll buy each of us a bike the next day. So we prepared for this, three or four weeks in advance. We went out and we bought a lamp, a bell, a pump — all the extras. Well, when he came home he knocked the hell out of us. And that was the end of the bikes. He says because we were bad we're not going to get them. We weren't bad. That was just his excuse. He was never going to get them in the first place.

But my father had the greatest confidence in me being a success. I used to give him ideas. I made purchases with him and he saw that I could do it. He always used to say, "If you throw Jackie down on his head, he'll wind up on his feet."

World War I

1914

When the first world war started in 1914, the British government decided all people not British must register with the local police and get an identity card with all information such as where you came from and when. You had to list wife's and children's names and ages. So that was the time my father registered us as two years older. He put us on his papers and made out like we had been born in Austria two years earlier than we were. The police didn't bother to check it out because in those days lots of people didn't register births and children were born in the home. That's why when I go to Europe or anywhere, I have to put down Austria as my birthplace. That's also the time we left school and went to work for ten shillings a week. My brother was two years older than me so he went to work before me. And then my dad took me out.

During the war people who came from Germany or Austria were considered enemy aliens. Some that did not check out properly were sent to internment camps outside London. And when there was a bad air raid over London, a few more were taken. Some had to give up their businesses. My father was well known as a great man with feelings about England. He was very British even though he was not a British subject. And also one of his friends was the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Charles Wakefield. My father had an office and a barber shop and a tobacconist together on Baysonhall Street where the mayor's office used to be.

My father knew the guy that owned the biggest department store in Cairo, Egypt: Stein Continental House, it was called. Well, as it happened, this guy was in London on business when the war started and couldn't get back. The British wanted to intern him, but through my father's efforts with the mayor they let him off. He never forgot my father. He always said, "When your boys grow up, be fourteen, fifteen, they can come to Cairo and I'll teach them the department store business." Many year later I was in Cairo, and I'm glad we never took him up on it.

Fur Apprentice

When I turned twelve, my father took me out of school to go to work. Years later, my father and I were walking around Tower Bridge, where we lived. We used to walk and he used to sing a song: "Oh British boys, they may sail the ocean ..." Something like that. I forget the rest of it. And he told me, "Jackie, I made a few mistakes in my life" and all that. And he was telling me why he took me out of school earlier. But it really didn't make a difference. No. At that time, it didn't make any difference. I couldn't care. All I was interested in was making a living. I made it and what do I care what they put down on paper?

So my papers showed I was fourteen but I really was twelve and very small at the time. In fact, there was a bookie who wanted me to train to be a jockey because of my size. Anyway, my father, my step-mother and my real mother were all Austrian and in two trades in England was a lot of Austrians: the fur trade and the diamond business. So my stepmother said, "You go be furrer." And she got hold of someone she had known as a little girl in Austria — a relative or a *landsmen* or whatever — and I became an

apprentice. They hired me as an errand lad, but because of my mother they would teach me the business much faster so I could help give some money home. My mother had such a high rating its unbelievable. They would do anything for her.

In the place where I worked, there was a father and a son. The father used to run the factory which was upstairs and could handle the customers, and he was one of the best in the trade. He cut the better furs and had about 20 people working, all on piece work. The son ran the business. He was also a gambler and when he did not go to the racetrack, he would send me to his bookie, the one that wanted me to become a jockey, to place some bets there. Betting in England was a big thing, especially on racing and football.

While I was working there, they couldn't get enough coal, as it was rationed. And we had to have coal to dry the garments, as London has damp weather. So I would go to the coal yards until I found somebody that would take a few shillings to bring coal to our place. Sometimes I would ride in the cart with the coal and people would laugh.

Well, I had the edge over the other boys so my boss moved me up fast. In a year or so I was in charge of the skin room and looked after the showroom when my boss was out. I had the run of the place. One day I got lucky. A few Australians came into our showroom and asked to see the guvnor. My bosses were out of town so I asked if I could be of some help. Then I started to show our rabbit coats and after I got through they said I was great showing them and that my guvnor should call them and make an appointment. Everybody said forget it, but when my boss came back he said, "I will call them." And, lo and behold, we were given an order for about 200 rabbit coats.

Well, my bosses bragged about me and before I knew it, I was the talk of the town. Everybody wanted to hire me and I was given more money. Unfortunately, my brother, who was working near us as a cutter, envied me because of the trade talking about me.

Anyway, so I decided I had to learn the factory work, and in a few months, when my boss was out of town and his father was away I tried to cut a coat. I took some skins up to the factory and got some help from the cutters. They needed me because they used to work on piece work and sometimes they would run out of a skin to finish the coat and I would help them with an extra skin. Otherwise it would take them a long time to finish. Well, a couple of days later I made a mistake. Nothing bad, but in the excitement I made two sleeves on one side which is easily corrected. The father and his son gave me a lecture that I should not worry about being a cutter as I was doing very good taking care of the business.

Black Saturday

During the war, we had air raids every other day. First the Zeppelins at night and then airplanes by day. At that time we lived at 17 Norton Folgate, right opposite a railway goods station which was bombed. Another bad thing was that the Germans used to drop poison candy for the children to pick up.

We had the first daylight raid on a Saturday about eleven a.m. It was called "Black Saturday" and all the damage was done where I worked in Golden Lane. My brother and I saw the Zeppelins that dropped the bombs. In the street was one of the delivery wagons for the restaurant across the street from us and I got hold of the reins of the horse and tied it to the door where we were standing. Then I ran inside.

All of a sudden I did not hear the pulling of the reins and when we heard “all clear” and opened the door and the horse was dying from the shrapnel. Across the street, the restaurant was bombed down to the ground and a number of girls were killed. Also, the son of the one of the lady workers in our factory was killed. He used to come and meet her every Saturday around noon since people only worked a half day and then got paid. Well, the poor boy’s name was Jackie and my friends thought it was me. You know. They were saying, “Jackie’s been killed.” They notified my father and he came. By the time he got there the place was barricaded but they let him through. Of course, it wasn’t me.

Non Bar Mitzvah

1916 When I was thirteen, I wasn’t Bar Mitzvah. My brother had been, purely by accident. He was a couple of years older than me and my father and mother were friendly at that time. They were on speaking terms. But when it was my turn, things weren’t so good. I didn’t really care because I wasn’t religious.

After I was in America though, my mother, may she rest in peace, found a friend of mine I went to school with who was going over. And she sent me a gold chain with a gold pound piece which is usually given to all the kids in London when they become Bar Mitzvahed. Later, Jean made it into a bracelet.

Scotland

1918 When I was about fifteen years old, the people I worked for used to send me on a trip to Scotland, Glasgow where we had two accounts: Stewart McDonnell and Mason & Company, which were on Argyle Street, I believe. I went up on a train called “The Flying Scotsman” and they sent two trunks filled with coats. When the coats arrived my job was to glaze them and let them dry to take out any creases from the packing. At that time I got friendly with a warehouseman who used to be a caddy on the weekend. He asked me to stay over for a couple of days on the weekend and he would teach me to play golf.

Odd Jobs

One of the boys working with me was a foot taller than me and his father was a tailor who had a factory in the top of his house. So one day I asked the father if I got a fur machine, would he allow me to make a couple of coats. He agreed because he had a stupid son and knew it would be good for him. My boss found out and raised a racket, so I told him I was giving him two weeks notice. He came over to my house and told my mother all they did for me and that I had a great future with them. But, at that time I only wanted to be in business for myself. I became cocky and had to move out on my own.

1918 Then I worked for a while selling skins on commission but it didn’t work out too good. So after awhile, I went to work for a Turk who rented an apartment next door to the place. Anybody could have got a job then as there was not many people around. Everybody was in the army. He had me cut coats and I had to stand on a box to reach the table. The man in charge of the room was an Australian. That’s where I got my first ideas of maybe going to Australia, especially when he told me their saying was “Live and let live”.

1919

Belgium

When I was about sixteen or seventeen I talked a rich friend of mine to go to Ostend, a beach resort on the coast of Belgium, for a weekend. After a few days he was afraid and decided to go home. So I went on to Antwerp where I knew a man that was in the diamond business. That town was one of the biggest in diamonds. The diamond people had a small place on Provence Strasse opposite the railway station which at the time the glass roof was shattered.

My first experience was at the main station which was the Kaiser Line. There was a restaurant. I went in and sat down. I didn't speak Flemish so I heard somebody order "*pastlet an border*" [?]. Well, when the girl came over with the *cafe la rus* [?], which is coffee and cake. I was talking to myself when I said "This is not for me" when the girl said "Why don't you speak English?" Then I found out the language was Flemish and Dutch, but most of the people spoke a little English.

The diamond people liked me and taught me the diamond business and I earned some money. I stayed about one year and I enjoyed Antwerp. But when they wanted me to take diamonds over to London, smuggle them, that was not for me. So I went back to London and took a job at a place where I stayed until I went to America.

Gabriel and Peters

In London I got a job with a firm the name was Gabriel and Peters which was in Creed Lane, opposite St. Paul's Cathedral. After working there a few months, a lady came into the factory and kissed me. I was very shy then. Well, it happens that that lady was the daughter of the nice people I stayed with when I was young, my first place. And, she was the wife of one of the partners. Well, after that I became like family which was a good thing since at home things were not so good. I was almost always invited to Friday night dinner. Later, when Jean and I went back to London, I would visit with a son of the partners.

Australia vs. America

I was making a lot of money in London. I had people running to give me an opportunity to make a living. Matter of fact, I used to wear a lot of fancy clothes. I used to have to put them on at a friend of mine's house when I used to go out because my dad didn't know I had them. I used to tell my father only half of what I made.

Unfortunately, I had to get away from my father. My mother and father were not getting along and my father was breaking my mother's heart with his running around. Well, he was probably running around. I saw him with other girls, women, while my mother was alive. So I knew that he was two-timing her and I couldn't take that no more.

I was very strait-laced as a young fellow. Still am. In fact, before we were married my friends used to call me "Jack the Reformer" because I didn't allow anybody to use foul language in front of a girl, even "hell". I've never said one off-color word to Jean in all the years I've known her. My boys, too, never used anything dirty. Outside maybe, but never in the house.

So I told my mother, "I'd like to leave here. I can't live in the house." My parents had moved to a place that I didn't like too much because I was lonely in that area of London. But they didn't want me to live somewhere else and I stayed with them until

I made some money. Later, I talked them into moving back to the city and we found an apartment next door where we lived and I helped to pay the rent.

Anyway, in order to get away I said, "I got to go to a different country." It was either Australia or America. One of the reasons for my thinking to go to Australia was their government. If you had a trade they would pay the fare and give you ten pounds when you arrived. And I had the fur trade. As a matter of fact, a friend, Bond, was with me at the time. He went and became a director in Meyer's Emporium and whenever he came to New York to buy I used to supply him with patterns. I had connections with designers and was fairly good for styles.

So I decided to go to Australia. But I didn't go because my mother heard from some of her friends that Australia was the other side of the world. She cried for days. But she also said I am right to leave England but why don't I go to America. My brother was there and she had some friends there. And she thought America was around the corner. That's why I went to America. It's the only reason.

Ellis Island

1923

Around 1923 I sailed for the USA. At that time you could travel first, second, third or steerage. And there was a certain understanding that if you traveled first or second class, you don't go to Ellis Island. Immigration came on and examined you on the boat. But if you went over steerage or third class you went to Ellis Island right away. Well, I didn't want to travel first class so I went second class. On the Aquitania, I think. On board I got acquainted with a young chap, my age, who was a reporter for a French newspaper. He spoke English very well and I got chummy with him.

When we got to New York, immigration came on and they asked a lot of bloody silly questions. First, he's talking Jewish. I says, "Can you speak any English?" He said, "Yes." The fellow said, "Would you take a job if you got it?" I said, "Who wouldn't take a job?" As a joke! I mean, I came over on a holiday. You understand? "Would I take a job?" I mean, what would you say? "Sure." Right? Well, that was my mistake — in those days they had conditions which I'm not sure they have today called contract labor where they were worried about people importing labor from Europe where it was cheaper. And this Frenchman, he said the same thing as me. We were both giggling.

So, the immigration guy put down a little thing and they kept us on the boat and then sent us off to Ellis Island. Well, we got out the next day, but some people stayed there for weeks. It was like a prison. People were living in cages. When they gave them food, they grabbed pieces of bread and tore it up. I was so angry with them. There was one guy who was really mistreating the poor people, pushing them around like animals, so after we got out the next day we waited for him in the street on the New York side. We beat the hell out of him. I was so mad. We scared the life out of him. Anyway, we got out.

New York, I

My brother, Michael, was already here from Canada and lived in the Bronx. Even with his bad arm he demanded the highest salary. He was one of the fastest cutters in London when I was enjoying the fluke of the sale of the coats, getting the most money. I

stayed with him for a few weeks, but it was better when he lived with his friends and I with my friends.

I found out that the English fellows hung out at a restaurant on Delancy Street, on the East Side. At that time everybody had a neighborhood: the Italians had Italian neighborhood, there was a Jewish neighborhood and so on. I missed England very much because in London I was considered one of the boys and had my own business.

The fur district was 28th Street and 30th Street and 7th Avenue, 6th Avenue. There were a lot of English furriers, about a dozen others, manufacturers, workers. So I got acquainted with these particular people. It was so easy in New York as in my trade very few people spoke English. Making money, making a living was like sliding off a duck's back. The only thing I found difficult was I didn't want to join the union which at that time was out in the open about being communists.

I went to work for a guy that only wanted to invite me home for dinner on a Friday night. He had a daughter he wanted me to marry. Years ago when they met somebody that had some ability, fathers always wanted to match you up with their daughters. I worked for him one week and he asked what I want. I told him. He couldn't pay me enough. He said he'd like to take me as a partner. So I told him that I couldn't be his partner because he's going to go broke. He don't know how to run his business. Anyway, he went broke a year later, but that's beside the point.

Well, I went into business for myself was because I didn't think I could make it to the top as a mechanic. And we lived in a swell apartment. I missed England very much, but decided to become an American citizen which meant I had to stay for five years. I would become a citizen then and was very happy because I could go back to England as a Yank. But in the meantime I used to go back to London every year to check on my mother.

Joyride

1925

A couple of years before I got married — I believe it was 1925 — one of my friends, an English fellow, told me he was going back to London. He had booked a passage on the *Leviathan*, an American ship. The *Leviathan* and *Berengaria* were sister ships that were taken away from the Germans for war reparations. Matter of fact, if you travelled on those boats, all the hardware you see is German. The English took the *Berengaria* and named it the *Berengaria*. And the Americans took the other and made it the *Leviathan*.

Anyway, so this fellow said to me, "I'm going over on the *Leviathan*. I booked passage, third class." So I said to him, "I think I'll go too." Like that. He said, "Wise guy. What do you mean 'go too'?" I said, "I'm going" and I bet him fifty dollars that I was. I was anxious to go anyway. So I go down there to the USA Lines and they're full. Third class and steerage were full. So I couldn't get a passage. I could have gone second or first class, but I didn't want to. I wanted to be with these guys.

So I bought a body belt and put in about fifteen hundred dollars. And I go down to 12th Avenue where the boats leave. And I said to a guy, "Who's in charge of the crew?" He said, "The boatswain." I know a boatswain? "Where would you find him?" "In the dinettes." They said, "That's the boatswain." I looked at him — and I was a sharp kid, silk socks and everything — and I said to him, "You the boatswain?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Look. What boat are you on?" "*Leviathan*."

His name was Whitie. They called him Whitie. He was American and he has Filipino crew. He had them locked up like this. He was the boss, like a gangster. I said, "Whitie, would you want to make fifty bucks? I want to joyride on the boat to London." He says, "You got a deal." I said, "I'll give you fifty bucks when we get on the boat." OK. He said, "Come over here" — he saw he wasn't dealing with an idiot. I wasn't going to give him the fifty dollars there. He'd never let me on. He said, "So I got to give you papers." So he gave me seaman's papers. "You go on and you sign on the crew."

