

# **MA, MOTHER AND ME**

**A MEMOIR**



**By**

**Marge Huneke Blaine**

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## Chapter 6

### The Grocery Store

1936

Carl and Lee decided a grocery store might work for them. They continued to look and finally found one. It was at 1295 Page Street, on the corner of Page and Lyon Streets in the lower part of the Haight Ashbury district of San Francisco. It was a fairly large neighborhood grocery store. There were no supermarkets then. Fred Von Issendorf and his brother Henry, ran the store for many years, but they were tired of it and wanted to sell the business. They were native San Franciscans of German heritage. They were willing to sell to Carl, the German immigrant and his wife, who spoke good English without an accent, because they had heard that other Germans had done well in grocery stores in San Francisco. They did not want them to fail and give the store back, so they struck a deal. The Huneke's would pay a few hundred dollars for the inventory and give the Von Issendorfs a note for the rest, promising to pay off the loan in monthly installments for three years. Carl and Lee would both work hard, but Carl would run the store, and Lee would help him. That was the understanding they had with the Von Issendorfs. If things went well and customers came in to buy groceries, they would have a profit for themselves after paying their bills and the Von Issendorfs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt had been sworn in as President on March 4, 1933. Though Carl and Lee had little belief in the promises of politicians, things did seem to be a little better. By 1936, they dared to have hope. They named the corner grocery store Huneke's Grocery.

By now I was old enough to remember many things that were going on in our lives, though my mother filled my memory with stories all my life. At first they took me to the store with them every day. Then my mother looked for a flat near the store since they had no automobile. She found one at 1216 Page Street, just a block from the store. The rent for the flat was \$20 per month. It had two bedrooms, a dining room, living room and kitchen. They furnished the dining room as a bedroom for me and rented out one of the bedrooms to their German bachelor friend, Rudy Weederman. He would pay them for room and board and Lee would provide dinner for him each evening. They were not sure how much the store would take in but they needed every penny because my mother could no longer work at the laundry in Palo Alto.

My mother found a widow lady named Grace Juth, who lived two doors away from the store, to care for me during the day. Grace confided her life story to Lee and soon they were friends. Grace was a widow with a daughter to rear. Fortunately her husband left her a Victorian house on Page Street, but she still had to make payments on the mortgage.



At first Grace didn't know what to do. Her small pension hardly paid for their food. There was enough space in the big house for more than just her and her teenaged daughter Emily. So she decided to use her best asset – her house and her ability to cook well and clean. She took in roomers and boarders. The money the boarders paid would provide them with enough to live on. Soon she rented the first room to a nice man named George Waterman. He was employed as a Floorwalker at the I Magnin store downtown, one of the finest stores in the City. His job required that he dress impeccably in a three piece suit each day. He was assigned to one floor or another at the elegant ladies apparel store. He made the rounds constantly, assuring that each customer was taken care of to their complete satisfaction. He recognized important customers, addressed them by name, and knew the special needs of each. It required a very special kind of man, one with gentle sensibilities and George Waterman was ideal for his job.

Unexpectedly, Grace Juth's younger sister, Bertie Frontyn, was divorced and she needed a place to live with her daughters, Isobel, 15 and Gracie, 13. Bertie got a good job as a secretary at a law firm downtown, so she and her daughters moved in with Grace. Grace Juth could also take care of me all day and even on Saturdays. I could also eat dinner at her house each evening. Sometimes on Saturdays the girls would help take care of me. Eventually I became the pet of the household. I followed around after "Auntie Grace" as she did her cleaning chores each day and then sat in the kitchen, where she fed me lunch. After lunch I took a nap in Auntie Grace's own bed, as she read me to sleep. When I awoke I played in the garden, on the swing and stretched my feet up to the Angel's Trumpet bush, blooming outside the kitchen window. I was thin and a picky eater so Auntie Grace puréed and creamed all kinds of food to tempt me. I was the darling at dinner each evening as the "family" gathered around Grace's table, well set with cloth napkins in silver napkin rings and real china. A book was placed on the seat of my chair to make me tall enough to eat at the table with them. First there was a blessing and then a well served dinner, eaten by well mannered people, with the polite tone set by George Waterman.

This freedom allowed my mother the time to get used to Huneke's Grocery, as well as the new boarder in her own home. The first day they opened the store they took in \$18. The next day it was \$20, the day after that \$30. From then on the income continued to increase each day. They decided to keep the store open seven days a week, fourteen hours a day, to give the best service possible to their customers and, of course, to make money. Carl disliked talking to customers, since his German accent seemed to displease them. Everyone liked Lee, with her easy-going, carefree manner. One woman said to Lee "What's the matter with him? He doesn't speak English very well. He has a German accent." Carl overheard and was embarrassed. But Lee said to him later, "I should have told that woman, 'If you didn't speak English, you'd have to bark like a dog, because you don't know any better' No, no, Carli, don't worry, I didn't say that to



her " Mother laughed to herself, remembering Ma saying that very same thing to her third grade teacher in her first day of school at Bayview Elementary

After a few months, Carl told Lee that Edward Lapotka called him to say that he had a job for him again. "Carl, I've just gotten an order for new windows in a church in Stockton, and some other work here in San Francisco. I need you to come back." Carl and Lee talked about it. She told him she could run the store herself with no problem. They made an arrangement that worked. Carl would open the store at seven in the morning, while Lee dressed and fed me, left me with Auntie Grace at eight and relieved my father so he could walk the one mile to the Church Art Glass Studio. Daddy would leave there at five in the afternoon, walk back to the store, pick me up, relieve my mother, so she could rush home and cook dinner for Daddy and me and our boarder, Rudy Weederman. Then Mother would rush back to the store and relieve Daddy, who would go home with me, feed me, do dishes, and put me to bed. Then he would relieve Mother and close the store at nine at night. They agreed. It could be done.

The new schedule began. Everyone worked and worked hard. Open the store; bring in the milk and bread deliveries, mark the cans with prices, fill the shelves, wait on customers, order the produce, order sausage and lunchmeat from the Pork Store, pay the bills, wait on customers, bag the sugar, flour and coffee, dust the shelves, sweep the floors, wait on customers and always, always, every night, count the money and fill in the ledger books.

Fred Von Issendorf and his wife and daughter lived in a flat across the street from the store, in a building he owned on Lyon Street. He came to the store almost every day and sometimes more than once a day, to see how Carl and Lee were doing. He wanted them to succeed in this business so they would keep paying him. In the beginning he offered lots of advice on how to run the business. But after a while my mother worked out her own way of doing things and she didn't need his advice any more.

Fred decided that Lee was too outspoken for his taste and soon limited his conversation to Carl, who usually said nothing and just listened. Eventually Fred got tired of Carl's lack of conversation and Lee's outspoken ways and stopped coming in. They seemed to be doing all right and he would let his wife check up on them from now on.

His wife, Maude, by contrast, enjoyed talking to Lee, so she found an opportunity most days to go to the Store. As she got to know Lee she shared many things with her. She said that her husband Fred and his brother owned the Tivoli Dahlia Garden at 1336 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue – the Great Highway – in the Sunset District. They sold dahlia bulbs there as well as cut flowers. Both had done well buying real estate in San Francisco. Maude thought Fred was rich but though they had been married several years, he told her little of his business affairs.



Maude, born in England, came to America with her little daughter Vivian, looking for opportunity. She found it in Fred, a confirmed bachelor who supposedly owned property with his bachelor brother. After a short courtship they married and she made a home for herself and her daughter. Her only disappointment was Fred's lack of interest in providing some much needed medical care for her daughter. Vivian was born with a large crimson colored strawberry mark on her cheek. As she got older the mark grew larger, along with her, and caused the child embarrassment when she was teased in school. Maude wanted to take her to a specialist, since there were expensive surgeries which might improve or eliminate the birthmark. Fred refused saying, "It's a waste of money. Someday when she's grown up she can cover it with makeup." She asked Lee what to do. Lee told her to start putting money aside without Fred's knowledge, and Lee would see if there were doctors in San Francisco who could repair the girl's birthmark.

Eventually Fred noticed that Carl wasn't in the store very much any more. Lee was running the store herself! Fred said in exasperation, "But a woman can't run a grocery store!" "I know, but I'm doing it anyway," she answered. Fred threw up his hands in disgust, but decided to wait and see what would happen. He certainly didn't want to take the store back. He complained bitterly to his wife that the store would fail now that a woman was running it. But she only smiled and said, "Calm down Fred. I think she's doing all right. I think she'll run the store just fine." She started tucking money away regularly for the surgery that she now knew her daughter would have someday.

Lee's days at the store were full. There was an endless stream of customers who came each day for milk and bread and a chance to visit with her. She made sure she stocked the best. She threw away the wilted leaves on the vegetables and removed the carrot tops before weighing them for the customer. She bought the best meats and sausages from the Pork Store on Haight Street and never complained when the customer wanted it sliced extra thin. She, and they, knew that a housewife could stretch her pennies farther with a sandwich made from thin-sliced bologna. She always had the best fruit available and threw away anything that was bruised, rather than try to slip it in the bottom of the customer's bag.

Each month an old junk man rode his horse and wagon up Page Street, calling out "Rags, bottles and sacks – rag, bottles sacks – rags, bottles, sacks." I thought those were the only words he knew and that he was probably not very smart. But he always stopped to see if my mother had old rags, bottles or sacks to give him. Mother gave him what she had saved up for a month. She usually made him a sandwich with a crusty French roll and some liverwurst or mortadella, along with the bottle of milk he bought to drink. He liked to stop and talk with her. He was dressed in raggedy old clothes and looked as if he were



poor. But he confided to my mother that he owned a house in the Mission District and he and his wife had been buying real estate to rent out to others. "You know people don't know how much money there is in the rags, bottles and sacks they give me. All I have to do is feed my horse, keep my wagon wheels in repair and make my way around San Francisco each month to pick things up free from everywhere. There are only three of us doing the whole city and each of us makes a good living. I even sell my horse's droppings to the city for fertilizer for the new plantings in Golden Gate Park."

The vegetable man came by each week, with his horse drawn wagon. At first, all the housewives came out to greet him because he brought fresh fruit and vegetables to their door, and they could bargain with him for the best prices. Mother came out to look at his products and soon decided that they weren't good enough for her or our store. She stocked fresher, better fruits and vegetables than he ever carried on his horse drawn wagon. She charged a few pennies more and she wouldn't bargain with the customers for a cheaper price, but the customers never got bruised fruit or wilted vegetables. Mother taught them all to look for and expect the best, even if it cost a few pennies more. And that's what they got at the Page and Lyon grocery store.

A plump German lady named Fritzzi owned a beauty salon down Fell Street. When she came to buy groceries, she noticed me biting my nails. "Let me give her a manicure and I'll give her a permanent for her straight, fine hair too. She won't bite her nails anymore and she'll have soft ringlets around her little face like Shirley Temple." After the manicure I didn't bite my nails for a day or two, but the permanent made my hair look like Brillo pads. Mother laughed with me and said "It'll grow out soon." But I didn't have any more permanents.

There was no end to my parent's work in the store: ordering groceries, filling shelves, cleaning the vegetables and fruit, keeping the lunchmeat trays clean and stocked. All day there was a steady trickle of customers. Many of them came for their daily visit with my mother. Some came when they knew she was less busy, so they could talk longer. Later she told me many of them needed to tell her their stories because there was no one else to listen.

Fritz Wilser lived across the street, alone on the third floor in an attic room. He cooked on a little hot plate. He came from Austria and liked to talk German with Mother because she spoke Austrian German like he did. He had lost his job as a tailor and now only found work a few days a month. He always wore the same gray suit with a matching vest and almost always a light blue shirt with long sleeves and a thin black tie. His face was young and unlined, but very lean since he had little money for food. Others had told Lee with disdain that Fritz once killed, cooked and ate a cat when he had no money for food. Once when she and Fritz were talking alone, he quietly told Lee, with lowered eyes, that it was surely not so bad to eat a cat or a dog if one were starving. After hearing that,



Lee made sure he always got a little more meat and vegetables than he paid for, to be sure he had enough to eat.

When I was sick we got acquainted with Dr Sonnenberg across the street from the store. His lovely white house was furnished downstairs as a doctor's office and his private rooms were up a sweeping staircase. A small white iron gated front garden, with manicured lawn and flowers, lent elegance to the path and front porch with white pillars. The brass on the front door lock always gleamed and the heavy wooden entry door with thick cut glass led into a hall, gleaming with hardwood floors and thick pastel oriental rugs. His medical services were standard for the time and his fees were modest – one might even say cheap. Needless to say, the old doctor had a steady stream of patients from the neighborhood

Timmy was a stout old man with thinning gray hair, unlined boyish face and a happy smile on his face all the time. He had a stroke which left him unable to talk very well and he walked with an awkward gait. His wife saw to it that he was shaved and groomed and dressed neatly each morning, before he shuffled up Page Street with his cane to the corner grocery, for his morning visit with Lee and all the customers who made their daily visit to the store. Mother always had a big smile for him and she pulled up an empty wooden orange crate and turned it on end for him to sit on, near the front door. She got him the freshest apple to eat each day and he beamed as she polished it first with a clean cloth, and then presented it to him. There he presided, with a benign but somewhat vacant smile, over the steady flow of customers, the milk man, the bread man and all the others who passed through the portals of the Page and Lyon Grocery. Sometimes Lee asked him to "watch the store" while she used the toilet in the back of the store and he did so proudly. Running the store alone left not even a moment for herself and she was grateful for his presence. One day as he sat on his throne near the entry, his face pulled sideways in a grotesque grimace and he toppled sideways to the floor. Mother called an ambulance and then ran across the street to get Doctor Sonnenberg. This time Timmy had a more serious stroke and he never returned to the store again. Mother missed him.

Soon she was so busy with all the new customers who started coming to Huneke's Grocery, that she had to find someone to help her. One of her customers was an immigrant from Canada. Her name was Bernice and she had a teen-aged brother, Leonard O'Leary, who lived with her. He needed a job after school each afternoon and on Saturdays. He was supposed to pay room and board to his sister, Bernice, but he couldn't find a job. He seemed like a nice kid with red hair, pale skin, freckles and a quiet smile. Mother hired him. He was a great helper and a quick learner. She taught him to do everything. In addition she started a grocery delivery service, which Leonard took care of completely, running around to all the houses in the neighborhood with bags of groceries after school.



More than once I heard my parents talk about the possibility of Daddy having his own stained glass studio. Mother always encouraged Daddy with her assertive ways. "Of course you can do that. I can keep running the grocery store and you can have your own business too." But they agreed that he would have to find a way to learn every aspect of the *business* here in America, even though he was already a master stained glass artist and craftsman in Germany. Mr. Lapotka still jealously guarded knowledge of stained glass window production in his shop. Each worker was limited to only one part of the process. Carl was now doing all of the design work.

One night Daddy told Mother he had talked to Ed Lapotka alone. "I have an idea for you, Mr. Lapotka. I would like to work at all the stations in the production of stained glass windows, not just the designs. He started to tell me no one is allowed to do that, but I just went on and told him I would secretly give part of my wages back to him each week. And no one would know. Just him and me. That seemed to tempt him and he agreed. Then he told me not to tell his wife. He even talked about me possibly buying the business from him someday when he retired." Mother was happy for Daddy, though she told him she wouldn't be so sneaky. She would have just told Ed what she wanted to do and if he didn't like it she would quit. He threw up his hands in disgust. "Honey, you just don't know how to do business!" I listened to these discussions and wondered who was right?

Mother bought an old car and parked it on the street somewhere in the neighborhood. She had to have some way to get around and she had been driving since she was fourteen. She visited the Pork Store on Haight Street as often as she could. Both Ma and Pa worked long hours, standing on the cold, hard tile floors, waiting on customers, but the store prospered. Frequent trips to the ice storage box left Ma chilled, with cold feet and fingers. Pa's hands were in salted water much of the day. He deftly linked the sausages by hand, as they came out of the grinding machines. Mother bought fresh sausages for her customers in the grocery store. Many said the frankfurters, mortadella, liverwurst, and bologna from The Pork Store were the best in San Francisco. Rudy, was now almost fourteen, ten years older than me, and had not attempted another escape to Hollywood. After school he took the streetcar to the Pork Store to help Ma behind the counter and Pa in the sausage factory. My father and mother gave him a beautiful new bicycle for his birthday. He was thrilled to own it, but there was little time to ride it.

Mrs. Juth had been taking care of me in her home, but now her arthritis was too painful and she couldn't do that any more. Mother had to find a dependable place where I could go every day. She inquired at the French School at 150 Oak Street, which had an excellent reputation. They took children as young as three in their pre-school nursery. I spoke mostly German, which I heard at home and a



little English that I learned at Auntie Grace's house. Mother thought it would be good for me to learn French too. She took me to the school and they agreed that I would start there the next day. I went at eight in the morning, stayed for the all day program, and was picked up at five. They fed me a hot lunch and I had to learn to speak French, since they spoke nothing but French to us. Mother was relieved to find such a good place for me. Unfortunately I cried the whole first week, unable to say why. All I could say was, "I want to go to Auntie Grace. I want to go to Auntie Grace." Mother finally gave up. The last day she climbed the circular front stairs at the French School with me, she went to the school office and told them it wasn't working out. They were very nice about it. "La pauvre petite la pauvre petite." I didn't know what they were saying but my mother nodded, understanding the general intent of the words and that was the end of the French School.

She went to Saint Agnes Catholic School at 755 Ashbury Street, and spoke to the Mother Superior. The sister told my mother kindly that they didn't accept children in kindergarten until they were four years and nine months old. I was only three years and nine months. Mother explained that she ran the grocery store to support the family and begged her to take me. Times were bad for everyone, and the school needed money too.

Mother Superior talked to me and to my mother. It appeared to her that Mother would be able to make the tuition payments each month if she kept running the grocery store. And I seemed docile enough. I might not be too much trouble. And I would learn English soon enough. So she agreed to take me on one condition. I would have to stay in the kindergarten room for two years and I would have to stay close to Sister La Salette during the entire first year, because I was too little to be alone with the other children on the playground. I would stay at school all day for two kindergarten sessions, as did some of the other children. I would have lunch in the convent with Sister La Salette, and nap in the afternoon on a little cot in her classroom. Mother readily agreed. I would be safe with the Presentation Sisters.

After mother left, Mother Superior thought to herself that Sister La Salette was young, inspired with her vocation to teach, and filled with the love of God. She would rely on the vow of obedience to convince the pretty young Sister that she must attach this three and a half year old to herself for a whole year, even during recess and lunch time. The Sisters wore a leather strap wrapped around the waist as a belt. I learned to hold on to that strap any time I was not seated in my chair or lying on my cot. It was my lifeline to safety. At every recess I trailed the young Sister to her convent next door to the kindergarten room, and I sat outside her private room and even the bathroom, obediently waiting until she rejoined me. Thus my first year in kindergarten passed, with me learning the ways of the Sisters and the Sisters accepting me into their cloister.



Mother drove me to Saint Agnes School each morning before Daddy left the store, and picked me up each afternoon when Leonard O'Leary came to work after school. Then I sat at the big old roll top desk at the back of the store. The store had a glass window which looked to the counter. I could see my mother at the counter and my mother could see me. I practiced drawing and writing and read books. As I got older Mother taught me to fill two pound brown bags with white sugar, using a scoop, from the large wooden sugar bin near the roll top desk. Each brown bag had to be marked "20¢" with a black grease pencil, filled with white sugar, weighed to exactly two pounds – no more – no less. Then the top of the bag was rolled down and secured with tape. I had to fill enough bags to fit the empty spaces on the shelves. Sometimes it was bags of coffee beans that needed to be filled.

Most days the schedule worked well. There were many demands on my mother and she had little time for herself so she ate to compensate. She found herself constantly eating all day long. She never had time to sit down and eat a normal meal. She had always been heavy but now she got heavier each month. Soon she weighed well over two hundred pounds. The smocks she wore at the store were expandable so she didn't notice her steadily increasing girth until she put on one of her dresses. She no longer fit in any of her clothes and every few months she had to buy a larger size.

Eventually Mother and Daddy closed the grocery store on Sunday afternoons. Mother always drove the car since Daddy couldn't drive. We went to the Tourist Club, Golden Gate Park, the Band Shell in the Park, Muir Woods, the de Young Museum, the Japanese Tea Garden and all the other places to visit in San Francisco. On Christmas Eve each year many of our German friends got together to celebrate with good food and singing, with Santa Claus and gifts for the children. On New Year's Eve, we welcomed in the New Year with food, wine and song. My father's sister Martha came from Germany to visit.

Tante Martha and Tante Adele, who I still called Dita, loved me and I loved them too. They took me with them on many outings, when Mother and Daddy had to work. "Tante Dita, Tante Martha, take me with you," was my plaintive cry each time I saw them. All too soon, Tante Martha went home to Germany with a promise to return with her mother, Johanna, who longed to see Carl and Adele and meet her daughter-in-law, Lee, and me, her little granddaughter Margaret.

Sometimes in the evenings, or on the weekends, Mother, Daddy and I would spend long hours filling shelves and cleaning the store. Daddy would set me on the cement floor on a little stool, with a case of canned milk and a black grease pencil. The first numbers he taught me to write were 5¢ on the top of each can of milk. Then he showed me how to place each can, just so, stacked on top of each other on the shelf, with the picture of the cow facing the customer. Mother worked hard at the store, counted the money in the cash register at the end of



each day and made entries into her journal. They were making money, but not enough to justify their long hours and hard work.

Daddy relieved Mother each evening for a few hours and still opened the store in the morning. One night, when they were alone in the store, mother said, "Carli, I don't know what to do. This is too hard. We work and work and even though the customers come in and we take in money, we never have enough left over. We don't get ahead, no matter how hard we work." Carl grinned at her and said, "Come here, honey. I have something to show you." My mother walked to him slowly, wondering what he was up to. Daddy reached under the counter, pulled some rags out of a hole and took out a metal box. He opened it; inside was a thousand dollars. "I've been taking a little bit out of the cash register each day, without you even noticing, and now we have accumulated all of this already." My mother was furious. "How could you do this? Here I've been working and worrying, not knowing what to do? I thought someone was stealing money from us." After that, Daddy promised never to do it again and Mother promised to count more carefully and to deposit money in the bank regularly. In no time the bank account grew and they both knew that they were doing very well.

From the time I was in kindergarten up to second grade, mother was beset with child care problems. San Francisco State College had a small campus at the foot of Page Street near Market Street and she hired a steady parade of college students as child care givers. First there was Flash Trobuck, a wild eyed, cigarette smoking redhead who was more interested in flirting with our boarder, Rudy Weederman, than in caring for me. Rudy finally told Lee it was time for her to go. He was offended that she flirted with him in front of me. She was replaced by Jeanne Crain, an adorable girl, whose parents had a farm in Sonoma. She took me to visit her family more than once. All too soon she finished her teaching program and took a full time job. Helen Rufran was next. She was unattractive, with short chewed nails and greasy hair. But those were not her worse traits. Her short temper and sharp words with me were unacceptable. She had to go.

