

INTRODUCTION

This is a work of fiction. It is fiction because we do not have affidavits or legal documents to support many of our statements and genealogical charts. It is a work of fiction because a great deal of the material is based upon our memories of incidents that occurred many, many years ago. It is a work of fiction because several of the accounts were passed on to us by people who themselves heard it (or claimed they heard) them from other people, and these other people were not actually present but, again, claimed to have heard the accounts from relatives or good friends.

Despite all this, and despite the limitations of some of the information available to us, we have tried to give this body of anecdotal material a measure of credence and continuity. By necessity it is, of course, colored by our own personal attitudes and perspectives, and we ask the reader's indulgence in accepting what we say as our opinion rather than as specific fact. We deliberately tried to present certain individuals not as ideal or perfect beings, but as they really were with their foibles intact. This was done not to cast blame or ridicule upon them but rather to present the many sides of their personalities and to show what made these people so human and so special to us. Of course, even though what we wrote cannot be considered a totally accurate account, one this is literally factual in every aspect, it is nevertheless based upon events that did happen, and there remains more than a germ of truth in what is related here.

It must be remembered that all of the episodes in this volume occurred over fifty years before the time of writing. The army episode, in particular, took place under strenuous and difficult circumstances. The emotions involved here might have added even further ambiguity to the events related but these events are generally historically correct.

The spelling of names is incredibly ambiguous. Documents and verbal accounts sometimes varied not once or twice but in many cases numerous times. People also changed names, both first and last, many times frivolously or due to changing familial relations. In addition, the nationality of our sources varied, and a name sometimes reflects these differences of nationality among our informants. Thus, the same name may appear in Yiddish, Spanish, English, or Ukrainian. The family trees will be updated in future volumes. Non-family names have been changes, except for those of historical figures.

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We want to express our gratitude to the many friends and relatives who gave

generously of their time and energy in helping us to obtain stories that would have been impossible to obtain otherwise. In some cases these friends and relatives made numerous long distance and local telephone calls to help clarify points that could not be definitely ascertained. Others read early drafts of the story and sometimes contributed additional anecdotes or helped us recall certain aspects that had slipped our minds.

We thank the readers for their patience and their understanding that this is a work of fiction based upon faulty memory and minimal documentation, but written with a great deal of heart and the desire to explain to the younger members of our family something of their background and some of the anecdotes that happened in the past. If you have a generous disposition and read this chronicle for the sake of general cultural enhancement and an eye to preserving the past, you should enjoy it. If you try to establish precise numerical details and specific accountability of events, however, you may find this impossible to do.