

A CHRONICLE
OF THE UNIGLICHT AND YUDISKY
FAMILIES

For Ira

by Sally Cohen

November 1975

Dear Ira,

I will now try my best to give you a chronicle of the Uniglicht and Yudisky families. I have been a good listener. Shall begin with my Mother's family. I was ten and Cousin Nettie was nine, and we loved to visit Grandma Uniglicht on Saturdays to take our Sabbath dinner with them after their return from the Synagogue. Grandpa wore his best, a high silk hat and tuxedo suit, and Grandma looked lovely, usually in black silk. They would change into more comfortable clothes and we'd sit down to eat.

The Chalah was wrapped in a linen napkin and then Grace was said, we'd drink a little brandy, said another prayer over the first piece of bread we ate. Then the big meal, and the dessert was usually - how well I remember - a pudding made of rye bread, apples and raisins, and the shortening was chicken fat because the meal was composed of Kosher meat products. After more prayers Grandpa took a nap, but after we helped Grandma with the dishes she would relate her story.

She was born in the northern part of Russia, if I remember correctly it was Alick - look it up on a Russian map - on a big estate during the Feudal system, and her father, about six feet tall, named Noah, was supervisor and managed all the peasants who worked and lived on the estate but received no salary, but worked very hard to produce all the wheat, vegetables and fruit that the Tsar's agents came to collect and sell. The peasants received all their food of course, a cobbler came to make their boots and shoes

and a dressmaker to sew their clothes once a year. There were no banks, so the money given to my great-Grandfather was kept under the beds and he also received genuine pearls. Grandmother used to ride on a horse through the entire estate and learned much from the peasants - how to cook, preserve the fruit and vegetables and how to deliver babies and the use of herbs for medicinal purposes.

She was about fifteen when she met my Grandfather who lived in the same vicinity. He was a scholar and theologian and spent most of his time with others who studied the Talmud, and so he didn't have any worries about supporting a wife. Her Father took care of that and when her first child was born, one of the peasants was the wet nurse. My Mother was born there and was named after Grandmother's mother who had died at a very early age.

Then came the deluge - all the Jews were told to leave, but fortunately my great-Grandfather Noah died before they left and Grandpa and Grandma, Aunt Clara's Mother and my Mother went to the Southern part of Russia, Odessa on the Black Sea.

It was a difficult change and they were lucky to have the pearls. Grandma had to use them for an exchange of food. Grandpa got a job peddling Bohemian glass and traveled a lot, all over Europe. This glass was exquisite because Grandma had a few pieces of it and I admired same because of its loveliness, parts of it shone like rubies, and those left were given to Aunt Clara, Nettie's Mother.

From what my Mother told me, they lived on a beautiful street in a small apartment and there were all kinds of geraniums in pots

on the window sills and the floors were colored tile.

Her sister Pessa, Aunt Clara's Mother, also married a great scholar, but died when Aunt Clara was a year old, and when she was two, her Mother died, so thereafter she lived with Grandpa and Grandmother, and my Mother and all the rest of the children called her sister, but she was really their niece. Uncle Moe, Uncle Ben and Aunt Rose were born in Odessa.

My Mother never went to school but her sister Pessa who learned needlework and worked for a wealthy lady taught my Mother how to sew, crochet, etc. But in the summertime, Dr. Seidman who was studying medicine in Berlin and came home for his vacation, would teach my Mother how to read Yiddish and Hebrew. Dr. Seidman's Father was a cousin of my Grandfather and owned a big department store in Odessa and the samovar that you have, I believe was given to my parents as a wedding present together with the candlesticks that Donald has.

According to the story that my Mother tells, this is how she met my Father. Grandfather Uniglicht got acquainted with Grandfather Yudisky in the Synagogue, and one Saturday when my Mother accompanied her Father to the Synagogue, they were introduced and I believe it was love at first sight. Grandpa said she had two beautiful black braids, and he always admired women with long hair. They were engaged and then married shortly thereafter.

My Father was a longshoreman. Mother didn't think that was a very good job, and therefore, opened a store. There was a war at the time between Turkey and Russia and their business flour-

ished. They never spoke Yiddish and their customers did not know they were Jewish. But one day, a Jewish peddler walked by their store and the Mujiks started to annoy him and when my Father tried to protest the Mujiks got very angry and said, "Ah Ha! So you too are a Jew."

From that time on, business decreased and they thought it best to get out of Russia before the pogroms started there. Pauline was six months old; they sold the store and Mother had some beautiful jewelry, much bedding and enough food to last them on the voyage to America. They went second-class. Father ate the pork products that were served, but Mother only ate the food she had brought along. The trip was a long one, the ship stopped at Glasgow in Scotland and London in England, and Hamburg in Germany and finally they reached Ellis Island and an agent who had charge of everything brought them to Newark and found a little two story house for eight dollars on McWhorter St.

My Father got a job in a leather factory and they had a few Russian boarders whom they had known in Russia. Aunt Rae was born in that house two years after they reached here, and then I, and finally your Mother. They sent money to the Uniglicht and Yudisky families and in about two years time every one in both families were settled in America.

The younger ones attended public school and the older ones went to night school. When Uncle William, Nettie's Father, was eighteen years old he met a somewhat older man, a Mr. Buddish, and they opened a hat factory. My Father and both Grandfathers worked there, but my Father contracted asthma, and by that time,

Dr. Seidman has also come to America, and when he came to treat my Father, said it would be better to give up that work and open up a store of some kind. The Doctor had opened an office above a well known department store. Simon and Joseph, on Springfield Ave. and Prince St., and he knew a man who wanted to sell his grocery store right around the corner on Prince St.