Lee searched frantically for someone. She found Mary Stone, an Old Age Pensioner, who lived at the Crane Hotel on Powell Street in San Francisco. Although her name was Mary, everyone called her Jo. She was willing to come to the house every day and stay overnight, a few nights a week. She was *not* willing to give up her room downtown however, since she needed to "be in the bright lights, at least a couple of nights each week." In addition Jo confided to Lee that she must be paid in cash. Once each month her OAP social worker visited to confirm that she was still renting a room at the Crane Hotel and that she was not earning any extra money. If she were earning extra money, part of her pension would be taken away. Social Security did not yet exist and a poor old lady like Jo would be dependent on her son Nicholas Stone, who could not afford to help her. Lee and Jo made an agreement and she ended up becoming



part of our family for many years, though she always maintained her independence and her room at the Crane Hotel

One day after school, when I was in second grade, Mother told Jo that she would pick up me and my school friend Sylvia Langer at four o'clock to take us roller skating on the smooth sidewalk at the Beach. I stood in the bay window on the third floor of the flat at 1216 Page Street, waiting to see my mother's car come down the street. As I watched from the upstairs window, Mother drove by slowly and called up from the window of the car, "I have to get gas in the car. I'll be back in ten minutes. Wait there." I asked Jo "Can I go downstairs and wait on the front steps for Mother?" Jo said yes, she would follow down the stairs when she put on her coat. The old lady got her coat and walked carefully down the three flights of stairs to join me. At the same time a young man came down the street, whistling a cheerful tune. He stopped near me and said "Hi, what's your name? Mine's James." I was shy and didn't answer, knowing I shouldn't talk to strangers. He took my hand firmly and pulled me along, saying all the while, "Let me show you what I have. I have something nice to show you. Come on, come with me." Quickly he pulled me after him into the adjacent alley, as I squirmed and tried to resist. He pulled down my underpants and starting touching me inappropriately and I began to cry "Stop it! Stop it! You're hurting me." As my cries grew louder, he panicked and fled from the alley, running down Page Street to Oak Street, where he ran around the corner and down the hill.

Across the street, in an upstairs window, Roberta Czernazki, eight months pregnant, sat at her kitchen window looking down at the street. Her husband Alex was a jockey at Tanforan Race Track and she was up early each morning, before he left for the track to exercise race horses. By afternoon she was tired, felt clumsy and large, and spent hours sitting at her kitchen window, watching for Alex to come home. When she saw Lee's child, little Margaret, being pulled into an alley, she telephoned the police right away and then lumbered down two flights of stairs herself. She arrived in the alley at the same time as Jo Stone, Lee and the Police. Lee was frantic when she saw me crying, with my underpants pulled down. Mother and I went in the police car immediately to try and find the man and have me identify him, but to no avail. He had fled or hidden in one of the many gardens. The next stop was a hospital where a medical examination revealed no serious physical harm, followed by the Police station where I was questioned extensively. I identified the man from pictures the Detectives showed me and I was rewarded with smiles and lollipops from several of them.

Mother was not so easily quieted. She was at first frantic; then hysterical, then furious. She demanded that the Inspector, then the Chief and finally the Mayor "do something NOW to get this rotten, degenerate sex fiend off the streets of San Francisco. He drags little girls off the sidewalk into alleys to attack the most innocent among us. He is a degenerate, filthy, no good animal and should be



castrated immediately when he is caught! Castration is too good for him. He should be tortured before he is castrated!" For weeks Mother continued her tirade to everyone at the Police Department who would listen. Eventually the predator was caught and convicted. He was a nice looking young man who had sexually molested more than seventy children, both boys and girls, in San Francisco over a two year period. Some were seriously hurt. I was one of the lucky ones. He was sentenced to more than twenty years in San Quentin. Rumor had it that child molesters were not welcomed kindly by the other inmates, who often subjected them to sexual perversities of their own. My mother fervently and often vocally hoped for this.

Though I was one of the lucky ones as far as physical injury, Lee was now even more vigilant than before. I was watched carefully for many more years and was never allowed to be alone on the sidewalk until I was much older. Mother tried to allow me some freedom, but she could not help having a heightened fear of potential harm.

Mother no longer wanted to live on the third floor flat at 1216 Page. She wanted to get away from the locale of the despicable crime that had occurred there on the front steps. She told Daddy that she wanted to buy a home. He said "No, that's impossible. We need to live close to the store so Margaret can be near us. And I don't know how to drive a car, so we must be someplace where I can walk to work every day." So Mother and Daddy didn't buy a home. Instead, we moved to 1319 Page Street, one half block away from the store, farther west on Page Street. We lived on the second floor of this building, with no one above us and the flat had an automatic heater, which was miraculous! We ignited the boiler in the basement, by pushing a button on the second floor. The flat had hardwood floors instead of old splintered pine floors. The kitchen sink had white hexagonal tile on part of the drain board instead of wood. And there was a large enclosed back porch, large enough for one of those new washing machines. There was a separate room just for the toilet. The large claw-foot bathtub and a pedestal wash basin were enthroned alone, in another room. Daddy and Mother had their own bedroom at the back of the house and mine was next to theirs. There was an extra room at the front of the house next to the living room for Rudy Weederrman to rent. It was definitely an improvement from 1216 Page Street.

In 1939, Tante Martha returned from Germany with her mother, Johanna. Johanna was full of joy to see her son, Carl, again and to meet me, her little granddaughter, Margaret. She and my mother got along well and she was happy to be in America. She lived with her daughter, Tante Adele and son-in-law, Uncle Ernst. Tante Martha, once again, worked as a housemaid. Adele, though happy to see her mother, had established her own household in a well-regulated, frugal way. Johanna, an old lady by now, liked to indulge herself with the luxury of butter, spread generously on black bread and plenty of sugar in her coffee.



After a few weeks, Adele angrily accused her mother of extravagant habits which would not be tolerated in her home. Johanna fled her daughter's wrath without coat or hat and ran a mile up the streets of San Francisco to the grocery store on Page Street.

Leonard O'Leary, the teenaged neighbor boy was working behind the counter and Mother was with him, when they saw Johanna running up the street. Her gray hair was disheveled, she had no coat in the cool air and she was crying hysterically. She sobbed her story in German, to her daughter-in-law, Lee, as she sat on a high stool in the back room of the store. "Ja, Lee, it is true. It is true. One mother can take care of nine children, but nine children can't take care of one mother. I don't want to go back there. And I don't want to go home to Germany. I don't know what to do." My mother consoled her, laughing to herself. Mother thought of her personal distaste for the excessive interest in saving – SAVING – SAVING, that Uncle Ernst and Aunt Adele engaged in. Mother was much more apt to think of working harder or buying income property that might make more money, rather than saving every penny. Certainly cutting back on butter and sugar for your aged mother was not the way she would try to accumulate money. Mother told Johanna, "For now you will stay with us. You can have all the butter and sugar you want." When I came home from school that day I was surprised to see Oma sitting there, red eyed, still hiccupping with sobs. Lee continued, "You will share a room with Margaret. She will call you Oma. She will be happy for that, won't you Margaret?" I nodded agreeably with a smile. "Then we will look for a nice German speaking companion for you, so you can live together and enjoy each other's company."

By the time my unsuspecting father walked up Page Street that evening, whistling a happy tune, Mother had it all figured out. "Oma will stay with us, share a room with Margaret for now, and we will pick up her clothes tomorrow. Then I will find a nice German speaking companion for her and they will live together and enjoy each other's company." Oma had stopped sobbing by now, though her eyes were still red and her hands shook. Daddy rolled his eyes and shook his head at the events of the day. He thought he had left petty bickering behind in Germany. Now it had followed him here. Thank God my mother took care of it.

My Grandma from Germany spent several happy weeks with us, sharing a bedroom with me. I learned German from her and called her Oma, in the German way. Each day after school she taught me how to crochet and knit, and each day we would look at picture books together. Oma learned English from me. Mother learned how to make bread pudding for Daddy, like Oma did at home. Mother kept her well supplied with butter and sugar. Oma was a quiet person and I enjoyed her presence in our house during the next weeks. I liked watching her unwind her long gray hair at night as she brushed it before bed. It had streaks of yellow as if it had once been blonde, but she always had dark hair.



in the pictures of herself as a young woman. She was always layered in bundles of clothing, even at night, so I had no real sense of what her body looked like, only the tea-cozy end product that the world saw.

During those weeks she told my mother many stories of her life in Germany, first as a happy young wife, then as a young widow with nine children with nothing but a small pension and a house. All those stories were passed on to me by Mother during her lifetime and they are included in the biography I wrote about my father. Before too long, Mother found a German lady named Mrs. Walz, who lived in a spacious flat, two blocks from the store, on Central Avenue near Page Street. She was happy to rent a room to Johanna, for she appreciated both the money and the companionship. The two old ladies soon became good friends and they both traveled all over California with either Mother or Daddy, since one of my parents always had to stay at the store when it was open.

Mother bought a better car and on weekends we went to places of interest in San Francisco and California. Sometimes Rudy Weederman would drive Daddy and the two old ladies on a trip in his car. They visited Yosemite, Mount Lassen and Mount Shasta, Oregon Caves, Crater Lake, Lake Tahoe and Monterey. The 1939-1940 World's Fair was at Treasure Island, in the middle of San Francisco Bay. It was called the Golden Gate Exposition. It was a man-made island, filled with mud dredged from the Bay and it was attached to Yerba Buena Island, the mid point anchor of the new Bay Bridge. The Exposition was our destination for many weeks of its anticipated one-year stay. It was so successful, that it was extended for another year. By 1939, everyone felt the worst of the Depression was behind them. People were going back to work, newcomers were pouring into San Francisco from all over the country and suburbs were building up all over the bay area.

Ma and Pa continued to work hard each day at the Pork Store. Pa still insisted they keep up the tradition of stopping by his brother's house in the Bayview once a week to deliver meat and sausages from the Pork Store. It was usually dark when they arrived at the fine new house that Julius Tham had built for his family. His wife, Harriet, had declared their family to be of a higher status, now that the girls were being courted by eligible bachelors. She told Gus and Leopoldine not to come to the front door but to come around to the tradesman's entrance at the back, when they delivered sausages. She didn't think it looked good if her girl's visitors thought that common tradespeople were part of the family. Mother was furious when she heard that and told Ma and Pa to stop delivering sausages. But Gus said, "Now Poldi, it's my only brother living here. It isn't so important. It's only Harriet saying that, not my brother Julius. Julius always comes outside to the back of the house to talk to me when Harriet lets him." My mother shook her head and said nothing.



By now Rudy was sixteen and had his own car. His best friend Howard Rasmussen had entered the seminary at age fourteen. But Rudy only grinned when Howard asked if he might be interested in joining him. Instead Rudy joined the Golden Gloves, an entry organization for amateur boxers. They took kids who were sixteen or older and trained them at their gym in the afternoon after school. It appealed to Rudy who loved the idea of looking good as a prize fighter, a tough but handsome guy. He still thought about the movies. Maybe this would be a way? He got to know the fighters at the gym and liked hanging around with them. Mother was furious. She didn't think prize fighting would lead to a better education. He just said with a grin, "Ma thinks it fine."

He still worked at the Pork Store with Ma and Pa. Their business was doing better, but somehow they never seemed to have enough profit for all their hard work. One day Pa telephoned my mother at the store. "Poldie, you have to come quick. Rudy's been in a car accident and the police say he's at the hospital." He was alive, but had shattered the bones in his ankle and had other bruises and minor injuries. He was at Saint Joseph Hospital for a week. Ma said, "I can't take care of him. I have to work at the Pork Store and our house is too far away." Mother said "He'll stay with us. He can call me when he needs something and I will run home from the store."

So she brought Rudy home to 1319 Page Street, where he stayed in a large bed in the dining room. His leg, huge with a white plaster cast, was propped up in front of him. The doorbell rang all day and into the night as many friends arrived. I would go to the top of the stairs, call 'who is it?' If it was one of my brother's friends, I'd buzz the door open and leave. His friends would enter cautiously, unescorted and then come up the stairs where Rudy was enthroned in the dining room. He could hardly wait until his ankle mended so he could get back to training at the gym. Evelyn told me in later years that I was rather rude, because I never spoke to her or any of the others when I let them in. I just walked away without a word and went on playing with my dolls.

Mother noticed one of his friends in particular. She was a girl. Her name was Evelyn Prini and she came a long way on the streetcar to visit Rudy. Mother thought it was clear that she was more than a casual friend. She was my brother's girl friend. She called Mother 'Mrs. Huneke', but Daddy said, "My name is Carl," so she always called him that. She was a shy girl, with a sweet smile. She lived with her Italian immigrant parents at 629 Brussels Street in the Bayview District. She and Rudy had met in Portola Junior High School when they were just thirteen years old. At night, when they were alone, Lee muttered to Carl "I don't like this. He's too young to be running around with a girl friend." But Carl said quietly, "Let the boy be. Let him be. There's not too much you can do about it. His grandparents are raising him and he's made it clear, he likes it that way."



Much later, when I was older my mother told me that Rudy arrived at the store one afternoon. "Mother I need to talk to you " Leonard arrived soon and relieved her behind the counter. When she walked outside with Rudy she saw that his girlfriend Evelyn Prini, a classmate at Mission High School, was in his car. They went someplace where they could talk. "Mother, Evelyn is pregnant and we don't know what to do." The sixteen year old girl sat there, miserable, embarrassed and crying softly. She still looked like a child. Lee thought to herself, "Why – oh why- does history have to repeat itself so consistently, constantly and cruelly?" She put her arms around the girl and glared at Rudy. "How could you do this? Animal! Pig! She's only a child. She's just a little girl!" Then the girl started whimpering, "Don't, please don't, Mrs. Huneke. It isn't his fault. It just happened. We couldn't help it." "Have you told your mother and father?" "No! Oh no! I can't tell them. They would never forgive me. They would be so ashamed of me. I can never tell them." "Well then, why did you come to me? What do you want to do?" They both spoke at once. Rudy said "We want to get rid of it" and at the same time Evelyn said, "I don't know what to do." They stopped and looked at each other and Rudy, looking at her, said "We want to get rid of it. Someday we'll get married, but not now. You have to finish high school." Lee glared at him. He paused a long time and finally said, "And so do I. And Mother, Mr. and Mrs. Prini can't ever know about this. Ever."

Lee and Evelyn went about the tawdry business of finding a doctor who would "take care of things." Lee made sure she found as good a doctor as she could. Abortions were illegal and most good doctors feared they would lose their license if they were caught doing abortions. These things were done, but done secretly, down back alleys and behind closed doors. Cash passed hands from one person to another. Identities and even faces were concealed from the participants and if infection or complications resulted, the patient was on her own. If she went to a hospital for treatment of a complication, there would be many questions and the Police would be notified that an illegal procedure had occurred.

Evelyn recovered physically from the abortion without incident. Her body was young and healthy and she was soon herself again. But her soul did not recover. Her conscience tortured her as she thought of the life that was destroyed by her actions. But worst of all, the priest at her parish church wouldn't forgive her sin when she went to Confession. "You have sinned against the Law of God. You have murdered. There can be no absolution for this." She loved Rudy. He was handsome, daring, exciting and so different from her staid, Italian working class family. She wanted to marry him. Lee had now become her confidante. Lee said often, "Rudy is wild. Ma has spoiled him. You'd be better off marrying someone else." "I don't want to marry a working man who goes to work every day with a lunch pail. I like him the way he is." And so her path was chosen.



Soon after, Rudy was expelled from Mission High School. He transferred to Continuation High School. He had been caught trying to persuade the girl students who worked in the Principal's office, to change his grades in the school's records. One of those girls was Evelyn. The transfer to a new school didn't bother him. Soon he was one of the most popular boys in the new school, just as he had been at Mission High. He was elected Student Body President. He and his friends always laughed about it. He could never decide whether it was an honor or a disgrace to be President of the Student Body at Continuation High School. Mother kept telling Ma that she was too lenient with Rudy. And Ma's response was always the same – "Dinty, my Dinty. He's a good boy. He's a good boy."

The store continued to prosper. Mother and Daddy talked at night when they were alone. Lee said, "There's no use just renting the store. We should try to buy the whole building if Von Issendorf will sell it to us. There are two eight room flats above the store and they bring in a good rent." Daddy was afraid to buy real estate. After his experience in the stock market he was happy to be making money again and he preferred to have money just pile up in the bank – preferably a large pile. Mother decided to approach this in a different way. "I talked to Von Issendorf today and it's all settled. He'll sell us the whole building for \$9,000. We'll give him \$3,000 in cash and pay him \$100 a month plus interest for the next five years and then it will be all paid for." Daddy looked at her, amazed. "I told you I don't want to buy real estate." "I know. I did it anyway." Daddy was furious. When Mother was angry she kept up an endless litany of her complaints. When Daddy was angry he was silent. The house was quiet for a week. Finally when it was time to sign the papers he told her he would do it, but only under duress. "That's all right Carli; just don't say that out loud to anyone. Just sign the papers and don't say anything." He signed his name on the note, next to hers, wondering why he was doing this. He was convinced it would be a failure. There was nothing better than a large pile of money in the bank. Lee just smiled to herself. They were landholders! And this was just the beginning. She was sure of it. She began to look around at other opportunities to invest in real estate. The details of this investment are in her papers and journals.

Tante Adele telephoned Mother one day with great excitement. She was finally expecting a baby. A healthy boy was born on December 9, 1940, and Uncle Ernst was proud to have a son of his own. He brought Tante Adele and Warren home from the hospital to a one bedroom apartment in an eight unit apartment building he bought, at 1930 Fulton Street. He thought he would like to own real estate too and Adele could help manage it. Mother smiled to herself, wondering how that would suit Adele. To her credit, Adele pitched right in and helped with cleaning and renting empty apartments, though she hated meeting tenants. Mother, by contrast, could expect no help from Daddy, who told her emphatically



that he would have nothing to do with managing the flats that she forced him to buy. She was on her own. So she hired people to help her.

Mrs. Caleja had been a customer in the store for more than a year. She had a spare body, with stooped back, though she was not more than forty years old. She had a homely face, large red nose, big knuckled hands and thin hair. She liked to talk with Lee when she came in each day to do her shopping. She saw that Lee was running the store successfully and it gave her the idea to earn some money of her own, instead of being dependant on her husband. Sometimes he drank too much and spent his whole paycheck, giving her nothing. She confided to Mother that her husband wasn't earning much these days and if Lee ever needed help she could work. Mother asked if she knew how to clean apartments. "Yes I can", she said quickly, with no hesitation. "I'm a good house cleaner. I'd like to work for you." So my mother gave her a job, cleaning the vacant flats, the common areas every week, and eventually, cleaning our flat at 1319 Page Street once a week. The sheets now went out to a laundry each week and Mrs. Caleja changed all the beds once a week. The arrangements worked well for all. She worked for us at 1319 Page Street all the years that we lived at the flat. Daddy was never aware of who cleaned or how it happened, or who paid for it. It was just done.

Mother decided that I should learn to clean even if I never had to do it for myself. "If you have a house cleaner, you still have to know how to do it right so you know if they are doing a good job." So each Saturday my job was to crawl around the house with a cloth in my hand and clean all the borders around the rugs in the halls and stairs. I had to take a spray bottle and a cloth and clean all the small panes in several glass doors in the flat. But Mother never made me clean the toilet. "You can learn to do that when you're older."

Usually I was well behaved, but one day my mother noticed that I liked to use the scissors in the drawer to cut paper. One week when Mother was cleaning the windows she noticed the sheer curtains on the bay window behind the couch in the living room had been cut in the fold of the curtain. "Margaret. Did you do this?" My guilty look was enough to warrant a long lecture from her. Often Mother worked late at the store and Daddy stayed home with me. When she came home Mother would stop in the bedroom where I was sleeping to tuck me in and turn off my night light. One night as she leaned over to pull the blankets up, she saw that the embroidery on the pillow slip had all been neatly cut out. The offending scissors were neatly placed on my bedside table along with the cut out embroidery. Mother was furious. She turned on the light then and there and literally lifted me up by my scruff. "Did you do this?" Again my guilty look was enough to confirm the evidence. Mother decided she had to do something. The next day we went to the Five and Dime Store and found some paper dolls. She bought several packages of them. "Here is something you can cut all you want. But you must never, ever again, cut things in the house." I smiled happily. That



started my love affair with paper dolls which lasted for many years and provided endless hours of imaginative entertainment. And I stopped cutting curtains.

One day one of my mother's good customers in the neighborhood came in the store. Lee had allowed some of her best customers to "run a tab" for their groceries and pay her once a week on payday. This man was an electrician and did carpentry work as well. His bill had not been paid for several weeks. He owed more than \$100. He hung around the counter, waiting for my mother to be alone. "Mrs. Huneke, I need to talk to you. I can't pay your bill. I didn't want to tell you, but I lost my job. I thought I'd get another job right away, but there's no work right now." Mother nodded, wondering where this was leading. "You have a little girl. I built a dollhouse for my little girl, but she's almost grown up now. It's a beautiful dollhouse – like a Southern mansion with columns on the front. The whole front opens wide, like doors, so she can play in all the rooms. And the rear opens that way too. I electrified every room in the house and even installed a light in the fireplace so she can pretend it's a real fire. It has real hardwood floors and a staircase. And the house is full of furniture." He paused to take a deep breath. "Mrs. Huneke, do you think you'd take my dollhouse as payment for my grocery bill?" My mother had no heart for this. She had no desire to keep food from hard working people who couldn't find jobs. "My little girl would love your beautiful dollhouse. And we'll consider your bill paid. I know you'll get a job soon." And he did. But from then on, both he and my mother agreed that he would pay cash for his groceries.

I was astonished to come home from school one day to find the huge doll house standing in the entry hall at the top of the stairs. It was about three feet square and three feet tall with a peaked shingle roof. It stood on a platform. Inside, each of ten rooms had polished hardwood floors and wiring for small electric lights. The fireplace in the living room had a small electric light to make it look real. The banisters to the central staircase had brass railings and the windows were all paned with glass. The front had broad stairs and a porch, with large pillars like an old plantation house in the South. It was a work of art. I looked at it with my mouth open. "Who is it for?" Daddy and Mother both smiled. "It's for you. Someone in the neighborhood lost his job in the Depression and he couldn't afford to pay us his grocery bill. We agreed to take this instead." The elaborate dollhouse became part of our house all of my childhood.

Mother thought it was important for every child to have a pet. And she wanted to have a dog too. She had always grown up with dogs and cats at Ma's house, not to mention cows and chickens when they were in Sebastopol. She preferred dogs to cats so she told my father she was going to get a dog. Daddy had not grown up with pets, certainly not dogs. "We don't need a dog. I never had a dog. Why would we have a dog here in a flat in the city?" But Mother paid no attention. One of her customers raised Pekingese puppies and had one available for sale. Mother went to see the puppies and came home with a honey



colored male Pekingese dog – not a puppy, but a young one. He was already house trained and would require minimum care. A walk twice a day and food and water would suffice. It would be good for Margaret to learn to do that. And it would be good for her to be outdoors with the dog each day. The dog was pedigreed. We named him Sun-Yet-Lee and called him Sunny. He also had a very nasty disposition. A basket with a cushion, water and food bowls were set up in the back porch and he immediately considered that his territory, to be guarded with his life.