The purser looks at me. I'm fancy dressed and I'm signing on. I looked like a nothing. You know. And he said to me, "What's your name?" I tell him my name according to the papers, "George Grant." "Sure that's your name?" He said, "What kind of a seaman are you?" I said, "A.B," means "able-bodied". I didn't even know what that meant! Anyway, he signed me on because he was afraid of this Whitie who was like a gangster on the boat.

When the boat left New York, we had to pull in the ropes. But I didn't even touch the rope. I just let it pass through my hands. A lot of the boys from the trade came to see me off because of my nerve.

Normally, when the seamen land in Southampton, they get five pounds to allow you to go to London, if you wanted, for two days. They don't give you the whole salary, just five pounds. So I said to Whitie, "If you treat me right and I don't work on the ship, I'll give you that five pounds. I promise you." So he said, "George Grant," he said, "OK." And he winks at me.

He sent me up on A Deck, which is the top deck where the flag has to be changed when another ship passes by. And when it rains there's these tarpaulins that you have to pull in and put them over the deck and tie them up. Who knew about that? OK. The second day out I'm standing there when a ship passed. All of a sudden, somebody kicks me up the behind. It was Whitie. He says, "God damn it." A real Yankee. "Rrrr. Don't you know how you have to do that?" He uses real language. Anyway, he did it for me.

So I said to him, "Look. I promised you this five pounds." That was almost twenty-five dollars. It was a lot of money but I didn't need it. So he said to me, "OK. I'll tell you what I'll do." Next morning, the master of arms — he's the guy that wakes you up at five in the morning. So many bells he rings, "Get up! Get up!" When he came to my cabin, he was already tipped off. "George Grant," he said, "you're sick today." I wasn't sick, so I knew I had to be sick so I knew it was all set up. That meant I did not have to report for work so I went to the passengers' place and found my friend to collect the fifty dollar bet.

The day after that they put me on a deck where there's a gate that opens to the deck. There's brass on both sides and they put me on to shine that brass. Well, I shined it. I shined it. And I shined it and shined it. A yiddisher lady come over to me. She says, "Are you a yiddisher boy?" I said, "Yes." "You mean you do this kind of work?" The boat was going to Cherbourg before Southampton, so I said, "I have a sister that's getting married in France. I haven't got any money. So I work my way over, I go to the wedding and come back." "*Oy. Lay von to noy!* [?]" The next day I still polishing the same thing.

All along the crew knew I was joyriding and they gave me a hard time. They wouldn't say anything, because of Whitie, but they only wanted to borrow things from me — a dollar, my cap, anything — because they knew I'd never come back. Also, I was

afraid they would find out I was wearing a body belt with money in it and I slept with most of my clothes on. Lucky it was only five, six days or they would have killed me.

Finally, the boatswain was getting complaints about me polishing the same piece of brass over and over again. So, just as we were getting to Cherbourg, they put me on the mail room which is a drop in the hold, all the way down at the bottom. And there's locked bins where all the mail goes. Now, they put these square ropes down at the bottom and the sailors carry those bags out from there, throw them on the ropes and then a crane would pick them up and put them in a tender. The boat didn't go into Cherbourg as it was too big.

The crew was giving me a hard time. And I got an idea: "Maybe I'll get off at Cherbourg. These guys are going to kill me. I have my money with me." But I decided to stick it out and go on to Southampton after a few arguments.

So finally we got to Southampton. In order to get off the boat, you're supposed to get a pass, but I didn't know that. So here I am dressed up, with a derby — a bowler hat what they call in England — and a silk suit. I was a sharp dresser. I'm going to get off with a bag and a guy stops me at the deck. He says, "You got a pass?" I said, "No. I don't have one." He said to me, "Then you can't get off. You go get a pass." I was scared. So I took a chance. I said, "I'm a friend of Whitie's. If you don't let me off, Whitie will take care of you." When they heard the name Whitie, they let me off. They were all afraid of Whitie.

By that time, I had already missed the train to London. So I went into a bar on the station and I have a drink. In England, there's a beer that's very strong and black: stout. I had this stout and I got a little bit dizzy. And I got on the next train to London.

The train gets into London about eleven o'clock at night. Now eleven o'clock at night, I go to my house where I lived. And, I'm standing on the other side of the street thinking whether I should check into a hotel and come there normal time, or, go over and wake them up. Along comes a bobby. The bobby says to me, "You're a bloody Yank, aren't you?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Aren't you Rose's boy?" You know my father talks a lot. I said, "Yes." He said, "There's your Dad looking out the window." I don't know, he just happened to be looking out the window. And the bobby calls up, "Here's your boy! Here's your Yankee son! Your son, Louis, is home from America!"

So I went over and the door opened and I went upstairs where the bedrooms were. And my stepmother — oh, what a doll, may she rest in peace. My mother was such a wonderful lady. She cried and the first thing she said, "Jackie, you must be hungry" because I was away about eight months and she thought in eight months I didn't eat. She said, "You must have a sandwich, because I know you didn't eat." I stayed there for a few days but then I saw that nothing had changed and I couldn't stay there.

Rose and Lain

I met an English fellow, Lain, and we went into business, making fur collars for the cloak and suit people. Rose and Lain. This fellow was the inside man and I was the outside man. His job was to make the collar and my job was to get the business and deliver the merchandise. I never went to our office, which was in Aldersgate Street, where Barbican is. Our boy used to meet me at a restaurant where all my customers were and bring me the mail.

My gimmick was dancing with their daughters in the afternoon dances, the tea-time dances. Twice a week was an afternoon dance where there were girls whose fathers used to own the stores that sell the cloth coats. I was a pretty good dancer as a young fellow. In fact, when I was a kid, I even once ran a dance in London. I brought the money home and put it on the bed and let my mother count it. It wasn't big money, but for a kid, you know, it wasn't bad. Anyway, I got in well with the girls and they used to tell their fathers to give me the business.

So, naturally, we had people working for us. But I was having problems with the English help. I was always the type to do today what I had to do tomorrow. One time I called my office and my partner did not complete an order that I had promised. I got annoyed, as I was a fast operator and when I promised a delivery I expected him to meet it. So I went the next morning to the office and had a meeting with the help. They told me that this is not the United States and to go back to the USA and try the speed system there. They reported me to the local council for slave driving.

I took stock and found skins missing. I asked my partner and he said a friend of mine came in from a different country and looked for me and he bought some merchandise but didn't pay for it yet. So I looked for my friend and I found that he did pay him. It was one of those things. So we split up. I took out the machines and left the keys and the lease.

How did I make a living after that? I had the good fortune of knowing this fellow, Sam Francis, that would sell his life for me. He was the guy in town. He was a millionaire and he loved me. It's the truth. In fact, he even said to Jean when he met her, "I have to love you if you marry Jack." Years later, Marshall met him also. I met him when he came over from South Africa where he was in trouble. It seems they were auctioneering in Johannesburg and a kafir — they call black people "kafirs" there — interfered and he shot him. He shot him because he was talking too much. So he went to London.

Anyway my friend, Sam Francis, was a wealthy guy and had helped me set up the business with Lain. So after I split with Lain, I used to sit in the restaurants where the furriers hung out and I used to hear what they were interested in. And I used to give the message to Sam, because he was a merchant. And he would buy that merchandise because he knew there was a trade for it, because they were talking about it.

On time he finds out there's about two or three thousand birds of prey, which is a small bird about four inches long with the most beautiful colored feathers. And he bought them for next to nothing. He was a big speculator. He thought they could be used for furs, but they couldn't because their backs had no skin so the operator couldn't sew them on.

He was stuck so he decided to try to sell them to the millinery trade as they could sew the feathers on with needle and cotton. So I gave him a suggestion that he should give them into a broker there and then I would set a rumor where the milliners are, that feather trimmings was going to be a big thing. So we did it. Well naturally, the milliners didn't go to him, they went to the broker. And that's how he sold them. You know, I could always make money as long as I could handle people.

New York, II

1926

Through the grapevine I heard there was a strike coming in the fur trade in America, so I knew I could make some money and I decided to go back. At that time I had a cousin who wanted to go with me. His name was Sam Amster and he was the son of my mother's brother. He was four years older than me and had been in the army but he was afraid of his own shadow.

So I sailed to Canada with him. I had to go through Canada because I had to slip into America because I was not supposed to be out of the country for so long. Anyway, we got to St. John's at the coldest time of the year and took a train to Montreal where we stayed a few days before going to Toronto. I found my cousin a good job in Toronto and then I slipped into New York. I opened a place in Farmingdale in Long Island and started to make fur coats for New York. I brought in my own crew from London.

After the strike was over, I moved back into Manhattan. A number of interesting things happened to me. I have a lot of little stories about the people that were living with me. I don't remember the exact order, so I'll just tell them as I remember them. Some of them might have happened before I went back to London. I'm not sure. Anyway, you'll figure it out.

In New York I lived at two different places. One was at 86th Street and Amsterdam or Columbus Avenue. The other was at 71st Street between Central Park and Columbus. That was a brownstone in a very elegant neighborhood. I saw Rudolph Valentino's funeral at 63rd and Columbus from there in August 1926.

Both places always used to be a hangout for English boys. Anybody who needed a place to stay could come over. Even if they had to sleep on the floor, they always had a place to sleep. I was like the savior for all the guys. It didn't mean anything. I paid the rent anyhow. And when you're away from home, you're a little lonesome anyway. And they all knew me because I was free with a buck, you know what I mean?

The landlady of the place on 86th Street was an Irish lady named Mrs. Brennerly. She was very fond of me. And she used to run a speakeasy in her apartment which was next to mine. This was during Prohibition, of course. In fact, I used to have a little joke. I told people I was a "sea-lawyer" because I "took cases off of ships." I had two bedrooms there but I only paid a small rent because she liked me and she knew she could trust me not to give her away.

The landlady of the place on 71st Street, was also Irish. She owned about six or eight brownstones — worth about a million bucks apiece — and rented apartments in all of them. She wanted to turn them over to me, that I should run them instead of my fur business. But I never thought about it seriously.

I lived quite a life in those days. I was a sharp dresser. In fact, Jean used to call me "a real Beau Brummell". She called my dad that too. I used to have a tailor and that tailor was a Jewish guy on Columbus Avenue. He had a key to my apartment. And his job was, once a week, to come into my apartment, open all the drawers and the closets and whatever needs laundering, whatever needs pressing, he used to take it out, and bring it back and hang it up. I used to go by at the end of the week and pay him.

God was pretty good to me and I never had rough times because, wherever I went, I struck with nice people. It was luck. But nobody ever supported me. I always took care of myself. I wasn't afraid I could make it.

Gambling

I was always lucky. During the off-season, when we didn't work, we used to play poker in my apartment because it was the biggest. I'd usually go to London for a few weeks and then come back and wait for the season to start. Anyway, I always won and after I cleaned them out I used to go to sleep with my robe on with all the money in my pockets. And they used to wake me up to cash checks or borrow money. Even if I hadn't cleaned them out, the moment they borrowed money from me I used to quit. I never let them play against me with my own money. I had a little black book where I kept the names of the people that borrowed from me and how much they borrowed. By the time I got married, it came to a lot of money. I think it was at least a thousand dollars, or more. And just before I got married I tore that book up, right in front of Jean. I had to shape up.

So I was lucky and some of these guys were real gamblers. It was in their blood. So they wanted me to go with them to McManus's, which was around 42nd Street, 49th Street, whatever, and Broadway. McManus was a professional gambler and all the big stars — I mean all the big gamblers — used to hang out there. Famous names. Well, my friends wanted me to go so they could bet on me, like at the dice table. Whatever I'll do they'll bet on me. So I went down there one night. Arnold Rothstein was there. He was a gangster. Not a gangster so much, but a high-roller. I think there was a murderer connected with him. All these kind of people were there.

Well, I looked around and I realized that if I do it, win or lose, I'll be a gambler for the rest of his life. So I said to the fellows, "I'm not going to do it." It had taken them a long time to get me there but I turned around and walked out. I didn't play anything. My friends wanted to kill me.

Murray Frankel

Once there was a young fellow whose last name was Frankel and whose first name was Murray, I think. I'm not sure. Anyway his father was the biggest butcher in England. He had maybe fifty butcher shops and was a very religious guy. Everybody knew the name. I didn't know him but I heard the name. His father saw that the kid wouldn't work out in the butcher business, so he went ahead and made him the manager of one of his cinemas. The father had four or five cinemas around London, so he made him the manager. And the kid used to go and collect the money at the end of the week. Anyway, he was such a gambler that he lost all his father's money and he couldn't face him.

So he came to America and he heard of me. So he came and I says to him, "I know of you. You know of me. You're about my age." I said, "What happened?" He told me the truth. He absconded with the money and he couldn't face his father and he came over. So I said to him, "Well, look, I'm going to let you stay for a couple of weeks but I can't support you. I've got two other guys here." I had a big apartment. I was living at 86th Street and Amsterdam or Columbus Avenue, that time. So he said to me, "Fine."

Anyway this fellow was such a gambler and he used to go to McManus's. One day I'm down there with another friend of mine watching him and he's killing them on the dice. He's cleaning up. I would say those days must have been a couple of thousand dollars. It was a fortune of money. The dice were rolling with him.

Anyway, while the dice were rolling I was taking some of the chips and putting them in my pocket. I must have put three, four hundred dollars in my pocket. And my friend did the same. We were bamboozling in order that he should leave with some money, because we knew he had to give it back. Finally, he ran out of money and we left the table with him. We went over to the cashier and we cashed the chips and gave him the money. He was so mad with us that he wouldn't talk to us. He said we broke his luck. So I said, "The hell with you. You can't even come to my place tonight."

After that he looks up the paper, he sees an ad that they needed drivers for the laundry and he got a job. He delivered the laundry and he got the money and it was working out good. I got him an apartment someplace, near my place. Very reasonable. And he was delivering laundry. This went on about three, four months. I didn't see too much of him.

All of a sudden one day he comes to see me. He says, "I can't go to my apartment." "What's wrong?" He said, "I took the money instead of giving it to the firm. I gambled it." So I said, "OK. Stay here." I was taking a chance. The next morning about four o'clock I had an idea to take him down by taxi to the docks, give somebody fifty bucks and put him on the boat, as a stowaway or whatever, and send him back to England.

Lo and behold, about five o'clock there's a car downstairs with guys outside. We looked down because Mrs. Brennerly, the lady with the speakeasy, used to look anyway. She said, "These fellows are not for me." In other words, they're out looking for him. So I said to her, "Do you think I should go down and talk to them and feel it out." She said, "Don't take a chance." She liked me very much because I was her confidante, I wouldn't give her away.

So we sat there and I had him sit by the window for two and a half hours. Well, when he sat there for two and a half hours that car moved away. So I had him put his clothes on and we walked around the other corner and took a taxi down to the docks. And I got him on the ship. He had a few bucks, you know. But for several nights after they came looking for him, but of course he wasn't there. They would have killed him.

Nicky Marks

Nicky Marks was a guy whose father was a rich woolen merchant in the East End of London, Whitechapel. And he bought himself a gymnasium and put it downstairs in the basement. He was a handsome looking guy with muscles and all and he wanted to be a fighter. Well, he left home and came to America and ended up staying with me. He said he can fight, but he didn't have no fights.

So I became his manager. I was the guy watching him and telling him what to do. And I didn't know anything. It turned out that there was an English manager, that I heard of back in England. His name was Charlie Harvey and he was from Liverpool. And I got chummy with him. You know how people are clannish. And through him I got Nicky a couple of fights, ten-rounders. He got ten dollars for ten rounds, but we had to give five dollars to the guy who stands by your corner, the seconds.

Anyway, Nicky won the first 10-rounder at the Lickerson Arena, 64th Street off Broadway, off Columbus Avenue. That was an armory. I got him the fight because I lived a few streets away on 71st Street. He won that fight only because the other guy was scared of him. Nicky Marks had a big reputation, but he couldn't fight.

