

LEN FORMAN'S MEMOIRS, SUCH AS THEY ARE
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My daughter Fran deserves the credit or criticism for talking me into doing these memoirs, for it was she who motivated and urged me to do these when I was floundering so badly in the few weeks after Roz died.

Originally, I planned this in sections and, although I'm generally leaving it that way, it is clear to me that the definitions of the sections can't be as clear and delineated as one might like them to be. There is overlap, as one's life can't be pigeonholed. As to the grammar, syntax, punctuation, and rambling, forgive me. I hope you enjoy reading these as much as I did writing them:

GRANDPARENTS

I decided to start talking about my grandparents. Now, when I say my grandparents I can talk only about my paternal grandparents, my father's mother and father, because my mother's parents died when I was a small child. In thinking of my grandparents I can't help but wonder or be amazed at the gulf that separated not only me from my grandparents but particularly my children and certainly my grandchildren (who represent a five-generation spread). That spread is inconceivably wide, particularly to the grandchildren. I believe that I am the only one left with a direct contact with anybody in my family who originated in Europe and lived a European lifestyle.

First, my grandfather, a gentle lovely man known as Zaida. In fact, when Rosha, my first grandchild, was born her mother and father asked me what I would like to be called, I told them I wanted to be called Zaida because I loved this old gentleman so much. (they didn't honor my request!) as far as I know, Zaida and my grandmother, Bubba, were both born in a little town in Lithuania called Posville near Kovno, the capital of the country. I know that there was such a place because I know of other people who came from there. Whether Posville was a town or a "shtetl" (a

small village) I have no idea. Apparently, Zaida had decided to get out of Lithuania after he was married, after he had a couple of children, because I am told he went to south Africa as a young man and was by trade a blacksmith. In fact, I have hanging on the wall of my den pliers that Zaida had made himself and took to South Africa or made in South Africa and then brought back to Lithuania when he went back there from South Africa after the Boer War broke out.

It is highly unusual that anybody left Europe, went somewhere, then went back to Europe to subsequently go to the United States. But that's what Zaida did. When he came to the United States he brought with him the older of his then six children, three girls. Why and how they settled in Baltimore, I have no idea. I think he had a brother there at the time. How many years later I don't know, but at some point he apparently raised enough money to send tickets to come over to my grandmother, the younger three children as well as his mother, my great grandmother. And you better believe they came in steerage.

They came over to the United States, at least Bubba and the younger children, around 1900 because my father was five years old when they came here and he was born in 1895. Zaida was a rather tall, stately looking man, at least that's the way he looked to me at the time. I never saw him without his characteristic derby hat which was typical of those guys who had come over from Europe around the turn of the century. He dressed always in a derby hat, always wore a tie when I saw him, a shirt with frayed cuffs and an old overcoat. I just remember him only in the winter, maybe he wore the overcoat during the summer too, I don't know. As to my grandmother, Bubba, she was also a very unusual looking woman in that she was very small, rather small boned, a handsome face, in fact my daughter Frannie looks very much like I remember Bubba. I have no idea what Bubba's body looked like, because in all the years I knew her I never saw her other than in voluminous dark clothes, summer and winter, a scarf over her head which I don't think was for religious reasons but she just wore a scarf all the time. I have no idea what her hair looked like, whether she had any hair or anything of the sort,

nor do I have any idea whether she was thin, fat or what not because she always wore a long, heavy skirt with other skirts under it and blouses and brooches and all kinds of stuff like that. In the forty years that Bubba lived here in the United States, to the best of my knowledge, she didn't learn one single word of English. She lived in a 100% Yiddish speaking milieu which she never tried to break out of and lived a rather provincial circumscribed life. As far as I know she was not only illiterate in English but I think she was illiterate in Yiddish as well. It's possible she never learned to read or write in any language. Hard to believe.

Bubba and Zaida lived in a small two-story house at 209 South Exeter Street in what is now Little Italy in Baltimore. The house was very interesting: It had no central heating and in the winter the only room that had any heat was the kitchen, and while there were several other rooms on the first floor one of them was the living room which to the best of my knowledge although furnished was never occupied in all the years that I knew Bubba and Zaida. My father told me that as a kid there was so little room in the house for all the children to sleep that he slept in the same bed with his grandmother until he was eleven or twelve years old.

The kitchen was heated by a coal stove on which Bubba did the cooking. Most people think of their grandmother as this wonderful cook and baker. But poor Bubba couldn't bake worth a damn. Everything was burned, and to this very day I remember the cookies that Bubba used to force on me when my father took me to see her every Friday night -- and the bottoms of the cookies were so goddamned burnt and blackened with soot or whatever was on top of that stove that you had to scrape it off in order to eat them. Instead of being round they were sort of oval shaped and most heavy, whether she didn't use shortening or didn't know how to bake at all, I have no idea, but I still remember those cookies.

There was no plumbing in the house either. To go to the bathroom you had to use an outhouse behind the house and every time I went there I used to love to go to the outhouse because on its walls were old newspapers that my father had collected having

to do with the First World War from 1914 to 1918, most of which were the rotogravure pages of photographs of Germans and Frenchmen and British in the trenches. I still remember that.

Water for both cooking and washing and shaving was brought in from the yard from a pump and heated on the same stove that was used for the cooking. I would assume that bathing was done in a public bathhouse of which there were several in the neighborhood. I also remember Bubba's hands as being rather work worn most of the time. Whether it was from the stove or was her lifestyle I have no idea but Bubba had pretty rough hands. I didn't notice any particular odor in the house because maybe I was a kid and didn't look for those things, but to me now I would say it looked and smelled old and musty. As to the lighting at some point my father had the house electrified, but whenever I went there the only lights that were on were in the kitchen. The rest of the house was absolutely dark.