Each afternoon Daddy came home and said “Margaret, let’s take Sunny for a walk in the Park.” I knew this was the signal for me to get Sunny since Daddy would not approach the dog in the back porch. This ferocious animal made a joke of the word “pet”. Mother taught me how to handle him and soon I could do it as well as she did. I went to the refrigerator, got a piece of meat, and walked to the back porch. Sunny snarled and barked as I approached and held the bait above his head with my left hand. As he lunged to bite me, I grabbed him by the scruff of the neck with my right hand. Then I carried him to the kitchen, squirming and gagging, where he became “tame” again. At that point Daddy put the leash on him and we would get ready to go to Buena Vista Park for a nice walk. It was a strange routine. Daddy and the dog tolerated each other and Mother was content that we had a dog.

By the time I was in the second grade at St. Agnes School, the school offered weekly piano lessons for seven dollars a month. Mother wanted me to learn everything. That Christmas Eve, family and friends gathered at our house while we waited for Santa Claus to arrive. We all sang the old songs around the Christmas tree. There was a commotion at the front door. Santa bustled up the stairs carrying a piano on his back. Daddy hurried me out of the way. He quickly took me through the dining room into the living room where Santa left a beautiful new piano. My eyes were wide as Santa Claus boomed “Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas.” As he left, I said, “Mother, Daddy, he had to be the real Santa Claus – no one else could have carried that piano up the stairs.”

Years later, I learned that Mother had found a life sized cardboard cutout of a piano at Sherman Clay. It was easy to convince a near sighted child that Santa was carrying that piano while they surreptitiously wheeled the real piano out of Rudy Weederman’s bedroom into the living room, in the midst of the excitement.

Daddy took care of me for the first three years of my life. But he was working more than full time. Now it was Mother’s turn, though she worked more than full time too. She found good child care, but there were rituals she wanted to do herself. At the end of summer each year, The Emporium on Market Street near Seventh Street had a Catholic school uniform department on the second floor of the Rotunda. As school approached, mothers brought their children to be outfitted with uniforms for the coming year. When we went mother also bought



underwear and new shoes for me. She usually wore her grocery store smock, because that was all that fit her and she was too busy to shop for dresses. Sometimes we went to the half sizes department and Mother looked for something to fit herself. When size 22 ½ became too small, she sighed unhappily and moved to the 24 ½ sizes.

At Easter, no one dyed Easter eggs as well as Mother. She usually boiled at least two dozen of the largest, best grade, white eggs for us to decorate. The eggs were soaked in cold water so they would part easily from the shell when we ate them. She bought Paas dye, which was the best. On Holy Saturday, after noon, the fun began. Daddy took care of the store while Mother shared all she knew about Easter egg decorating. Bowls overflowed with colored eggs decorated with decals. But the ones I looked for were candy eggs in baskets that were hidden around the house on Easter morning. They called me the Candy Kid and prayed I did not get worms or some other disease from all the candy I craved.

Sometimes just Mother and I went to Ocean Beach to buy Bull Pups, the famous carry out enchiladas, wrapped in cones of brown paper. Sometimes we'd buy "It's It", San Francisco's own ice cream coated in chocolate on a stick. Then we walked over to the breakwater wall and watched the waves roll onto the beach.

Summer was difficult. Mother wanted me to enjoy sunshine and fresh air but it was often foggy in the city. She had to run the store so she could not take me out of the city to find sunshine. When I was seven, Mother decided I was old enough to go away to summer camp. She made reservations at Camp Imelda at Rio Nido at the Russian River for a two week stay. She thought she could extend for more sessions if all went well. And why wouldn't it go well? It was in the redwoods, with rustic cabins, good food, camp counselors and wonderful nuns ran the camp to assure all went well. Mother visited after one week and I clung to her, whispering all the tearful reasons why she should not make me stay any longer. She persuaded me to stay for one more week, but understood that Camp Imelda would not be the solution to her ever present problem of summer child care.

In Germany the political news was ominous. In 1932 the Nazi Party became the largest party in the German Reichstag, although they did not have a majority. Adolf Hitler was their leader. In 1938, he invaded Austria and moved into Czechoslovakia. In 1939, Hitler signed a non-aggression pact with Stalin of Russia. By 1940, he had invaded Denmark, Norway and Holland. That same year, the United States started the Selective Service Act, requiring military service of its young men. And in November of that year, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected to a third term of office, as President of the United States. In spite of minor recessions the economy seemed to be improving.



Martha told Mother she would like to find a German husband in America, but found none to suit her. They were too old, too young, too poor, or too ugly or simply, had come from the wrong part of Germany. Mother laughed when she watched her sister-in-law arch her eyebrows as she looked at a prospect, listened to him for a while, and then turned her pert nose in the air with a disdainful toss of her head and walked away. Mother tried to interest her in our boarder, Rudy Weederman, thinking she could kill two birds with one stone, but Martha simply turned away with disdain. She confided to my mother that she had been corresponding with Heinz Lohmann, a widower with a daughter he was raising alone. She had met him a few years earlier in Achim. She was ready to go home.



Above: Left, Huneke's Grocery at 1295 Page Street at Lyon.

Above: Right, Margaret after her hair "Permanent"



Below: Upper row left, Kitty and Hans Gelhar, unknown woman, Carl and Lee, Uncle Ernest Gade; Lower, Unknown woman, Carmen with Margaret, Martha Huneke, Adele Gade, Shirley Gelhar and Rudy Weederman.







Upper Left: Margaret gets pony ride picture taken in front of the Grocery store.

Lower Left: Pepi Heintzen, Lee and Marie Steinle pose with Margaret on the deck at the Tourist House.



Margaret with Sunny the Pekingese dog.



Lower Right: Carl, Lee and Margaret in Muir Woods.





The first of Margaret's two Kindergarten years at Saint Agnes Grammar School She is seated front row, third from the right.

*Kindergarten Class of 1938*

MOOREHEAD

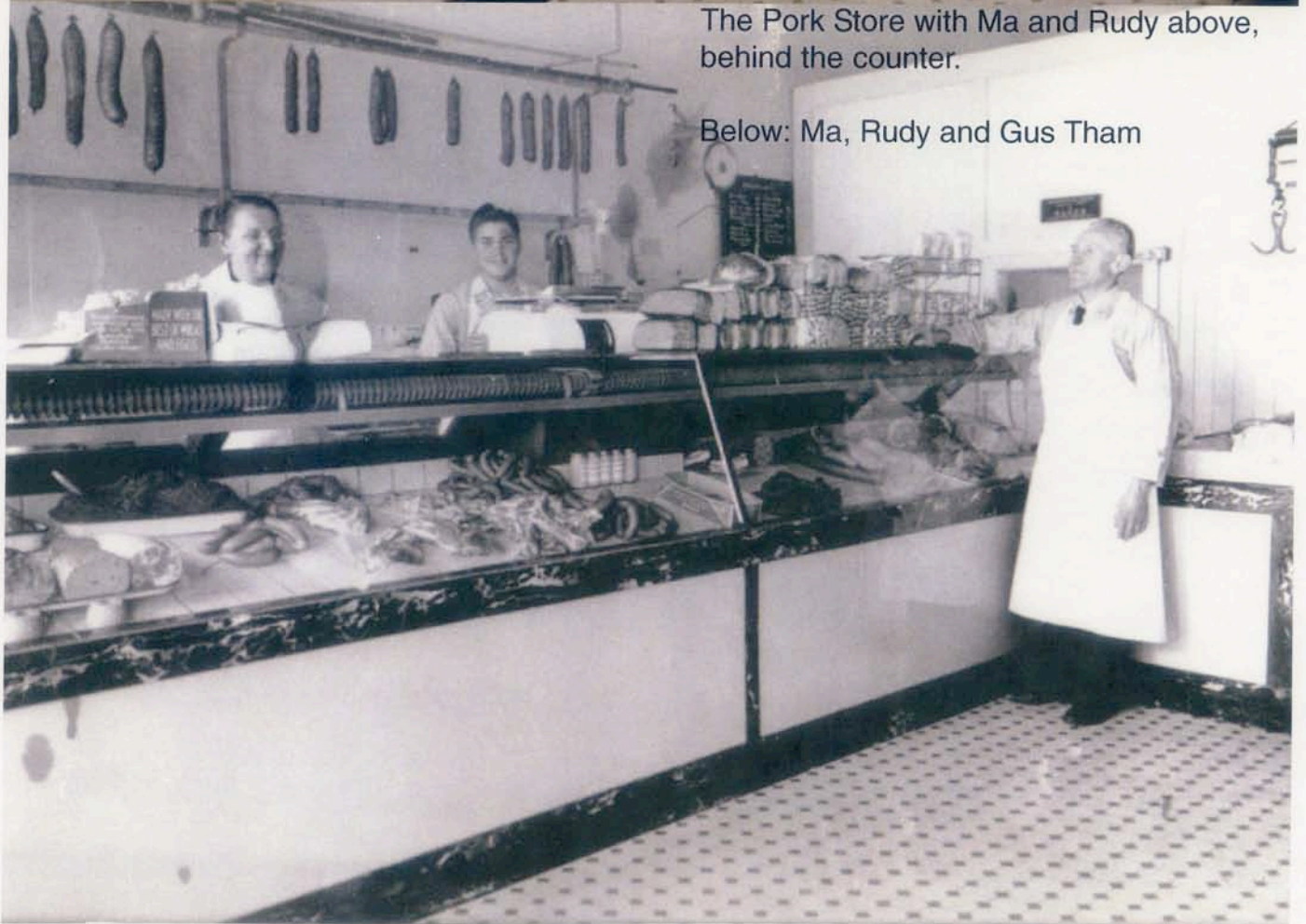
Margaret building sand castles at San Francisco Beach with her nanny Jo Stone and Rudy Weederman







The Pork Store with Ma and Rudy above, behind the counter.



Below: Ma, Rudy and Gus Tham





Above: Evelyn Prini in her late teens.



Rudy Tham in his late teens.

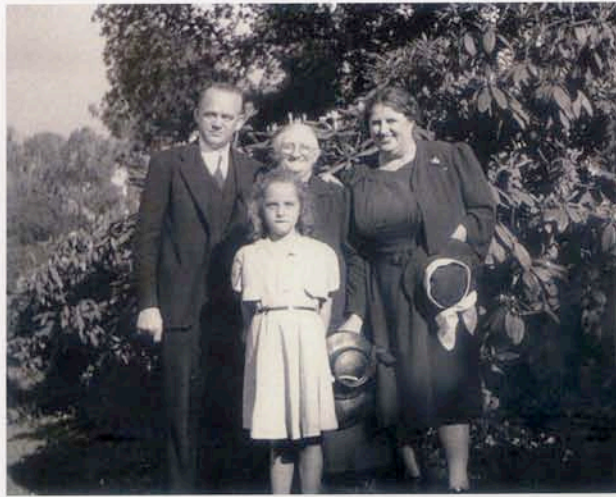
Evelyn's parents Mary and Gianco Prini



Center Evelyn with her brother Larry left, and friend Vula, right.



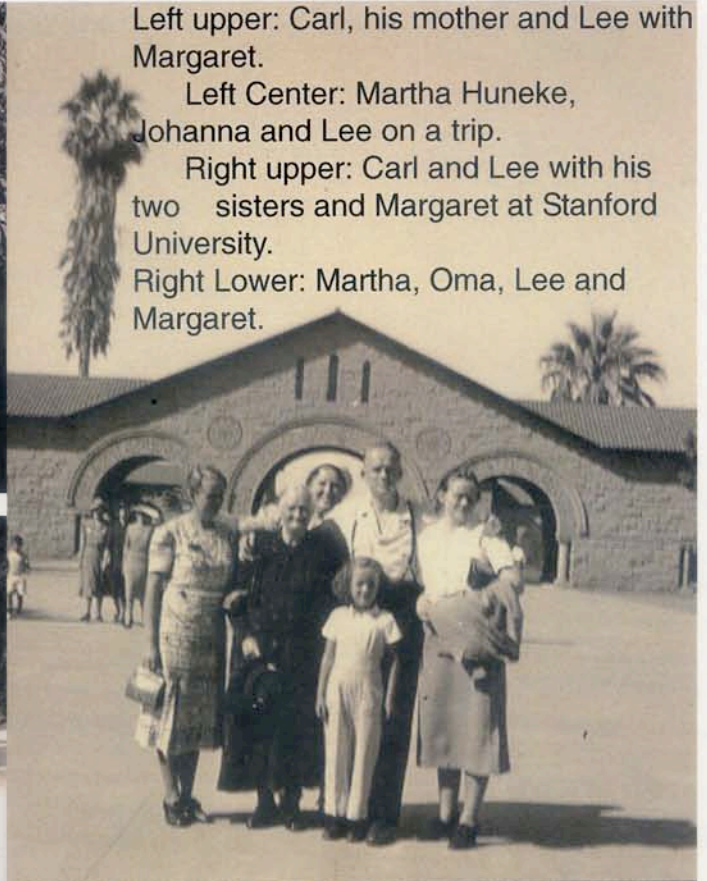




Left upper: Carl, his mother and Lee with Margaret.



Left Center: Martha Huneke, Johanna and Lee on a trip.



Right upper: Carl and Lee with his two sisters and Margaret at Stanford University.

Right Lower: Martha, Oma, Lee and Margaret.



Lee has a portrait taken.





# MA, MOTHER AND ME

## A MEMOIR

### Chapter 7 World War II 1941-1945

By spring 1941 war was escalating in Europe. The German Consul in San Francisco advised Martha and Johanna to return home quickly via Asia, since German U-boats were sinking passenger ships in the Atlantic. They planned to go across the Pacific, enter Manchuria and travel on the Trans-Siberian Railroad across Russia to their home in Germany. If there was war in Germany, they would be safe in their little village of Achim. They made plans quickly, bought tickets, and friends gathered for final parties and farewells. Oma hugged me and her grandson, Warren, perhaps for the last time. She held Carl close and kissed her daughter-in-law, Lee, whom she had come to love. They boarded the ship at the San Francisco waterfront. The ship moved away from the dock into the Bay, passed under the majestic Golden Gate Bridge and headed to Japan via Hawaii. Nothing was heard from them until July 1941, when Martha wrote from Harbin, Manchuria:

“We have been here since June 24. If we had realized there would be a German-Russian war, we would have stayed in America. We arrived ten days too late. Our group of twenty-five travelers was taken prisoner in Manchuria. We can be happy that we are here. We hope to continue on to Germany in a few months.”

Mother wanted to have a house of her own rather than rent the flat on Page Street. New flats were being built in an old abandoned cemetery near the University of San Francisco. The subdivision was called University Terrace. She was excited and told Carl about it. Carl shuddered at the thought of bodies underneath him, but Mother ignored him and assured him the bodies had been moved long ago. She successfully kept him from seeing the lurid newspaper accounts of someone digging up a human bone as he planted fuscias in the garden of his new home. That location would add another mile to Carl's walk to work, or he would have to learn to drive. He kept insisting, “No, honey, I don't want to move. 1319 Page Street suits us fine. I can walk to work, you're close to the store and Margaret can walk to St. Agnes School. She can even walk past the Pork Store on her way home from school each day. I don't want to move and I don't want to learn to drive. We don't need a new house. It's too expensive.” But Mother was determined to buy more real estate. Quietly she talked to the salespeople at University Terrace. She picked out two flats at 40-42 Annapolis Terrace. Finally she took Daddy and me to look at them while they were being built, but he insisted he would never move there. When the flats were completed, Mother and Daddy battled, followed by a week of silence. Finally he signed the papers. His name was on the deed, but that was as far as he would go. He refused to move and there



was nothing she could do about it. She leased the two new flats, Thomas Clark and his lovely wife in the upstairs unit and Doris Hertner in the downstairs flat. Those tenants lived there for all the years that Daddy and Mother owned the flats. Mrs. Clark told Lee often, "This is such a beautiful place to live, with a brand new kitchen and a lovely view of the city from the bedroom windows. You should be living here yourself." Mother just smiled, shrugged her shoulders and said little. And we continued living in the old rented flat at 1319 Page Street.

Life continued routinely. Each evening Daddy relieved Mother so she could go home and cook dinner. Then she returned to the store while Daddy ate with Rudy Weedermann and me. Eventually Mother bought a brand new car. Soon after they got it, the three of us went to the Golden Gate Theatre on the corner of Taylor and Golden Gate at Market. We parked our car in the garage a few doors away. We saw vaudeville acts and listened to the sounds of the great Wurlitzer organ boom throughout the theatre. A newsreel and a movie followed, all for less than a dollar a person. Children were free. When we returned to the garage a few hours later, everything was gone. The whole building had burned to the ground with all the automobiles in it. Eventually insurance provided us with the money for a new automobile, but Mother long remembered the loss of her first new car.

On weekends we still went to the Tourist Club; sometimes we brought Sunny along. Now we drove the car over the Golden Gate Bridge to a parking lot at the top of a steep trail above the Tourist House. We brought all our own food, but I was usually allowed to buy a 5¢ chocolate Hershey's bar from the bartender who doubled as a snack dispenser. As she steadily gained weight, Mother found the hike down the steep trail hard to do, and the uphill trail even harder. By then, Werner and Pepi Heintzen had a little girl named Trudy. She and I played there together. Hans and Kitty Gelhar had a daughter named Shirley, but she was older and the Gelhars didn't go to the Tourist Club very often. Hans weighed almost 300 pounds and he couldn't climb the road to the parking lot where their car was parked.

Many a Sunday we went to Golden Gate Park and sat on a bench in the sun. Mother and Daddy read the paper, while I played my solitary make believe games or cut out paper dolls nearby. I created endless versions of meals from flowers, twigs and grass. I served them on dinner plate sized leaves to my willing parents, who paid me pretend money of pebbles. Sometimes we went to the Band Shell and listened to the concert while eating a picnic lunch. Often Aunt Adele and Uncle Ernest, or other German friends were there. Sometimes Daddy found a chess game with someone he knew. Sometimes we stopped at the big Children's Playground near Stanyon Street, where I rode a donkey, or the carousel, or even the little "kiddie cars" which ran down a graded cement culvert by gravity. If it rained, Steinhart Aquarium and the Natural History Museum, or the de Young Museum, were all entertaining alternatives. The Flower Conservatory was always a warm, humid place, and in winter we could imagine for an hour or so that we were in a steamy jungle in a far away place.



Instead of hiking at Mount Tamalpais, Mother preferred that we go on rides to the country in our new car and we frequently did that on Sundays. Sometimes we drove down the peninsula, to explore things that Mother had heard about, read about or just wanted to see. One Sunday we drove to the Santa Cruz Mountains. As we started up the mountain, Mother looked for a dirt road to the left. There was no sign, but she found a road that led down the mountain in a serpentine pattern. After they stopped for my carsickness, Mother continued to inch the car halfway down the mountain, until we reached the relative level of a settlement called Holy City. There we saw a small cluster of wooden shacks. Several men and women stood around. They looked like maverick "holy men", carrying shotguns to discourage non believing intruders. Daddy kept saying under his breath, "Let's get out of here. Turn around now! We do not want to go any farther" The sight of scowling, tall, bearded men and grim faced women with shawls, standing belligerently in front of their shacks, did nothing to change his mind. But nothing could stop Mother from getting out of the car to talk to the strangers. They were never friendly at Holy City, especially if you were driving a nice new car. After a few minutes conversation she got back in the car and we made our way back up the winding dirt road, with Daddy continuing to grumble all the way, "Why did we have to do that? I don't understand why we had to do that." Even today you'll find a sign for Holy City right below the one directing you to Redwood Estates.

One time while randomly prowling the Santa Cruz Mountains, Mother finally spotted her destination. It was a mystery to Daddy "Where are we going?" Finally she found the lady who bred Pekingese dogs. She lived in the redwood forest in a two story wooden house with bright red geraniums growing in pots at the upstairs windows. The woman had a litter of Pekingese pups and Mother wanted to see them. Or at least she wanted something to do on a Sunday afternoon. Daddy muttered, "We already have a Pekingese dog." "I know, but it's always nice to know where we might get another one if our dog dies." Daddy groaned to himself. He had always hoped that when Sonny died, that would be the end of it. The puppies were adorable and I had fun playing with them while Mother chatted with the woman about breeding Pekinese dogs. Daddy was immensely relieved when we finally left – *without* a puppy!

One Sunday we made our way through the hills to a nudist camp Mother had heard about in Los Gatos. Daddy kept asking "Where are we going?" Mother just grinned at him, knowing he would disapprove if she told him. They stopped once because I was carsick and after cleaning me up they continued. Finally we snaked into the remote dry hills decorated with dark green California Live Oaks and saw a sign that exceeded Daddy's worst imaginings.

**Nudist Camp  
Visitors Welcome  
Register at Office**

"Turn the car around right now. I am not going in there." Mother soothed him, "Don't worry Carli. You stay in the car with Margaret. I'll just go into the office and see what's



going on.” Mother returned after a while. She reported with a smile, “Well That was very interesting I met some very nice people. They said they have lots of families who are members. They have a swimming pool and a nice recreation room. This might be a nice place for us to come for some sunshine and relaxation ” Daddy rolled his eyes skyward and muttered, “Turn the car around and get out of here now ”

Mother loved to explore Cañada Road with its rolling acres of grasses and wild flowers, grazing deer and redwood trees crowning the surrounding hills. She coveted the land and thought to herself that she would like to find some way to buy some acreage – lots of acreage. She dared not mention it to Daddy who was still adamantly opposed to buying any more real estate. Filoli is now a famous destination in Woodside on Cañada Road, with a mansion and hundreds of acres dedicated to a public trust by the Roth family. Docents lead thousands of visitors each year on tours of the gardens and house, as well as hikes in the rolling acres of the old estate. But in the Forties it was the gated private estate of the Roth family and certainly not open to the public.

As they drove past the fenced land of Filoli, Mother noticed the gate was open. She drove on to the winding paved road, passed “Private Property” signs, continued through the oak trees, until we approached a parking area which fronted a huge two storied mansion. Daddy sat in the passenger side of the car, slinking down as far as he could. He said continuously, “Turn around right now This is private property Turn around and leave right now or I will jump out of the car and walk back to the entrance.” Mother looked at him sideways, smiled benignly and got out of the car. A man and a woman approached and after a few minutes conversation, she brought them back to the car to meet us. They were the German caretakers and the Roths were not there right now. Mother asked if Mrs. Roth might be interested in selling some of the land, but the caretakers said they didn’t think so. They thought the land was tied in some way to the San Francisco Water District. “Mrs. Roth loves to be here. She would never sell this land. The Roths named the estate with the motto of the family, which is “Fight – Love – Live” – ‘Filoli’ They have children and grandchildren and spend all their holidays here, though they live in San Francisco most of the year. Come, let us show you the gardens. They are beautiful right now ” By now we were all speaking German, like old friends. We enjoyed a private tour of the beautiful gardens.