Then I got him a fight in the Lenox A.C., the Lenox Athletic Club, that was in Harlem with Paul Bellamy. He wasn't bad, he wasn't good. It seemed that whoever he fought was more scared of him than to fight him. He wasn't really what you call a boxer. Anyway, Nicky was supposed to get forty dollars but he had to give ten to be a member of an association. This way they would allow a second to come into the ring. What a racket.

Finally I got him a big fight, in Brooklyn. And he's supposed to get about \$250. Well when we went down in the basement there, and they're talking to him, giving him pep. He was scared. And the fight before he was scared. So I knew he wasn't a fighter. Anyway, he lost that fight. They beat the hell out of him and he quit. He quit and he got onto a boat as a steward behind the bar and went to Australia. And I lost track of him.

About twenty-five or thirty years later, however, I saw him on TV. They were praising him that he's the maitre d' of Lindy's around 50th and Broadway where I used to go a lot. And they were talking about his past experience as a fighter. So I said to Jean, "We got to go down there." We went down to see him and I said, "Nicky, sit down." And he just looked at me. He's the maitre d', the head waiter. So I said to him, "Don't you know who I am?" He said, "No." And I didn't really recognize him either. But as he was talking, the voice And as I was talking, my voice I said, "My name's Jack Rose." I thought he was going to faint he was so excited.

Well, it turned out that he had stayed in Australia for about a year and a half and had a few fights before he decided to come back to New York. He told Jean, "If it wasn't through my friend Jack Rose I wouldn't be alive today." He says, "You are married to the greatest guy I ever knew in my life." He says, "He did so much for everybody and an awful lot for me." After all, I fed him, gave him money. I did that to a lot of my friends. And he told her stories about me, while we were sitting there. He told the waiters not to bother him, he's visiting with an old friend. You know as the maitre d' so he could do what he likes. He wouldn't even let us pay the tab.

Phil Scott

Another fighter who stayed with me was Phil Scott who was a light-heavyweight champion in England. When I met him things were bad with him. He has come over and things didn't work. They knocked the hell out of him. And he heard that any English boy can always have a place to sleep with me, so he stayed with us.

He couldn't get a manager, so I was the manager. I went down to 23rd Street, where they used to have the old Madison Square Garden and I booked him a couple of fights. But it was no good because the fights I could get him were degrading, and the good fights they didn't want to take him because he had a bad reputation. He was no good. If you hit him right you knocked him out.

Unfortunately, he was also the kind of guy that you couldn't trust. We were in fear of him and we didn't like him. One of the fellows who lived with me opened up his mail — which he shouldn't have — and saw that his father wrote him a letter from England and said something about "Be careful of those Jew bastards in America, especially New York." So we didn't like him and we had to get rid of him. So I told him I'm giving up the apartment or some such excuse — I forget exactly — and he moved to another place. He had no money and if his father wouldn't have written that letter, maybe we would of helped him.

Anyway, a little while later a friend of mine and I were going back to England on the *Berengaria* or the *Acquitania* and we met him on the boat. I didn't know he was going to be on the boat. And we had pictures taken of me with a sailor's hat, with him, Phil Scott, the champion. And, I'm a bit of a prankster. So, the *piece d' resistance* is, one day on the boat I got up and asked the maitre d' not to bang the gong that they use to announce dinner. I said, "Don't bang it because Phil Scott will fall down." Well, it was a huge joke. Everybody was laughing. But that was the end of him and I. His face got red and he stopped talking to me.

Alex Martin

Alex Martin, on the other hand, was a nice guy. He didn't have much money and came to stay with me. He was so embarrassed that he couldn't take any money. He was a very honest guy. Instead he went out to wash dishes and all that sort of thing. When I heard he was working for a cheap coffee place off Broadway near Columbus Avenue, washing dishes, I got sick. A kid comes from rich family and has to do that. Well, finally, he couldn't make it and he left me a beautiful note that he's going back.

Unfortunately he had no carfare. Years ago there used to be such a thing as these freighters, or tug boats. There's a famous name for them, but I can't think of it right now. And they used to travel from one country to another with pigs. And they needed people to watch the pigs and to clean away the mess. So instead of going to England in five days, you used to get there in three weeks, working for your passage. Anyway, he went over on one of those because he had no money.

When he gets to England, he goes to work for his father who had a few pubs in London and was very rich. He sent me about fifty pound to pay back some of the money I had lent him. While he was there, he met a fellow that used to write lyrics, who was also in bad shape, and he taught him how to write lyrics for songs. All of a sudden, about six months later, while he's working in his father's pub, the lyrics to a song came into his head. He had no voice, but he was singing it when he used to serve the drinks. And he started singing this song and he was writing down the music. He happened to catch a song. This I found out later on.

So he went to a place called Hammersmith Palais, in Hammersmith, in London. I was there when they first opened up and I used to dance there a lot. I wasn't there at this time, but he went there and they heralded him as "England's Irving Berlin". Unfortunately, the guy only had one song in him. He couldn't make any other songs. He thought he could, he tried, but it didn't work. So one of his friends said, "Why don't you go back to America and see Jackie Rose? Maybe he can help you?"

Well, he came back to New York and he stayed with me for a couple of weeks and he told me his story and showed me photographs that was in the paper. "England's Berlin." So I said to him, "Being it says 'England's Irving Berlin', I'll take you to see the real Irving Berlin." He had an office on Broadway.

So we went there and they asked him to sing out the lyrics. But I also noticed — I don't know whether it's honest or dishonest — that Irving Berlin had somebody writing down the music and the words. And they said, "It's not bad, it's not good. But being they heralded it in London, we'll give it a try. When you get a couple of more songs, you bring up the lyrics and we'll put it to music and we'll have somebody sing it."

Well, he couldn't do it. He tried very hard and it didn't work out. He had a couple of lemons, but it turned out he wasn't a musician. He just accidentally happened to have a hit. And he didn't even have the money to go back to England, so he went back on the same kind of a deal. I never saw him after that.

Hock Kestler

One of my closest friends at the time was Hock Kestler. "Hock" was his nickname — I never knew his real name — and he was a furrier. He was a good mechanic. Later on I realized he was a phoney, but we never called him a phoney then.

I met him for the first time when I was a kid. He was about a year or two older than me and had lived with my brother and gone to my school, but I didn't know him until we all took a trip to Southend when I was eight or nine. You know, I don't know how we got there. I forget. We were a bunch of kids. Anyway, we go to Southend and this Hock is doing card tricks near the rocks and getting people to put down money. He was doing "three card monte" — saw here, show there. A scam, like with the nut shells. So that's when I first got to know him.

I remembered him later on when we got older and we lived together in New York. He was a guy that used to smoke cigarettes with a cigarette-holder. He was always slender and he wore nice clothes. Jean used to say he was a beautiful dresser, a real Beau Brummell. He wore spats, gray spats. We all wore them. And he was a good talker, he was good company. He always had stories to tell. He could con a guy.

Hock was also an excellent dancer. He, I, and a couple of other fellows used to go to the Arcadia on 53rd Street and Broadway two, three nights a week. It was like a hangout. We also went to the Roseland. Roseland was an upstairs place and this was all on one floor. I used to like to dance but only with the hostesses who taught dancing although I never paid them. I used to hear fascinating stories from them. One of them was going with a multi-multi-millionaire and she told me all the stories. I was a pretty good dancer, too.

Anyway, Jean's sister Ida liked Hock. He came with me to Jean's sister, Rose's, house the night after the Apache party and she fell for him. But he was a real man-about-town and she was like a stick-in-the-mud and he didn't like her. He went for young chicks. And the fellows that liked her, she didn't like.

Finally, this Hock, became a racetrack guy. It was a sickness. He was a gambler. That's where he met the woman he married, at the track. She liked the races. She was rich and lived off Broadway and 10th Street.

Hick Girls

Hanging out on Broadway you meet all kinds of creatures, all kinds of people. One day one of the boys met two Gentile girls. Rather nice-looking but naive. They believed everything they read or saw. And real hick. And what brought them into New York, from out west somewhere — Arizona maybe — was they had seen adverts in the paper that they come in and they teach them to dance and become models. OK. So they came in and they gave this guy on Broadway every nickel that they had because he conned them. He said he's going to teach them, going to get them a job in this place and that place.

Well, one of the boys met them at the Arcadia. We were always looking out for poor kids. And they were crying and they tell him the story. So we met them the next morning and bought them breakfast. Then we went to the place there, threatened the guy that we're going to expose him, that they brought these girls in and took their money. He gave them back part of the money. And I was one of the group. I was the originator of that idea. Then we took them to Pennsylvania Station or Grand Central and put them on the train to go home. Otherwise they would have become prostitutes.

A few months later we got a very nice note and some present, I forget what it was. A shirt or something. And I changed their life. You know, if anybody needed money or something they knew who to hit. Jack Rose would always take care of them. I don't believe people have to do that, but sometimes if you see a case of true hardship and you reflect on your background, you think that it could be you, that "there but for the grace of God go I."

Jean

1926

Now, of course, I've been saving the best and most important part for last. How I met Jean. Because I had known her on and off since I came back before the strike. During the strike, when I used to come into New York for the weekend I started to call and take her out on Saturday and Sunday. I used to call from Long Island to make a date. At that time, the phone you had to turn the handle and finally you would get your party. Once, I asked what she was doing and she said "I have my hat and coat on and we are going to a movie." I took it as an insult. I was wrong, however.

After the strike was over, I was living in the brownstone at 71st and Central Park. The place had a few English boys in it. One day one of the fellows was getting engaged or married to an American girl and he asked me to the party. I wasn't anxious to go, but I went and I saw Jean there. They sat us together and that was the start of keeping company. I liked her. We went out a few times and we enjoyed each other's company. When we went to restaurants I would draw her face on the tablecloths and napkins. Like the faces I drew in school, only prettier. I believe she liked my British accent.

One day some of the boys — Hock Kestler, my cousin and an American fellow named Murray Cohen — and me took a place in Brighton Beach for the summer. Lo and behold, Jean and some girls also had a place there. It was just coincidence. The moon was on the boardwalk so I told the English boys, "Don't get married". But I didn't listen to my own advice. I thought we were suited for each other and I asked her and she agreed. Next I had to meet her family. Her mother and father were the finest people but they were not sure about me because my family was in London. But they got to like me.

1927

A year before I got married, I went home to visit my mother, may she rest in peace. I knew that she was sick. I saw by the letters. They were tear-stained so badly you could hardly read them. I think she was broken-hearted. I said to Jean, I said, "Look. The last thing I do, I can't help it, I got to go see my mother." It sounded funny because we were planning to get married. And I went over there. And, let me tell you, those days it was an expense. After all, you don't get paid for not working. But I made it my business to go over. Every year I made a trip. My brother Mickey had no interest at all. He never went home all the years he was here.

When I got there my mother was in the hospital in Southend-on-the-Sea. When I got to the hospital, my mother got out of bed and we went home. In those days,

whenever I used to go home, I used to leave money with the trade people like the tailor, the grocery man and hairdresser so my mother could buy things she wanted without my father's knowing it. Had I given her the money, she would just have invested it in jewelry as she was very thrifty. She felt that, to protect herself from ups and downs, it's best to save. Anyway, this time she thought she wasn't going to live much longer and she insisted that I take all her jewelry. But I couldn't do it.

1928

I couldn't stay long and I went back to New York. Jean and I were married on December 26, 1928. My brother at that time was going with a girl whom he married after Jean and I were married. One month after we got married my mother died. I really loved her. My father was a man that spoke a few languages, but he was a gambler and took the jewelry and spent the money. After that I sent my dad money, a hundred-and-five pounds — about five hundred dollars since it was five dollars to the pound then — to put up a stone at the burial grounds.

Many years later when I went with Robert and Judi to visit my dad's grave, I found out that she had just a little marker on her grave all those years. My father had just spent the money I sent him on himself. So we put up a stone. And once in a while if we're in London visiting a friend of ours who lives near East Ham we go over and check and give a few pounds to the man in charge.

American Rose

The year we got married was just five years that I lived in the country and I became a United States citizen right before I was married. It was then that I changed my name legally from Rosner to Rose. My father's name was originally Rosner but when he came to England he used Rose. Then when he had to register during the war he went back to Rosner. But I grew up using Rose and I was always Rose to everybody I went to school with and in all my businesses. Only on his papers, under his registration was I Rosner. And naturally when I had to go for papers to get into the United States I had to go under Rosner because that's what it said on the papers. In other words, my British passport said Rosner. But when I became a citizen I took an oath and changed my name and that's how I came back to Rose.

So all at one time, more or less, I became American, married and Rose. I was twenty-five.

**Ein Klein:
Jean's Story
1907-1928**

Coming to America

My family came from Russia, from a little town outside of Odessa, called Pudulska Gubernja [?]. Can you believe that I can still remember it? Pudulska, that's the Polish part of Russia. Gubernja, that means "area" or "town". My father's father died when my father was just a few years old — I don't know exactly when — and his mother remarried, a man with a family. And she had two children with him, Phil and Max. Phil was older and Max was younger. The two children are half-brothers of my father, but they were closer than real brothers. The love was unbelievable. He also had a real brother, an older brother, but I don't remember his name. His last name was Klein. My father's name was Frank.

In those days everybody had to go into the army. Well, almost everybody. The oldest brother, the real brother, was very well educated, and he was an attorney, a lawyer or whatever they call it in Russia, and he was the head of the town. He was like a mayor, equivalent to a mayor. And he used to issue marriage licenses and death certificates and birth certificates, you know, and other things. And he lived in a beautiful big house. Beautiful by comparison, you know, since he was the head man of that town. And he had a beautiful wife and two daughters. Anyway, they didn't take him in the army.

c.1895 But my father, when he became of age, had to go into the army. He must have been about 18 or 19 or 20, because he served in the army for eight years before he came to this country and then he was only about 29. Anyway, he was young. And he was with the horses, in the cavalry.

While my father was in the army, Philip and Max, his two half-brothers were called up. But before they can get to them, they skipped the country. They had written to an uncle living in Brooklyn who was very comfortable and he had sent them the means to get here. Max was already married and had a little baby, but he left them behind and they passed from the border and whatever and they got to this country. And the uncle was the one that was responsible for the two brothers when they came over, and they lived with him. All this time the half-brothers were corresponding with my father. So, even though he was in the service, he knew just what they were doing.

c.1903 Then just before his time was up, my father got a notice that he has to re-enlist for another eight years. The first eight years was not even over, probably another six months or something to go, when he got a notice that he cannot get out of the army at the end of his time and he has to re-enlist. And he wrote to his half-brothers and they says, "Don't do it". And he didn't want to do it. And they sent him a letter telling him exactly how to go about it, to skip the country. So he left his family with his mother and he came to America.

When he got here, he couldn't be in his profession, which was singing. He had a beautiful voice. In the beginning he used to sing in the choir and then he became what they call it a cantor here. But when he came to this country, you know, he had to start making a living to save money to send for his family. So he did very menial work. He worked at a sweatshop, about 12, 14 hours a day. And the most he made was like three or four dollars a week. This is about 1902 or 1903.

And he was here three [?] years before he and his brothers were able to bring their families over. My two uncles by that time were making a fairly good living. One was a very good carpenter in Europe and the other one — he was a wise guy — he wasn't that good a carpenter. But they started doing carpentry work and they started making money. I don't know what they paid you, but they were making a living. Enough to save. And my father saved every penny he made.

c.1904

And they sent passage money over for the whole group. You know, the grandmother came along. She was the most wonderful woman. I knew her. She died when I was 15. So I got to know her very well. And my mother and four children. She had three children, but nine months before she got to this country Ida was born. In other words, she was pregnant when my father left. And then the four of them came over. And Max's wife, Etta, and the little baby came over, but the baby died on the way over. The little baby died. So he didn't have any children, although they had children in this country. And they all came over in steerage.

When my father brought his family over they got established in a small apartment in Brooklyn, on Georgia Avenue. My father was struggling in these factories, but then my uncles, they became quite comfortable, early. I mean, after a couple of years of carpentry, they took on jobs, you know, like contracting and all that. And then, maybe in two or three years' time, they started building. They built small things, stores, store fronts, and whatever.