Their religious attitude was the same as all the Jews who had come from Eastern Europe; they were orthodox. I would think of my grandfather as observant, but not crazily so. On the other hand, I am most certain that Bubba bought only kosher food. I do know that Bubba used to shop on Lombard Street, which was the then center for Jewish style and kosher food -- chicken killers, Jewish grocery stores, kosher butchers, etc. As far as I know Bubba shopped every day as everybody else did down there because there was no adequate refrigeration and social life was on these shopping forays. She did have an icebox, however, and perhaps kept things for a day or two.

In those years there were many synagogues on Lloyd Street, the present magnificent Lloyd Street Synagogue being the oldest and most impressive. Many of these synagogues were in houses and originated when Jews from various towns in Eastern Europe came over. After all, it takes only ten men to start a "shul". Zaida belonged to the Rushasha Shul which was housed in the lovely building now restored and occupied by B'nai Israel Congregation, the very last active congregation in East Baltimore.

PARENTS

While I'm sure that other things will occur to me about my grandparents as time goes on and I'll intersperse them, I'd like to talk a little about what I understand about my father's earlier years. I believe that the goals of various generations were different. For example, it was important to my grandfather to make sure that my father and his other children threw off the trappings of their European birth and became "Americanized". It was also important to my grandfather that his children got an eighth-grade education. An eighth-grade education in those years was quite an accomplishment for the children of immigrants and my father did in fact go to the eighth grade. I have no idea what my father's childhood was like, except that he was the last child and had five older sisters. He was the first boy in the family so one might assume that he was spoiled by these five older sisters. I got the impression that he was used to getting his own way, certainly after he married my mother. My father married my mother in 1919 and prior to that had served in the Navy during the First World War as a yeoman or a clerk at the then coal loading piers that the Navy maintained in Norfolk, Virginia. That is where he spent his naval career. It is doubtful whether he ever set foot on a ship. After coming out of the Navy, my father apparently wanted to go into some sort of business for himself and decided to open a paper jobbing business in Salisbury, Maryland, which at the time lacked such a business. This decision followed his being employed by the Continental Paper Bag Company (later became part of International Paper Co.) as a clerk or an inside man. Through this job my father discovered what paper jobbing consisted of and he and my mother moved to the eastern shore. I doubt that my mother was happy in Salisbury, because she had lived a rather provincial circumscribed life and as it happened my father developed malaria and my mother took it upon herself while he was being nursed back to health to close the paper business and liquidate it and the two of them moved back to Baltimore.

At the time there was another gentleman in Baltimore, named Lou Malinckrodt who operated sort of a superjobbing (large distributing) business. Lou represented another paper bag

manufacturer and since by then my father felt he was learning the paper bag business he went to work for Lou Malinckrodt as a salesman and worked for him from about 1920 or 1921 until 1929. In 1929 Lou decided to retire or he got sick or something happened and the paper bag manufacturer that Lou was a representative for asked my father to go to work directly for it as their employee.

It is clear that at that point my father made what turned out to be a major decision in his life and perhaps even mine when he decided to forego opportunity for security, because by going to work for this paper bag manufacturer my father was assured of a steady salary, modest commission and modest bonus for the foreseeable future. Whereas, had he picked up an agency arrangement of his own, he would have been independent of the company while distributing their products and would have had an opportunity to get involved with other paper products and perhaps gone off into an entirely different entrepreneurial direction. This might have given him a shot at making some real money that some of the other men around the country who opted to go that way did. Perhaps it was the right decision at the time because in the latter part of 1929 the stock market had a big break and the United States entered the great depression of the 1930's and my father was able to go along, getting his salary from the paper bag manufacturer and feeling himself perhaps fairly secure at the time when many other people were going under. As a kid I literally worshipped my father. I had no idea that he was strictly a middle class Jewish employee of a big manufacturer at the time (or what I thought was a big manufacturer) and he and I spent a great deal of time on the weekends together. Whether my father looked upon me as his child and my sister as my mother's child I don't know, but every Saturday morning he would take me with him to his office and it was in that office that I learned how to operate a calculator, how to type, how to make out sales cards, etc. Bear in mind I was only ten or twelve years old at the time. I enjoyed those Saturday outings very very much. I remember after going to his office on Saturday morning and watching him or helping him bring up his sales records he and I would have lunch together at what was then Horn & Horn's, which

at the time made the most delicious crabcakes in the city of Baltimore. Not only did my father have an office in Baltimore, but the company also maintained a warehouse of their paper bag and wrapping paper products to make local deliveries. In addition, in order to minimize the overhead of the office and warehouse they also maintained a little shopping bag converting plant, where in those years they stapled handles onto paper sacks. As a kid I remember the clatter of that little shopping bag plant rather well. It had manually operated stapling machines to do this work. They also maintained a small printing plant to print ads on those paper bags before they were made into shopping bags, because many of the butchers and grocery stores using shopping bags in those years loved the idea of having them printed. It was quite de rigueur. The shopping bag in those years was a functional item which people really needed to carry merchandise and groceries bought in the various markets around the city on what for the most part was then a streetcar. It was largely as a result of those years that I have to give credit to my father for teaching me the whole functioning of the paper bag and concurrently paper distribution business which stood me so well in my young adult and later years.