One Sunday the three of us got in the car and headed north across the Golden Gate Bridge. Daddy was hopeful that we were going to the Tourist House or at least to Mount Tamalpais. But Mother just smiled and would not tell him where she was headed. Before reaching Sonoma, she veered the car to the right, headed toward Napa. When she had reached an area now called the Carneros, she looked for a large eucalyptus grove near the road. Soon she spotted the large grove of trees. Telltale tendrils of smoke rose through the trees and leveled above them like a blue ceiling. Daddy felt uneasy and a bit suspicious. “Lee, where are we going?” Again she smiled, but this time broader and more confident. “I’ve wanted to come here for years. Every year they come here and camp in the eucalyptus grove. They come from all over with their trucks and carts and wagons, old and young alike. They only stay for a week or so, but while they’re here it’s fun to come over and see what they’re doing.” Daddy was



exasperated “*Who* comes here? What are you talking about?” “The Gypsies, Carli. It’s the Gypsies. It’s like a big family meeting for them except it’s all the Gypsy families in the country ” Now Daddy was really angry “Are you crazy? Why would you want to go anywhere near the Gypsies. You know they’re dangerous. It’s dangerous to even go near there. I’m not going anywhere near them with you.”

Mother found a place to park in the shade of a tree, opened the door of the car and got out with me. Daddy fumed anxiously in the car She held my hand as we wandered around the edges of the huge encampment which extended into the grove as far as we could see. There were hundreds of people gathered around dozens of campfires. Tents and crude wagons served as shelters. Some sold artifacts or food delicacies, but mostly they talked amongst themselves. Sounds of deep laughter broke the steady low rumble of conversation. Noises of singing and dancing came from deep within the encampment but we did not intrude beyond the perimeter

Mother spoke to a gap toothed old woman about throwing the bones like Ma did The crone laughed and nodded her head. “Ya. I can do that for you, but first something for me”, she cackled as she extended her hand, palm up. Mother took her hand and when the handshake ended, the old one glanced at the money in her palm before pocketing it. She reached into a deep pocket in her skirt and pulled out a small leather pouch and unfastened it. She shook the contents into her palm, closed her eyes and rocked on her heels for a long moment, humming to herself, before she rolled the bones onto the hard packed dirt. There were the familiar icons. the devil face, the bird, the sun, the girl and a few others unknown to Lee. The old gypsy woman squatted, looked closely at the bones, hummed and rocked on her heels, as she studied the display Finally she smiled and squinted at my mother “You will do well. You are taking the right road. Have faith in what you are doing. You have children. They will prosper You have a husband He will have success. But you. You must stay on the road you have chosen. It is the right road. You will live long and have a good life, but stay on the road you have chosen.” And then she closed her eyes, rocked on her heels, and said no more. After a few moments silence Mother saw that no more would be said. She thanked the old woman and took me by the hand as we slowly made our way back to the car

When we got to the car, Daddy was hot and dusty, but relieved to see us safely returned “Well, did you see what you wanted to see?” Mother told him about her encounters, ending with the old Gypsy woman’s predictions. He laughed and said, “You don’t believe that stuff do you?” She smiled to herself No, she didn’t need to hear it, but it was fun to have a stranger reinforce what she already knew – she was on the right road It would just take time.

Mother was always concerned about my pale complexion. I had a more olive skin than my father, and never turned red in the sun. Mother kept looking for a place “in the country” where we could all go to get some sun. She found a house in the hills on Vista Drive above Emerald Lake in Redwood City A number of vacation cottages were clustered on streets near the Lake, which had been developed for recreational swimming The house was on a large, steep lot, above the road Terraces cut into the



hill. There were fishponds, fountains, and areas for lawn swings. The house had a dark living room, with a brown enamel gas stove, a functional kitchen with an ice box. There was a huge enclosed porch, where we spent most of our time when we were indoors. The house even had a name. It was called "Toyonolla", after the many native toyon trees in the area. This time, Daddy didn't resist Mother's intentions to buy it because he enjoyed the sun and knew he wouldn't be dealing with tenants.

Mother was tired of spending most of her life working and was determined to spend more time away from the store. She intended to enjoy Toyonolla. She tried to spend more time at home and sometimes even made bread pudding for Daddy "the way mother made it" Sometimes it was almost as good, especially if she planned ahead and used very stale bread. She hired more help in the store, but only Leonard O'Leary was totally trustworthy. He was now reaching the end of his high school years and feared that he might have to serve in the army if America entered the war.

Conditions in Europe were growing worse, but Roosevelt's policy continued to be one of neutrality. Japan had become an ally of Germany and on Sunday, December 7, 1941, Japanese airplanes bombed Pearl Harbor in Honolulu. In an overwhelming attack they crippled a large part of America's naval fleet. That was the last straw. President Roosevelt declared that the United States would join the war against Germany and Japan. World War II had begun. I remember seeing the Examiner, Chronicle and Call-Bulletin newspapers screaming headlines "PEARL HARBOR BOMBED" I didn't know then, what or where, Pearl Harbor was, but I would soon learn.

Mother and Daddy still waited to hear from Martha and Johanna, not knowing if they made it back home to Germany. Finally they found out what had happened. They arrived in Manchuria to board the Trans-Siberia Express but Hitler had invaded Russia just ten days earlier. Japan had occupied Manchuria in 1931. As German citizens they were "guests" of the Japanese government and were treated relatively well. They spent all of World War II in Tsingtao, China, also occupied by Japan. My parents reasoned that they were probably as safe there, as anyplace else in the world.

San Francisco mobilized immediately for the war effort. The City feared that it was next to be attacked. The day after Pearl Harbor there were guards at the Presidio. The first blackout was that very first night. Every home had to have blackout curtains and use few lights. A net was placed down into the water, under the Golden Gate Bridge, to entrap any ship or submarine that might try to enter the bay. Anyone with binoculars was expected to be on watch for any activity on the ocean or the bay. Soon gas, meat, sugar, and butter were rationed. Shoes and most goods were in short supply, or nonexistent. Silk stockings were unavailable, since the silk came from Asia. Women either wore heavy cotton stockings to cover their legs or applied a brown lotion to bare legs and drew a black line down the backs of their legs to simulate the seam.

The Selective Service was now fully activated and all able-bodied men were drafted into the military. Rudy Weederman, a nearly 40 year old single man, knew he would have to go eventually. Leonard O'Leary would be eligible as soon as he finished high school.



Rudy, too, would have to go as soon as he finished high school. Gas stations sold gas only to those who had gas coupons. Grocery stores were required to collect red, green or blue stamps from each customer before selling meat, sugar or butter. The storeowners accounted for the stamps by pasting them in books, which they had to present before they were allowed to buy goods to sell in their stores. Now Sundays were spent sitting around the dining room table, pasting thousands of stamps into books.

America needed ships fast. Henry Kaiser's shipyard in Richmond could build them. In three years, more than five hundred Liberty ships were built there. They set a record by building a single ship in five days. Thousands of laborers came pouring in to San Francisco. They had dreams of better jobs and better opportunities. They swamped quiet neighborhoods that were sparsely occupied before. They changed the City and it would never be the same again.

Mother had to rent a garage for her car, two blocks away from the flat. Frequently she had Leonard put the car in the garage for her. Sometimes she asked him to fill the car with gas before he put it away. That was her request one warm evening in May. There had been a heat wave and the night air was balmy. Leonard couldn't resist taking the new car for a drive with his good friend, James McCracken. They drove through the Park, out to the beach, then turned left, out the Great Highway. Soon they drove down Skyline Boulevard, when thick fog enveloped the car. Leonard pulled over because he couldn't see the side of the road. The two boys sat on the running board of the car, laughing and trying to decide what to do next. Suddenly the car began to slide slowly and they jumped up, just in time to see it fall over the edge of the road and down a steep embankment. Leonard was terrified. How could he tell Mrs. Huneke, his employer, that her car was destroyed?

The next day Mother waited in vain for Leonard to show up at the store. He never came. Finally she went across the street to his sister's house, where he lived, and Leonard told her his sad story. They went out to the site of the accident and spotted the shiny metal at the bottom of a steep ravine. Mother and Daddy forgave Leonard long before he forgave himself. Years later, the redhead's face would turn beet red and he would hang his head in shame whenever the incident was mentioned.

Leonard's friend Jim McCracken, who was with him the night of the accident with my mother's car, later had a son named Seamus. He and our son Tim were classmates at Saint Raymond's Grammar School in Menlo Park. One night at a gathering, Terry and I chatted with Jim about San Francisco and the old neighborhood where I lived. One thing led to another and it finally came out that my parents owned the car that he and his friend Leonard wrecked that foggy night so many years before. He still turned beet red as he recalled the incident, just as Leonard had so many years before. We laughed at the coincidence, but he still found it hard not to be embarrassed. At that time, he was an administrator of Stanford Hospital and lived in a lovely home in Atherton.



We continued to go to Toyonolla during the war years, but because of the gas shortage, we had to limit our trips. We got there by driving down El Camino Real from San Francisco to Redwood City. We turned west on Jefferson, up the hills to Emerald Lake. Ma began to spend more time there, staying for some weeks with me and Larry Prini, Evelyn's brother. I took swimming lessons and learned to swim. On the weekends everyone else would join us. Rudy and Evelyn came down with their friends, Vula Pantoleon, Charlie "Dodo" Ratto, Ralph "Red" Turner and Annie Fraticelli. Daddy and Mother came down with Pa and we all enjoyed the sun and swam in the Lake.

Part of the property was overrun with poison oak. Mother decided that everyone would work together to dig it out. This became the weekend project. Everyone dug, clawed and ripped at the noxious shrub as we sweated in the hot sun. Within a few days, we all had poison oak rashes. Daddy's case was so severe that he required medication and could not go to work for several days. As much as we all enjoyed Toyonolla, the "Battle of the Poison Oak" ultimately diminished our love of the place. As for my father, he never again lifted a hand to help maintain the grounds and bided his time until we sold it.

Leonard O'Leary was sure he would be called soon to go into the Army, so he decided to enlist in the Navy. He made his plans and told my parents when he would be leaving. They were sad, but relieved that he would be in the Navy, where they thought he would be safer. The night before he left they hosted a party for his family and ours at the Mural Room at the Saint Francis Hotel. We had a fine dinner with dancing afterward. The best part was a floorshow featuring Hilo Hattie, a young Hawaiian school teacher, who was known for her Hawaiian singing and dancing, as well as her comedic antics, while her dance troupe did the hula. The audience howled as she sang and danced a crazy version of "The Cockeyed Mayor of Kalakakai." She finished with her signature number, "When Hilo Hattie Does the Hilo Hop." Afterward she came to our table, signed a menu for me and hugged me before she kissed Leonard, who proudly wore his Navy uniform. Later she became famous in Hawaii for her line of clothing. It was a wonderful evening and at the end, we all wished Leonard well and kissed him goodbye. He left for the war the next morning.

Soon it was Rudy Tham's turn. He didn't want to go in the Army or the Navy. He, as well as Ma, thought they were both too dangerous. Ma kept telling him "I'd rather have a live coward, than a dead hero." So he went down to join the Merchant Marine, theoretically a safer place to be, since the ships carried only supplies and did no fighting. "Son, the first thing we need, to process you for the Merchant Marine, is your birth certificate and your certificate of high school completion. When he asked Ma for those papers she gave him the birth certificate she had gotten eighteen years earlier when he was born in Sebastopol. It said clearly he was Michael Rudolph Antonovich. And his high school certificate said he was Rudy Tham. He looked at Ma and grinned. He had heard the story of his father's departure before, from Ma and Mother. He went back to the Merchant Marine Recruiting Office and brought both papers. He tried to explain the mix-up to them. "My real name is Michael Rudolph Antonovich, but I've always used the name Rudy Tham ever since I started school." But they said, "Sorry



son You'll have to get this straightened out before we can accept you. You'll probably have to go to court for a name change"

The Selective Service was breathing down his neck. Unless something happened fast the U S. Army would be breathing down his neck too and they were no where near as particular about his name. "Mother, I've got to change my name legally right now!" After Mother heard his story she agreed She hired a lawyer and they got a quickie court date to change his name. Since he was going to do it, Mother and Daddy told him to do it right. This was his opportunity to take whatever name he wanted. Daddy said, "I'd be happy to have you take the name Huneke if you want to." But Rudy shrugged off the offer without a second thought. "I've always been Rudy Tham. That's how everyone knows me. That's who I am." And he grinned at all of them. Later he said to Mother, "Why would I want to take his name? He's nothing to me." My mother's cheeks burned with embarrassment and she remembered what Daddy's wise mother had told her once. "When they're little they step on your toes – and when they're big they step on your heart." But that's exactly what Rudy said to the Judge when they stood in court. Now he was officially Rudy Tham. Ma and Pa were very happy And the Merchant Marines were happy too. Another young boy was snatched from the jaws of the Army

Once again, Daddy and Mother offered a farewell party But Rudy, a tough kid at that time in his life, said, "Nah- I'd rather spend the time with my friends." Then he was gone too. He had many near misses during the war Apparently the enemy thought it was just as important to destroy ships carrying supplies, as it was to sink ships carrying troops and ammunition.

Rudy Weederman decided to wait to be drafted since he was older and might not be called, but eventually he was. Before he left for the Army, they had yet another farewell party with all the German friends they had come to know over the years.

Life went on during the war as we continued to wait for news. Johanna, Martha, Leonard, Rudy Tham and Rudy Weederman I walked home from St. Agnes School each day My route took me down Ashbury Street, then Haight Street for one block, where I would stop at the Pork Store to visit with Ma and Pa. Sometimes I watched Pa in the sausage factory in the back. Sometimes I tried to help Ma behind the counter Usually I drew pictures on the butcher paper that Ma would give me.

Ma got involved in the war herself through a strange incident. She read in the newspaper that Austrian boys were being held as prisoners of war on Angel Island in the middle of San Francisco Bay She contacted every official she could think of, to demand that she be allowed to visit. Eventually her demands annoyed someone enough for the prison camp Commandant to put Georg Martinkovits on a small boat to Pier 35. The Commandant told Georg, "Please get that lady off my back"

Georg Martinkovits had a delightful personality and he did that very well. Soon Ma arranged for him to visit every three months. It gradually developed into his bringing other Austrian friends to visit Ma on weekend passes from the prison camp. Sometimes



Rudy was in port during his weekend visit and once they took Georg to Yosemite to see the beauties of California.

The boys who visited were always accompanied by Georg and they always enjoyed a good home cooked Viennese dinner with Ma. They told over and over how they had all ended up as prisoners of war on Angel Island. Their German luxury passenger ship, the *Columbus*, had disembarked all passengers at Havana, Cuba, then headed for Mexico for several months. Georg had been a steward on the ship. Finally they left and scuttled the ship off Cape Hatteras, to keep from being captured by the British. The American cruiser *Tuscaloosa* picked up all the crew and took them to Norfolk, then to Washington D.C. They were treated as celebrities for scuttling their ship. The U.S. and Germany were not yet at war so the German Ambassador arranged to send them back to Germany. Since the Atlantic was closed by the British Navy, they were put on a train for San Francisco to return to Germany via Russia.

They got as far as Reno, Nevada where they were met by Fritz Wiedemann the German Consul General in San Francisco who told them the war was over for them. All routes back to Germany were closed and they would be interned at Angel Island. Georg spent the war behind a barbed wire fence (with a very loose gate) on Angel Island. Georg eventually became a postmaster for the prisoners and would take a boat to Pier 35 every afternoon at 3 p.m. and return at 4. Ma often met him at the pier with delicacies to take back to Angel Island.

In 1945 at the end of the war, when he left San Francisco, she bought him a nice navy blue wool serge suit, and a new white shirt and tie so he would return home looking as if he had been treated well by the people of San Francisco. When he returned to Vienna, he opened a restaurant, "The Tomato Basket", across the street from Austria's Parliament building, and was very successful.

Long after the end of World War II, Georg Martinkovits returned to San Francisco. In 1975 he visited with his common law wife, Klara Lochpigler. He was now a successful Viennese restaurateur. As a tribute to Ma and all our family, who met him for dinner in North Beach at La Pantera Restaurant on upper Columbus Avenue, he wore that same navy blue suit she had given him as a farewell gift. He had saved it all those years for this very occasion. He toasted Ma and Pa, in absentia, and Rudy and Lee and all our family who had befriended him during the war.

Much later, in summer 1982, in a Rehabilitation Hospital outside of Vienna, Terry, Marge, Connie, Warren, Christy and Robert Gade visited him. He was learning to walk again after a second leg amputation. He presented Connie and Robert each with an Austrian ducaten. He died soon after on September 15, 1982.

Clara Lochpigler continued the tradition by sending a coin to each of my grandchildren at their birth, in memory of the friendship between our families, started by Leopoldine Tham and Georg Martinkovits during World War II.



Daddy told Mother about the church he was working on at Church Art Glass. Monsignor McGough, the pastor at St. Mary's of the Annunciation Church in Stockton, was a difficult man. The stained glass window in the choir which was created by Cummings Studio did not please him and he fired Cummings. Then he was not happy with two windows that Lapotka created for the church. Carl told Lee that Monsignor McGough had taken him aside and said, "I like your work very much. I want you to leave Lapotka and finish the rest of the windows for my church. What do you say?" Carl told him he would think about it and let him know. "What do you think I should do?" Mother was immediately enthusiastic. "Of course you can do this, Carl. You're a much better artist than any of the rest of them. Monsignor McGough is smart to see that. I'll keep working in the store so we don't need to worry about money." Daddy nodded, "I'm going to need someone to work with me. It's a very large church and I can't do it alone." They talked for hours that night and by morning he was ready to ask his co-worker, Harry Leonhardt, if Harry would like to be his partner in a new studio. Harry was ecstatic. He wanted to leave Lapotka and didn't know how to do it.

They told Mr. Lapotka, who took the news calmly. "Lots of luck to both of you, if you have to work with that difficult man." Carl rented a small shop at 357 Fillmore near Haight. A contract was drafted in November 1942 to "make and install a window called the Coronation Window, in conformity with a sketch, to be ready to install in three months time at the new church in Stockton." He immediately started the design work. He bought glass, lead, paper, tables, glass cutters and most important, started building a kiln.

The first Friday after they started the new studio, Harry Leonhardt realized that, as a partner he wouldn't get a paycheck. He would share the expenses and the profits, whenever they came. He hung his head and said to my father, "I really want to be your partner, but I can't afford to be without a paycheck. I have a wife. I just can't do it." Daddy talked to Mother that night. "As long as I'm working in the grocery store, you can afford to give him a paycheck each week. But he won't be a partner. He'll just work for you." He named the new studio Century Stained Glass Studio.

Daddy told Mother about the imperious Monsignor McGough and the young charming Dominican sister who was Principal of the parish grammar school in Stockton. "It would be impossible to work with him if it were not for her", my father complained. That Sister usually accompanied Monsignor McGough to the Studio, and was gracious and diplomatic in making suggestions that seemed to work. She made it possible for the demanding Monsignor and the humble immigrant artist to co-exist. Her name was Sister Maurice Powers O P.

Daddy could no longer relieve my mother in the store. It was hard to find help, and she had to find someone to help her. But the money kept coming in. It was wartime, there was full employment, and people had money to spend. There was rationing, but there was still food on the shelves – and no matter how bad things were, even in the worst of times – people still had to eat, so the grocery store did well.



Mother was determined that I should have the best education. She never had a chance for a good education and Ma never pushed Rudy to do well in school. Mother doubted he would ever go back to school. Rudy already said, "It ain't what you know – it's who you know." She wanted me to learn to do everything. I went to German language class on Saturday mornings until the war made it embarrassing to even learn German, much less speak it. I already rode bicycles with my father; I roller-skated, I took dance lessons and piano lessons. I learned how to ice skate with Daddy at the Sutro Rink out at the beach. Mother decided that I should take horseback riding lessons, so she took me to lessons every Saturday at the riding stables on Stanyon Street, the entrance to the Park. When I got older I took the streetcar or rode my bicycle to the stable.

When I came home after school, crying that I had to memorize the poem, "Hiawatha", and I couldn't do it, my mother got Leonard to stay at the store. She drove me out to the beach where we could watch the waves roll in. We slowly repeated the lines together, over and over – "By the shores of Gitchee Goomee stood the wigwams of Nakomis – Daughter of the Moon – Nakomis. " And finally the lines of poetry stayed in my head.

Once again Mother had trouble getting the kind of child care help she needed since Jo was sometimes unavailable for several weeks at a time. Mother decided that she would try a younger person who would live in with us. She talked to several people and before long she found Emily August, a sixteen year old Portuguese girl who lived on her father's farm in Martinez. He was eager to have her quit school and earn some money. If she could earn her own room and board as well, that would be one less mouth for her father to feed. Martinez was a village surrounded by farmland at that time. We went over to the farm to pick her up. The place was dusty and ill kept, but Emily, short, and plump, with dark hair, had a winning smile and ingratiating way. She seemed happy to leave and Lee hoped this would be the answer to her prayers. She took a liking to Emily and took her to the Emporium to get her some decent clothes. It was almost summer vacation, but Mother would send Emily to Presentation High School in September if she qualified. Otherwise she'd have to go to the public school. Emily shared a room with me and fit in well with the family. She was happy to go on our weekend outings and loved going to the Tourist House and Mountain Play.

She soon made friends in the neighborhood and unbeknownst to Mother became acquainted with a tall blonde young man who was in the National Guard. Before long he visited the house regularly when Mother and Daddy were away. While I listened to the big radio in the living room and played paper dolls, the two of them sat on the couch holding hands and smooching. One day Mother came home in the middle of this and was shocked. She couldn't believe Emily would allow a strange man in our flat with me there. Mother still cringed at the memory of that other nice looking man who had harmed so many children and nearly harmed me.

"Emily how could you do this?" She berated both of them, as they both tried to calm her. They explained they were in love and could not live without each other. Emily said she wouldn't agree not to see him again and he agreed that he had to see her too. So



with me in tow, Mother dragged both of them to the National Guard Armory on Mission Street, south of Market. She marched into the foreboding dark red brick building with all of us trotting after her. She demanded to see the young man's commanding officer and told him her complaint. He said with a grim face, "Young man, don't you know this girl is underage? Don't you understand the seriousness of your actions? You can't see this girl again. You're going to be given some punishment as it is." But the two of them clung to each other, Emily sobbing as though her heart would break. Finally it was agreed that the young man would spend time in detention for his transgression and would receive no leave for several weeks. And Mother would take Emily back to her parents in Martinez.

We went home, packed up her things including all the new clothes and from the Emporium. We drove back to Martinez with Emily sniffling in the back seat. Her father was happy to see her looking so well but couldn't understand what the fuss was about. Mother didn't care if he understood or not. Emily was no longer her responsibility and she was back at her father's farm. We went back home and Mother continued her search for someone to care for me.

The war years were hard on Mother. It was hard to get all kinds of help. There was rationing for meat, coffee, sugar and butter and grocers had to account to the Ration Board each month, with their red and blue ration stamps all pasted into books and accounted for. Daddy was working in his own business seven days a week and evenings too. We worried about Rudy, Leonard and Rudy Weederman, but occasional letters gave us hope that everyone would come home safely. Johanna and Martha were in China, surviving the war in the best way they could. Gus and Leopoldine Tham were tired. The Pork Store was very hard work; they had difficulty finding anyone to help them. There was never enough profit for all their effort. In addition, they were both in failing health. They looked for a buyer and sold the Pork Store.