And my uncles built two small apartment houses and they asked my father to take charge. He was like the super. He used to collect the rent and see that the building was clean. People came into clean, but he did a lot of the cleaning. My mother used to clean, too. I don't remember her doing it, but she was telling me they had marble stairs leading to the entrance. Of course, it was a walkup. And she used to scrub. You know, she helped out. Eventually she didn't have to, when he started making a living.

1907

And then when I was born, that was in 1907, my father was making a living. I don't remember him ever being poor, real poor. They may have been poor before I was born, but I wasn't poor. And we had everything that we needed. But my uncles both became very, very wealthy, by comparison, because they went into big buildings and blocks of high-rises and whatever.

Cossacks

Only the older brother didn't come to America, and that was their misfortune. Of course, he had nothing to lose by staying since he was an official. And my father was corresponding with this older brother all the time. My father was the only one that wrote, that was very fluent in languages. Russian of course he knew, Polish he wrote and he learned how to write English eventually. So he used to correspond with this brother in Europe. And everything was fine.

c.1915

And then, when I was about seven, eight, nine years old, my father didn't hear from them for a little while and he was terribly worried. So he got in touch with somebody in that town and they wrote him a letter to tell him what happened to his family, which was terrible. And then he got the address of his sister-in-law in Europe and he got the whole story.

What happened was, the Cossacks got them. In those days, the Cossacks used to rampage all the towns, going around just grabbing anything they can and actually killing

people. Even if a person didn't have anything they'd surely kill him. Anyway, when the Cossacks got to this town they asked somebody, "Who lives in that big house up on the hill?" That was the only big house on that hill. And they told them, and the Cossacks took the horses and went up to there and knocked on the door.

In the meantime my uncle had a hidden room, in the paneling, that he can just push a button and it will open up. It was hidden with furniture. And as soon as he knew that they were coming — he heard with the hoofs coming and all that — he got his wife and two daughters hidden in there. When the Cossacks got there, they asked him, "Who are you? What do you do? Where is your family?" You know. And he stood up to them, I understand, from what I heard from my father with the letters that he used to get.

And he said there was nobody there and they said they didn't believe him. They kept saying, "You have somebody here." And before they even went in to rampage the house, take everything they could lay their hands on, they shot him right in the doorway. And he died. But the wife and the daughters, they didn't come out. They were quiet while the Cossacks ransacked the place and took the money that he had, because he was well-to-do.

After that, the wife and the daughters ran away and they were hiding. They couldn't live in that house anymore because the Cossacks would be coming back. So after my father found out where they were, he used to correspond with them and they sent pictures of themselves and things were terrible. They were very bad off. From a very wealthy family to scrounging.

So the two brothers and my father, they sent money. There's one thing about my father: As rich as his brother's were — I mean they weren't millionaires yet at the time, they became later on — but he always paid his share, whatever he could. And they sent money. So she says, "Don't send money. Send material" or things that they can sell to people. So they used to go down on the East Side and buy bolts of cloth, material, wool, and whatever, like a few hundred dollars' worth, and ship it to them. And they got it and that's how they got along. And they were able to live on that for quite awhile.

During those years they were hiding in different places and he had to have different addresses to send the letters to, until finally they got to a certain town where they thought they were safe. And the next thing we knew, the girls were getting married. I remember we got a picture of the mother with the two girls. I don't know who has that picture now, but the most beautiful girls. They were about 17 at the time and he sent them dowry.

1917 And then right at 1917, when the czar was overthrown, that's the last they heard of them. All the letters that my father wrote didn't reach them. And my uncle had already a little influence and got people to inquire and find out. But not a word came through anymore. Somebody did something to them, either the Cossacks killed them or the communists killed them. And that was the end of them. That was the end of that family.

BR Construction

As far as our family is concerned, by that time my father was doing a little building with another man named Bernie Rosenstock. It was Klein and Rosenstock, but the company was named BR Construction Company, because Rosenstock had the company already when he approached my father. And, he said since he had the

corporation, we'll stay with that. So it was the BR Construction Company for many years.

My father was running the thing. He didn't actually build the buildings. He was the brains and he used to get the contractors. Later on, when I graduated from that business school, I did all the bookkeeping until I got married. So I know. I met all the contractors and the people. At first, he made those storefronts and other things in Brooklyn. Then he started building up in the Bronx. There was the Watson Estates, which was up at the end of the Bronx and the beginning of Westchester. It was the Bronx, but it was called Westchester Avenue. And it was up a hill, the land that he bought. He bought at first one parcel and then he added the others. So he built a lot of houses there, and tennis courts and things. And everything was BR Construction.

A Jewish Home, A Kosher Home

My parents were both very religious people. My father went to synagogue morning and evening and was very well learned in Hebrew and my mother kept a kosher home. She didn't know Hebrew. Women in Europe had enough to do bringing up the kids without going to Hebrew school. But she knew enough. She kept a kosher home and she went to synagogue for the holidays. The women sat upstairs; the men downstairs. Even in that lovely synagogue that my father built, it was two levels. And everything was done to the nth degree. To his dying day he was a very religious man.

My brothers both went to Hebrew school from a very young age and they were Bar Mitzvah. And they really knew it, too. It wasn't superficial like, you know, the others. They really know it, to this day. Well, to this day they're not here, but even Maxie, who never much of a student at school, knew it. He was the baby of the family and they let him go crazy by that time. He used to hang out with the candy store kids and became a little bit of a rough neck. But every time we went to the cemetery, Maxie used to say the prayers without looking at the book or anything. Because he used to read. He used to go to the temple, knew all the prayers, by heart. And Willie, of course, kept a very kosher home because his wife Rose came from a very religious home. To this day they're ultra, ultra religious. The whole family. Rose Klein, plus her sisters, her brother-in-laws. All of them.

Rose and Fanny went to Hebrew school too, because my father was more modern by that time and he could afford it. But when it came time for Ida and me to go, he had troubles and he couldn't put us through too. So I didn't go to Hebrew school. But I wouldn't put any lights on Yom Kippur in the house. It was always dark. Just the candles that were burning.

And while my parents were alive I kept kosher. Even after I married Jack, I had two separate dishes, separate dishcloths and everything. And when my father lived with us, years later, he shipped down all his Passover stuff, all his dishes, pots and pans. And even though he did it, he still did all kinds of rituals with all that stuff. You know, certain things that he wasn't positive were 100% kosher he buried in the garden for 48 hours. Like the silverware, or anything that you want to use for the holidays that you used all year round. To make it kosher. Then he boiled it in a big vat, threw some stones in to bubble it over, you know. He did the whole thing right. And even after he remarried, when Robert and Marshall were grown and we lived in Manhattan Beach and he came with his second wife for dinner, I never gave him anything that was not kosher.

And we all went to the temple for the holidays. My father used to get seats for the men downstairs — the whole first row was for him, my brother, my brother-in-law, Jack. You know, everybody had to be there. And we sat upstairs with my mother, of course, because it was a very religious temple.

But after he passed away, then I gave it up. You know, I never believed in it, but while they're alive I knew I wanted them to have it.

Rose Marries Nathan

1915

Anyway, going back. About the time that terrible thing with the Cossacks happened, we moved to Dumont Avenue into a three-story corner house that my father built. We had two tenants and we had the whole floor. Two doors away from us was a grocery store that Nathan's father owned. Nathan was 19 at the time and he used to hang around. He would sit in front of that grocery store with his feet up on a something, you know, and read. He didn't want to work. And his father did nothing either. But the mother worked in that grocery like a slave. And Nathan had a younger brother, Charlie, and four younger sisters. Nathan was the oldest.

My sister Rose was only 15 at the time. She was such a beautiful girl, talented, but she quit school after she graduated and she went to work. She got a good job in an office. And Nathan started courting her when she was 16. Courting her! He was a boy on the block! And my folks were very much against it, because he looked like a bum. You know lazy even, dear God.

1917

Well, in 1917 when the war broke out, Nathan got a notice that he's going to be drafted. And the next thing we know, they're married! Nathan and Rose were married! She was not even 17, because they're exactly four years apart, and he was not quite 21. And because she was underage, his mother and father went as witnesses making believe that they're the girl's mother and father so they could get their license to get married. And they didn't even tell us.

But my uncle Philip, who was the sweetest guy in the world, read about it in the paper, where the marriage licenses are reported. And he sees their names. So he calls up my father. He says, "What happened? You don't let me know when Rose is getting married?" And my father says, "What marriage? I don't know anything about it." And that's how we found out. My father hit the ceiling! He was furious. And he called them everything under the sun and he wanted to throw them out of the house. But what's he going to do?

And immediately she became pregnant. Because that was the idea, so she'd have a baby and he wouldn't have to go overseas. So, even though he said he's got married, he went into the army, but he was in Jersey in Camp Dix. Anyway, when my sister was about in the seventh month, or eighth month or whatever, she and Nathan's mother, who was still acting as her mother, went over there and persuaded them not to send Nathan overseas. She was a darling woman, I'm not blaming her, but it was a fraud. My mother and father wouldn't give a damn about him, whether he's going to go to Europe, you know, overseas or not. And he got away with it. His clothes and his dufflebag and everything went over to Europe with his unit, but he pulled out. He didn't have to go because she was pregnant. And that was the idea.

1918 Flu

1918

Around the same time, we had the influenza, the 1918 influenza. You must have heard of it because that's something the whole world knows about. This flu struck this country and people were dying, like flies. It was the worst flu that ever hit this country — then or since. Even now, to this day. Anyway, Nathan had gotten himself a job in Camp Upton where he was working in the supply room. And his brother, Charlie, was drafted also into the service. He was a brilliant boy in his third year of college. A civil engineer, he was supposed to be. And he wrote Nathan, that they didn't have enough coats to go around and if he can possibly get a jacket, one of these army jackets, to send it to him. This was around October, November and it was a very bitter winter. But by the time Nathan was able to get the jacket sent to the camp that he's at, Charlie came down with the flu. And he went into the hospital, an army hospital, and he died about a week later. He never got the jacket.

I tell you, it was a tragedy. When they brought the body home they put it in the bedroom, on the floor. But his mother never looked at that casket. Wherever she went she kept her hand in front of her eyes. And when they buried him, she didn't go to the cemetery. She didn't go to the funeral. She didn't see him. He was her pride and joy. Anyway, they buried him and the street was black with people. I've never seen, since even, such a funeral. Because he was one of the first ones in the whole area to die of the flu in that tremendous epidemic. Anyway, they buried him on Sunday and by Friday morning of the same week his mother was dead. Of a broken heart. There was nothing wrong with her physically. It's just that she didn't eat, she didn't sleep, she didn't do anything. She just laid in bed. And they buried her. So you can imagine how bad we all felt. I can cry when I think of it, it was so sad.

In the meantime, Nathan and Rose's baby was born, a baby girl. And she was about a month old when Rose and Fanny both came down with that same flu and they were running fevers of 105, 104-1/2 and all that. Then everybody else in the house came down with the flu. My mother, my father, Ida. Even Maxie and he was about 8 then. It was very, very contagious. Only my brother Willie and I didn't get it. And I took complete charge of the baby, the most gorgeous little girl. Fortunately, nobody died in our family. My sister Rose and Fanny they almost gave up on, but they pulled them through. The doctor that took care of them said they should be in a cold room. But Fanny was left with a spot on her lung and that's what killed her a couple of years later. But we didn't know that then. All we knew was that everybody revived and recovered.

Thatford Avenue Grocery

1918

Soon after that we moved to like the farm section of Brooklyn, which was like two miles away from where we used to live. During the war years nobody was building and so business wasn't any good. And my father wasn't going to just sit and twiddle his thumbs, so he bought a grocery store on Thatford Avenue. A nice, big, corner grocery store. And my mother was in the store with him and he ran the store. We didn't live in the grocery. We had an apartment across the street, in like a two-family house.

It was a very nice neighborhood with different kinds of homes — some two-family homes, some private homes. And there were fancy ladies there and some of them had maids. And before breakfast we had to deliver their milk and whatever they ordered the night before. So early in the morning, like God knows, four o'clock in the morning

maybe, my father and mother were filling already the orders in a big room in the back. My father used to stand like a general with this long strip of orders. Quarter of a pound of cream cheese. A little, you know, lox. Whatever they were ordering. And the whole thing maybe amounted to like three dollars, or two dollars. And my mother used to fill the orders. And my mother wasn't such a healthy lady because she had rheumatism. She had other things happen, too. You know, all that caught up with her.

Then, when they had filled the orders, my poor brother Willie used to make the deliveries, like around six o'clock in the morning. He was a very, very bright fellow. He was the student in the family and getting the highest marks in school. But he couldn't stand the way my mother and father were working so hard, and so he dropped out. It was a shame, you know, because he was a senior in high school, his last year, and he could have really been somebody.

And Ida and I used to go around to get the orders and collect the milk pitchers. You know, it was loose milk. Nobody had bottles or anything in those days. They used to deliver those tall cans, great big ones. And my father used to scoop out the milk, you know, quarts or whatever, with a ladle into these pitchers. At that time I was already almost 11 and I remember it distinctly.

After we were at Thatford Avenue awhile, we got this call that Rose's little girl had died. And she was only about four months old. Four or five months old. And the most gorgeous creature you ever saw in your life. But she had had the flu, not from the main epidemic, but later. And, of course, when the little girl died, we were all heartbroken and we went there, but my sister was inconsolable. She was just unbelievable. So that's when we were saying, you know, "Well, maybe God sent down the little girl to save her father." And they always claimed later that she's the one who saved her father's life. Because if she wasn't in her mother's belly, Nathan would have been killed, because later we found out that 90% of the fellows who went over from his unit didn't come back. His clothes were there, but he never went.

c.1919

After about a year, when I was about 11 or 12, my father was able to start building again, so he got rid of the grocery and bought a house all the way out in East New York, in the country. Which was good because he didn't like the grocery. And I didn't either. I resented the women we delivered to. When we used to come in, they looked at us like we were like trash or something. You know, my father was doing so nicely before and all of a sudden we're in this place. So I resented them.

And when we left there was about 500 dollars due us from those people. Everybody had an account there. Of course, some of them paid cash, but with the fancy ladies everything was, you know, "Mark it down. Mark it down." So after we moved away and my father was building, Ida and I used to go there to try to collect. But we never collected a dime! They always had an excuse and here these are people who were comfortable. So my father wrote off the whole thing. Here he slaved, and ... Well, that was that. So when he got rid of it, he says this is not for him.

So we moved in the country there and he started building on new lots in that area. They called it the country because it was maybe two or three miles from where we used to live. But those three miles made a difference. And my father built two six-story houses. Walkups, but, you know, they had elevators in those days. And he was doing nicely. So we lived there for about three or four years, until he was finished with his projects and then we came back.

Alpha Business School

1921 When I was 14 I graduated public school, with honors, and I did not want to go to high school. I was a good student but I was going out with girlfriends that were three years older than me, my sister Ida and her friends, and none of them went to high school, and I figured I'll miss out if I go. It was a foolish thing to do and I regret it. But, you know, peer pressure. So, I told my folks that I didn't want to go to high school, that I can go to this business school which teaches you bookkeeping, stenography, typing. And I went there, to the Alpha Business School, which was on Broadway in the Williamsburg section.

1922 And I seemed to be doing alright. Instead of a year and a half, it took me under a year until one day the secretary of the principal or somebody called me in and she says, "The principal wants to see you. There's a call for a stenographer at a manufacturing optical house" and they'd like me to go to be interviewed. I said, "I can't go this way." You know, I had a short skirt on, with saddle shoes. You know. I said, "I look 12." I looked very young. I says, "They'll throw me out." So she says, "I'll fix you up." And she gives me a hat and a coat — she had a spring coat — and I went over there. It was within walking distance, so I walked over there. And I was scared out of my wits when I went.