As to my mother, she was a rather interesting woman in that she felt that much responsibility was bestowed on her. As I mentioned earlier, she felt it was her responsibility to liquidate the paper jobbing business that she and my father had set up on the eastern shore in the early 1920's. She and my father had what appeared to be a happy marriage. The responsibilities of the two of them were very well delineated, much more clearly defined than they are among younger families today. I frequently think of my father's car, my father's checking account, my mother's kitchen, my mother's children and things of that sort.

How my mother and father met, I don't know. But they were good looking young people from the pictures I have seen and were married in 1919. As to my mother, I know that as a kid she was extremely poor and worked even as a youngster in various jobs such as embroidery, making lace things and things of that nature.

She tells me she would much rather have gone to Hebrew school and learned to read Hebrew and so forth and apparently was rather frustrated that she couldn't do that. As a young woman, she wound up as a clerk in a company that made printed cake tins and things of that nature called the Tindeco Company whose factory now is being converted into an upscale condominium. From what I can gather, she loved her father more than her mother, almost worshipping the old gentleman because apparently he fit her ideas of what a person should be like. My mother was the fourth girl of five. My mother led a very structured existence, always planning something to do and was most unhappy when she had no plans. She was always taking upon herself the responsibility for something and only in recent years did she become unhappy when there was nobody left for her to be responsible for. She is somewhat amazed that she is the last survivor of her brother and sisters and my mother still has all her marbles at ninety years of age.

From what I can gather, my mother and father were certainly anything but harsh disciplinarians. To my recollection neither my father nor mother ever laid a hand on me in anger, or as punishment. Frequently my mother threatened to hit me by raising her hand but it never came down. As to my sister Elaine, who is six years younger than I am, I regret that those six years that separated her from me were somewhat a barrier as to our getting to know each other better. For example, when she was born I was going off to elementary school and I get the impression that since my sister was born prematurely my mother took it upon herself to shelter her and watch over her and take care of her, one of my mother's many, many responsibilities. When my sister went off to elementary school at six, I was already entering junior high school. And then when my sister went into junior high school I got married. So, as you can see, we were always sort of a generation apart and never really got to know each other. It is only in recent years when she and I joined together in worrying about seeing that my mother was adequately cared for that she and I established a genuine family relationship. When my mother developed angina and had to have bypass surgery at eighty-eight years of age, I might add that Elaine and I developed a much

closer relationship than in the past. I really regret not having gotten to know her better during all those intervening years.

MY CHILDHOOD

As to my childhood, I really don't remember that much about it, except that I think of it as a happy period of my life. We lived then on a Street called Towanda Avenue, off of Reisterstown Road. The neighborhood was entirely Jewish. Although I joke about it today by saying that I didn't know Jews were a minority until I got into the army, I think that's partly true because the school that I went to, No. 59 at Keyworth Avenue and Reisterstown Road, was virtually 100% Jewish. On the Jewish holidays it virtually closed down. One of the most vivid memories of my childhood is of a warm spring day walking home from school to my house on Towanda Avenue on a Friday afternoon and hearing all the noodles being chopped for the Friday night chicken soup suppers from the open windows along the way.

From the time I was a little kid I always assumed that I would go to work for my father when I grew up and when I entered high school I started out in the commercial course to learn typing, bookkeeping and things of that nature. It was only after a year or so at high school that I decided that I indeed wanted to go to college and was not discouraged in this thought by either my father or my mother. However, the idea of going to college outside of the city of Baltimore didn't enter my mind for two reasons -- No. 1, I had skipped several grades as a kid, so I was ready to graduate from high school at sixteen and was reluctant to cut loose from living at home at that time. And No. 2, I knew that going to college outside of Baltimore would have been a financial burden which I didn't want to inflict on my father and mother, consequently I decided to go to Hopkins. In those years it was considerably easier to get into college if you were any sort of student at all than it was later on, and getting into Hopkins was a piece of cake after I switched from the commercial course and took the academic course requirements to

get into college. I went to Baltimore city college at that time and graduated in 1938 when I was still sixteen years old.

COLLEGE

My years at Johns Hopkins University were really an eye opener, and while I can't say that they were the happiest of my life, were pretty close to it. I literally loved going to Johns Hopkins University and the years I spent there. Perhaps my head was then ready to absorb a lot of new information, new ideas, new subjects, etc. And I just became like a sponge, picking up the subjects like economics, French, money and banking, corporate finance and things of that sort. I majored in economics and wound up taking every economics course in the undergraduate department at Hopkins. I joined a fraternity even though I lived in the city and even though going to college meant just getting on a different streetcar. I had the chance to make acquaintances and meet men who had come to Hopkins from other parts of the country and whose friendship I cherish to this very day. Among those people are Dr. Jack Handelsman, who is one of my dearest friends; Marty Robbins, who died several years ago came to Hopkins; Dr. Henry Seidel came to Hopkins and many, many young men came down from New Jersey to go to Hopkins because (a) there were no medical schools in New Jersey in those years and (b) by coming to Hopkins as undergraduates they felt they could get into the Hopkins medical institutions more easily, and most of them did. I entered Hopkins in September, 1938, and here too, in order to save my father a buck, I did four years of economics in three, graduating in 1941 instead of 1942 when the four year program that I otherwise could have done would have had me graduate. Of course, these were the years of World War II and it was while at Hopkins that we Jews learned what was happening in Germany. This is the first time I had ever heard of all this and this too came as somewhat of an eye opener.