So they went, looked it over, and bought it, which was a good move for them. Molly and Eddie were born there, but underneath this store was a public bathing place and the steam caused my Father's asthma to become very bad and Mother got rheumatism. My Father went south and lived in Tennessee for about six months and before coming home went to the Chicago World's Fair. Mother closed up the store for a while and was treated by Dr. Seidman in the German Hospital for about two weeks, and when they were both better, sold that store and opened a new store on Boston St. near 13th Avenue. Business was thriving and they decided to buy the property which was the store, kitchen and dining room in back of the store, another floor, sitting room, my parents' bed room, then another floor with three bedrooms for the children. Irving was born there, and we had a nurse Libba who took care of us.

They had paid a deposit to buy this property, but when my Father went to the agents to pay the rest of the money, he told my Father that a neighbor of ours who lived across the street, had offered more money, and therefore, my Father could not purchase it. My Father engaged my Uncle William's lawyer, but he was given back the deposit and so the case was lost.

But fortunately the lawyer told my Father of a good buy about nine blocks from here on Camden Street. The man who owned this property and store had been a carpenter and he had built this place himself. When Mother and Dad looked at it, they fell in love with same, bought it and we lived there for fourteen years. Alice and Bertram were born there. At that time real estate was booming and Grandpa and some of his friends, would buy a piece of property, sell it, make a profit, and then buy some more.

At one time we owned four houses and a whole block on one side of the street of two story homes. Then we also sold our home and store where we had lived for fourteen years, and we had been happy there. Pauline had been married there, also Rae. After we moved to one of the homes on South 6th St. which Grandpa owned. He gave up the grocery business while we lived there. Shortly after there was a big depression, many in the real estate business lost everything and many committed suicide. But we managed to survive. Luckily, had a savings of about \$2,000 and your Mother had about \$400 and Grandpa exchanged all the property he had accumulated for the house on Canfield St., Orange, N.J. and also opened a grocery store on the same premises.

It was a lovely corner house and consisted of two apartments on one side of the house and another small apartment on the other side of the house and the store below this. Grandma had her garden and raised vegetables and flowers. We were contented and Grandfather loved this new home. Anna, Alice, Irving and I were married, also Eddie while we lived there. Molly was married when we lived

on South 6th Street and had the most elaborate wedding in a hotel.

My Father died in this home. Just before he became ill he had bought a private one family home in West Orange with a garage. Grandma, Grandpa, Bertram, your Mother and you were to live there, but after Grandpa's death, just Grandma, Uncle Bertram and your Mother and you went there to live. Uncle Bertram had by then graduated from Columbia; got good experience in several hospitals and a Dentist's office and then opened a Dentist's office on Main St., Orange, where he is still practicing. But living in West Orange took up too much time travelling in trolley cars for Bertram and your Mother. So, Grandma sold that house and bought the Essex St. house in Orange where you all lived.

Grandmother died there, and by that time Bertram had married Ruth, and later he bought that house from the rest of the brothers and sisters and Mother and you lived with them. Eugene was born after Grandma died and later, Bertram sold that house and rented a larger house in another lovely section of Orange before Carol was born and later bought that house across the street which we all loved.

I will now end the story about my Mother's family and give you a brief one about my Grandpa and Grandma Yudisky. I can't tell you too much about Grandpa' Yudisky for he never talked too much about himself. Although he was a good Hebrew scholar, he was not a fanatic - he was broad-minded and I shall always remember what he said to Uncle Eddie after he taught him the meaning of all the Hebrew words for his Bar Mitzvah. These were the words

Uncle Eddie told me. He said, never forget that God is always near you. You see him in the Stars, the Moon, all things that grow, you may have some joy, some sorrow, but God shall never forsake you. How beautiful. I loved this Grandpa and when he was sick I used to have great talks with him. Grandma Yudisky was a beautiful woman, tall fair skin and auburn hair.

She told my cousin Nettie and me that she was born in Krimachuck, a small village in the Crimea, and her Father owned a distillery where the choicest liqueurs were made for the Counts and Dukes who lived in that vicinity, the most beautiful section of Russia. She learned how to make some of these liqueurs herself and I can well remember the taste of that luscious blackberry brandy that she made and brought us. Also, she was a wonderful cook. Nettie and I also went to her house sometimes for the Sabbath meal after they came from Synagogue. First, that wonderful Pate de foie Gras, rich soup, roast chicken or capon with stuffing and Kishka - was that something. We always saved that for last so we could chew on the crispy skin which was like chewing oum; and the dessert was preserved cherries. My Father was born in Krimachuk, but later they moved to Odessa.

Grandma loved rich foods, no wonder she died of diabetes. The night before she died she had eaten a dish of carrots, parsnips, sweet potatoes and fat meat. When she didn't appear for breakfast at her usual time, Grandpa went to her room and tried to awaken her, but she had died in a coma. It was a great shock to the entire family. Grandpa died seven years later, he told me how he missed her and wanted to join her. He lived alone

in an apartment owned by his daughter Deborah. She was tall and fair like her Mother and had married a man in the trucking business whose name was Barhunka but was later changed to Brown. They had several children and although they were my cousins, we didn't see them often enough to tell more about them.

There was another daughter, Rossi, married a Mr. Rivelis, who had boarded with my parents in Newark and Grandma introduced them. The youngest daughter was Idez. She married a Brooklyn man and had two daughters. Aunt Idez died in her late thirties and we missed her for she was a lovely Aunt. Then there were three sons, my Father Jonas was the oldest, then cam Nukom and Lazar who fought in the Turkish-Russian war, and often they would tell us about their experiences. The oldest, my Father, and the youngest, Nettie's Fahter, were not drafted.

Ira, I have written a long story to the best of my knowledge about the Uniglichts and Yudiskys and my nieces, grand-nieces, nephews and grand-nephews. You should be as proud of our ancestors as I have been.

Love,

Aunt Sally

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