So I was interviewed and he wanted me to take some shorthand, which I did. And then I read it back and I typed it up and, you know, showed it to him. He says, "Come tomorrow." And I came home and told my folks, not only did I graduate, but I have a job! The same day. But, I said, "How can I possibly go with the type of clothes that I have?" And my sister Fanny, who was very close to me, she says, "Don't worry about it." We went for a haircut and cut my curls off. And we went out and got some clothes, and shoes. Anyway, I was 15 when I started to work, so it was 1922. And I thought, "It won't last." But it did. It lasted about six and a half years. I got married out of that job! That was the only job I ever had.

The firm was Joseph Greif [?] and Company, manufacturing opticians. They made like eyeglasses and things. He used to supply eyeglass stores, people like Meyrowitz [?], which is still in existence. And he also serviced oculists, which is a doctor that's more than an optometrist. And they did well. They had about six or eight people in the factory, and then Joseph Greif had a brother-in-law, Milton, who did most of the work in the office, filling out the things and sending it into the factory to be ground, and then we had a half-a-dozen boys that used to deliver, by train or walking, depending on where the store was.

And he used to give me dictation and I did the typing, and of course I kept the books. And if I had any time in between my work I used to fill the prescriptions for the glasses. There was a tray and they had a machine that you can look through. And I used to fill them up — plus-100, minus-200, axis, astigmatism, all that stuff — and send them to the factory. In the beginning they checked me out, you know, to see if there's any errors. But I was good at that. And I used to pick out the frames, too. You know, the frames were a certain name — Bausch & Lomb, American Optical Company, and so on. So I did a little of that too with my bookkeeping and whatever it is and I really enjoyed it.

I worked five days a week. I used to come in at nine o'clock, go out for lunch and leave around five or a quarter to five. In those days that's early, because people used to

work till six or six-thirty. And it was about a 15 minute ride from where I lived to work. Later, when I moved to the Bronx I told him I was going to leave. I said, "I'm not going to travel to Brooklyn." So he says, "No. You can come in later and you can leave earlier." And that's what I did. Because my work didn't require me being so many hours there. I used to leave the house about nine o'clock and get in at ten. And I would leave no later than three-thirty or four o'clock, before the rush hour.

So they were always good to me and treated me like part of the family. In fact, when I was getting married they made Jack a pair of formal glasses. Pince-nez, you know, rim-less. And they both came with their wives to the wedding. So they were very nice to me, and I didn't know any better. I suppose I could have gone to a bigger firm and gotten more money, but I got promotions, you know, increases in my salary, until it was comparable to what other people would have given me. I don't remember exactly how much I was making. Maybe it was \$20, whereas other companies would have started me maybe with \$30 a week. But I was getting a nice salary and he gave me increases until I got married. And I used to get my vacations for two weeks in the summertime.

And the money wasn't important. You know, I didn't have to give anything to my parents. The only one that I gave to was my sister Ida who stayed home. I think it was \$10 a week just for pocket money, out of my salary. The rest of the money I put in the bank and I bought my own clothes. Big things, like a fur coat, my father bought me. You know, he could afford it. And my mother was the one that pushed all these things. When she'd go shopping, she would insist that I pick out something to, because Ida was with us and so there was one bill for all of us. So I had money in the bank when I met Jack.

Dating

1922

Just after I got that job, when I was 15, I was sitting in the train reading a paper going to work, when this young fellow was starting to talk to me. So I moved away and went to another seat. But he followed me and sat down. And another fellow who I didn't notice, at the other end of the train, saw that he was bothering me. So he came over and he said, "Is this fellow bothering you?" I said, "Not really." I said, "I just ignored him." So when I got up to get out at my station, this fellow followed me. And the other guy came out too. And he says to him, "Do you have any business in this station? Do you have to go any further?" He says, "No. I have to get off here." He says, "Then go." You know, he told him to walk down the stairs. And he walked me to my office, which was about three blocks away. Then he wanted my phone number. He says, "Just as a friend." You know. And, I don't know why — you know, you do sometimes stupid things — I gave him the phone number.

I don't remember his name now, but he was a very nice looking man, probably 25. He called a couple of days later and I told him, "Don't call me." He wanted to come over, but I says, "No, because I don't do any dating." He called a couple of more times until, finally, my sister Fanny said, "Why don't you have him come over? It sounds like a nice thing that he did on the train. He deserves to come over. You have nothing to lose." She says, "I'll go, too. We'll go double-dating." She was keeping company with this young man.

So this fellow came over with a box of candy and something else, maybe flowers. I don't remember them. I do remember a big box of candy. And we walked to the movies and then after that we went in for a snack. The four of us. And he went home. He says, "Can I call you again?" I says, "No." But he did. He called a few times and I says, "No." I says, "I don't date. I don't enjoy dating. I'm too young for that." And that was the last of him. I never went out with him again. And then the sad thing about Fanny happened right after that.

1923

I didn't go out regularly until I was 16. And I met Jack when I was 18. So between 16 and 18, I used to go out with fellows on Wednesday and Saturday. I told about that in the story about how I met Jack, so I'm not going to go over it again. Anyway, I used to break them in Wednesday for Saturday and then when I got rid of the Saturday, he moved up, the Wednesday. And there weren't too many of them, maybe three or four, because they would last about a year or so.

Even when I broke up with Jack, I went with this Sam for about a year and a half. I don't even remember his last name. His father had a factory that made men's clothing. And this Sam was so sure we were going to get married. He wanted me to meet his parents. He was carrying on. You know. And he said, "Come up and meet my parents." I said, "I'm not that serious with you. Don't you even ask me." I should go and meet his parents.

So I was dating. But I was a little Miss Goody-Two-Shoes. One time when I was about 16 I met a fellow at a party. I forget now who's party it was. There was a party and girls were invited. And this fellow was there with another friend and he spotted me and he started pursuing me. He was calling me on the phone, asking me to go out.

One time he said they were having a house party with somebody that I knew from the party where I met him. So, Ida, myself, and another girl, we went. My poor sister Ida never used to get dates. She was three years older than me and I felt very guilty. She was very attractive but the fellows just didn't go for her. She never have that experience where the fellows played for her. So I fixed her up a couple of times. I got the fellow to bring a friend and we went out. But it just never clicked.

Anyway, so we had this date. We went to the party and he was playing up to me. From there he says, "I'll take you to a place" on our way home. And we went to this little bitty place up near Scarsdale. I forget the name of the place, but it was very lavish place up on a hill on the [??] Parkway. It was like a nightclub, but it was probably a speakeasy. They had a wonderful show and a band and dancing and all that. He was a great dancer. And I was a good dancer.

And we went there. And then I see the characters coming over and whispering into his ear and, to me, it looks like gangsters. You know. I tell you, I was so petrified I couldn't wait to get home. Years later, I found out that this was the hangout for the real "name" gangsters, this beautiful place, so he must have been a gangster. He called himself Ross, but his name must have been Rosso or God knows what. I wouldn't go with a Gentile fellow to begin with, so he made out like he's Jewish.

Finally, we were in a cab coming home — Ida, his friend, him and me — when he says he wants me to elope with him that night. He was really carrying on, you know. He says, "I can't live without you." I says, "Come on." He must have been at least five years older than me, or seven years older. I couldn't wait until I got home. And when I

got home, I says, “Don’t you ever call me up again.” But he called a few times and my sister said I’m not home and that was the end.

But, you know, impressionable girls ... He had a diamond ring on, expensive watch and all that. He must have been a gangster. And, so I says, “My God! I came so close to getting my head cut off or something.” Because you never know. You know, you meet somebody and he looks nice, and ... Well, anyway, that’s one of these little, terrible things that I thought I could have gotten into trouble.

White Rose Laundry

1918 Meanwhile, a lot of things had happened with Nathan. When the war was over, Nathan got out of the army and worked for a laundry company, for just a few months. Then he bought it. How’d he buy it? My father gave him the money. So he bought the laundry to be a boss and he called it the “White Rose Laundry”, because my sister is blond and her name was Rose. So it was the “White Rose Laundry” and he was the whole boss. But he never took care of the business. He had drivers, you know, to pick up the laundry and everything. But, instead of being one of the drivers and running the business, he had girlfriends. He was such a tramp, it was unbelievable. I hate to tell these stories. He had a girlfriend wherever he lived.

1922 One day, early evening, like five, six o’clock, right after dinner, Nathan says he has to see a customer. So he says to Charlie, “You want to go for a ride?” Charlie is 12 years younger than me, so he was 3 and I was 15. And Nathan had a big car. So he says, “Come on Jean, you take him. You come with me.” Sure he wanted somebody with him. So he drives all the way from where they lived in East New York to someplace like Flushing, a Gentile neighborhood. He parks the car in front, and he says, “I’ll be right down.” He’s going to see somebody.

10 minutes. 15 minutes. An hour. Over an hour, he doesn’t come down. Finally, he comes down. And this is already maybe nine, ten o’clock. And a girl, a shiksa, was up there and she’s sticking her head out of the window, waving to him and throwing kisses. What does he think I am? A lunatic? When I’m 15 and I see this. I was boiling! So he drives me home. I never told my sister that, but I told my mother and father. I says, “That tramp!” And we knew that when he used to be a driver and he went to the people’s houses he was carrying on. But this was already a boss.

Well, my sister got some call or something and she found out. And she threw him out. That’s how the thing broke up. Anyway, Nathan went to live with this woman out in that Flatbush, Flushing, whatever that neighborhood was. And my sister had two kids. Charlie was not quite 3 years old and Beverly was an infant.

Nathan’s four sisters were living there too because they didn’t get along with their stepmother, with their father especially, and my sister took them in. They were about her age. Jenny, she was the oldest, and Gussie and Lottie and Anna. They all had that one room. And they loved Rose and they got married from out of my sister’s house. They’re all alive, all four of them. One lives in San Francisco and the other one lives up in Kingston and the other one lives in Massachusetts. I don’t remember where the fourth one lives. Anyway, the four sisters, they were very angry with Nathan. But, you know, blood is thicker than water and when they see him they make a big fuss over him and treat him like he’s an angel.

So anyway, my two uncles went up to see Nathan and they laid the law down to him. They were very bright, they knew what to say to him. They said, "Either shape up or Rose'll get a divorce from you. And you'll never see your children again." And he probably loved his children. My uncles told him, "Sell that laundry, no matter what you get out of it. You can't be in that laundry business. Your father-in-law is going to take you into his business."

Well, anyway, I don't know how long it took, maybe a week or so, and he came crawling back. And my father took him into the business as a full partner, but his input was like zero. But he was very good with figures and they carried him along. And from then on we didn't trust him, and he had girlfriends until he got to be an old man. Because Rose threw him out once again later, years later.

So, I mean, it was something wrong with him. My poor sister is gone, and she really had such heartache that it's amazing that she lived to the age that she did. But later on Nathan redeemed himself when my sister started having trouble with her feet. You know, she had really bad circulation in them. And, then he was getting older and he realized, I suppose, how wonderful she has been to him all these years and he took really good care of her. Because she couldn't do much. So he redeemed himself a little bit.

Fanny

c.1922

After my father finished building those six-story walkups in the country, he bought a house on Pennsylvania Avenue where we moved. 413 Pennsylvania Avenue. It was a very nice two-family house, you know, all on one front. And Rose and Nathan and all lived right around the corner. And my father was building two blocks of taxpayers, which are apartments upstairs and stores downstairs. They're called taxpayers because the people who bought them didn't have to pay taxes on them. In those days, if you're working and you're living in the same place, it was tax-free. And they built a high school right across the street from us. So my father bought this very lovely house. And that's where Fanny died.

Fanny was the talented one in the family. She sang, she played the piano without taking a lesson. I'm the one that took the lessons, classical lessons for four years. And I was good at that and I liked it. And she loved me. We had a close relationship. She treated me like I was her daughter and there was about six, seven years difference between us. And I wasn't quite 15 and she was turning 21 when we moved into that house.

And she was very popular and a wonderful dancer and she used to go to dances all the time. When Fanny used to go to the dances, she took along Ida, who was like a wall-flower. I don't know. Ida just didn't fit in, because she didn't like school so she was home most of the time. My mother was sick and so that was always the excuse, "I have to take care of Momma." So Ida didn't get much of an education because she just graduated public school, period. She always stayed home, but she used to go to the dances, you know, with Fanny. It was about two years difference between the two of them.

Anyway, Fanny was very attractive and she was keeping company. She was engaged to be married. And we had a beautiful party for her 21st birthday and she was the life of the party. She sang, she danced. And about a week later is when she went to that particular dance. Later on Ida was telling us, she said everybody broke in on Fanny's

dancing. Fanny had her fiancé with her, but they were all friends and they used to break in because she was such a terrific dancer. And she got overheated and I think she was drinking ice water.

So she caught a cold. But, you know, when you have something on your lung, which she had from the flu, and you catch a cold and you neglect it, things happen. This was on a Saturday night. Sunday she was home. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday she went to work. And it was the wintertime. It must have been November or so. November or December. So one morning she didn't get up. She was laying in bed and my mother went in there. She says, "Fanny". She says, "You know it's getting late." She didn't know Fanny had a cold because Fanny concealed everything. She never wanted anybody to worry. She was the kindest person. So Fanny says, "You know I don't think I feel good enough to get up. I think I'm going to stay home today."

When my mother touched her head, it was like fire. She takes her temperature, and it's 104-1/2. So immediately we had the doctor there, within an hour. And this doctor is the same doctor that pulled them out of the flu only two [?] years before using the cold room. He was our family doctor. So he put her into the front room which is supposed to be the coldest room, with the windows open and all that.

Then uncle Phil, that sweet uncle, when he heard that she's so sick, he came right over. They all lived in Brooklyn but further away. He was very well-to-do. He had a maid and fancy cars and all that. So he comes in. He says that the uncle that brought them over originally from Europe had the flu just before, real bad. Uncle whatever-his-name-is. I can't think of his name, but Feldman was his last name. And Phil says, "Look." He says, "Your doctor may be very good," he says, "but we had this professor." And they had given up on the uncle but this professor pulled him through. He says, "Let me call him in, just for an opinion." And, you know, you grab at straws with something like this.

So this professor comes in and he says, "Close those windows! Put her in the warm room!" Which is right next to the kitchen. We didn't have steam heat. We had, you know, like a hot water heater or something. And we paid him \$50, which was a lot of money in those days, and he leaves. And she was so sick. But as sick as she was, she was beading bags. Because she used to bead bags, you know, make evening bags. She had golden hands. And we were all very, very upset.

The next morning, her temperature went down a little, and then about four o'clock it went up again to very high, to around 106. So immediately we called our doctor, the first doctor, our family doctor. And he came in. And my father told him what happened. He didn't reprimand them or anything, but he rushed her to the hospital. And my mother and father went with her. And none of us went to sleep. We were up all night.

Around two o'clock in the morning the hot water pipe broke. We had it on so high, I suppose, that it broke and there was a flood in the kitchen. So while we're wiping up — my brother Willie, Ida and myself — we were saying, "Maybe this will wash our problems away."

During the night, we called the hospital a couple of times and spoke to my father. He says, "Nothing new yet. Nothing new." Well, she died five o'clock in the morning with 107-1/2 fever. My father said she turned to a crisp, the blackest thing. As soon as I heard I ran out. I ran through the streets to Rose, crying and screaming.

The next day we had the services at the temple on the corner where my father used to be cantor. And the whole block followed her hearse. They all knew her. And that's how she was buried. And while we were at the cemetery, the professor comes around and he can't find anybody. We didn't even ask him to come and he came. So he asks the neighbor, says nobody answers the door. And he was shocked when he heard what happened. It was such a stupid thing. Anyway, I knew my mother wasn't going to live much after that. It was such a sad thing. I think of her all the time. I loved her.

The Bronx

c.1923

After Fanny passed away we closed the piano and moved away. My father wouldn't stay in that house anymore. And since he had already been building up in the Bronx for three years, we moved up there to Boynton Avenue, to one of the buildings. It was a two-family house with a finished basement. We had the upstairs apartment because it was the larger apartment, six rooms or something. And we had the basement, the finished basement, for parties and things. And on the first floor was a young couple that lived there.