There are a number of men who I feel have affected my outlook and my life very, very much and the first of these was Dr. Broadus Mitchell, who was assigned to me as my advisor when I

entered Hopkins. Dr. Mitchell was an extremely liberal individual politically and he began to color my thinking as to liberal versus conservative and really opened my head to a lot of social obligations that I never realized existed. I loved being his student. I worked very, very hard and although I was a good student in high school as well, at Hopkins I really felt that I had come into my own. I was taking courses that I was interested in and really did very well. I learned somewhere along the line that by writing and rewriting things you are apt to learn them better and I really took copious notes and in many, many instances took them home and retyped them and did learn many, many subjects, most of which I remember to this very day.

It was in my freshman year at Hopkins that I met Roz and although we didn't start going together seriously until a little later on she clearly appealed to me as I did to her and we began to date around in 1938, over fifty years ago.

MARRIAGE EARLY YEARS

Roz and I were married in January of 1942, when we were each twenty years old, a rather tender age to marry. In those years our romance was accelerating and the only way into the bedroom was under the bridal canopy at that time, and clearly that's where we were going. I also think that both she and I were probably mature enough despite the fact that we were just twenty and were certainly wet behind the ears by any definition. I think subconsciously we were ready to break out of our then nuclear family life. I don't think we consciously got married to get out of our parents' homes but I do think we were ready to take the next step. Our courtship I certainly wouldn't describe as whirlwind but was I guess a perfectly ordinary courtship. We spent a lot of time at the fraternity house dinking around and so forth. We had planned to get married in June, 1942, but the Second World War brought the United States in during December, 1941, and we decided to get married as soon as possible because the draft was blowing hot and heavy and we thought we ought to

get on with it. At that time, Roz's father had had a series of heart attacks and was spending the winters in Florida, having been forced to sell his cigar manufacturing business and retire. Roz's mother and father were willing to have us get married provided we came down to Florida for the ceremony, which we were both happy to do. Certainly my father and mother were happy to come down to Florida as well and on January 4, 1942, we were married in Miami. Roz and I honeymooned at the Hotel Nacional de Cuba, we flew over the day after we got married and this was my very first airplane flight. It was on a DC 3 as I remember. I also might add that staying at the Hotel Nacional de Cuba was our first exposure to a German Jewish refugee group staying there, many of whom had gotten into Cuba and were waiting for visas to get into the United States.

ARMY

In 1942 I was concerned about being drafted and went down to the Army induction station to find out whether my then vision would keep me out. I had a low vision right eye and so forth and at that time I was told that my eyes would not permit me to go into the Army and so in order to encourage the draft board to consider me kindly as to not going into the Army I took a job as an inspector at the Glenn L. Martin plant in Baltimore which was building B-24 bombers. I worked for the Martin Company from the summer of 1942 to the early winter months of late 1942 when I got a draft board notice anyway. I was again examined by the Army and sure enough this time regulations had changed and I was inducted into the Army as a draftee in January, 1943, as what was called "limited service". One of the greatest breaks of my life was while I was being interviewed by the Army at the induction station I met a chap whom I had known who was interviewing me. I asked him how he got the job at the induction station in Baltimore and he told me that the Army was replacing all the soldiers at the induction station who were not limited service with limited service people who could type and of course I asked him how I could get a typing test. This chap, who I knew from high school, sent me to see the adjutant at the induction station

who did in fact give me a typing test and I typed like hell. The adjutant asked me if I wanted to be stationed at the induction station here in Baltimore and of course I jumped at the opportunity. The adjutant told me not to worry, that I would be ordered to the induction station in Baltimore to work as a limited service typist. I didn't believe him, but sure enough when I reported for induction I went down to Camp Meade along with all the other draftees and after staying there four or five days got orders to get back on the train and come back to Baltimore to be stationed at the induction station as an interviewer.

After working as an interviewer for several months, living at home in an apartment that Roz and I had rented and getting paid by the Army to live off of an Army base if you don't mind, the psychology department of the induction station (which worried about the literacy of the draftees) was looking for soldiers whom they needed who had some knowledge of psychology. I had taken one course as an undergraduate at Hopkins and so I was transferred to the psychological subsection which was a very, very fascinating job in the Army. It was the task of this department to see whether an individual draftee was literate or not, and if he was not literate to find out whether he was not literate because he was too stupid to learn to read or never had the opportunity to learn to read and it was our department's job to find that out. That work lasted for about one year when word came down that the limited service people at the induction station were going to be checked out to see if they were eligible to go overseas or not as limited service people. Those of us who felt we would be eligible to go overseas decided to apply for officers candidate school as limited service people. There were only three officer candidate schools that took limited service people; i.e., medical administrative, Air Force administrative or transportation, and I applied to those three officer candidate schools in that order. The Army, in its infinite wisdom, gave me the third one, the Transportation Corps, which was the one I wanted to go to least.