Ma was happy to spend time at home and at Toyonolla in the summer. Finally Mother had someplace to send me during the summer where Ma could take care of me and I could be in the sunshine. After all, Redwood City proclaimed in a large arched sign, right over the main street, El Camino Real, "Climate Best By Government Test". Mother was more than ready to believe it. Evelyn's brother, Larry Prini, only a few years older than me, could get out of the summer fog for a while too. Ma was always full of mischief, though her personality was tempered with age. One Sunday she was hosing down the shrubs on the front terrace when I came prancing down the stairs in my starched white Sunday dress, gloves and hat, dressed for church. She turned to see me, got a gleam in her eye and hosed me down, then and there. Though I shrieked and leapt about, I was soon delighted to know that I wouldn't have to go to church after all.

Ma loved spending time with her granddaughter and she often had me stay at her house in the Bayview now that she didn't have to go to the Pork Store. I called her Grandma even though everyone else called her Ma. Ma's house was different than my mother's. It was full of plants and animals. When we were in the kitchen the cats purred as they wound around our legs. Grandma and I sat on the bed together in the



bedroom of the house on Newcomb Avenue. Two bedroom windows were wide open to the crisp morning breeze in the Bayview District. The white curtains followed the wind in and out of the windows. The room had green plants growing on every dresser and table. They imitated jungle growth rather than civilized house plants. Two oversized bird cages sat in the room, one on a brown wood dresser top and the other on top of a table, each covered with starched white cloths. Canaries crowded together. One sat protectively on a nest. Some puffed up their feathers and pulled in their heads, glaring and sulking. Several warbled in competition with the radio from which Bo Carter, Ma's favorite newsman, blasted the morning news about the war in the Pacific. They also listened and sang along with the canaries, which accompanied a symphony orchestra, sponsored by Hartz Mountain Bird Seed.

Grandma brought down her old wooden jewelry case. She brought it to me and I lovingly stroked the wooden chest. It was made out of chestnut, a warm rich red-brown. It barely fit on her lap. Grandma lifted the lid, carefully spreading her knees so it wouldn't fall. Inside were several compartments, all lidded with wooden covers adorned with small ivory knobs, except one. A rectangular lid with brocaded purple velvet covered that one. Inside that compartment was a miniature music box. The small metal cylinder had prickly pins sticking out. Grandma showed me how to pull a wire which tripped a lever, allowing the cylinder to turn. We watched the pins pluck the metal keyboard as two familiar Austrian melodies entertained us.

One compartment held pictures. Grandma said "This is me when I was a young girl, a little older than you. And here I am again when your mother was born. And this one – this is a picture of my mother. Your mother looks like her." Another contained two silver thimbles, one encrusted with enamel Edelweiss, Austria's national flower. A heavy brass key to wind the music box resided in another. Inside another was a small round box, covered in brown alligator leather. "These are the bones I got from a gypsy woman long ago in Austria. They're not real bones. Grelie – they're ivory carvings – and if I throw them, sometimes I can tell what the future will bring. But only for others – never for myself."

She spoke with an Austrian accent, which was softer than German and she spoke kindly to me, though she was often impatient with others. She stroked my hair and took my face between her work-rough hands and kissed me on the forehead. She called me Grelie, an Austrian nickname for Margarethe or Gretel.

The large bed in Ma and Pa's bedroom had no bedding when it was being aired. The down bed pillows freshened on the window sills. Grandma stomped into the room with fresh linen. She was tall and spare and walked with a limp. Her sensible laced-up black shoes protected her feet, which had been crippled with frostbite from too many hours in the ice box at the Pork Store. Her hair was dark brown, by now streaked with gray. It was pulled back from her face and tied in a bun at the nape of her neck. She wore no makeup, but her skin was smooth and ruddy. A deep dimple at one side of her mouth showed as a crease in her cheek even when she didn't smile. The rimless glasses were for her nearsighted eyes. She removed them carefully to place on the dresser.



Her plain cheap cotton dress had long sleeves, covered her knees and had been washed too many times. It was almost completely covered by a flowered starched apron with two deep pockets. Thick brown stockings encased her legs.

She had just taken a fresh white sheet off the drying line. It billowed as she lifted her arms several times to allow it to settle in the right place on the mattress. She showed me how to tuck and pull the sheets tight. I watched carefully as Grandma lifted the side of the sheet, creating a triangle at the bottom that she called a “hospital corner” “This is the most important part of bed making”, she murmured

“Come Grellie – let’s go down to the back yard and pick some fresh spinach for dinner. Don’t forget to stay close to me when we go through the basement door out to the yard” Prince, a large male German Shepherd, lived in the back yard. Chow, a large male Chow dog who strayed into the household, lived in the basement. They both loved Ma and each was jealous of any attention she gave to the other. Ma and I went down the steep wooden stairs to the basement. We stopped to say hello to Chow, who pranced around our feet. I walked to the back door and Grandma followed, carrying a large pail to gather spinach. I slid back the bolt and carefully turned the knob, but the door exploded in. I fell back into Grandma as Prince charged into the room, attacking Chow with full vengeance. The two whirled and lunged, snarling at each other, as if only blood would satisfy them. Ma stumbled to her feet and ran for the ready hose. I crept to a corner, away from the raging animals and watched with wide eyes, too afraid to scream. Grandma ran toward the dogs, twisting the nozzle and blasting their faces with water, driving Prince back to the yard and Chow to his corner, where he cringed and cowered. She helped me to my feet. We stood in the dim light of the basement as she hugged me tight for a long minute. My heart pounded from fear. “Now Grellie, let’s go outside. The spinach still waits for us.” We walked through the back door carefully and Prince trotted toward us with his tongue lolling, as if nothing had happened. Grandma grumped at him and shooed him out of the way as we headed toward the neat rows of spinach.

We picked the best tender bright green leaves and put them in a basket to take to the kitchen where we rinsed them in a large pot of cold water. Then we pinched off the stems and filled a large pot with the leaves, put in a little water and a handful of salt. The burner was turned on high and a lid quickened the steaming of the spinach. When the spinach was limp Grandma drained it and put it through the grinder. The grinder was clamped to the table and she let me turn the handle as the spinach oozed out into a bowl. Next she melted butter in a pan, thickened it with flour – not too long – so it didn’t brown, but stayed a lovely golden color. A wooden spoon smoothed this into a roue and the puréed spinach was added slowly until it had all been absorbed. Then some fresh ground nutmeg was added to taste. I was happy to help taste, then to lick the spoons.

Sometimes Grandma cooked Austrian goulash with paprika. After hours of simmering, the meat fell apart with a fork and the rich brown gravy was ready to cover spaetzle when the tiny potato dumplings came out of the boiling pot. On Christmas Day everyone came to her house for turkey dinner. She cooked a special broth with leber



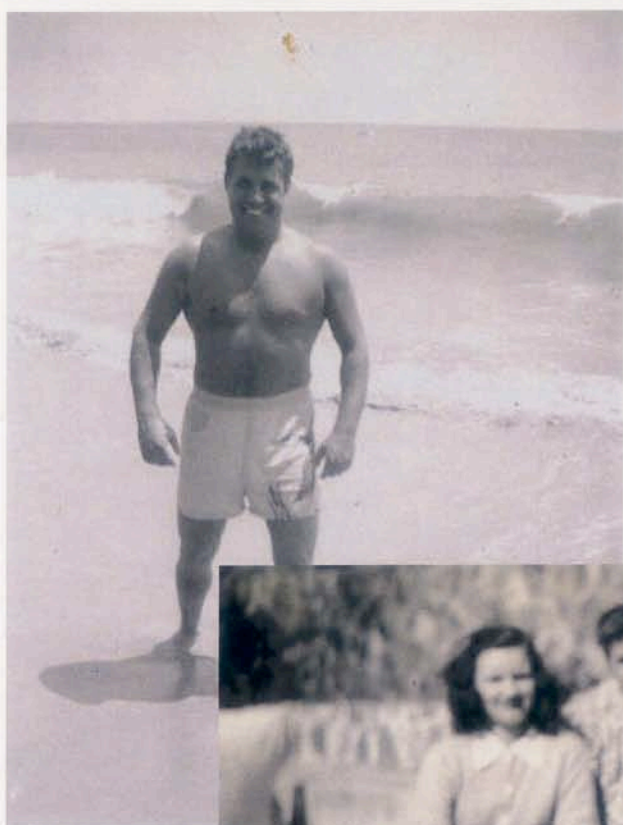
kloetchle, a finely ground, very small liver dumpling that tasted better than paté. This was only the first course of several well prepared dishes.

Sometimes she showed me how to bake strudel, stretching the dough patiently until it was thin enough to see through. Only then were the apples, raisins and cinnamon piled on and the dough rolled into a long log. Once Grandma showed me the beautiful silver tableware she bought from Shreve's in San Francisco. "I had it engraved for your mother – now that she is married to a good man like your father. See Grelie "JK" engraved on every piece. When I'm gone this will belong to your mother. And someday it will be for you." I listened and looked at everything. I loved Grandma and Grandpa and the dogs, cats, birds and plants that cluttered every room of the immaculate house. The days I spent with Grandma were full of things to do that were different from home.

Mother was tired of working so hard in the grocery store too. Daddy's business was going well. Mother found a buyer for Huneke's Grocery. Daddy was nervous over these events. "What if I don't get any more jobs? What will we live on?" "You're doing well now. I know you will get new jobs. You will be very successful." Daddy continued to fret. He complained, "No, honey. I don't like this. I think you should stay in the grocery store for a few more years."

My mother listened to him, but continued with her plans. The final payment for the Page and Lyon building, including the two flats and the grocery store was made in February 1944. The building which cost them \$9,000 was now owned free and clear. She sold Huneke's Grocery to Lloyd and Lone Wilkerson in May 1944 for \$5,000, of which \$1,500 was "good will" and \$3,500 was for grocery stock on hand. My father reluctantly signed the papers. It was renamed Page-Lyon Grocery. Mother agreed to help them learn the business and work with them a while, so she was not yet completely free of the store.





Above, Left: Rudy with Bob Lane aboard ship.

Above Right: Rudy shipboard.

Left: Rudy in a preferred pose.

Below: Back Row Left, Evelyn, Rudy, Ann, Dodo, Vula. Front: Gus Tham with Margaret.



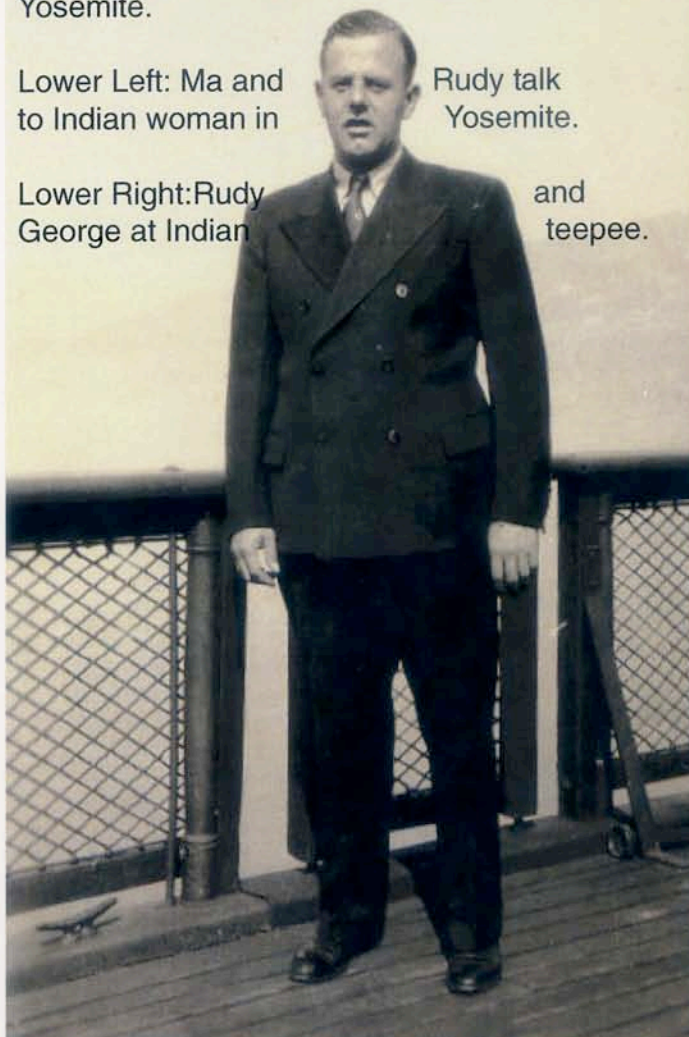


Upper Left: George Martinkovits on ship going home to Austria, dressed in his new blue suit - a gift from Leopoldine.

Upper Right: George, left, Rudy, Ma and Pa in Yosemite.

Lower Left: Ma and Rudy talk to Indian woman in Yosemite.

Lower Right: Rudy and George at Indian teepee.







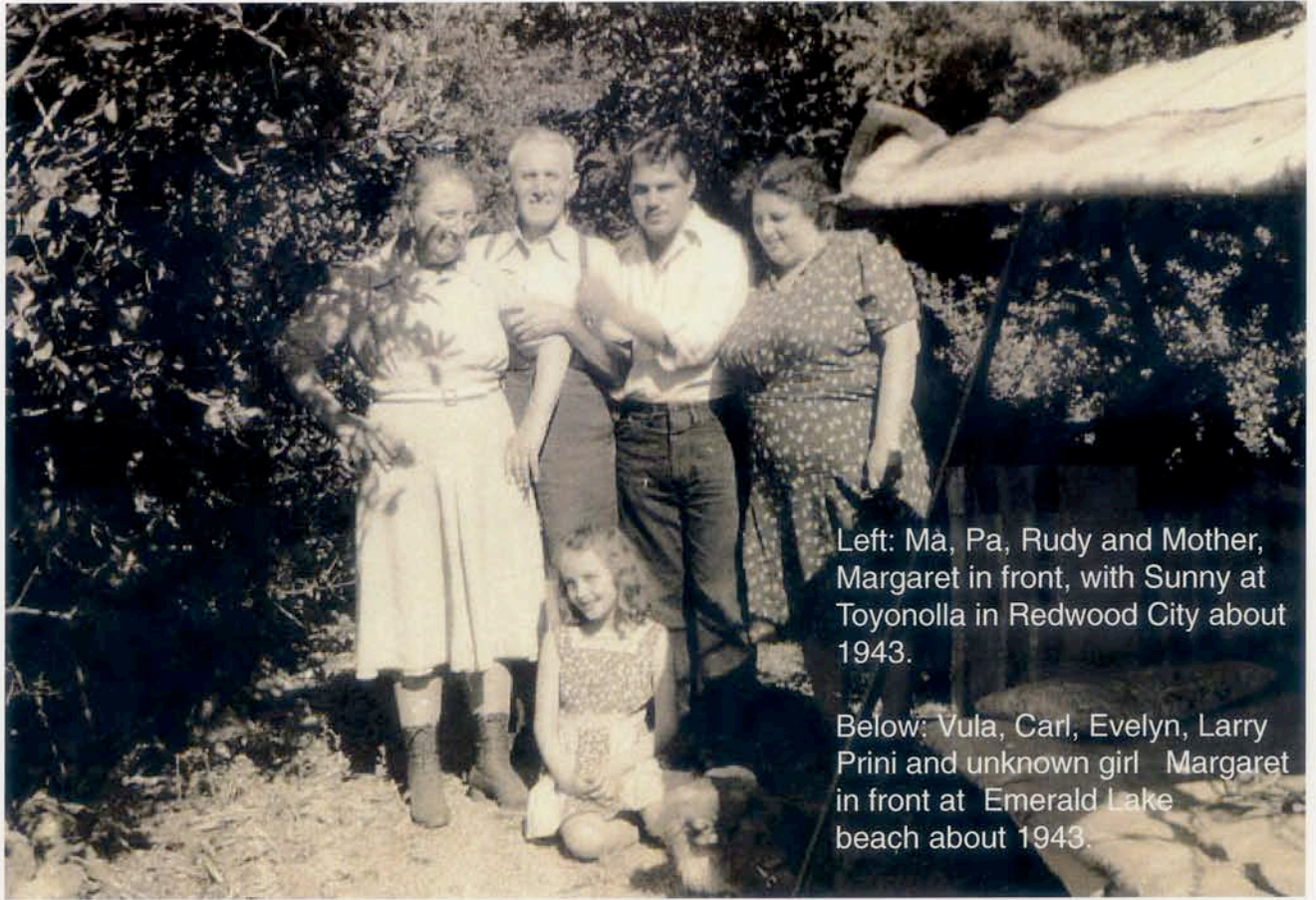
Upper Left: George Martinkovits and Klara Lochpigler, his common law wife. Summer 1982, in Rehab Hospital in Austria when we visited.

Right: His famous restaurant near Parliament in Vienna. (The Tomato Basket)

Lower: His brother's famous restaurant near Vienna. Connie, Terry and Marge visited in 1982.







Left: Ma, Pa, Rudy and Mother, Margaret in front, with Sunny at Toyonolla in Redwood City about 1943.

Below: Vula, Carl, Evelyn, Larry Prini and unknown girl Margaret in front at Emerald Lake beach about 1943.



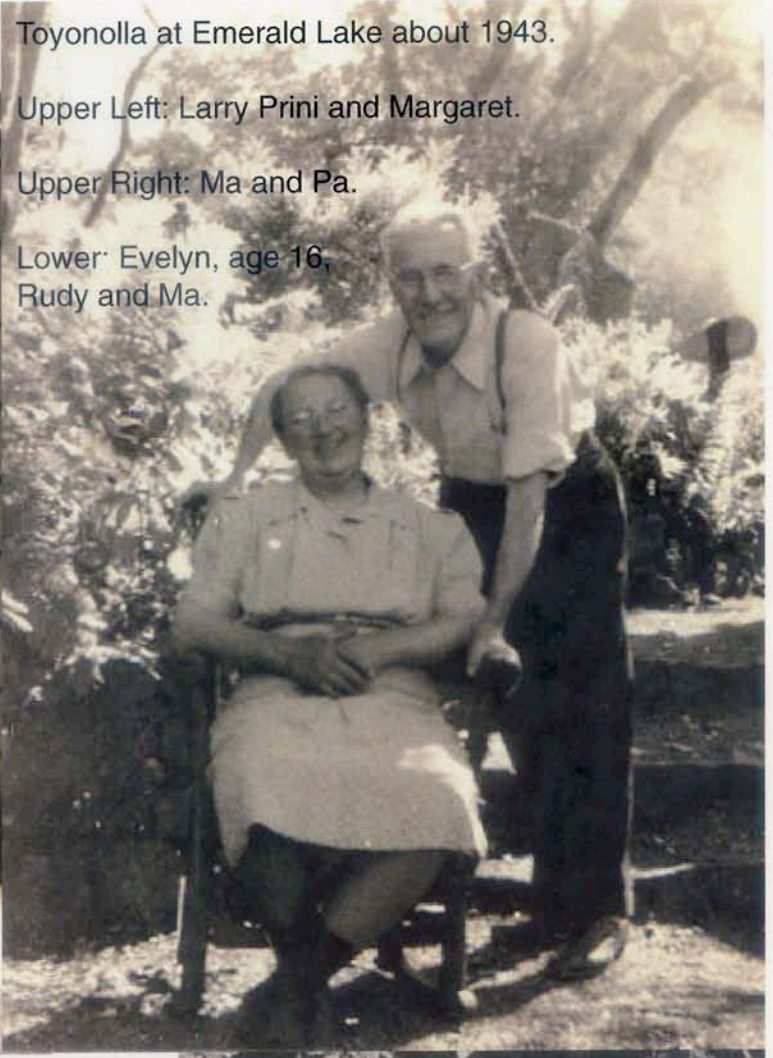


Toyonolla at Emerald Lake about 1943.

Upper Left: Larry Prini and Margaret.

Upper Right: Ma and Pa.

Lower: Evelyn, age 16,  
Rudy and Ma.







Above left: Mountain Play meadow around 1944. Back row center: Leonard O'Leary and to his right his sister Mary Kerrigan and husband. Front: Margaret and Emily August.



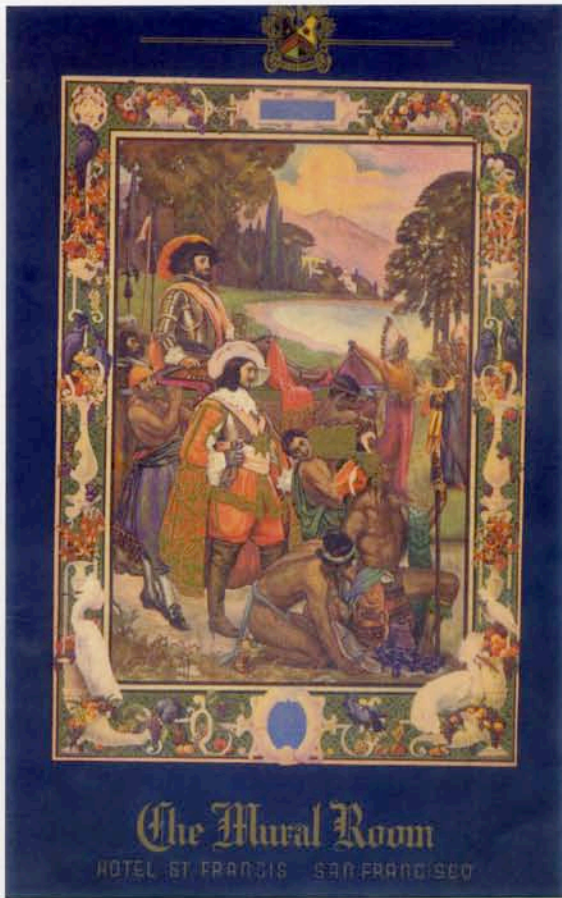
Above Right: Margaret and Emily August.

Below left: Emily August, Ma and Margaret at Mirror Lake in Yosemite.

Below Right: Margaret on new bicycle with school friends Mary Ellen and Joan Powers. Our corner grocery store building in background.