At the same time, my father's partner, Bernie Rosenstock, decided he wanted to have next door, so they moved next to us. His wife was a lovely lady and he was a nice man, too. He used to go to the dogs and spend his money and all that. And he had two nice sons and a daughter. We were all friendly. My father was friendly with everybody. He never fell out with anybody. And Rose and Nathan took the house next to them. So there were all three families right next to each other on Boynton Avenue.

My father built a lot in that area. The first thing he had built was a block of Boynton Avenue, on both sides of the street. He had one-family homes and then he had two-family homes and across he had four-family homes. You know the whole street, a big block. Probably about 70 homes altogether. And then on Elder Avenue, where he built the temple first, but then across the street on the other side. In between he built two apartment houses on Stratford Avenue, which I think had elevators because they were six stories. I mean my father was doing well.

But the first thing that he did, as soon as he got there, before he had put a brick into anything, was immediately put up a big tent. Because it was about two months before the holidays, the high holidays, and he was a religious man. A very fine person. And he put the first thousand dollars, which is like \$50,000 today, into that temple and he was the president for ten years. And he made it from 40 or 50 people to I think about 600, or more. And even when you go up there now, Temple Emmanuel [?], up on top as you walk in you can see his name.

He was looked up to in that neighborhood like a king. They had the highest regard for him. And when I got married I had to invite about 350 people, because he had went to so many weddings, you know, from all the people that he knows, that he says, "I must have all these people come." But these were all people that my father was friends with and people that belonged to the same temple.

So business was good and they were making lots of money. My father had money and he had money invested in mortgages. You know, he had a lot of money, which he lived on for many years. And my sister Rose had diamonds and emeralds, and a mink coat, and a maid, and antiques. And Nathan had a chauffeur. Would you believe it? And they went to Canada with his big car and the chauffeur took along his wife.

During the summer Charlie and Beverly went to camp at Camp Roosevelt up in Monticello, and Rose stayed at the hotel, Nemerson's, which was considered the top hotel or whatever and was maybe a half-hour's drive from that camp. And Nathan used to come out weekends. But during the week, he had every tramp that he can, you know, put his hands on. My sister used to get telephone calls and once somebody came to the house looking for him. She threw him out two or three times even then.

1928

And then, all of a sudden, the crash came — October 1928, when all of a sudden the banks closed — and that was the end of the business. My father owed the banks maybe \$500,000 or something — you don't build for pennies, you know — and he couldn't pay. So Nathan wanted that they should go bankrupt to get out of it. But my father said, "Not on your life." He says, "You didn't start this business and you're a bum to begin with." He says, "Don't tell me what to do." He says, "Everybody will get paid." In the meantime he had brick four-family houses on Elder Avenue, the one further over, which he sat with. He couldn't give them away, not even for just their mortgage. But he sat there until he got rid of them, which took a whole year.

In the meantime, as soon as the crash came Nathan didn't have a dime. But he didn't want to go to work. So he went into building by himself. My father advanced him some money which he never got back. Anyway, I don't think he was in it more than a year because it didn't work out. And they had no money and Rose had to pawn her jewelry.

So then my father says, "This is it. You don't get another dime. Go to work. You never worked in your life. Start working." And he did. He was good with figures and so he took an examination and went into the Navy department, in downtown Manhattan. There were like five levels and he went up to the top, with nothing more than a high school education. In fact Beverly, when she got out of high school, got a job in similar department. And that's where he worked until he retired.

But Rose could never redeem all that jewelry. But my brother Willie was doing well and he redeemed it, otherwise they'll be forfeited. He had a nice business, like a little department store in the Bronx, on the West Side. It was a haberdashery, like in a drug store. They had drugs and then clothes and things. His brother-in-law was a pharmacist and he was his partner. And they did very, very well. So little Rosie, Willie's wife, had most of those diamonds and emeralds and things.

The Lynettes

1923

But while things were still good we used to go away on vacation during the summer. My sister Rose used to go for the entire summer and my mother used to go there, I think, for the whole summer too. And my sister Ida went for two weeks when I went up there.

The summer I turned 18 [?], Ida and I met some girls there who were musicians and had a band. I mentioned them before when I told about how I met Jack. There were five girls, three of whom were sisters, who were my sister's age, much older than I am. Well, of the three sisters, the oldest was Ida's age and the youngest was about my age. Anyway, we got very friendly with them. And since they lived in the Bronx too, and we knew we were going to see them, we decided we'll form a little bit of a club, The Lynettes. There was the three sisters, my sister and myself, and four or five others. Altogether there was about 10 of us.

When we got back to town, I said that there's an orphanage — the name was Israel orphanage — maybe a 15 minute walk from where we lived. And there was about 60 or 80 children there, boys and girls from about six to 12. Some of them had fathers but no mothers, but most of them didn't have any parents at all. And we went there and we liked what we saw and we suggested that we take some of the children out one day a week, either Saturday or Sunday, for the day. Not all of them at once, but two kids for each of us, so we can manage them. We didn't want them to get into trouble or anything. And we would take different ones different times.

Well, they were very happy about that and that's what we did. We used to take them to the park, to the Bronx Zoo, to the movies. There was a place where they had children's plays and we took them there. Usually it was a Saturday. And then we took them to lunch. And we always gave them little gifts, you know, on the holidays. It never amounted to much money but it was the attention.

And then after awhile we decided to make contributions to that orphanage. So, to raise money, we ran a dance in a hotel in mid-Manhattan. And it was very successful and we raised — I don't remember now — a few hundred dollars which we gave to the orphanage. And then, after I met Jack, I told him that we have to have another dance. So we picked a bigger place, I think 57th Street or 59th Street, downtown, and he says he'll bring a lot of people. Which he did. And it was a very successful dance, a real big dance. And we raised a couple of hundred dollars [?], which is more than we did before. Mind you, in those days, people weren't making the kind of money they make today. You know, if a girl got \$35 a week, she was already very well paid. So we did that.

And, of course, it all fell apart as the girls got married. One of the girls got married ahead of me. Then she had a baby. And so, you know, it sort of simmered out. But we did that for about three or four years.

The End of the Beginning

Work, on the other hand, ended with a bang. Because when I was going to marry Jack, he said, "No wife of mine is going to work." He was a real Britisher. And I was furious with him, because what am I going to do? I have nothing to do when we first get married. But what could I do? So I told my boss I was going to quit, and I was trying to break in a new girl. And I had the toughest time. I don't know how many agencies sent girls over, but they just didn't grasp anything. So, I had turnover of about six or eight girls that came in, and they were much older than I was. Finally, a girl came. Her name was Rose Rose. Would you believe it? Yeah. Rose Rose. And she's the one.

1928

But my boss still pleaded with me. He said, "Come in." He said, "I'd like you to come at least once a week for at least a month or two. Just to see how she's doing." And I told that to Jack. But he says, "No, no." Then my boss said, "At least come in once a month for the trial balance. See that she does it right." You know. We had an accountant come in, but he had nothing to do except check out what I did. And he got paid for it. Well, Jack didn't go for that either. And so I never came back. And they were furious with me, and they didn't think much of Jack for being so stubborn.

Settling Down?
Jean's Story (More or Less)
1928-1933

Toronto Honeymoon

1928-9 For our honeymoon, we had decided to go to Toronto for a couple of weeks. Jack had a lot of cousins and friends living there. They were all from England and had settled in Toronto because they couldn't come into America. But it was easy enough to go into Toronto and they were established. And they were very lovely people. He knew at least ten couples that I met.

So after we left the wedding, we stayed that first night at a hotel in New York, the Empire Hotel, which is at Broadway and 65th or 66th Street. Jack had stayed there once when it first opened up and it was a very nice hotel. It can't be nice now; I mean, I'm going back so many years. Anyway, the next night we took the night train to Toronto. You know, nobody used to fly in those days. It was a long trip in those days. Today, it's like nothing. Anyway, on our way there we stopped in Niagara Falls. It was cold; I mean, it was wintertime, with snow. And we stopped at a very lovely place where we had a reservation.

We got to Toronto in the morning and we stayed at the King Edward, which is still in existence. It was very elegant, the top hotel there. And we had a wonderful time. We had dancing with our meals, you know, and so on. And Jack was a real Beau Brummell, you know. A real Englishman. Everything had to be exact and he was very courteous and he knew just how to handle everything and everybody, including me. He had wonderful manners. And we had a very good time.

We went to a couple of plays, but mostly we were with friends who made parties. Everybody made another party for us, in their homes. So we had parties going, you know, most of the two weeks. Especially on the Sundays because they had "Blue Sundays" and you weren't allowed to do anything. I mean, there were no movies or anything. So these people used to have card parties and house parties with maybe four, five tables of people playing cards. The men played poker and the women played something, I don't remember. And we would sit and talk.

So that's there where we went. And, although I hadn't been to Toronto before, we made friends that for years we used to go back to Toronto and see.

"Home Sweet Home"

1929 Well, finally, we had to come back because Jack had to go back to work. We had taken an apartment in the Bronx before we got married and we moved in there. The place was not too far from my folks, about ten blocks. It was a brand new building, with elevators, which in those days was something new. So we lived in an elevated building and our apartment was very, very nice. My parents furnished it beautifully. That was part of my father's gift to us: the wedding and the house, down to the dishes. Everything was furnished. And my mother was a very generous woman so whatever we wanted, we got. She probably could have bankrupted my father if he wouldn't have put a stop to it because she wanted her children to have everything. Not that she used to throw her money around but she was very kind and good, and she knew he was making good money. When they were poor, she helped him out, but then he was making good money

and she spent it. So we had a lovely, lovely home; I mean, with real good furniture that we had until we re-did many years later.

The first night back from Toronto we had dinner at my folks' house. So the first meal I made was on a Monday, which is usually fish night for the Jewish people. You know, fried fish or broiled fish or whatever. Then they used to fry fish. So my mother told me how to do it, and I bought the fish. And Jack liked potato pancakes, so my mother taught me how to make them — very flat, very thin, like crepes. So there I was making breaded, fried fish. And since my pots and pans were brand new and all that and I didn't want the fish to stick, I kept adding butter to that fried fish. It wasn't sticking, but I kept adding another piece of butter and another piece of butter and another.

Well, I worked all afternoon to surprise Jack for the first meal home. The table was set very nice and everything looked beautiful when he came home and we sat down to eat. And whatever Jack ate, he said, "Gee. That's delicious! Oh, how wonderful!" And I took one bite of that fish, and I almost died! It nauseated me. I mean, I couldn't even chew it, and when he wasn't looking I spit it into the sink. But he cleaned up his plate. He ate everything, the vegetables and the fish. And he didn't say anything, except, "Everything is great. Everything is marvelous." That's what they all do. Later on he told me, "That fish almost killed me." But he didn't want to make me feel bad, so he ate it all up down to the last crumb.

So Jack was working and I had nothing to do. I mean, we had decided not to have any children for the first two years. Or at least a year. And I was a little annoyed with him because I had too much time on my hands and I felt the proper thing would have been for me to go in the office once a week or something. My boss was so mad at me, and pleaded with me. But Jack wouldn't hear of it.

So I spent time with my friends. They'd come over to the house. Or I'd go over to my parents' house since it was only ten blocks away. And then Ida was home, so I'd spend time with her. But mostly I was with my parents, my mother especially. And she had to teach me everything. I mean, I didn't know how to shop or anything because I went to work when I was a youngster and then I got married. So she'd take me to the butcher shop and the fish place and whatever and show me how to do it. And we'd take walks. We'd go to the park. You know, my mother was a sick lady so she couldn't do too much. Oh, I loved her so. She was such a doll. There's not too many people I know was like my mother. She never scolded anybody. She was just sweet as can be. And so I liked to be with her. And she was very modern. When we were going shopping for the wedding we'd go to Chinese restaurants. Now she wasn't that Orthodox but she would not do anything that isn't Kosher. So she just had the tea. She wouldn't have anything else with that. Maybe take a couple of the little noodles. I don't even think she took that.

And every Sunday for years was open house. My father had a lot of friends, so he used to have a lot of people in the house. And all my friends knew they can come Sunday, any time during the day. Not in the evening, but during the day. And we always had a lot of food around the house and piano playing and all that kind of stuff. It was a very happy house. Some Sundays my parents used to go to the theater, at matinee, and then they'd have dinner at this Rumanian restaurant down on the East End. A Kosher place, because my father would only eat Kosher. And we were always invited and we could bring all our friends there, and so they used to have a table that must have been like for 20 people. My sister Rose and her husband used to come with the two kids. And

when I was dating or if I went out with the girls I'd bring them there. So we had a social life that way. And this continued when I was married. And we had Friday night dinner there for many years. You know, every Friday night at their place. Later on we ate out a little bit.

So I wasn't bored. Actually, things were very exciting because Jack's 26 years were like a man of 35. I mean, he'd been on his own, like since he's 15, and he'd travelled and lived in Austria and all over, and so he was a man about town. That's what I liked about him. He wasn't like the average fellows who lived home, who didn't know too much and just went to work or school or whatever. He was very exciting. He used to tell me these little stories that he tells, of his experiences. You know, what are we going to talk about? Sure. We're going to talk about his experiences and mine. I didn't have too many, but he had a lot. And everything worked out fine. We were very compatible.

Norwalk. Not

1930

About a year after we were married, Jack says he doesn't want to work for anybody anymore. He says, "I know much more than the bosses, and I can't see myself doing this." He was very anxious to become his own boss because he was very mature. And he had seen in the newspaper where two sisters were selling a fur shop in Norwalk, Connecticut. They had a factory and a store which their brother had left them when he died and they were selling it. And Jack says, "That would be perfect for us." So he says, "Let's go there. I'd like to live in the country. I don't like the city." He says, "That would be perfect", because he would fit in, in a small town. I mean, he would have been the mayor by now, that's for sure.

So Jack wanted me to go up with him to see it. And I, like a nut — how can I move away from my mother? I said, "I don't want to live in Connecticut. I want to live near my parents. My mother's a sick lady. I don't know how long she's going to be around." Because my mother had rheumatism for many, many years. And then she got the gall bladder. A couple of times over the past fifteen years, she would faint away and get deathly sick. And they would take her away in an ambulance and rush her to the hospital to be operated on. But each time my father would pull her out and take her home because her heart was getting bad and he never thought that she would pull through any operation. It was a real love-match between my mother and father. So I said, "I really don't want to move away to Connecticut." And going to Connecticut was like going to Canada. That's how I felt about it. To me, I'm a small town girl and my father never drove. I mean, he could afford a car or whatever he wanted but he never drove. Nathan drove. And so when am I going to see them?

Well, Jack was very mad. He was very angry with me. He says, "This is really an opportunity." He says, "I always watch the papers and this is the best opportunity. Just," he says, "let's go up and just look at it." But I said, "No. I don't want to move." But that was a mistake I made. I really spoiled things, because it would have been a different life. I was very foolish. You know, when you're young you do stupid things.

Anyway, just at that time, the lease on our apartment came up for renewal but I didn't want to renew it. My brother Willie had gotten married from my parent's house and they had extra rooms so I says, "Why don't we move in there until we make up our minds where we want to go?" Because Jack wasn't going to live in the Bronx. He wanted to go to England or Connecticut, either way. And my father said to him, "Look.

You feel like going into business.” He says, “You’ll never save up enough money to really go into business if you’re going to pay the high rent” that we were paying. He says, “We have so much room here and Jean’s here anyway everyday.” He says, “Why don’t you move in here? Put your stuff in storage.”

So we moved in there and we were there for a little less than a year. Ida was there and had her own room, and Maxie had his own room, but we had a big place. And so we saved most of Jack’s salary because we didn’t have to pay anything for food or anything; only if we went out to the movies or dinner or something. And so he was working and making a good living and we were saving. We saved a nice few thousand dollars.

Robert / Concourse / Brighton Beach

About the same time we moved in with my folks, Robert was conceived. I mean, as soon as we thought about it, it was done, because, you know, we didn’t do things irrationally. And he was born there too, a year and nine months after we were married. I mean he was born in the hospital, but we were living there with my parents at the time. And Robert was a real fat little baby. He weighed 8-4. And I was like a toothpick. But I must have had rich milk or something because he was very satisfied.