By then it was the spring of 1944, the invasion had already been going on and American troops were on the European continent

again. The Germans were being pushed back day by day. But off I went to O.C.S. And after a very, very rough go graduated in November, 1944. Getting through officer candidate school was a very rough time for me because I had spent my soldiering in an induction station doing clerical work and didn't know anything about field work. The fact that the Transportation Corps Officer Candidate School accepted limited service people didn't mean a goddamn thing. Nonetheless, I managed to graduate and was sent to New York to work at the New York port of embarkation, I did for a month or two. Roz joined me and we lived at the Barbizon Plaza Hotel and had a pretty good time of it, but in January, 1945, I was shipped overseas. Roz was then pregnant with Frannie, unbeknownst to me, and nonetheless off I was overseas. I was shipped to a replacement depot in France and assigned to the 262nd Port Company in Cherbourg, France. The men in the 262nd Port Company were actually stevedores used to unload ammunition in the port of Cherbourg and in those years the Army was not integrated. Black troops were put into completely black units which had both Black and White officers and the 262nd Port Company was one such unit. The chap I replaced as an officer had had an argument with one of the men and he had been pushed into the river where he didn't drown but it was best felt that this gentleman be transferred out of the unit. The unit had been overseas since 1942 and I had just come over so you can imagine the shape that these guys were in compared to the shape I was in. The unit didn't live in tents. In fact, the only time I lived in a tent in the Army overseas was when I first got over and was in the replacement depot. After I was assigned to the 262nd Port Company I always lived in either a caserne, which is sort of a French Army barracks, an apartment with other officers, or a hotel room of my own.

During that period in early 1945 there was a growing number of prisoners of war and displaced persons who had been shipped around by the Germans as laborers and the Army began to utilize these people, both prisoners and displaced persons, to do the physical labor that the Army needed done, like unloading ships. The troops like the 262nd Port Company who formerly did labor were used to guard both these DP's and POW's. This change made

the officers of these port companies and other units military policemen. The officers, including me, now came under the control of the military police department.

Over in Europe nobody knew from limited service and poor little old me was now transferred out of my Port Company to a military police traffic control company comprised of half-crazed infantry men who had suffered "battle fatigue" and were too undisciplined or incapable or crazy to go back to get shot at. Some of these guys had been wounded and just couldn't go back to the infantry. These were my new troops, and for a while I did traffic control with these lunatics.

After what I remember was a couple of months I think, I was then transferred to a prisoner of war guard company, and that was great. I was stationed in Dijon, France, lived in a hotel and then an apartment house, and culled out of the prisoner of war camp the head chef of the Adlon Hotel in Berlin and he was made our apartment cook. Fourteen officers lived in the apartment and we got along just great.

I was also stationed with my guard company in Nancy and Metz as I recall. But the longest period of time and the best physical setup was in the apartment house in Dijon.

Just about this time I got sort of flu like symptoms which simply wouldn't go away and I continued to run a temperature and take aspirin for a week or so and still stayed in the unit. At some point since these flu like symptoms wouldn't go away one of the younger doctors suspected that I had a malady called infectious mononucleosis, which I had never heard of at that point. It was also known as glandular fever because I also had swollen glands under my jaw, under my arms, in my groin and these too were indicative of this particular disease. The only way that they can tell if you have infectious mononucleosis is by doing a blood test called a heterophile antibody - I'll never forget the name, and they did this blood test on me. I really thought the whole thing was fatal but it turned out that in fact I did have infectious mononucleosis and so I was taken out of the unit and sent to a general hospital in Paris.

At that time the war had ended in Europe and many of the troops were being shipped back to the United States either to be transshipped to the Far East where the war against Japan was still on or to be discharged from the Army. My unit was ultimately broken up while I was in the hospital in Paris. Apparently there is no way in the Army to be a little bit sick because I didn't feel seriously ill but at the same time was too sick to stay in the unit and so had to be hospitalized. The hospitalization wasn't all that bad. By then the symptoms of my infectious mononucleosis were to have normal temperature and feel reasonably good all day, but in the late afternoon to become fatigued and have my temperature go up. By evening I had to lie down and really take it easy. The problem with infectious mononucleosis is that the patient gets pretty run down and subject to pneumonia. Whether it's still the same way I don't know but nevertheless I had a mild case as it turned out. When we would wake up in the morning I would hang around, have breakfast and bedcheck, and then another guy and I would get on a public bus, ride into downtown Paris for the day and arrange to come back to the hospital in the late afternoon for me to lie down and take it easy when my temperature got high. There were two things on these trips to Paris that are worth noting. Firstly, I got friendly with a Canadian Jewish guy who had become a doctor in the American Army and he had been going in to visit the poor wretched Jews who were the remnants of the Jewish community of Paris and take them candy, stockings and other stuff every day. He used to go out of that hospital with a suitcase every day and one day he asked me to go with him, which I did. We went at that time to the Marais to visit the Jews who were living as best they could and we actually gave them all the things in the suitcase, most of which wound up being sold on the black market (about which we could care less) because it gave these poor people who had been through so much a living. One day we said to one of the local people, is there anything special you would like? And he replied yes, he would like a typewriter which would have been pretty difficult to get. Another day we asked him something else and he said he'd like a jeep. We said, well we can't get you a jeep, we can't possibly get it out of the hospital and it was he

who suggested we bring it in piece by piece. He was quite serious, which we weren't.

The other interesting thing worth remembering about these visits to Paris was that when I originally came over to France and was in the replacement depot in a little town near Epinal, while walking along a canal outside the depot one day I met an old French gentleman in a rowboat. I spoke a little broken French at the time and he invited me to come back to his house on the canal to have a cup of tea. His house was most interesting and I would assume typical of small French summer homes south of Paris. The thing I remember most about it was that it had a two story living room and the upstairs rooms all were half the house and had a balcony running along the hallway, down which one could look when he emerged from any of the three or four upstairs rooms, assumed to be bedrooms. So the house appeared to have one great big room on the first floor and three or four small rooms, half of the house, on the second floor. I went with the old gentleman and met his daughter and son-in-law and their three or four children who also had an apartment in Paris. Their name was Outins and when I got to the hospital in Paris I contacted the Outins and we spent a little bit of time together. I had lunch everyday at the officers club and brought the Outins with me and they in turn had me over to their apartment for dinner, which was pretty good considering the scarcity of items at the time. The Outins and I continued our friendship after I went home and a little later on i'll talk about some of the subsequent meetings and visits and adventures that Frannie had with the Outin family.