### Selective Dinner

MURAL ROOM, SUNDAY, JULY 12, 1943  
PRICE OF ENTREE DENOTES COST OF COMPLETE DINNER

Pickled Filet of Trout, Beet Salad	California Fruit Supreme
Crab, Lobster or Shrimp Cocktail	Celery Embassy
Chicken Gumbo Creole	Borscht in Jelly
Cream of Fresh Corn Washington	
Radishes	Olives
SLICED LOBSTER, Newburg Sauce and Rice Pilaw	2.50
STUFFED DEVILED CRAB St. Francis Style	2.00
GRILLED LAMB CHOPS, Mint Jelly	2.00
MEDAILLON OF SWEETBREAD Princesse	2.25
HALF SPRING CHICKEN SAUTE Chasseur	2.50
ROAST PRIME RIBS OF BEEF, Yorkshire Pudding	2.00
GRILLED TENDERLOIN OR SIRLOIN STEAK, Shallots Butter	2.75
Creamed New Peas	Dauphine Potatoes
Combination Salad, Special Dressing	
Apple Pie	Strawberry Tart, Whipped Cream
Assorted Cakes	Vanilla Ice Cream
	Cheese and Crackers
	Pineapple Sherbet
Cafe	
<b>COMPLETE DINNER WITH BROILED KANSAS CITY BEEF STEAK 3.75</b>	

### Carte du Jour

Escalopes and Crab Legs Mousquetaire 1.25	California Fruit Salad St. Francis 85
Sliced Alligator Pear with Crab Legs Goumet 1.00	Half Alligator Pear with Shrimps Vinaigrette 80
Blackberries 40	Bluesberries 40
Fresh Strawberries with Cream 55	Raspberries with Cream 55
Honeydew Melon 40	Watermelon on Ice 55
	Celery Embassy 60
	Fruit Coupe 40
	Fruit Supreme 60
	Fresh Figs with Cream 55
	Cantaloupe on Ice 35

#### SOUPS

Cream of Fresh Corn Washington 40	Borscht in Jelly [Cup] 30	Chicken Gumbo Creole 40
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#### FISH

Sliced Lobster on Consomme, Newburg Sauce, and Rice Pilaw 1.35
Grilled Filets of Turbot with Bacon and Olive Potatoes 1.10
Filets of Roe Sole with Grapes Vinaigrette 1.10
Baked Eastern Oysters in Shell, Polonaise 1.10
Stuffed Deviled Crab St. Francis Style 95

#### ENTREES

Omelette with Fresh Mushrooms 1.00
Scrambled Eggs with Sausages and Bacon 90
Breaded Veal Cutlet with Tomato Sauce and New Peas 1.10
Medallion of Sweetbread Saute in Butter Princesse 1.50
Half Spring Chicken, Sauce Chasseur, and Noodles in Butter 1.20
Emmentaler Tenderloin of Beef Saute with Bordelaise Sauce and New Potatoes 1.10
Roast Prime Ribs of Beef with Coquille Potato and String Beans 1.20
Broiled Chicken Liver Brochette with New Succotash 1.10
Grilled Spring Lamb Chops and Dauphine Potatoes 1.20
Prime Ribs of Beef, Yorkshire Pudding 1.20
Chef Salad Special, Red Wine Vinaigrette Dressing 1.10
Chicken Salad Niçoise 1.00
Salad Ohlandt, String Beans, Artichokes, Beets, Asparagus, Tomatoes 1.00

#### DESSERTS

Apple Pie 30	French Pastry 30	Assorted Cakes 35	Frozen Strawberries 40
Apericot Pie 30	Strawberry Tart with Whipped Cream 40		Apple Souffle Pudding 30
Vanilla, Strawberry or Chocolate Ice Cream 40			Pineapple Sherbet 40

**COVER CHARGE AFTER 9.00 p. m., 75c    FRIDAY \$1.00    SAT. \$1.25**

### A La Carte

Sauerkraut Juice 30	Tomato Juice 30	Orange Juice 30	Grapefruit Juice 30
Special St. Francis Clam Juice Cocktail 45			Fruit Supreme 60

#### OYSTERS & CLAMS

BLUE POINT OR TOKE POINT OYSTERS: Cocktail or Half Shell 75	Supreme 95
OLYMPIAS: Cocktail or Half Shell 70	In their own Juice 70
Little Neck Clams 60	Cherrystone Clams 35
HOT: Deviled Crab 1.00	Lobster Newburg 1.65, Thermidor 1.65, Americaine 1.65
COLD: Seafood Combination St. Francis 1.00	Lobster Salad 1.50
Half Lobster Mayonnaise 1.35	Crab Salad 1.30

#### HORS D'OEUVRES & RELISHES

Salami 75	Individual French Sardines 1.00	Stuffed Celery Parisienne 65
Main Celery 30	Chutney 40	Chow Chow 35
Jumbo Ripe Olives 40	Stuffed Green Olives 45	Mixed Pickles 35
	Fresh Caviar on Ice, Garnished [per person] 3.00	

#### SOUPS

BROTHS: Beef 30	Chicken 35	Clam 45	Essence of Tomato 35	Onion Soup au Gratin 60
CREAM: Tomato 45	New Peas 50	Princesse 35	POTAGE: Mongole 40	

#### FROM THE GRILL

Steak Minute with Potatoes 1.50	Sirloin Steak 1.75	Tenderloin Steak 1.85
Filet Mignon 1.75	Lamb Chops [2] 1.25	Veal Kidney 80
Sweetbreads 1.50	Cal's Liver 1.00	Chicken Liver Brochette 1.00
Broiled Kansas Steak with Potatoes 2.25	Whole Squab Chicken 1.50	Spring Chicken [half] 1.15

#### COLD MEATS

Sliced Chicken 1.25	Beef Tongue 95	Roast Beef 1.20
Corned Beef 1.20	Sliced Turkey 1.25	Spring Lamb with Rib 1.40
Ham 85	Virginia Ham 1.10	Supreme of Chicken Janette 1.25
Assorted Cold Cuts 1.25 with Chicken 1.40	[Garnished with Potato Salad or Cole Slaw]	Prosciutto 1.00

#### VEGETABLES

Fresh Asparagus 70	Onions in Cream 45	Artichoke 50
Spinach 30, Caramelized 50	Fresh Stewed Tomatoes 50	Cauliflower 50
Peas 45	Carrots 35	String Beans 30

#### SALADS

Fresh Fruit 85	Heart of Lettuce 40	Lettuce and Tomato 45
Roast Beef 40	Endive 50	Escarole 40
Fresh Vegetable 90	Chicory 40	Tomato 30
Cucumber 35	Waldorf 70	Special Mixed Green Salad Combination 45
Beet 35	Artichoke Bottom 65	Asparagus Tips 70
	Dressings: Roquefort 25	Russian 20

#### CHEESE

Camembert 45	Cottage 35	American 35	Roquefort 40
Edam 50	Monterey Jack 35	Philadelphia Cream 35	Double Cream and Bar la duc 80
Lindemann 45	Brie 35		Swiss 45

#### TEA, COFFEE, ETC.

Pot of Coffee with Cream [hot or ice] 30	Coffee Special [in percolator] 40
Sanka Coffee [in percolator] 40	Chocolate with Cream 40
Tea [all kinds] per pot with Lemon or Cream 30	Milk [small bottle] 15
	Buttermilk [glass] 15

*Hall portions will be served to children under twelve years of age at half price*

*To Margaret  
Aloha Kuu Loa  
from  
Hilo Hattie  
(clear sister)*

Menu from the Mural Room, Saint Francis Hotel, about 1943. Hilo Hattie was just becoming famous and was doing her Hawaiian show so she signed both her real name and her adopted name for me.



# MA, MOTHER AND ME

## A MEMOIR

### Chapter 8 Marina Court Apartments 1944

Mother had ideas about what she wanted to do once she was out of the grocery store. Now she had time to pursue them. First she had to lose some weight from working and eating behind the counter for eight years. She wanted to wear better clothes. She had hidden behind grocer's smocks for all those years and she was tired of it. She bought a couple of dresses size 24 ½, but promised herself they would be the last ones that large. She found a doctor to help her with some diet pills and she started to diet. She knew she had to change her life completely and she was ready for a change.

While I was at school and Daddy was at work, she started looking at real estate. For a long time, she had thought that this was the best way to make money in San Francisco. Many of the Germans had bought real estate in the Mission District because it was cheap, but she didn't like that. She wanted only the best, so she headed toward one of the highest rent districts in San Francisco, the Marina. She walked into Traner-Small Company, Real Estate and Insurance Brokers, at 2141 Lombard Street. A man sitting at one of the desks, slowly unfolded himself to greet her as she walked in. He towered over her. "I'm Conrad Small, but everyone calls me Tiny", he smiled. His handshake began a lifelong friendship.

She spent a lot of time prowling the neighborhood, looking at buildings, and coveting all of them. She listened to what realtors told her and soon learned some basic lessons. Mr. Small drawled, "Huneke, there's only three things you need to know about buying real estate: location ..location location." And she'd say, "Lots of our German friends are buying apartments in the Mission District. They say you can get a lot more for your money there." And he'd drawl back at her, "Yep. They can. But in the long run, what counts is location location location. Remember, Huneke, you take care of your property when you're young and it will take care of you when you're old." Lee loved it all. She listened and looked and learned. There was a building for sale for \$90,000 at 3445-3455 Pierce Street in the Marina District. It was called the Marina Court Apartments. It had thirty apartments, all one bedrooms and studios with low rents, under wartime rent control. But surely, someday, the war would be over and rent control would end. Then she could raise the rents, fix the building, and eventually the rents would provide a good income. All she had to do was to convince Carl and find enough money for a down payment.

She talked to Gus and Leopoldine about her plans. Gus Tham said, "Poldi, we've worked hard all these years in the Pork Store. All we have to show for it is \$14,000, for our whole lives' work. Take it, it's yours. We have faith in you. You will do better with it than we did." She hugged them and said, "Someday we'll all have something of real



value. I promise you we're going to make it when we buy this apartment building " Pa put his arm around Ma as they stood in the window of their house in the Bayview district, and watched her drive away He shook his head slowly. "Maybe she'll make it. Maybe she will."

Carl was so busy making the stained glass windows for Saint Mary of the Annunciation in Stockton that he hardly had time to think. Three men in addition to Carl kept work progressing at the shop on Fillmore. The kiln was installed in the storeroom in back of the Page and Lyon Grocery It ran late into the night, fusing the paint into the glass. Gus Tham used the outside entrance to deliver the glass from the shop to the kiln for firing, then back again to the shop for assembly into the leaded frames. At home, at night, Carl sketched full sized cartoons for the new windows, using a projector to cast images on the wall at the top of the stairs of our flat.

Mother told Daddy she needed to talk to him about something important. She had decided the only way to deal with him was head on "We're going to buy an apartment building in the Marina District. It's called the Marina Court Apartments. We're going to sell the flats on University Terrace, use our savings, use some money from my parents and get a loan for the rest." Daddy looked at her as if she had lost her mind. "What are you talking about? We don't want an apartment building. I don't like to talk to people. I don't like to fix things. Are you crazy?" Mother explained all she had learned about real estate and told him that this was the way for them to succeed Soon the war would be over and she could raise the rents. Then the rents would be high enough to pay someone to fix the apartments. Then she could raise the rents some more and she would never have to come to him for money Someday, when they were old, they could live on the rents because the apartments would always keep going up in value. By now Daddy was furious and ended the discussion. "I am not signing any papers. That's that. I don't want to hear any more about it." For a week Mother argued passionately, but Daddy was adamant. Finally there was silence in the house. Two weeks later, under protest, he signed the papers at the title company He told her bitterly, "I want you to know I am totally opposed to this. We are doing so well, but you aren't satisfied You have to have more. Well, I lost the first fortune in the stock market crash of 1929, so I guess I'll let you lose the next fortune in real estate." The deal was done.

The title insurance papers and Mother's personal notes showed that Marina Court Apartments cost \$90,000, of which they got a mortgage for \$55,339 They traded the flats at 40-42 Annapolis Terrace and the balance of \$10,661 came as a loan from Gus Tham and their own savings. The title transferred on November 3, 1944. A month later, Gus Tham loaned them an additional \$5,161 for operating capital.

Mother took Ma and Pa to the apartment building They stood in front of the courtyard and looked up at the sign, "Marina Court Apartments" Ma and Pa were so proud "Now we are finally landholders. Poldi, I know this was a good thing to do." Mother was busy learning how to manage the building Tiny Small introduced her to an accountant who showed her how to set up her books.



Ma had not seen Fini since the day Mike and Fini fled from Ma's house. That was the day her engagement to Laurson was supposed to be announced. Fini never wanted to see Ma again, but finally, after eleven years together, she and Mike had a child of their own. Their son Mike was born September 5, 1944. Fini wanted Ma to see the boy. Even after all these years had passed, Fini still feared Ma, but Mike was with her now. They had a good visit in the house on Newcomb Avenue. They laughed at life and the way things turned out.

Rudy told Ma and Pa he wanted to marry Evelyn Prini. Ma finally said no to something Rudy wanted, but it was too late. He was twenty-one and had already made up his mind. "Why don't you get a job first and find a place to live", she pleaded, but to no avail. On November 6, 1944, Rudy and Evelyn Prini were married at All Hallows Church in Butchertown. Evelyn wore a dark suit, very high heels and a small hat with a veil over her eyes, which was the style for many wartime weddings. Rudy wore a blue suit with a flower in his lapel. Ma didn't feel well, but came clumping down the aisle in the brown ermine coat that Lee had just bought her. As usual she was late, and the wedding almost started without her. Mother, Daddy and I were there, as well as the Prini family and some of the young couple's friends. Afterward everyone celebrated at Evelyn's parents' home at 629 Brussels Street. Rudy and Evelyn went on a short honeymoon. They drove down the coast for a couple of days, then came back to live at Ma and Pa's house. They stayed in Rudy's old room until they could find their own apartment. Under rent control, it was hard to find a place to live.

One month later Pa called with tears in his voice. "Poldi, we had to take Ma to the Hospital. I don't know what's wrong." She slipped into a coma very quickly from kidney failure and never recovered. She died on December 16, 1944, only 57 years old. Mother grieved that Ma would not be there to see them become successful. Pa didn't know how to live without her. He had chest pains all the time and was afraid he would die too. Rudy was inconsolable. Ma was the mother he always knew. She had spoiled him terribly. It was a huge loss in his life. The funeral was at Gantner, Felder and Kelly on Upper Market Street. When they tried to close the casket, he threw himself on her body, crying, "No, no. You can't take her away." Fini and Ole Michaelson came to pay their respects to Lee, Rudy and Gus. Fini hugged Lee tightly. They had not seen each other since the day Mike and Fini left Ma's house. Fini was glad she and Mike had a chance to visit Ma just a month before. Mother and Fini promised to see each other again now that Ma was gone.

They mourned Ma greatly as they laid her to rest at Cypress Lawn Cemetery. Mother soon organized things and they decided to sell Ma and Pa's house. Pa would come to live with us at 1319 Page Street. The front bedroom of the flat was empty since Rudy Weederman was away in the army. Pa could move in there. There was a studio apartment coming up at Marina Court Apartments. Rudy and Evelyn could live there.

The total rental income for December 1944 at Marina Court apartments was \$1,394.50, with most of the one bedrooms at \$45-\$50 and most of the studios at \$30-\$35. They



would remain at those levels for many years. Rudy and Evelyn moved into a studio for \$27.50 per month until a one bedroom became available. Mr and Mrs. Greer received free rent in 3445 Pierce #105 for managing the building. In addition, Mother paid them \$35 per month salary. She was happy when they gave notice to move and by February she hired a new manager.

She paid Gus Tham \$56.25 interest on his loan every month, as well as \$205 to Travelers Insurance for her mortgage payment. In April 1945 she paid property taxes of \$736.34, half of the annual cost that first year. She was proud to pay \$23.60 for her first membership dues in the San Francisco Apartment Association. After one month, a one bedroom apartment became available. She paid \$129.90 for a new stove and refrigerator and \$125 to paint a beautiful one bedroom at 3455 Pierce #105 for Rudy and Evelyn. They would pay \$50 a month, the highest new rent in the building.

lone Wilkerson, who had bought the Page and Lyon grocery business with her husband, confided to Mother that she and her husband, Lloyd, were having problems. "I'm not willing to work with him as much as he thinks I should. He thinks I should be here as much as you were and I just don't want to do that." One night she went to the store to find out why he had not come home after the store closed for the night. He wasn't in the front of the store, so she went to the back room. She screamed when she found him hanging by the neck from a rope tied over the rafter. She ran to my parent's flat and they comforted her as best they could. lone wailed, "Why would he want to do that and leave me alone here. He knew I couldn't do it alone." They called the Police and Mother went back to work in the store the next day. But they knew right away that lone Wilkerson would sell the business. On September 10, 1945 Vic D'Aquisto bought the business. He was a dark skinned, blue eyed handsome Italian, an American, with immigrant parents. He had an easy smile and a quick temper. He had been in the grocery business before and knew what to expect. My parents hoped that this time it was sold permanently. Mother didn't want to be in the grocery business again.

In April, Rudy and Evelyn announced that a baby was on the way. Evelyn confided to Lee how happy she was to have this baby. She hoped it would help her forget the one she didn't have years earlier. She told Lee she still had bad dreams about it and she had never received absolution from the priest. During her pregnancy, the United Nations was formed in San Francisco. They met at the Opera House for six weeks with President Truman presiding at the end.

During that same time, Germany surrendered unconditionally in Europe. There were rumors of some kind of "secret weapon" that America planned to use, but no one knew what it was. Then on July 16 the first test atomic bomb was exploded in Alamogordo, New Mexico, followed by atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan on August 6 and 9, 1945. On September 2, Japan formally surrendered, thus ending World War II.



On September 21, 1945, Rudy and Evelyn had a baby girl. They named her Judith Lee. She was the beginning of a generation which would be called "Baby Boomers", and my parents were grandparents.

At last we received another letter from Martha. It was from Tsingtao, China, dated September 19, 1945. "We are still sitting and waiting here. We would like to be home for mother's eightieth birthday, but apparently nothing will come of that. Up until now things have gone well for us, but we have received little money. We have already sold everything we could turn into money. We hope this will be our last summer here since it is very hot. During the winter we moved to a nice place closer to the city. We are directly on the sea and have hills and forest all around us." Johanna added her words of love and thanks for the time in America. My parents were relieved that they were well and hoped they could soon return home to Germany now that the war was over.

When Rudy got out of the Merchant Marine, he tried to find a job that he liked. He wasn't interested in just working as a wage earner. He had grown up with people who worked in their own businesses and he was not inclined to carry a lunch pail to a factory every day. Evelyn worked in an office and she wanted her husband to do something better too. Through the Golden Gloves he met a lot of guys who were in the prize fighting business. They hung out at Cyril DeNike's Bar at 4001 Third Street near Mission. Cyril gave him a job bartending and he loved it. Rudy didn't drink himself, since alcohol made him sick, so Cyril really liked him as an employee. But Evelyn didn't like Rudy working until two in the morning. She was pregnant and did not want a bartender for a husband.

One day Rudy saw a laundry business for sale on Divisadero Street near Page. He talked to Mother and Daddy and soon they agreed to loan him \$5,000 to buy the business. By the time the sale closed escrow, he had conjured a scenario where he would be the "laundry king" of San Francisco, washing linens for the whole city. Rudy, Evelyn and my mother started working at the laundry April 1, 1946. Little Judy was behind the counter in her baby carriage for only one day when everyone decided she shouldn't be around other people's dirty clothes. After two weeks they knew that they did not want to wash other people's dirty clothes either. On May 7, 1946, they sold the laundry. It lasted one month but Rudy and Ev paid back the \$5,000 and knew forever that they would never do that again.

Daddy continued creating windows for one church after another: Saint Mary of the Annunciation in Stockton, St. Vincent de Paul in San Francisco's prestigious Pacific Heights, Trinity Lutheran Church in Palo Alto, Saint Charles Borromeo Church at 743 South Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco – all this and more out of the little rented shop at 374 Fillmore Street and the kiln in back of the grocery store. He was now an established stained glass artist.

Grace Juth invited us to a wedding at her home. She was proud to tell my parents that her beautiful tall slender, graceful daughter Emily, who had graduated from college and was now a teacher, was marrying James Benson, an Ensign in the U.S. Navy. Mother,



Daddy and I accepted the invitation, amused that Emily was marrying someone named Ensign Benson. But we had to keep straight faces when Emily, in a long white satin gown, paraded down the staircase to meet her handsome Ensign, in front of the fireplace in the living room. She towered over him by fully a head and a half. He stretched his neck way up and she leaned over considerably to touch lips, as they were pronounced man and wife. They stayed married long enough to have two children before they divorced.

We received word that Martha and Johanna arrived in Germany safely at the war's end. When Martha and Johanna returned to Germany they found their home in disrepair, but still standing. Martha married Heinz Lohmann, the widower she had corresponded with so faithfully. At age forty she became pregnant with her only child, Karl Heinz Lohmann. Heinz, who was a member of the Nazi Party during the war, was now ineligible for government employment so the family was hard pressed. My parents sent \$50 each month, the maximum allowed by the government. Martha brought a beautiful carved camphor chest home with her from China. She gave it to me when I visited her at her home at #13 Feld Strasse in Achim, Germany in 1982. She shipped it to me several months later. I have it in my office at home. Now I keep all of my parents' memorabilia in it.

Gus Tham was happy living with us. His days were full of activity. He had no worries about money because he knew Mother would take care of him and he could see prosperity around him. Each day he drove to Marina Court Apartments and inspected the building from top to bottom. He swept the stairs, collected newspapers from the landings and picked up papers that had blown into the garden courtyard. He was so proud that Lee and Carl owned this beautiful building. He stopped to see Judy and Evelyn at their apartment every morning. He'd hold out his hands to Judy, with a piece of candy clenched in one fist, and say, "Which one?" Then he would return to Daddy's studio to transport a load of glass to the kiln at Page and Lyon storage room and reverse the process when the glass was cool. He often said to Mother, "I've never been so happy in my whole life."

San Francisco changed with its wartime influx of people from all over the country. Many veterans who had passed through on their way to war wanted to return to San Francisco after they got out of the service. Thousands settled, bought cars, filled universities and built homes, parks, and schools in and around San Francisco. The suburbs became cities. Rudy and Evelyn were happy living in their one-bedroom apartment at Marina Court with their new baby. My mother loved visiting them.

Lee continued her friendship with her cousin Fini. Fini's husband Ole (Mike) Michaelson was now a sea captain. Sometimes they met at Rudy and Ev's apartment in the Marina. Mike's brother Pete Michaelson was also a sea captain and though he shipped out of Seattle, he was looking for a change. He thought he might like to ship out of San Francisco, but his wife Mary and teenaged daughter Cherie lived in Seattle and were not inclined to move. He was a dark haired, nice looking man and did not resemble Mike at all. They used to laugh, sometimes wondering if they had the same parents.



When they got together at Rudy and Ev's apartment, the whisky, the stories and the laughter flowed. They told about being kids who were put into an orphanage by their father after their mother died. Mike ran away from the orphanage when he was just fourteen. He told Pete he'd come back for him. He shipped out as a captain's cabin boy and somehow survived that way until he was old enough to be a seaman. Pete's experience was about the same. Mike always told Pete, "Someday I'm gonna find that sumbitch! I'm gonna ask him why he did that to us kids. Why'd he put us in an orphanage? All we wanted was to be with him."

One day Mike did find him. He sat next to a stranger in a bar in Petersburg, an out of the way village in Alaska. They talked and shared information, and as they did, Mike realized this guy was his father! With the realization he knew he had his opportunity "Why'd you go and leave us kids? Why'd you do that? Why'd you leave little Christina, and Pete and my other two brothers and me? We needed you with our mother dead. Why'd you do that to us?" But his father had nothing to say. His father just sat there and hung his head, silent, as the tears slipped down his cheeks. Finally Mike slapped some money on the bar and turned and left. He never saw his father again.