1931

Shortly after Robert was born, it was Ida’s wedding and so we got a private nurse for the day to take care of him. And I pumped out all that milk from both breasts for three or four bottles. And, you know, it wasn’t easy, because I had very tiny nipples. But the minute the girl put the bottle to his lips, he would scream. You could hear him all over the house. It was terrible. But somehow he got used to it, to that bottle. And after that I couldn’t nurse him. If I wanted to nurse him, the minute I laid him down he would scream. If Jack held him sideways, he would scream. He only wanted that great big nipple. So the doctor said, “Look.” He says, “You can’t pump the rich milk out of you.” He says, “You’ll have to wean him.” So we had to, when he was three months old.

Around the same time, Jack became foreman of the place where he was working. He was really doing nicely, and he said we have to move back into our own apartment. So we took a beautiful place on the West Side, a block away from the Concourse. It was a very lovely, brand new house and we were on the ground floor. After Robert was born, you know, God forbid we should live one flight up. And we furnished it with our furniture and curtains and all that. But in order to go to the stores, there was a hill that I had push that carriage up, and I could never make it. I was as skinny as can be. I weighed about 102 and Robert was a buster. I have pictures. And I needed somebody help me push that pram up the hill to go shopping with him. So this was not going to work.

So Jack figured out, he says, “Look. Summer is coming up and I’m very busy in the summertime,” because that’s when they work up their line. He said, “I can’t go on vacations in the summertime. What are you going to do with the baby?” He says, “Why don’t we move to the beach?” So we took the baby and went out to Brighton for the day to take a look. Brighton was very lovely then. It was like Manhattan Beach, you know, later on. And we liked it.

So Jack said, “Let’s take a place in Brighton.” I said, “You have a two year lease here.” We had just, you know, fixed the place up. But he said, “Leave it to me.” So he calls up the manager of the building and he says, “Look. I’m out of a job.” He says, “I’m out of a job and I have to move back with my wife’s parents.” But the manager

said, "You don't have to worry about it." He says, "I'll let you stay without paying rent for three months. By that time you'll find a job." Here Jack was making something like 250 or 300 dollars a week. So Jack says, "No." He says, "I don't want to owe you money." He says, "Then I'll be in debt." And he says, "I can't live like that." At that time the building was 100% rented, so Jack said, "Why don't you have the superintendent put out a sign that an apartment is for rent?" All the time, I was in the other room with the baby. And he was making up such a story. He'll kill me for telling it.

So, the very first weekend, before they even rented our place, we went out to Brighton to look for an apartment. And we found one, also in a brand new house, also on the ground floor. Because, like I said, for Jack, God forbid Robert should be a flight up, a flight anywhere. Jack was such a doting father, the best that any father could be. His whole life was Robert. He loved him so. Anyway, the apartment was in the front, facing the street and the beach, and the boardwalk was right in front of the window. And between the boardwalk and our street, they had a private beach club, that you had to belong to it, with doors that led to the sand and the ocean, and a children's playground.

Jack said, "This would be perfect." And there and then he gave a deposit and a month's rent before he knew if he can even get out of the other thing. But, it turned out, the first person that came over to see our apartment, this woman, went crazy over everything. I mean, everything was brand new and very nice. I had good taste. So we got out of it within a week and we didn't owe them any money.

And so we moved out to Brighton and joined the beach club and we lived there for two and a half years. And we had a wonderful life there. It was all young families, people had little babies. And we made friends. The fellows went bowling and we used to go out to eat. There was McGuinness's, which made the most beautiful sandwich, 15 cents for a roast beef sandwich that was this thick with a bun. So what was the big deal? We used to go there on a Friday night or whatever, have a couple of these sandwiches or whatever. Or we'd go to Lundy's, the seafood place or to a movie at the Tuxedo. And it was like for nothing because the depression had set in then. The crash started in 1929, so it was terrible. And Jack was a big shot with his money. He was making more money than any of the young couples in the building.

When we went out, the superintendent's wife would sit with Robert. She lived on the same floor in the apartment right next to us. But the minute we would sit down, like if we were at a movie or something, Jack'd say, "Let's go home." I'd say, "What for? We just got here." And he'd say, "I know Robert's crying." I says, "Mrs. So-and-so is with him." I says, "So what if he's crying? So she'll give him a bottle, or a little water and he'll fall asleep." I says, "We just came in and I'm not going until the movie is over." And when we'd come home Robert would be up, but the woman told us he slept right through, and that he just happened to get up when we got home. But Jack would say, "See. I told you he was crying." And this went on till Robert was about six, seven, eight months old.

Raising Robert

I was so strict with Robert. Every day, at 8 o'clock in the morning, he was in the high chair in the breakfast room and I was putting the first spoonful of his breakfast in his mouth. My friend was on the fourth floor or the fifth floor — it was a six story place — and she says, "Ah. Jean is feeding Robert." 8 o'clock, the first spoonful. And I used to

fatten him up like a little pig, because if I would sing to him or read him stories or nursery rhymes, he would eat anything I gave him.

At 8:30 I was out of the house with him in his carriage, on the boardwalk. Instead of rocking him to sleep, I used to walk to Surfside which is about 35 blocks — two miles I think it was — where there was a hotel, the Half-Moon Hotel, and that's where I used to stop. And by that time he was fast asleep. So I'd take off his little gloves — I'm talking about in the wintertime, you know, December, with the snow and all — open up his sweater, because the sun was so powerful. And I took a kleenex, folded up, and tucked it into the hat, over his eyes, so the sun shouldn't hurt his eyes. But his forehead, and his hands, became so black, like a pickaninny's hands, and he had that white mark on the nose and across the eyes. But the rest of him was like a dark brown but ruddy looking, in the reddish family.

Every Saturday, we all met in my mother's house for lunch. I would bring Robert's bottles and things over in a little case. Which wasn't easy because I only weighed about 100 pounds and he weighed 26 pounds before he was a year old and I had to carry him and the case. And Jack would work half a day and then come over. Many times we stayed overnight because we had such a long trip. And my sisters came with their children and my brothers had two girls that were older. But they all looked so sickly compared to Robert. He was the only one that looked the picture of health, with the rosy-red cheeks. He was gorgeous.

In the springtime, when Robert was about seven months old, I got him training panties. Well, first it was diapers, little diapers and then the panties. And when he woke up in the carriage when we got back from our walk, before he could wet the diaper, I used to take him and hold him up in a little alleyway there beside our building, like in the bushes or something. And that's how I trained him. My friends used to laugh at me, but, you know, he was dry before he was ten months old.

Well, for his first birthday we went up to my mother's house. It was on a Saturday and he was wearing his little outfit. He was always well dressed, you know. After awhile I says, "Where's Robert?" You know, he was walking around — he started to walk when he was about 11 months old — and so I looked for him and found him hiding in one of the rooms. So I went in, and he was crying. And you know why? He had been playing with the toys and accidentally wet his pants. And so he pulled down the pants, which were elastic, and he was wiping up the floor. Here it was his birthday and he was crying because he had an accident. And I felt so bad that it made me cry. I had been so strict with him, you know. But I had no problems after that. The other kids, nobody even touches them until they're a year and a half or two. But he was really something else.

Lost and Found

1932

When Robert was about fifteen months old, I had something wrong with my refrigerator. It wasn't working right. So I called up the company and they said the man is coming at such-and-such a time. Well, I was with Robert downstairs when I saw it was almost time so I said to Lou Peck and his wife and a few other people that were from our building that we were very friendly with, I said, "Gee. The man for the refrigerator should be coming around this time, and I have to go right across the street." He says, "You go. Don't worry." He said his wife is there and he's there and his little girl, Gloria or Delores or something. He says, "I'll keep an eye on Robert."

So I went home and I took care of the refrigerator and when I came back, as I'm walking across the street, I see his wife is on the boardwalk walking this way, and he's on the other side walking the other way, and there's a couple of more women looking all around. And I says to myself, "Oh, my God. What the hell is he doing up there? He's supposed to watch Robert." By that time I didn't walk, I ran. I run over there and I says, "Where's Robert?" He says, "Don't worry. Don't worry. He ... he ..." Well, they couldn't say enough. I started crying and screaming. I was going like a lunatic. And they were covering the whole area and there was no sign of him.

I ran into the office, where a bunch of people were working and I says to the man, "Oh, my God. My son." I said, "He could have walked into the water," which was not too far away. And he was dressed like a fashion plate in a little white linen thing. Everybody used to talk about his clothes that he wore. I said, "Or some lunatic could have," you know, "taken him away." So the man got the police on the phone for me and gave them a description, what he wore and everything.

By that time I was so hysterical. I was glad that Jack wasn't there because I think he would have dropped dead. Then all of a sudden, after about a good half hour had passed — which seemed like five years — somebody says, "There he is." A woman was carrying him in her arms on the boardwalk. What do you think he did? Under the boardwalk he walked all the way to 8th Street, which is equivalent to a half a mile, because it starts 1st, 2nd, to 8th Street, and we were already a couple of blocks in Brighton. That's where she found him crying because he couldn't find his way back. So she says, "Where do you live?" And he says, "I live near the club" or "Past the ponies". Because the ponies were like 3rd Street or 2nd Street. The ponies and then the club. Anyway, he made himself understood so that she knew she had to go this way, as opposed to going towards Coney Island.

By that time I was a basket case. I was so upset. Even my friends were all crying. And Lou Peck wanted to kill himself. He says, "All I did is pick up my girl to the fountain, for a drink of water, and in that instant he walked away." So if I didn't have a lot of grey hair, it's a miracle.

Jack

I was going to kill everybody when he got lost.

Spoiled Rotten

Jack used to spoil Robert rotten. Once, when he was not even a year old, Jack brought a rocker home for him, one of these real big rockers. On the subway, yet.

Jack

It was such a big package and I carried it on the subway which was crowded. And everybody wanted to kill me.

And when Robert turned two, for his birthday Jack bought a fire engine in Macy's, a red fire engine about a yard and a half long that seats two kids. Which was

delivered. And the two drivers from Macy's assembled it in front of our house, with all the little kids watching. And then Robert got into the thing, with the bell and the fire chief's hat, you know, and he's driving it up and down. And his friends that he liked he would let sit in the back and those that he didn't like didn't get to ride. Well, by that evening the other parents wanted to kill the two of us. Everybody wanted a fire engine. That fire engine caused us such aggravation, you have no idea. But he used to ride it around.

Later, just before we went to Europe, Jack bought Robert his first bicycle. It was a three-wheeler, a tricycle. And we took it with us to Europe and he used to ride around the ship, on the deck. Later on, when Marshall was born and Robert turned eight, we bought him a bicycle for his birthday. That was his first two-wheeler. And right away he rode off. He was a natural. You know, he loved it.

So Robert was really getting spoiled. When I used to walk on the boardwalk with him when he was getting a little older, like two years old, he always wanted to go on the ponies. They had ponies right behind where that little club was. And they had rides and things and on Sundays Jack would put him on every ride maybe three or four times. On Sundays he used to spoil him rotten. There was nobody in the world to compare with Robert.

Jack

I used to give up my Sundays and take him for riding.

So by the time Monday came around I had my work cut out for me. But he knew how far he can go with me. And so I said to Robert, I said, "Daddy will take you on the rides on Sunday, only. During the week you cannot go on these rides. You're going to be with me and we're going to go to the park" or wherever. You know, I took him all different places. So he used to say, "Hello, ponies. Goodbye, ponies." Whenever we passed by them it was always, "Hello. Goodbye." And I used to walk with him for miles, and he walked when he was eleven months old. Because there's a picture of him in one of his snow suits, and he's just beginning to walk. You can see he was walking and he was so proud of himself. I think Mickey, Jack's brother, was visiting us with his wife. They had just gotten married and so we were on the boardwalk and you can see how skinny I am there.

Anyway, it was really very loving bringing up a child. And I think I did a good job in bringing him up. But I wanted another child. I says, "He's going to be a spoiled brat." I said, "We must have another one." But Jack said, "My God! How can I ever share my love with another child? Impossible! I don't want any more." Just Robert. And so we didn't have one until after my mother passed away because then he knew that I wanted to have a child to name for her. So that's when we had Marshall and that's why there's such a big difference in their ages. Anyway, it was great. There was such love for those two children growing up. I'm sure it was that way in your family when you were little. We remember it at this stage with joy. We had so much joy.

Jean

Jack

I have to take praise because of my

Jean

Yes. He had it so tough.

Jack

unfortunate life as a kid. My father was no good.

I was so much into those kids, that nobody could touch them, especially Robert at the time. In the first place, he was a good looking kid. And he was crazy about me at the time, as a kid. The last couple of years, I've been finding pictures of Robert and I. Me holding him around, in his riding breeches and all that. Well, it's memories, you know what I mean? And each time I went on trips and I used to send home a letter, I used to send him one. Maybe he didn't like the idea, but I just sent them. And I couldn't wait to get home. Yeah, I was very fond of him and he was very fond of me.

There was times when I used to have to work hard. I worked hard, worked hard. I mean, I supported them and I never took anything from anybody. So I worked hard, only they should have everything they needed. As a matter of fact, that was the purpose of us moving to Brighton Beach, because I felt in case I had to work hard in the summertime to make enough stuff, whatever I had to do, and I couldn't go away with him in the country, so we'd live at the beach.

Beverly

Jean

She used to spend the whole summer with us.

Or we used to take her to Brighton when we lived in Brighton.

Jack

I was so crazy about kids that Beverly, who is 62 today, she came to stay with us.

They were in poor circumstances. So whenever we'd go away on a holiday I used to take her along.

She was very special to me. She still is a little bit. She's an old lady now. Anyway,

Jean

He had a little girl same age as her or something and they had an argument, just an argument or something. I don't know. It was an unimportant thing but a man does not smack somebody in the face. And she had marks on her face. She was just only about eight years old.

Well, that was the only thing. But after that, he wouldn't even go near her. She was such a good kid. She was a dancer. On the beach she used to do the cartwheels all the way around. And she was in shows. I have pictures of her in costumes. When we used to send her back to school we would go out and buy her clothes for her, school clothes.

Fall clothes, for her school. Shoes. But, it's good memories, because he knows that she knows. She even remembers it. Because every summer she spent the whole summer with us, and Charlie, her brother, would come for just a couple of weeks, but she spent the whole summer.

Her mother made it but Jack had to fit it.

Tight new velvet pants. You know.

Jack

one day she came to stay with us in Brighton Beach and I came home and I heard about the father of one the kids had slapped Beverly.

I didn't want to eat. I go up to the apartment and they won't let me into the apartment. So they called the police. You know, the guy was scared. Like, I was going to beat his brains in. And Beverly was like one of my children. You know what I mean? He didn't want to come out of the apartment. He never slapped anybody after that.

I used to go into the department store and bring her home dresses.

I remember one time — she was a dancer — her mother, may she rest in peace, and I made her her an outfit.

Yeah.

I had it styled, you know, because I knew

Jean

She was only about four years old.

It had to be very tight, you know. If she moved, she'd get stuck.

She remembers.

These shows that she went into were really nice.

If her parents were comfortable she could have been something.

Very graceful. Very bright.

No!

No! Really?

She had an audition.

Jack

how to handle patterns. And we stood her up on the kitchen table.

Yeah. We put her on there and we fitted her out with pins.

Then she took it off, and the mother made it. And Beverly will never forget that I fitted her.

Yeah, she loves me, really does love me. And we fitted her out and we have a picture of her, the most gorgeous little kid.

At one time ...

At one time ...

I used to have a British accent, a good British accent.

It stayed good.

I had a British accent. And while I was single, I got acquainted with people from Rockefeller Center. There was a radio station there, and they wanted me to train for an announcer. You know, I'm talking radio. Not because I was smart, but because I had the voice. Anyway, I didn't do it for a reason. Because I made more in one day in my business in furs than I could have made there. But it was a good opportunity. Anyway, it went away years and years, until finally, I remembered when Beverly wanted to talk on the radio. So I took her down to Rockefeller Center and I met a couple of the fellows.