After a month or perhaps longer in the hospital in Paris my infectious mononucleosis began to get better, but I was in no hurry to leave this terrific marvelous setup. I really loved that stay in the hospital and managed to push off their discharging me for a week or two, but nevertheless pretty soon it reached the point where I had to go back to my now disbanded unit. At that point my father had written to the Army or the Red Cross or someone explaining that he needed my help to conduct his job and my wife had just had a new baby and sure enough the Army arranged

to ship me back home for discharge. I got out of the Army in February, 1946.

I might add that at no time while I was in the Army was a shot fired at me by Germans or anyone else and I was lucky enough never to see any combat or get remotely near it. I think the worst part of being in the Army for me was being separated from Roz, as well as not being there when Frannie was born in September, 1945. The first I knew about Frannie being born was when I got a letter from Roz. I had previously bought a bunch of cigars which I passed out to the other people in the unit. I was then stationed in Dijon and was quite elated but also quite upset that I wasn't there during that very, very important period in Roz's life, my life and Frannie's life. In fact, when I did get home in February, 1946, Frannie was already five months old and looked at me rather quizzically when I hung around the apartment which we then had on Hilton Road.

WORK YEARS

As anticipated, when I came out of the Army, I went to work for my father in his then regional sales manager's job for the paper bag manufacturer. Something that neither he nor I recognized during the Second World War was that as a result of the scarcity of paper products it was no longer necessary for the company to carry stuff in a warehouse because it didn't stay in long enough to hit the floor of the warehouse, nor was it necessary to carry stocks all over the South. Apparently my father never recognized these changes, always assuming that business would go back to what it was before the war. Anyway, in the latter part of 1946 the company was sold. Much to my father's surprise and chagrin he was terminated in January, 1947. He had worked for this company from 1929 to 1947, a period of eighteen years and that was that. He was destroyed psychologically. This termination of him, of course, included me and he and I in January of 1947 were left absolutely high and dry in terms of a living. We had long talks about what to do and decided that the only thing he or I could salvage out of all those years other

than his rather modest savings was the knowledge that both he and I had of paper bag distribution and the warm relationship that he enjoyed as a result of calling on paper distributors, wholesale grocers, candy and tobacco distributors and so on over those many, many years. Rather than look for other businesses to go into, which we could have, we (and when I say we, I mean both he and I) decided to see if we could get lines of other paper items, including bags, to sell to these very, very same people whom he had been calling on. 1947 was a rather poor year to start looking for lines because many, many items were still in short supply as a result of the disarray of the Second World War and the fact that there simply still weren't enough things to go around and it was tough on us both. Carrying the ball sort of fell on my shoulders despite the fact that he and I were together and we did manage to pick up a few lines on commission. In addition to which we decided to convert paper shopping bags on our own and by now the stapling of handles to make paper shopping bags was sort of passe' and shopping bag handles were being pasted onto paper sacks to carry them. We established a little shopping bag converting plant in the space that he formerly had occupied as his office and we had a little plant going making shopping bags. We were able to sell the output. This lasted for a few months and we had a few cockamamie lines which didn't amount to a row of pins but it seemed to be going in the right direction. Our big break came when we stumbled on a paper bag manufacturer called Negley Paper Bag Company in Monroe, Louisiana. The young man who owned the company, a guy named Bill Negley, was the son-in-law of a man named Brown who owned a big paper mill in Monroe, Louisiana, and put Bill Negley into business. Bill Negley knew absolutely nothing about much of anything except elephant hunting and drinking. He was manufacturing bags by the carload and they were piling up pretty fast in his warehouse down in Monroe with Papa Brown financing the whole proposition. In any event, we had heard about this Negley guy and flew down to meet with him and we worked out an agency arrangement where we would carry his bags in the hands of various food brokers whom we used in the South for the former bag manufacturer before they terminated these arrangements, this was around 1948. We also stocked Negley's bags in Baltimore in a public warehouse so that we could make prompt

deliveries to people who normally didn't rely on us in case they needed sizes that they were out of and for the small people to whom we previously sold bags and who only bought a few at a time. Our really big break came in 1950 when the Korean War broke out and we found that market conditions were such that we could increase the differential between the small quantity price and the carload price where heretofore we had been unable to do that. At the same time I decided that it was time to open our own warehouse instead of carrying bags in a public warehouse and to see what I could do about adding other items to the bag line. I promptly decided that I was not going to find myself in the position of being utterly dependent on one manufacturer for anything. My father had had this horrifying experience where he was dependent on one manufacturer and I resolved this was not going to happen to me - and it didn't. It was a tremendous decision on my part and we began to add other items to our line which could be sold to the same people to whom we were selling Negley's bags. My father had sort of had it, by the way, after he was terminated by his paper bag manufacturer and he lost not his will to live but rather his will to be aggressive and run. I have no idea whether it was his age or mental or physical or a combination of these things. I was fortunate in that he was willing to let me do what I wanted to do which was to keep adding lines. At the same time I added my brother-in-law Henry to our sales force of one (me) and we really began to go. I might add that when I came out of the Army at the end of World War II I would have signed a contract with anybody who would agree to give me ten thousand dollars a year for the rest of my life. However, when we began to add these other items and increase our "spread" on the paper bags it became apparent that it was possible, remotely possible, to make more, a little more than ten thousand dollars a year; because all you needed was the volume and as we added items, still more items began to come into the marketplace.