My mother enjoyed the company of Mike and Pete. She had lost weight, dressed attractively and even started smoking for a while to look more sophisticated. She particularly enjoyed Pete's company and started helping him find a place for his wife and child to live. Somehow his wife, Mary, heard about Lee and came to San Francisco in a jealous fit. She thought Pete and my mother were cheating on her. After meeting Mary Michaelson, a jealous wife, Lee decided she had enough of Pete's company for a while, so she went back to looking at real estate.

The City had come back to life after the end of the war. Night life flourished and Lee liked going to some of the night clubs. She bought more stylish clothes and fixed her hair more attractively. She creamed her face each day and learned to use the latest makeup. She persuaded Daddy to go out with her and one of his favorites was the Sinaloa Café. They served excellent Mexican food and offered a wonderful floorshow with Mexican dancers in bright colored costumes. When he was busy she would go to the Bocce Club, where opera was sung from a small stage by singers who were "at leisure." Bimbo's 365 Club was at 365 Market Street. Their claim to fame was "the girl in the fishbowl" which stood, well-lit, above the bar. The real girl was in a tank in the basement, swimming underwater nude, while viewed through a special periscope. Her image was projected live, in miniature, to the fishbowl three floors above at the bar. Sometimes the bar was ringed with admirers. The Bal Tabourin on Columbus was too large and glamorous for our evenings out. I usually went with them, now that I was growing up.

My mother loved her real estate and spent each day working at her books and going to the building in the Marina. She always picked up the ever present litter which regularly blew into the courtyard. Sometimes she worked in the courtyard garden along with Gus.



Tham She met with the manager every day and they talked about which tenant would be moving and what work had to be done and how much new rent they could get.

Before rent control finally ended in the fall of 1946, there were many difficult situations with people who wanted to be tenants. They sometimes slipped cash to the manager in order to get special consideration if an apartment became available. Landlords were not permitted to increase the rent and so did not pay for improvements to the apartments. As a result, prospective tenants paid for the improvements themselves, for the privilege of getting a rent controlled apartment. One such prospect slipped money to the manager, and had thus been introduced to my mother as a reliable prospective tenant. He and his wife agreed verbally to pay for the new paint in the apartment. They were intentionally vague to avoid possible scrutiny by the Office of Rent Stabilization. Lee required that her painter do the work to assure that a good job was done, but when he finished and gave his bill to the prospect, who was a lawyer, he refused to pay the painter, saying he had already been required to give money to the manager. When Lee refused to allow him to rent the apartment until he paid the painter, he sued her and gained a temporary order to move in immediately. She paid the painter and one year later, after a trial with a judge, Lee was declared guilty of violating the Stabilization laws, fined \$1,200 and paid almost that much to a lawyer to represent her in court. But the worst punishment of all was having the lawyer live in her rent controlled apartment at Marina Court for several years.

During this tribulation Mother had no one to confide in. Daddy wanted to hear nothing about the apartments and she was cautious about confiding any of her thoughts to anyone else. Gus was old and not in the best health so she could not burden him with these things. Carl was so adamant about no involvement with the building that he would never answer the telephone if my mother was home. If he was alone, and it rang, he sometimes answered. If anyone said anything like "I live at Marina Court Apartments and " he simply slammed down the phone. Mother would always hear about this later as she cleaned the courtyard at the building. She always had a big smile and nice words for them, no matter what she really thought.

Mother was supposed to save money from the real estate income for property taxes, but she never did. So every December and April she had to ask Daddy for money. He would be furious. "The property has to make enough money to pay its own property taxes", he'd argue. "But I had too many repairs and bills," she'd say. The arguments continued, until he finally relented and she could pay the property taxes, sometimes only hours before the deadline. Then she continued to spend money on the building until the next property tax installment. This semi-annual battle was not pleasant to witness.

But the worst times were in January and February each year. Mother gathered all the records for the real estate and personal expenses and Daddy gathered all the records for his business to prepare their income tax papers. Daddy was always shocked at the amount of money Mother spent fixing Marina Court. When they reached the end of the reckoning, he would tell her how much they owed for taxes from real estate income.



She would tell him that she didn't have any money left in her checkbook to pay income taxes. She said he would have to pay the taxes. Then the battle began and continued for weeks. The tax papers and bills were recalculated and reviewed with recriminations on each side. Sometimes the arguments erupted in angry words, but after the final numbers had been determined, there was stony silence. The silence, though uncomfortable, was better than the angry words. Each year, those were unpleasant weeks for me and my Grandpa Gus. Even Rudy and Evelyn knew better than to visit during January and February, since income tax returns were due March 15, the Ides of March.

During those years Mother was frequently depressed. If she did not have enough to keep her busy, she spent many hours a day in bed. As she promised, she never went to Carl. If she needed money to fix the apartments. If there was no money, she couldn't fix apartments, there was nothing to do and she was bored. She was also tired of living in the rented flat on Page Street. Everyone was buying homes and the Haight Ashbury neighborhood had deteriorated during the war years. She went someplace with the car most days, frequently looking for a house to buy. However everything she showed Carl was "too expensive, too old or too far for him to walk to his shop". He still refused to learn how to drive, though he was now forty-eight years old. Lee decided that she was "going through the change" though she was only forty years old. This presumably excused her bad temper, headaches, overweight and vitriolic tongue. She'd decided that I was getting "fresh mouthed" and vented her unhappiness with long rambling angry speeches at both me and Daddy.

Daddy dealt with her by working long hours and then finding other activities to keep him busy several nights a week. He played chess at the San Francisco Chess Club where people of varying skill levels played chess every night of the week. He met many people, but two became lifelong friends. One was Elmer Edward Rupp, whose wife, Hilda, was from Munich. Elmer and his wife owned Edward's Beauty Salon in San Francisco and they had no children. The other friend was Herb Rosenbaum whose wife Ilse worked at Edward's. The three men enjoyed chess, but the pleasure was enhanced when the three of them played Skat, the raucous card game of Carl's youth. He usually limited himself to one or two nights a week, but if Lee was particularly difficult, he played chess or Skat as often as he could.

Mother was happy when Daddy took me on outings. Her depression left her tired and disinterested. She did not want to go out with us. She wasn't interested in movies or museums. The important thing about our activities was that they were away from the house together, no one yelled at either of us, and it was peaceful and quiet.

One day Daddy came home from the Studio and told Mother, "Sister Maurice called me today. She is no longer at St. Mary of the Annunciation School in Stockton. She is now the Principal of a school in San Rafael called Dominican Convent High School. She thought Margaret might want to go there." Mother was interested immediately. This school had a good reputation for being an exclusive "finishing school" for girls. And it was a boarding school. Mother could avoid any rebellious behavior by me and it would



get me out of the neighborhood “I hope you were friendly and told her we were very interested?” “Yes, I was friendly, but I told her we were not interested in sending Margaret to a boarding school” At this, my mother erupted furiously “Of course we are interested. It would be unfair to Margaret to deprive her of a wonderful opportunity to live in a beautiful setting, have the best education, be with other very nice girls her age, and especially, get out of the neighborhood. I want to talk to Sister Maurice myself ” Daddy shrugged and said, “Have it your way ” Mother had a wonderful conversation with Sister Maurice and they established clearly that I would like to attend Dominican High School.

We made an appointment to visit the school the next week. The beauty of the grounds and buildings, as well as Sister Maurice’s charm impressed us. We saw classrooms, playfields, swimming pool, gymnasium, theatre, dormitories and dining room. By the end of the afternoon, I was enrolled I would start high school as a freshman at Dominican in September 1947 Sister Maurice sent the 1946 yearbook home with me and I read it avidly from that day until the day I started school. Louise Lagomarsino (Farrar) from Tulare was in that class and I always felt like I knew her through her yearbook pages, though I never actually met her until Stanford, when I met Terry, her brother’s best friend

Someone offered to buy “Toyonolla” so it was sold in June 1946. It had been rented out for a few years since Daddy had lost interest in the place after his serious bout of poison oak. Though there was sunshine, Mother found that sitting at a summer home with me was not of interest to her The money from the sale helped to pay for the first tuition at Dominican and for the next property taxes. For once, Mother didn’t have to ask Daddy for the money

My last months at home passed quickly Daddy understood that his only child might never again come home to live. How could it all have passed so quickly? But Mother looked at it differently I had reached adolescence and Mother wanted me out of the neighborhood and out of the flat on Page Street before boys started to hang around. She already had her own experiences with men and Evelyn’s experience was not much better She was determined that her daughter would live in a protected environment, would be a good student, would finish school, go to college and become well educated. She was determined that this child would marry *before* she got pregnant and had a baby

September 1947 came all too quickly and I went away to school. I was allowed to come home once every six weeks, but my family could visit me on Sundays from 11 until 4. They soon learned that it wasn’t enough time to do much of anything. After I left, Mother sometimes drove over to Dominican and parked on a nearby street so she could see us from afar as we went from class to class, or to the play fields. She hoped – she prayed — she wished every day, that her daughter would have a better life than she had had She was doing everything she could to make it happen.



Daddy continued to get more jobs and Mother continued looking for a house. Gus was not feeling well, but was happy to keep busy with the apartments and to help Daddy transport glass for the kiln. At last Daddy decided that he would learn to drive a car before his fiftieth birthday. So he took driving lessons. Mother was becoming more difficult each day because she wanted to move away from the neighborhood that was so convenient for him and so distasteful to her. After several months, he finally had his driver's license. At last he was independent and could transport glass if Gus were not able to. If Mother insisted on moving, at least he could drive. He bought himself a large green station wagon with "wood panels" on the sides. He could now drive himself to visit churches or make deliveries. He was finally liberated.

At Christmas I came home for two weeks vacation. I had changed quite a bit. I wasn't so quiet any more. Mother liked the changes in me and we got along together much better than before. I played with Judy and helped take care of her. I made gifts for everyone. I played the piano and sang Christmas songs with Daddy. Mother was thrilled I was doing well in my studies and that I seemed happy to go back to school at the end of my holidays. Years later after my father died, I helped my mother clean out his closet and drawers. At the very back of one drawer I found the hand knit socks and the hand woven scarf I had given him during my Dominican years. The inside of the socks were full of tiny knots where I had tied on each new color in the intricate argyle pattern. I finally understood how uncomfortable they must have been. He always said they were beautiful and never mentioned the discomfort.

Mother enjoyed taking me clothes shopping at I Magnin since I was almost grown and had a nice figure. She was grateful to see that I was tall and not as heavy as she was as a girl. I wore the new styles well: the Gibson girl skirts with petticoat and small waist accentuated my bosom and curvy figure. George Waterman was still the most esteemed Floorwalker at I Magnin's and he always made sure to come and say hello to us when we shopped. Mother introduced me to Miss Hunnicutt on the second floor. She seated me on a comfortable couch with my mother. She brought out the fashions that she thought were nice. Usually we purchased one or two outfits for special occasions like an Easter suit with hat, gloves and purse to match or a coat and dress for the Christmas season. When I was invited to the Informals, Mother was thrilled to buy long gowns for me. Those dances were held at downtown hotels, with escorts arranged by Dominican High School.

All through my school years and even during college and after my marriage, Mother was thrilled to buy expensive, stylish clothes for me. She dressed well herself, with furs, hats with veils, gloves of every kind, and lingerie, but she was limited by her weight. She also bought creams and makeup for her flawless skin. The one luxury she rarely indulged in was jewelry which, for the most part, she disdained. Mother wore her wedding rings, with a modest diamond that Daddy had given her. Later she did buy an exquisite diamond bracelet wristwatch in Switzerland and thrilled at owning it, though she seldom wore it.



Summer was spent getting out of the City as often as possible. Mother and I often spent a day looking at real estate with Mr. Waters, another Marina District Realtor, since he knew of ranches for sale. Since she had sold Toyonolla, she thought she would like to buy acreage, hopefully hundreds of acres that would be not only a good investment, but also a place to get out of the City and into the sun. Even if she didn't find anything, it was fun to look. Sometimes we drove north over the Golden Gate beyond Sonoma, and even into Sebastopol, though she had little interest in returning there. Sometimes we headed south down the peninsula to Morgan Hill, then west from Highway 101 into the hills, looking at cattle ranches.

On other occasions Mother and I visited Fini, who lived in a little two bedroom house that Mike had bought for her, near the railroad tracks in Berkeley. After eleven years together they were thrilled when Fini became pregnant. Little Mikey was born September 5, 1944. He was Fini's pride and joy. She sterilized bottles and puréed food for Mikey, because nothing in a jar or a can was good enough for him. Mike shipped out much of the time so Mother and Fini spent many hours visiting and reminiscing about old times.

Soon Fini was pregnant again. Richard was born two years later on November 8, 1946. They laughed about the old superstitious tale that Mike told about himself. He would say with his gravelly voice, "Yeah, when I was a kid I peed on the third rail of the railroad track. It was electrified and it shot back at me with a jolt of electricity! Owweee – that hurt! I was in bed for three weeks. They told me I'd never have kids. I believed that. And look at me now. Now I have two fine boys!" He'd laugh so hard the tears would run down his cheeks. And Fini would rock on her heels, grinning and clutching her apron, saying over and over, "Chess, Mike, Chess Mike! Look at these fine boys." Chaos surrounded her in the kitchen of the small house. With two sons Mike bought a larger house at 143 Sycamore Street in a good neighborhood in Mill Valley at the base of Mount Tamalpais.

Summer passed and I began my second year at Dominican. Daddy continued getting new jobs. Mother continued to look for a house while she used every dollar she could get her hands on to fix the apartments. There was no more rent control. Gus complained of chest pains, but continued on his rounds which gave him so much joy.

Daddy was fifty years old in June 1948 and began to feel his mortality. Leopoldine had died at fifty-seven and Gus, a few years older, was not in good health. Daddy did not have Mother's hunger for buying real estate, but he thought, if he died, it would be unfair if anyone other than her got what they worked for together. So he showed her a will he wrote, just in case.

*"I, Carl Huneke, of sound mind and health, desire to have my wife,  
Mrs. Lee Huneke, be the sole heir of all our belongings, as we have  
earned everything together. Carl Huneke"*



He showed it to her and she laughed "Don't worry If anyone goes, it will be me first." But in her heart she thought it was nice. Especially when he told her that if she died first, the first thing he would do was sell all the real estate!

I came home from school at the end of May 1948. The family had planned a trip to the Grand Canyon in June. Pa didn't feel well, so he stayed home and took care of Sunny, our dog We also planned to go to Yosemite and hike, both in the Valley and in the high country

Pa became much sicker We took him to the hospital with severe pains just below his chest. He lingered in the hospital for three weeks before he died Sadly, after his death they discovered that his heart was healthy, but his stomach was riddled with holes from peritonitis which had been there for years. Many of their friends attended his funeral. For Mother, it was the end of an era. Ma only glimpsed success before she died, but at least Pa had a few good years with them and for that she was forever grateful.

They found his will, dated June 27, 1947 soon after he died

*"My Dear Poldi and Carl*

*...my thanks and appreciation for what you have both done in my declining years in making them happy and contented...Give Rudy my gold watch and chain and the Ducaten is for Margaret.."*

*Give Rudy one thousand dollars. To my nieces and one nephew in San Francisco, Elsie, Florence, Margaret and Julius each one hundred dollars. This is the four hundred dollars I had from home when I came in this country. Give to my sister Paula Schewella and two nieces Lina Tham, Pauline Vrba and one nephew Carl Tham, One Thousand dollars in four equal parts.*

*The rest dear Poldi and Carl of the remaining earthly possession is for you both and may God please you all. Gustav Tham"*

Mother felt great appreciation to Pa. He was the only father she ever knew and she could wish for no better He had been kind to her throughout her life. After Ma died, he told her he put his life in her hands and made everything he had available to her It was the money given to her by Pa that helped Mother buy Marina Court Apartments. She felt a strong obligation to carry out every one of his wishes to the letter She was always short of ready cash, but on August 26, 1948 she was proud to note on his will "Paid" next to Rudy's \$1,000 bequest and the \$400 paid to Elsie, Florence, Margaret and Julius. Finally in August 1950 she noted on his will "Paid to Paula Vrba \$1,000", which was to be distributed equally to Paula Vrba, Paula Schevella, Lina Tham and Karl



Tham. Mother considered the will of Gus Tham a closed matter paid in full. Little did she know it would be the beginning of a relationship which would have been better left alone.

Within a few weeks after Pa's death, the dog Sunny died. His grouchy disposition had never changed as he aged, in fact, it became worse. Mother buried him in a pet cemetery and immediately started looking for a new dog. Daddy had given up protesting. By now, he was accustomed to having a dog to walk each day. Nevertheless, he warned Mother and me as we left on our search for a new dog, "This time, get a real dog."

Mother wanted to get another Pekinese. I wanted a puppy. We visited several breeders, but few dogs were available at this time of the year. Finally we found a Pekinese that was eight months old. He was pedigreed, but he did not have the long hair on his ears and chest that a true champion should have. The breeder explained that he would never be good as a show dog, but he had a very nice disposition.

We bought the dog and took him home to the flat at 1319 Page Street. When we got home, we took him up the front stairs and then the inner flight of stairs. Daddy came out to see him. "What! You got another one that isn't really a dog?" But he was wrong. This was a different kind of animal. He was lively and his body was made for running with abandon. He would race up the stairs, inside the house, taking them three at a time, then turn around to laugh at us, as we ran up after him. He chased balls and even retrieved when the mood struck him, always smiling and laughing. Daddy walked him at least once a day all his life. Mother and I named him "Honey Boy", because of his honey colored coat, in spite of Daddy's protests that this was a sissy name. Daddy grew to love him and he even hugged and kissed him on occasion, but only when he thought no one was watching. Mother loved grooming him, and searching for fleas on his white skin. She taught me how to deftly part the fur with my fingers, then crack a shiny black flea between my two thumbnails and move on to more fleas. The dog loved the attention.

Over the years Mother was busy with Marina Court Apartments. There were always relationships with the manager, tenants and contractors that had to be dealt with. Over the years Mother discovered that some managers were "silent drinkers" and you had to avoid hiring them at all costs. Most managers liked to drink a little bit – usually on Friday afternoons. Everything worked better once my mother gave up trying to get anything serious done on Friday afternoons.

Eventually Mother met some wonderful contractors, like Malcolm the plumber, John Couden, the general contractor and Warman, the locksmith. Slowly they helped her to make Marina Court Apartments one of the most beautiful buildings in the Marina. Couden and Malcolm reworked all thirty kitchens, taking several years to remove the old coolers and the common refrigeration system built into the buildings. They abandoned the archaic, sometimes dangerous, ammonia lines and installed individual refrigerators with freezer compartments. The kitchens got new rectangular tiles on the sink drain



boards, to replace the old hexagonal tiles with blue borders. All of this cost a fortune and extended over many years. Mother envied Percy Grisez, who not only owned several beautiful buildings in the Marina, but also had a son Jerry who was going to help his father some day. She wished she could buy another building but she could never catch up on all her repairs and set aside enough money for a down payment.

Because the apartments were beautiful when she finished fixing them, she frequently rented to someone who was recommended by a friend. Rudy recommended Dan Del Carlo, an important official in the San Francisco plumbers union. As an upcoming young labor leader, Rudy was anxious to make a good impression on Mr. Del Carlo and was glad to have him rent an apartment in his mother's building. Mr. Del Carlo was recently separated from his wife. The manager reported that he was not averse to entertaining ladies late at night in his apartment. Sometimes his bachelor son also stayed at the apartment with his father.

One night the telephone startled Mother out of a deep sleep after midnight. It was Dan Del Carlo, shouting at her in a rage. "I'm sick and tired of living in this cheap, rundown slum apartment where even the plumbing doesn't work. I have a nice lady friend visiting. She tries to use the toilet and when she flushes it, everything overflows. I want you to come over here right now. I want you personally to come here now and see this for yourself and take care of this now. Not tomorrow morning. Now!" Needless to say, my mother was not only upset. She was furious!

Thank God for Malcolm the plumber. She called and he said he'd be ready to go there with her in a few minutes. She met him in front of the building in twenty minutes and they both went upstairs to Del Carlo's apartment. His lady friend had left – she still needed to find a working toilet! Del Carlo was furious for several reasons, but the overflowing toilet was the most pertinent at the moment. Malcolm went to work at the toilet, with his snake and plunger, while my mother stood next to him and Dan sat in the living room.

Malcolm had his hand deep in the toilet when he whispered to my mother, "I think I feel something. Mrs. Huneke, I think it feels like a baby's head. What do you want me to do?" "Malcolm, I want you to pull out whatever it is that's in there! We're going to get to the bottom of this here and now. Whatever it is! Pull it out!" Malcolm reached in farther and finally got his hand around something and pulled on it until it gave and came out with a rush!" He held it up with an astonished look on his face and tossed it into the tub with the more conventional detritus that had come out of the toilet bowl. It was a woman's birth control diaphragm.

Mother and Malcolm looked at each other long and hard before he said quietly, "Here's the culprit Mrs. Huneke. Someone tried to flush a diaphragm down the toilet. Nothing else is wrong with the toilet. It works fine now that I removed that." When my mother asked Mr. Del Carlo to come into the bathroom and look at what they had found in his toilet, he first turned white as a sheet, then crimson. He spluttered that his son must have invited a female guest to stay there with him last night while Del Carlo was out of



town “I’ll just have to ask him what went on here last night.” Needless to say, Mr. Del Carlo never again referred to Marina Court Apartments as a slum. And he always looked the other way whenever he saw my mother

Mother was in the habit of reading the paper thoroughly every day since she left the grocery store. She always read the real estate section for new listings and current rent rates. One day there was an article on page one about a call girl operation in the Marina. She read with interest until she realized the call girl referred to in the article lived at Marina Court. Then she read with alarm. She called the manager right away who had just read the same thing and they both agreed immediately that this girl had to go even though her apartment was immaculate and she paid the rent on time. Gratefully she had always conducted her call girl business at another location, though her assignments were arranged from the telephone in her apartment. But front page news is front page news. And that kind of news is not good for a first class Marina building.

Early one morning Emily Smith, the manager, called my mother with bad news. She headed over to Marina Court immediately. One of the tenants, a nurse, had just jumped off the roof of one of the buildings and landed on the sidewalk in front of the building. Fortunately Emily was up early and called the police and ambulance which arrived before the morning exodus of tenants from the building, leaving to go to work. The police found a suicide note in her apartment. She had successfully accomplished her intent. She was pronounced dead at the scene. After the body was removed Emily, ever the practical manager, and my mother, hosed the blood off the sidewalk so no one would notice. Mother often thought to herself that it was certainly interesting owning an apartment building. Daddy never wanted to hear anything about it. He covered his ears with his hands when she even tried to tell him. He was preoccupied with the design and creation of his beautiful stained glass windows.

That summer we went to Yosemite Valley. Evelyn was depressed with the summer fog in San Francisco so Mother invited her to come along on this trip. Rudy was still bartending at night and was now working in the daytime on the waterfront as a sales rep for some of the merchandising companies that lined the waterfront. Mary Prini who was called Nona by Judy, was happy to take care of the baby and let her daughter go on a vacation. Evelyn came along and she hiked the Mist Trail to the top of Vernal Falls with Daddy and me. The trail was steep and slippery. We hugged each other in triumph at the top of the waterfall. We stayed in the beautiful cottages at the Ahwahnee Hotel and enjoyed the luxury. We laughed about the “old days” when we stayed at Housekeeping Camp 17. We enjoyed dinner in the high-ceilinged dining room, looking out at the meadows and the high cliffs around us. After dinner, when it was dark, we stood on the terrace of the Ahwahnee and listened to the beautiful Indian Love Call being sung as the firefall cascaded slowly down from Glacier Point.