They knew me. They gave her an audition, and I stood in the other room and somehow

Jean

Jack

she didn't come across good because she was, you know, very nervous.
But I was good to her.

Baby Beauty Contest

1933

But Robert was so good looking, it was unbelievable. With the blond hair and the big brown eyes, and the long lashes. I don't know whether his lashes are long anymore but they were. He was something else. And everywhere I went everybody went crazy over him. Well, when he was about two, two and a half, they had a beauty contest at the club next to our house and I entered him in it. It was on a Sunday and I dressed him beautifully, in a little white linen suit. During the contest, they eliminated hundreds of kids in the different age groups, and in his age group they eliminated them until there were ten and then they eliminated to three. And he was still in there. And he was far better looking than the other two. But all of a sudden he wants a drink. So Jack says to him, "Wait just a few minutes." But Robert started to cry. He says, "I want a drink. I want a drink." Stubborn! So Jack took him for a drink and he was eliminated. And the little boy that got the first prize was little Herbie Brown, who was the same age. He was a month older than Robert.

Anyway, the thing was shown in the newsreel which had the local news. And you can see Robert, how he's walking down. You can see all the ten kids lining up in the elimination, but he isn't in the final. You just couldn't talk him out of that drink. I says, "Just two more minutes", but two minutes to a child doesn't mean anything. So he lost. So I saw Robert in the movies although I never even told him that. Never. Maybe I told him when he was a little boy, but I have never spoke about it since.

Going to England

After we had lived in Brighton for about two and a half years, Jack began to start nagging me to go to England. At that time Jack was running a certain factory, a nice big factory. And the boss lived in Seagate and used to pick him up every morning and take him home at night, because we didn't have a car yet. And Jack was the manager there. He was a very good businessman and a wonderful mechanic.

Jack

I was a terrible mechanic.

He did the buying, the selling, everything. You know how he does things. More outside than inside but he knew how things have to be done right and they had to toe the mark. Well, he ran it and he was getting a very good salary, like \$200 a week and other people were making 30 and 40. I'm talking about 1933, and the Depression was horrible until around 1938.

But even though he had a very good job, he figured he didn't want to waste his years working for somebody else when he could be manufacturing for himself. Because he was running the whole place for this guy. He had a good head; I mean, his brain was working as a youngster. So in order to make up his mind what he wanted to do, whether it will be importing, exporting or both, you know, he wanted to go to England. And he

thought he'd have more of an opportunity over there at the time. He knew a lot of people, you know. He knew a lot of people here, too, but he says, "I want to have my mind cleared out because of all the rushing and working and all that." Also, he had an idea that if he goes out to London, goes back to England, that he'll talk me into living there. He really didn't say it in so many words that he wanted to live there, but he thought if I'd like it well enough then he'd try to talk me into it. Well, his boss pleaded with him not to go. He used to say to me, "Don't go. Don't go." He says, "Jack runs my business." It was a big thing. But Jack decided to do it and so he said, "No. I'm going to go."

When he decided to go to England, he had some money but it wasn't much — say, fifteen hundred dollars. And I surprised him because I had a bank account for almost \$2,000, that he never knew about. From the \$30 or so a week he used to give me for housekeeping, I managed to save all that! He'd pay the rent and, you know, other things, but from what he gave me I saved. I was so economical. And things were reasonable. I never had a maid. I did my own work. And, who had maids? I mean, even the diapers for Robert I washed myself. They didn't have a service and even if they had I wasn't going to use it. My hands got so bad, you know, from washing, that Jack used to have to ring out the diapers, because I used to boil them. Everything was spotless, I tell you. Nothing like I keep it know. The place shone. So I was very economical and every week I put so much into this account. It was a Christmas club, which was foolish because there was no interest or anything. And I never told him, until he wanted to go to England. And that's the money we went on.

Anyway, my folks thought that if he takes me to England they'll never see me again, because they knew he wanted to stay in England. They didn't trust him. They loved him, but they didn't trust him. But they didn't know who they're dealing with when I'm around. I mean, no such thing was going to happen.

When we left, we went on the *Berengaria*, one of the big ships. And we had big crowds seeing us off and a big cocktail party. My father was there. My family. My mother wasn't. Unfortunately, my mother had a bad heart. The night we left, she had a heart attack. I understand she was in bed the whole time we were in Europe, sick as could be, although nobody ever told me. I mean, I used to correspond with my mother and my sisters and my sister-in-law and my brother Willie, too, who also had some trouble which they never told me about. It seems Willie, who died young, had some trouble with his nose. He had trouble breathing. And one doctor said he should be operated on because of that, but her [?] brother was a doctor and she listened to the brother, not to operate. Well, to make it very short. I understand, right after we left he was operated on — and it was cancer. No hope for him. But nobody told me this. Nobody told me about my mother or anything. But as soon as we came back, she was up and she was fine.

Berengaria

Going over on the ship, on the *Berengaria*, Robert was just three years old and everybody went crazy for him. He made such a hit. Maybe he was the only child, but he was so manly. I mean, he didn't get in anybody's way. And he sat opposite us in the dining room and cut his own food. He ate just like he was ten years old. It was amazing.

And, of course, he was always dressed to perfection. I had the little suits on him with the jackets and all. Later, when we were in England I went into a shop and he was wearing a Lindbergh outfit. You know, he had a leather hat and he had a camel hair coat and jodhpurs. Like an aviator's outfit; that's his little outfit. So he's wearing this Lindbergh's outfit and when I came out of the shop a bunch of kids were all around him and they're talking in their English accent, "Look at the little aviator!" And I took him home because I was frightened, seeing so many kids around him. But they were all admiring the little aviator. For a winter outfit, Robert had a snowsuit of red and navy, with a cap, you know, to match. That was his winter outfit. And once when I took him to the barber's to get a haircut and he was wearing the snowsuit, they wanted to know, the way that he was speaking, whether he comes from Switzerland. They were all guessing, you know.

Anyway, he wasn't a baby. He was never a baby. Not that I was strict with him, but I was very methodical with him. It had to be just that way, you know. And it was great. My friends used to laugh so. They always knew 12 o'clock sharp that the first mouthful was going in, because I was always singing to him or telling the stories, reading the books. That's how they knew. But he was manly. So when we were on the ship, he had all his books. I had the stewardess give him his dinner because he used to go down a little early and then she put him to sleep. And she he used to read to him.

Jack

That stewardess got instructions that I was a crazy father. She had to be there on the minute. You know what I mean? I never enjoyed myself because I felt that nobody can take care of him. Was just a crazy idea. And they didn't like the way I used to annoy them by watching him. Jean was a wonderful mother, but she was more sensible, more reasonable than I. You know what I mean? Because she was with him all the time.

And we took along his tricycle which he used to ride around in the lounges and on the deck.

But it wasn't all fun and games. I worked some too because Jack borrowed a typewriter and I was typing up letters for him, for London. You know, I was a typist. And, in London, he had cards made, and stationery, and I sent letters to America and all those other things. I was the secretary.

Worthing

When we got to England, it was October and Jack's father met us at the boat and took us back to where he was living which was in Worthing which is a suburb of London in the southeast of England. And it's a beautiful town. His father had married again, a woman who was wealthy and had a beautiful big home.

Jack

My mother, may she rest in peace, died a month after we were married. I had seen her just a few months before. Anyway, when she died, I sent my dad money to put up a stone for her. And I didn't find out till many years later that my dad never did it - he just spent the money. All those years she had just a little marker on her grave. When I found out I was sick. So I ordered a stone for her then. I've still got the bill marked, "Paid in full".

Anyway, the new wife's brother was the mayor of the town and her sister and her husband owned the Dolcis shoe stores, which now they're open all over the country. Her sister was extremely wealthy. And Jack's father was the only Jew there I think. Everybody was Gentile.

You know, it's a funny thing. The stepmother had a parrot named Jimmy for many, many years. I don't know how old it was then but it must have been about 15 years old. And he used to stay in the men's barber shop and lady's beauty shop, which Jack's father had. And at 4 o'clock the parrot always used to start screeching, "Tea time. Tea time. Herbie get the tea." Herbie was the fellow that used to work there, you know, getting the tea, going out and running the errands. "Herbie, get the tea. Tea time." And he used to talk that way. And that was her pet.

But when we were visiting, the parrot became jealous of Robert. Very jealous. Because he was only three and she used to put him on her lap and cuddle him. And the parrot didn't like it and used to scream his head off. And she always used to put her hand into the parrot, at the back of the neck, to tickle him and talk to him. And he used to answer back. I mean, there was a whole conversation. So, one day, after she played up to Robert, she put her hand in, and the parrot took a piece of meat out of her hand. He bit her, and drew blood from her hand. It was terrible. And he turned the other way and wouldn't even look at her. And she called him a naughty boy, or whatever. And, from then on, every time she cuddled with Robert, she made sure that she wasn't in the same room with the parrot because he was carrying on terrible. We have pictures of Robert with this great, big parrot.

She had that bird for so many years. In fact, later, when she was about to die, she said to her husband that she wants Jimmy buried with her because she had him so many years. But, Jack's father, he's no dope, when she died he sold it for about \$200. He didn't want the parrot and he was a very valuable parrot because of his talking. So he sold it. That's the kind of a guy he was.

Anyway, when we first got to Worthing, Jack said, "We'll only stay here a few days." So he used to commute to London — he used to go in and come back every day. Meanwhile, Jack's father was very nice to me. He took me to every area of interest in Worthing. And he was a real Beau Brummell. He was something else, a fantastic guy. Everybody in town knew him.

Then Jack's stepmother wanted to help Jack open up a store. I mean, they wanted to put him up and they'll order the first two mink coats, she and her sister. And she says, with all the people she knows, she says he'll do a great business. But, after five days, I says, "I didn't come here to sit out in Worthing." I told him, "This is not going to be for me. You're not going to stick me down here." That's why we went to London and stayed there.

London Accommodations

In London we first stayed in a hotel for about a month — the Palace Hotel which is still in existence — and we ate all our meals out. It was cold then, and to get heat you had to put a shilling in the heater in the bedroom. But it never got warm! So when Robert had to get a bath, I'd put his Dentons or his nightclothes on a chair in front of the thing, just to warm them up, while I took him into the shower or the bath or whatever. And then I'd take him quickly to get him dressed. You know, the whole thing was done in a second because it was freezing there. And that cold was something that I never was accustomed to because we used to have central heating at home.

So I said to Jack, "Look. I don't like this running out to restaurants all the time." First of all, it became expensive. I says, "We have to have a place where I can make Robert's breakfast." So, our friends Alex and Rae — the people who walked down the aisle with Jack — were very well-to-do people. Gentile people, but extremely nice; really nice. He used to take care of the pavements of the roads. Well, they had an apartment in Finsbury Park, where they lived, which they had fixed up and which they used to rent out, I suppose, to people. It was a three room apartment, and they gave it to us and we went there.

We had a living room, a bedroom and this tremendous kitchen, which had a kitchen table, like a director's table, that you could seat 14 people around. Like we needed it! That kitchen certainly was as big as my living room and dining room together now, you know. And it was equipped beautifully. I could have served 12 people. In fact, I did serve 12 people, because one day I made a dinner. I made a roast beef with Yorkshire pudding which the lady downstairs told me how to make. And I had my friends over and Jack invited a bunch of other people.

But this place was cold, just like the hotel. It was just terrible. They had a gas heater, for shillings, and I had it going all the time. I mean, they only had electricity — which cost a fortune — in the very rich people's homes. In fact, we only saw it in one place, at the home of a friend of Jack's who had a very elegant apartment. He had electricity. Everybody else had a fireplace in every room, including the bathrooms. So, anyway, I used to put shillings in this heater — I don't remember how long they lasted — but I was putting four, five, six shillings in just for the morning. Then they had these hot things to heat up the bed. So when I had to put Robert to sleep in the afternoon, I got under the covers with him. We used to crawl into bed, and he used to fall asleep and I used to fall asleep. And when we got up and when I had to bathe him it was just bad.

Even when I would sit in front of the heater, the front of my legs used to be hot but the back was freezing. And I got chilblains. So I used to write these letters to my mother, and, as I'm writing, I couldn't hold the pen. I was crying. So the letter was all tear-stained. And I say, "Everything is lovely here but the weather is atrocious." I mean, as if the cold weren't enough, they also used to have these terrible fogs, you know, from

the soft coal that was outlawed after many years. During the day, in the wintertime, around November, December, it was those awful, pea soup fogs. So I wrote to my mother, "I can't stand it. I don't think we're going to stay." Of course, my mother probably was glad that I was going to come back because she thought surely she'll never see me again.

Boarding House Life

So we only lived in that apartment six or seven days. I says, "This won't do." So I says, "It's no good. The hotel is no good and this certainly is no good." So I looked in the papers and I found a boarding house that was north, 81 Stamford Hill. And, as you walked in, there was a big lounge with a roaring fire that used to heat up the water and the whole place. And we took a room there, with two meals a day, breakfast and dinner, so that I didn't have to do any cooking. The place was owned by a widow, Mrs. Miller, who was charming. And she had a couple of other boarders there: she had an engineer, a schoolteacher, and I forget what the third one was, and then us.

Jack

No Jews. We were the only Jews.

During the day, Jack used to go down to the fur section, where he was doing his importing and exporting. And Robert and I would sit in the lounge with the big fire going and everybody was very congenial. And of course they were crazy about Robert. He used to bring down his nursery books and sit in front of the fireplace turning the pages at the right time, because he had watched me. So, like when he got to the word "beautifully" and the "beauti" was on one side of the page and the "fully" was on the other side, he turns the page. Well, there was a school teacher that was staying there and so she's making motions to me, "Does he know how to read?" So I said, "Well, it's because I used to read to him and turn the page." He remembered the letters but he didn't know how to read. And they thought he was a genius.

Jack

He was the smartest kid in the world.

Very often, around 11, 12 o'clock I'd give Robert a bite of lunch and we'd take the trolley car to go downtown London. And we'd meet Jack — because he used to go in early and take care of all his business by that time — and we'd spend the afternoon together. Robert, Jack, and I. And when we'd come home, we used to have high tea at 4 o'clock, with the wagon. The maids used to bring it in with all these thin sandwiches, you know, and with all the other things that went with it. Cakes and things.

And they had three or four servants there and Robert used to help them set the table. They used to call him. "Robert!" they used to call him and he'd come up, you know, running. He felt so important. And he used to set the table with the silverware and everything. I mean, they were eating him up there.

So we had our breakfast and dinner there. And we took Robert out with us at night. We never left him home. The maids used to say, "Why don't you go out alone? Leave him here. We're here. We sleep here." They adored him. And Robert didn't

mind. But Jack would not allow these girls to take care of him. You've never seen such a devoted father in your life. He was unbelievable. He says, "No." He says, "It's a strange place. He has to be with me, otherwise I don't want to go out." He says, "I won't leave him alone for anything." And he never did.

So the days we were going out I put Robert to sleep around 3 o'clock and he would sleep until 5 or 6. You know, a real good nap. Then I'd dress him up and by that time Jack would be back from downtown and we'd go with him to these different homes or whatever. And Robert acted like a little gentleman, all evening. We even took him to nightclubs, where they had bands of music and so on. In fact, one day we saw Robert go up to the band — it was a very big band, like 8 or 10 people — and he was waving his arms, leading the band. He was just wonderful. And for New Year's Eve, we took him to a party in London at the house of Jack's friends, the Rosengartens. That was the couple that walked down the aisle with Jack, you know, instead of his parents — he and his wife acted as parents. And that Rosengarten was his oldest friend although he was about 10 years older than Jack. So we had a good time.

And every Sunday Jack's father and stepmother came for Sunday dinner. His father came with toys and cakes and cookies and fruit. You know, in England, in those days fruit was all imported and expensive. He came with peaches this size and plums and grapes. It was a treat for us. Not that we didn't have enough to eat, because there was plenty. But it was very nice that they did that.

And that's how we lived until the thing fell through with the dresses and we decided we'll be coming home. We went there in September, I think it was, and we came home, I think, in March — March or April.