Things were happening in the United States at that time which we certainly never anticipated. Firstly, there was a proliferation of new products appearing in the marketplace as a result of changes brought about by World War II. These new items were primarily petroleum based -- plastic bags, plastic stirrers,

plastic cups, plastic plates and things of that nature. Secondly, there was a change in attitude on the part of the American public into accepting a much more casual lifestyle which not only permitted people but encouraged them to accept these new plastic items as part and parcel of their living and eating habits. Bear in mind that prior to the Second World War paperplates were known as picnic plates and nobody, no restaurant, no home, would think of using throwaway plates or disposable items of any sort for any serious purpose. No hospital, for example, would consider serving food to its patients on anything but china. No institution, whether it be a prison or nursing home or anything of that sort prior to that period, would consider serving on disposables. But something else was happening -- the cost of labor was increasing and the idea of using disposables saved tremendous amounts of money as you can imagine. In addition to which people came to the conclusion that disposables were more sanitary than china and cutlery and as a result of all these things happening: The appearance of these items, the acceptance of these items, the economy of these items, many new distribution opportunities appeared. I might add that many of these new items were being manufactured by people who hadn't the foggiest idea of how to distribute them. All these producers knew was that they were making these products and there was a certain amount of sale for them automatically. But here I was in the center of this revolution looking for these items and finding manufacturers of these items who saw in me an opportunity to move boodles. As time went on I began to add these new items which took off like rockets. From nothing we shortly were handling truckloads of plastic trash can liners, plastic foam cups, clear plastic glasses and many more. Another factor which entered into all this was that more and more women found their way into the workplace so that eating out became popularized. Prior to this period in the 1950's there were no chains of drive-ins, no chains of establishments where one could go for fast food, but McDonald's came on the scene and Wendy's and Marriott. All these changes went on to help me, who really didn't realize what was happening, but nevertheless this dynamism helped me build a bigger business. One more factor entered into it: As I was selling more products in a fairly limited geographical area the federal government

began to establish the interstate road systems. It became fast to travel from Baltimore to Wilmington, Delaware, or Baltimore to Richmond, Virginia, or Baltimore to the western part of Virginia. My business became instead of a little localized operation the regional business which we built it into. After all, we had these new items to be sold to new people in farther away places and it just grew as I have often said not exactly like a flower but in an unpredictable, booming, proliferating way. I might add that I cannot help but give a great deal of credit for much help and growth to Joe Mucha. Joe came with us in the early 1950's, we hired him because he seemed like a bright young man who needed somebody to help him out. He suffered a severe handicap for he couldn't walk as a result of polio and we felt he would be a perfect inside man because of his disability. He took to the inside of our business like a duck to water. The two of us shortly became a pretty good team. At the same time, we began to hire more salesmen in farther away places; we had a salesman in Philadelphia, one who lived in New Jersey, one who lived down in western Virginia and all these men brought us tremendous numbers of new accounts. I might add that from the time we established our first warehouse, and I don't even remember the year, but I believe it was in the early 1950's, to the time I sold the business in 1978, we occupied four different warehouses, going from two or three thousand square feet all the way up to about 70,000 square feet. Our fleet went from one little 14' straight truck in the beginning on to bigger and bigger straight trucks. However, one of my biggest thrills was the first pair of trailers we bought and used with a gasoline operated tractor which today couldn't possibly get out of the City of Baltimore. I ultimately managed to build the whole trucking fleet into a trailerized operation which when I disposed of the business consisted of sixteen trailers and I believe eight or nine tractors, all diesel. All this wasn't accomplished without a great deal of effort, let alone stress.

There are several highlights that I'd like to put into this story -- one was our first catalogue, and I think we started that in the late 1950's or early 1960's, and it was a mimeographed series of perhaps twenty-five or thirty pages representing all

the lines that we handled at that time. In 1978, it consisted of a magnificent, at least for that time, binder with beautifully printed pages which was more or less a first in the industry.

A second highlight in my remembering the things that were terribly impressive was when we began to publish a shipping schedule; we offered customers in faraway places, as well as nearby places, a regular delivery day and we published these delivery days.

Our business was the first one in our field to do many things. Although we weren't the first, we were the second to publish a catalogue and ours was head and shoulders above the first guy. We were definitely the first to publish a shipping schedule.

It occurred to us that we would never be able to compete only on the basis of price. Our idea was to dress up our business to give it an air of respectability as well as efficiency.

A third highlight in our business was when we installed our first computer. I was largely pushed into this by Joe who was always into gadgetry and new things and our first computer was an old bucket file where we used punch cards for our many, many items and the computer began to do our billing for us. At the time it was pretty much the only game in town. As far as I can tell, we certainly were the first distributors of our type, at least in our neck of the woods, who were using a computer.

Our territory gradually increased from where we started in the City of Baltimore and in Washington to incorporate the entire eastern shore of Maryland (which was helped by the building of the Bay Bridge). Business was also pretty much over the entire state of New Jersey, Delaware, the eastern portion of Pennsylvania, the entire state of Virginia, with particular emphasis on western Virginia, and of course the portion of Virginia contiguous to Washington, D.C. We went from virtually nothing in volume to about twelve million dollars which was a fair amount of dough in 1978.

In the middle 1970's I began to lose my enthusiasm for the business and I felt as if I had been to a series of fires over and over again. There was very little in the way of change that came up that I hadn't experienced before and I began to tire of the whole thing. Furthermore, I had accumulated a few dollars and the net worth of the business was getting pretty good. I began to ask myself, why am I killing myself? Over the years in order to minimize overhead I felt that all of us should wear a number of hats and in a way we did. My organization was rather thin, I was concerned about my own health, Joe Mucha's health, Henry's health and wondering what would happen to the whole proposition if one of us got sick or died. I did very little about all this until in 1976 I suffered a heart attack and had by-pass surgery in the latter part of that year. It took me about six months to recover.

When I came back to work in early 1977, the idea of cashing out began to germinate. My father had long since died back in 1963 and actually I could do pretty much what I wanted with the business. I began to devise a plan to sell the business and cash out. I felt that my most logical buyer was Joe Mucha who having been on a nice profit sharing arrangement over the years had accumulated a few bucks himself and was ten years younger than me so that he most likely would want to buy the business. I had, although not by formal arrangement with Joe, pretty much agreed that if I ever decided to sell the business I would offer it to him first. During 1978, ten years ago, I evolved a whole program of how I would want to do this sale. I wanted a fair amount of money on the front end and I had to make plans for what I wanted to do with myself. I had to decide what to do about an office for myself, an employment contract for myself and things of that nature. I had to decide what was negotiable about the transaction and what wasn't and I had to see whether Joe could come up with the sort of money I wanted. I was further encouraged to make this sale by the government breathing down my back about the unusual accumulation of surplus I was enjoying. But, although I was taking out of the business as much salary as I thought I could get away with, we were still making a fair amount of money and piling it up pretty fast by our standards.

In any event, I finally evolved with my plan, having been helped tremendously by Howard Miller, managing partner of a prestigious law firm. I used as a consultant an accountant named Alvin Wolpoff who was very, very helpful to me in formulating all this. In summary, with only a modest amount of negotiation, Joe Mucha who brought in his brother as associate, bought the business and we closed the deal in December, 1978.

When I sold the business one of my non-negotiable items was a work contract. Joe agreed to this, figuring I'm sure, that he'd rather pay me a salary package which gave him a tax deduction rather than a higher base price which would have been non-deductible.

I particularly wanted a contract to assure me of a place to go every morning when I wanted to go and was in town, for this is what I had been doing for more than thirty plus years past.

However, at no time did we discuss my duties or my responsibilities. As it turned out, I expected to work and Joe expected me not to work. Coming in and not working came as somewhat of a surprise and although I had no duties I was never shut out of any of the goings on nor felt the least bit alienated from my former business.

The one thing that I hadn't thought about and which didn't make a hell of a lot of difference but when one sells a business one sells his power, for whatever that power is, even if it's just somebody to get you a cup of coffee. While before I sold, even though you said, "would you be good enough to get me a cup of coffee," there is no question at all whether somebody is going to do it. After you sell the business and you ask, would you mind getting me a cup of coffee, somebody could easily say, "no, I'm too busy." but that didn't bother me too much.

For some time prior to selling the business I had an idea of being licensed as a stock broker and took the mandatory course given by the New York Stock Exchange in the spring of 1979, getting licensed later in the summer of 1979. I really didn't want to work as a stock broker but wanted to be licensed for no

particular reason except to see if I could do it and sort of as an ego trip.

I also thought I could save in stock commissions, but found that one couldn't be a part-time broker. I was getting pretty good discounts on my stock trading commissions anyway so I abandoned that whole idea.

This stock brokering licensing idea evolved over the years because as early as 1960 or close to twenty years prior to selling the business I had become interested in stock options, then a rather arcane business done by put and call dealers very, very quietly and not quite secretly, very few people were interested in them. I traded these things more as a lark than having made any money over the twenty year period that I'm talking about and then when they became bought and sold on an organized exchange I was one of the first people in Baltimore whom I felt had the interest in these things. About this time I also got the wild idea of putting together a little investment pool of primarily friends who would be interested in buying and selling options as a money making scheme and looked like I had a pretty good handle on it. After abandoning the New York Stock Exchange license thing I found that in order to put together a little partnership or pool I had to register with the SEC as an investment advisor. After going through all the machinations of getting registered I finally did, having spent about seven thousand dollars in lawyers fees to get the thing going.

I did start two small pools which made money in 1980 and 1981, more as a lark than anything, on a percentage basis they did rather well but unfortunately in 1982 there was a sharp change in the market and since we were selling calls primarily and doing a lot of uncovered calls, we got caught in the then market that turned around, our poor little investment partnerships known as Northdale and Southdale were virtually wiped out.

In the years that have intervened since 1978 I find myself spending less and less time in the office of what is now known as Forman, Inc., which was M. R. Forman & Son, Inc. when I owned it.

Although I am still following the business I find myself looking upon it more as a spectator than as a participant. While I still berate myself for not having doubled or even two and one-half times the volume that I did when I ran the business, which Joe and his brother are presently doing, I certainly don't begrudge it to the Muchas. They've developed a much bigger business and certainly deserve everything they've done with it because I got what I wanted out of it, namely cashing out, and they in turn are getting I suppose what they wanted out of it. Joe has built an organization with a lot more depth or width than I ever thought about doing and has increased his warehouse space, his volume, his territory and all in all that has given me a lot of pleasure in knowing that it was the base I feel I established, the brick by brick building of the thing, the foundations of the thing which has given the operation its present day magnitude in volume and profitability.

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