Later that summer Daddy, Mother and I drove to the Grand Canyon in a new Chrysler that Mother had just bought. She loved driving and couldn’t wait to try out the car on a long trip. On the way we were stranded outside Williams, Arizona, because the



automatic transmission broke. The transmission was an innovation that year and the repair was not easy. The breakdown occurred on a high butte, with red rocks all around us. A fierce storm crashed thunder and lightning around us as the Sunday afternoon waned to dusk. Since a woman could hitch a ride easier than a man, Daddy and I stayed with the car, while Mother hitched a ride on a truck to town to get help. She talked to the truck driver as he maneuvered his big rig through the storm and they finally got to Williams, where he dropped her at a gas station. She arranged for a tow truck to drive her back to the stranded Chrysler, where they towed us back to Williams several hours later. We found a motel and settled down for a few days wait for the automatic transmission to come from Phoenix. Mother vowed she would never get another Chrysler. She thought to herself, "The next time it will be a Cadillac", but she said nothing to my father. She only fought one battle at a time.

Eventually we left Williams, and continued to the Grand Canyon. I wanted to take the mule trip down into the Canyon. Daddy took a deep breath and agreed to go with me. That was particularly brave because he had promised himself long ago he would never again get near a horse. His experiences of being run over by a horse and wagon when he was a boy and then with German Army horses were still frightening memories. Now he thought to himself, "I suppose I should have taken those riding lessons with her when I had the chance."

Mother stood nearby and watched. She said to us, "Why don't you go on the airplane ride over the Canyon with me?" Daddy shook his head. "She can't go down there alone." Mother laughed at us later, "I saw you winding down the switchback trail as I flew over the canyon. You should have been with me. I bet it was much more comfortable." Daddy and I grinned at each other, thinking, "But it wasn't as much fun." And she smiled, understanding. She was still too heavy to be allowed to ride the mule, but she was happy we did it together. When we returned home, I started my second year at Dominican and Daddy resumed work on his jobs.

By 1949, Vic D'Aquisto was disenchanted with the grocery business. Rudy had been working in various jobs in the waterfront business, hoping to become involved in one of the Labor Unions, which were becoming more influential each year. But nothing was coming up for him, so he and Evelyn bought the business. But a short while after he had started working in the Page-Lyon Grocery, Rudy was offered a job with the Teamsters Union. This was something that he had hoped for and couldn't pass up. Soon Mother was back in the grocery business, since Rudy was there only part time, and Evelyn had to take care of Judy. She hired Evelyn's brother, Larry Prini and his cousin, Corky Vezzolini to help. They did a good job and ran the store for several months before Rudy and Ev finally sold the store again. The buyer was a Chinese man named Never Wong. Daddy and Mother laughed to each other about his unusual name and hoped he wasn't "wrong" in buying the store. They didn't ever want to be in the grocery business again.

They were happy to learn that Rudy and Evelyn were expecting another baby. Rudy's job with Teamsters Local 85 seemed to be working out well. Harold Lopez, the head of



the Union liked Rudy and it looked as if he might have a chance at starting a new Union of his own someday. Now it was essential that the young family get a home as soon as possible. It was all right to have one baby in a one-bedroom apartment, but not two. Thousands of homes were being built in the sand dunes. They called it the Sunset District. G.I.'s could get very favorable loans, but Rudy wasn't eligible for the loan because he didn't serve in the Army, Navy, Marines or Air Force. He was in the Merchant Marine. So Mother asked a favor of Rudy Weederman, our boarder for so many years. He generously gave his Army priority to Rudy and Evelyn, and they soon found a home "in the avenues" like so many other young couples at that time. Rudy and Evelyn moved to a "two bedroom plus" house at 2723 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue near Vicente. Lawrence Gustav Tham was born May 17, 1949. He was named after Evelyn's brother Larry and after Pa, but we always called him Gus. That summer I came home and was thrilled to help take care of two babies, Judy and now Gus.

Lee rented Ev and Rudy's apartment at Marina Court Apartments for \$51.50 to George Waterman, the floorwalker at I Magnin who boarded at Auntie Grace Juth's house next to the grocery store on Page Street. George was happy to move out of the deteriorating neighborhood and was thrilled to decorate the interior of his apartment with the most elegant furnishings. He lived there in style for the rest of his life. The Marina District was definitely a move up for him. A month later, Lester Price Jr., the son of our neighbor, Lillian Price, who lived below us at 1319 Page Street, moved into a beautiful one bedroom apartment at 3455 #201 for \$54.50 at Marina Court Apartments with his new wife, who had a good job downtown in a lawyer's office. Everyone was fleeing the old neighborhood to take advantage of a better lifestyle. Except for us. Daddy still refused to move. Nothing my mother showed him quite suited him. It was always too old, or too expensive. Mother's depression continued.

Daddy joined the Stained Glass Association of America in 1947. Mother was eager to travel more and thought attending the Association's meetings was a good way to do so. When the Association's newsletter announced a meeting at the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite in the summer of 1950, Mother decided this would be an excellent time to attend.

Once again we enjoyed the Ahwahnee Hotel, now as part of a business conference. Daddy was pleased to have me along to temper Mother's boasting of his talents and successes. He had judged, probably correctly, that this was not the right venue for bragging. In spite of his discomfort with that, the meetings and social interaction were beneficial to him and his interest had been piqued. He decided that he would continue to attend these meetings, especially if they were in nice locations.

When Mother wasn't looking for a home, she looked for a studio to buy for Daddy. His business continued to grow and he needed more room, more importantly, he needed a place where he could have a kiln at the same location. Carrying the glass back and forth to the storeroom in back of the grocery store had become a burden. Mother found a building to please him much more quickly than she could find a house to please him. It was at 157 Fillmore Street, just two blocks from the existing shop. It was more



spacious, permitted a large kiln, and best of all, had a flat upstairs to rent. The deal was done quickly and he moved to his new studio with mother's promise that she would deal with the tenant. Mrs. Caleja, her customer at the grocery store and her cleaning lady, moved in and was happy there for many years.

After the bad experience with the Chrysler in Grand Canyon, Mother decided she wanted nothing but the best, so she bought a Cadillac. She chose a large navy blue sedan. There was no use asking Daddy to help her pick out a new car. She would just buy one and face him with it later. Daddy was furious when he first saw the car. He thought it was much too pretentious and refused to ride in it. Eventually he got used to it, but always preferred to drive his station wagon if he were doing anything connected with his work.

Mother enjoyed visiting Fini more often now that the Michaelson's lived in Mill Valley. When the two of them got together they laughed so hard over some of the old stories about Ma and Pa and those early days in Butchertown. "Where do you suppose Laursen is by now?" Mother laughed. "You know, Fini, it's crazy. I think he's in San Francisco but I've never run into him again." What about Sandy? Sandy Bernsen? Didn't he want to marry you?" Mother smiled. "Yeah. He was a good man. I still have the sapphire ring he gave me. I gave it to Margaret and she wears it all the time." Mother continued, "He owns a ferry up in Anacortes, Washington. He sent a nice note to me a while ago – sent it to Rudy so he could hand deliver it to me. I guess he didn't want to stir up any trouble with my husband. He's married. It was his daughter's wedding announcement and he wrote some nice words to me. 'to my dear time marches on – Sandra was 18 – will see you some day – I wish you the best of everything – love Sandy'. He was a nice man Fini, but he wasn't the right man for me."

They both laughed remembering Ma's oft told story of going to Fini's mother's house in Austria and finding it worse than humble. Fini said she still remembered how at age sixteen she cowered in the corner near the chimney, afraid of this brash woman talking to her mother. She wanted to get out of the bad situation at home, but feared even then, that Leopoldine was not going to improve her life. Her father was an alcoholic and her mother the victim of abuse, but at least at home she had the comfort of her sisters and brother and she knew the devil she lived with. Her mother's cousin, Leopoldine, might be a much worse devil than that. And then the terrible time at Ellis Island when they said she had rickets and they weren't going to let her in to America. She thought Ma must have bribed the immigration officials but she never knew for sure.

Fini told my mother the latest news about her brother and three sisters back in Austria. They had a hard time during the war. The Russians occupied the territory that they lived in and they wrote that one of the Russian soldiers raped her sister Lotte and she got pregnant. "They named the boy Gerhart and Lotte is raising the boy as her own. He's known as Gerhart Haider, my maiden name. Marie never married so she stayed at home and helped Lotte. My brother Richard Haider stayed close too, but became an alcoholic during the war. They have very little so I try to send food packages, clothing and money – as much as I'm allowed." Years later Fini told us that she found out Lotte



really had an affair with the Russian soldier, rather than being the victim of a rape. She lived with him for many years before he finally returned to Russia.

Mother continued looking for a house. She showed one to Daddy on Broadway Street near Divisadero in Pacific Heights. It had a commanding view of the bay and the bridge and was \$50,000. The exterior had dark brown shingles. "I've never liked dark brown shingles. It looks too old fashioned, like the ones in Germany I'd rather have a newer house. Besides this is too expensive." She showed him the home of her dreams, just off Marina Boulevard, directly on the park adjacent to the Palace of Fine Arts. The address was 3600 Lyon Street at Jefferson. It was \$37,000. The living room window looked out to the picturesque park and the dining room looked the other way to the Golden Gate Bridge. She thought this time that the views and a lower price would finally win him over. But then he pulled the trump card. One she couldn't argue with without tempting fate. "This might be dangerous for Margaret to come home at night since it's next to the park. Besides, it's still too expensive."

Now San Francisco was growing. The population was 800,000, greater than it had ever been in the past. Lee found a new neighborhood built by Sunstream Homes near Lake Merced. Until now, the sandy fields and foggy weather had been perfect for growing lettuce and cabbage. Mother picked out a fully detached three bedroom, two bath house, with living room, dining room, and modern kitchen. It had a two car garage, each with its own separate door, plus a full basement behind on the ground level. In back of the house was a private back yard. The house had hardwood floors, covered by wall-to-wall carpets, in colors of their choice. They could choose the bathroom and kitchen tile colors. It would even have a fireplace that could burn wood, though Mother never permitted it to be used with a real fire. She thought fireplaces were dirty and dried out the house. There was no view except down the street toward a small shopping center which was being built. But the price was right - \$17,500. Finally, in spring of 1951, after all these years, Daddy had no further argument.

During the months before the home was completed, we picked colors for everything inside the home – carpets, paint, tile. Draperies were selected and we bought all new furniture. We had our own back yard, with a lawn and roses, a patio and garden furniture. We bought new towels and sheets and bedspreads to match the colors in the bedrooms and bathrooms. Mother didn't want new pots and pans – she was used to cooking with her old ones – but she bought new dishes and silverware, with white plastic handles that looked like bone. Daddy didn't like those, so we continued using the old ones, saving the new ones for "special occasions." We finally got rid of the big wooden radio that stood in a corner of the living room in the flat on Page Street and bought a television, like everyone else. We didn't think we'd ever look at it, but they felt we should keep up with the times. Soon Mother and Daddy were avidly watching Jackie Gleason, Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, I Love Lucy and best of all, Mitch Miller, with his Sing-Along show. After all these years we were very excited to have a new home.



Mother was in the mood to throw everything out, including some treasures of art work and old cartoon books that Daddy had drawn and painted when he was younger. They had been packed away so long that they were covered with dust. But Daddy put his foot down and said "No! Those we will take along with us." So all the old paintings and drawings were brought along to the new house, but everything that was to hang on the wall at their house or at Ev and Rudy's house was reframed and cleaned. Even the old dollhouse had been brought along to reside in the basement for Judy to play with. That elaborate old house became part of my childhood. Years later Terry and I gave it to the children's Health Council, after we had two boys. It took up a lot of space and I thought it would jinx my chances of ever having a daughter. Connie never got to play with the wonderful dollhouse.

I was now in my last year at Dominican High School. I applied to Stanford University and waited to hear if I had been accepted. The news arrived just before we moved from 1319 Page Street to 1765 Eucalyptus Drive. Mother and Daddy telephoned me at Dominican to tell me that I had been accepted. I was excited and they were happy for me. Daddy said quietly to Mother, "She won't be able to enjoy her new bedroom very much." And Mother nodded her head slowly, not looking at him, "Yes Carli, it all took too long."

In May, Mother and Daddy arrived at Dominican for my graduation. Sister Maurice took their hands and said, "I hope you're pleased with your daughter's education. We've been very happy to have her with us during these past four years." Mother was effusive, but Daddy nodded shyly and thanked Sister for caring for me. They watched proudly as forty-seven girls walked two by two, carrying bouquets of flowers, wearing their best white uniforms for the last time. Mother was happy she had raised her only daughter safely, so far. Now I would go to Stanford. It was Mother's dream that I would have the best education. But I would no longer be safely secluded at a private girl's boarding school. Mother knew I had to have some freedom. I was seventeen years old, drove a car and was grown up. Now I would begin to go out with boys my age and even older boys. Mother still worried that I might not complete my education. After the graduation ceremonies they brought all my things home. This time nothing would be left to be stored over the summer. They would no longer go over the Golden Gate Bridge for Sunday visits at Dominican. Now, at last, I would be proud to invite my friends to our new home in Lakeshore Park for graduation parties. For that, my mother was very grateful.

That summer the three of us and Evelyn drove to Mexico City for the Stained Glass Association's Convention. Mother had invited Evelyn to join us because she had never had the opportunity to travel. Further, she was always upset because Rudy worked so many nights at his new job with the Teamsters. Evelyn's mother, Nona, was willing to care for the two children and it was a good opportunity to get Evelyn away for a while. Mother loved to drive and it was an opportunity for her to try out her new Cadillac on the road. We left on June 10, 1951 at 6 a.m. By 8 a.m., before reaching Los Banos, we ran out of gas, but the mood of all of us was so good that nothing could dampen our spirits. We were establishing a bond that we had not felt before. After lunch in Bakersfield, we



crossed the Grapevine and headed east across the desert. We passed through Beaumont, Palm Springs, Las Cruces, and finally after two days, El Paso, Texas before crossing the border into Mexico

We drove through deserts and impoverished towns, where we dared not get out of the car because the inhabitants looked desperately poor. We arrived at our "luxury resort" in Monterey that night and found the buildings and spacious grounds were surrounded by adobe walls, with broken glass embedded in the tops of the wall. After dinner that night, the four of us sat outside in the humid night air and enjoyed the hot blooded Mexican dancing and singing. Then we understood why there was broken glass embedded in the tops of the wall surrounding us. Outside hundreds of curious Mexicans crowded around to watch us "rich Gringos" inside. Mother thought to herself – it's the same the world over. There are always the poor, envying the rich, and hoping to get something from them. She wanted to go talk to some of them and maybe give them something, but Daddy was adamant that she not go near the fence.

We continued driving through Mexico, the unfolding adventure strengthening our camaraderie. We left the humidity behind and passed through desert areas. Poor Indians inhabited the villages we passed. When we stopped at churches, or other points of interest, little children swarmed around us begging, "Take me with you – America – America." We were appalled at the poverty and filth that we saw. Mother always looked tempted to take one of the children with us, but again Daddy pulled her back to the car. We arrived in Mexico City after three days and immediately decided to hire a driver and a car. Everyone drove with reckless abandon.

The Convention was at the Reforma Hotel and we participated in all the activities, which included dinners with American Ambassador O'Dwyer, bullfights, the pyramids, Taxco, the silver city, the floating gardens at Xochomilco, and the Association's final formal dinner. It was all wonderful and Daddy was overjoyed that Mother's assertive ways were tempered, by having us two girls with them. Daddy enjoyed the company of his three females. After a week in Mexico, we were all ready to go home.

We left at 4:30 a.m. to get a good start. It was our intent to make a run for the border, with only one more night in Mexico, but this was not to be. Heavy rain was falling and by late afternoon, the roads were awash. Mother drove determinedly, with our destination some hours ahead, when we came to a flooded bridge. A young boy stood in the road, waving us off. Six inches of water rushed over the bridge roadway. A high-wheeled bus just ahead, was lumbering across the bridge deliberately, but successfully. Mother looked, hesitated briefly, and then said, "We're going – we're getting out of this place." She started out onto the bridge, the car swerved as the flood of water swept across the wheels, and Daddy shouted, "No! Stop right now! We're not going through. You either stop right now, or I'll get out and walk back with the two girls. If you go, you go alone." Surprised, Mother looked at him, but she saw that he meant it. Slowly she backed up until we were off the bridge, and then turned back to town. We found the best place to stay, roof leaks and all. The next morning we were on our way. The rain had stopped, the bridge was clear and we headed for home with no further delays. For



the rest of our lives, the Mexican adventure was a source of laughter and a reminder of our camaraderie.

By 1953, new homes were being built around the corner from our house on Eucalyptus Drive. Lake Merced Boulevard would border Gellert Drive, overlooking Lake Merced, where an exclusive row of large homes would be built. Rudy and Evelyn were expecting another baby and had outgrown their home. They bought a new house at 416 Gellert Drive. Mother reveled in helping them pick out the best carpeting and drapes, furnishing and even dishes and silver. Evelyn loved Daddy's old paintings so Mother had the best ones cleaned and framed elegantly and they hung in the home on Gellert Drive until Rudy and Evelyn died. The beautiful painting of the red roses, that Daddy had painted for Mother when I was born, hung proudly in the dining room all the years Ev and Rudy lived in the house. After they died and the house was sold, Judy, Gus and Brad gave that painting to me. It will always have the honored place in my home, because it was created by my father for Mother with love and given to me with love from Judy, Gus and Brad.

By the time Ev and Rudy's baby was born on January 27 1954, they had just moved in to the lovely new home. The boy was named Bradley Carl Tham, which pleased Mother and Daddy. Evelyn was in the hospital for ten days, to recover from her Caesarian surgery. Little Gus was at Nona's. Mother agreed to take care of Judy, but was so short tempered and impatient that she started looking for a nanny, to help Evelyn with the household while she recovered. She found old Jo Stone's daughter-in-law, Naomi, to "live in" for a few months.

After a few months, Evelyn still had bouts of depression and periods of anger with Rudy for his constant absence from home every night at Union meetings. She confided to Lee, who she now called Grandma, that she still felt enormous guilt about the abortion she had when she was a young girl of sixteen. She had hoped for forgiveness from the priest, but when he told her she was a murderer and he could not give her absolution, she despaired. She said she prayed to God every day to forgive her but she got no answer. She could not get it out of her mind.

Mother was furious. Furious with the priest. So she decided to do something about it. She went down to the old Italian Church in North Beach – Saints Peter and Paul. She asked to speak to one of the Italian priests and told him the problem. He listened to the whole story, and then took her hand in his. He said kindly, "Bring her to me. I will hear her Confession." Mother took Evelyn to the Church and waited while she went into the Confessional.

As Mother knelt there she thought of her own transgressions. She got pregnant at fifteen before she was married. Then she had me with my father, while still married to Laurson. And now she was a twice divorced woman. As long as she was married to Carl, the Church made it clear that she could not receive the Sacraments. But it didn't bother her. As long as I went to Church, that was all she cared about. She had no



doubts about her own worth and needed no priest in a dark room to tell her she was a good person.

When Evelyn came out of the Confessional she went to the front of the Church and knelt for a long time in front of the altar while my mother waited. After they left the Church she hugged Lee. "He was very kind. He talked to me in English first and then in Italian. He forgave me my sins. He said God forgave me too. He told me to say a Rosary for my penance and I have done so. I don't ever want to think about it again." She wept for a long time and then took a deep breath. "Now I'm ready to go home."

I started Stanford University after a summer of post graduation parties and social activities. For four years my mother had not worried about my safety. I was well protected at Dominican Convent High School and few boys crossed my path. Now after a summer of dating, with Mother watching nervously, I would attend a school where I lived in a comparatively unsupervised dormitory, which did not require me to be home until 10:30 on weeknights and midnight or 1:00 a.m. on weekends. Mother worried all the time that I would succumb to the same fate as she, Evelyn, and half a dozen other women that she knew. It seemed that most babies were at least *conceived* before the wedding. With me, morality was not necessarily the issue. I had plenty of morality. She was worried about the reality of normal hormones in adolescent males, and the inexperience and acquiescent nature of adolescent females.

Before I was at Stanford for a year, my mother suspected that I was seeing someone in particular. By spring she frequently decided to take a ride down to Stanford unannounced. Usually she found me absent from the dorm. Often she would park in a corner of the parking lot and just wait in her car until she saw me return. Sometimes she would sit in the lobby of the dorm and just see how long she would have to wait until I returned. When I did return I was sometimes with a young man who my mother had met. His name was Terry Blaine and he and I spent a lot of time together. My mother had time on her hands, now that tuition and tax season had depleted her of money to fix apartments. She fretted about what I might be doing. She felt that all her plans for my education might now come to a crashing end unless she made sure that I was not led astray by this young man who was taking too much of my time.

By my second year my grades had dropped. I told my parents at Christmas time, "Daddy and Mother, I got some bad grades this quarter and I hope I can make them up in the months ahead." Mother was frantic. She told my father, "I think the reason for her bad grades is this boy she's with all the time. I've been checking up on her. I think his name is Terry. We have to do something about this." But Daddy shrugged her off. He was busy. He was not inclined to interfere with my life. Then there were more bad grades and Mother was furious. She demanded that Daddy join her in speaking to someone at the University, but he refused.

Because of the bad grades they received an invitation to see Elva Brown, the Dean of Women, along with me. Mother jumped at this opportunity and told me she had set up an appointment. She dressed in her best and picked me up at Branner Hall. When we



arrived at Dean Elva Brown's office, she warmly ushered us in. She was a diminutive woman with a short bob surrounding her round face, with a pleasant smile. We sat in two chairs in front of her desk. "Tell me why you've come to see me today Mrs. Huneke. I see that Marge's grades dropped last quarter." Mother told her concerns to Dean Brown, explaining that she felt I needed to have better supervision at Stanford. She was convinced that I was spending too much time with one young man, specifically Terry Blaine, rather than on my studies and that this was the reason for my poor grades. Further she had great fear that I might squander my opportunity at Stanford and leave to get married or something worse before I graduated. Dean Brown listened politely and then turned to me. "Tell me about your young man. Does he get good grades? What is he studying? What is he like? Do you really like him or is he just a good friend?"

I smiled and happily described Terry. "He's a senior, majoring in Chemical Engineering and is almost a straight A student", I said proudly. "His sister is Joan Blaine and she's in my class and is a friend of mine. Terry is here on an NROTC scholarship, so he'll have to be here five years to get his B.S. He's not allowed to be married while he's on scholarship. After that he'll be an officer in the Navy for three years. He's Catholic and we go to the Newman Center for activities and to Saint Ann's Newman Chapel for church on Sunday. He's very nice and I like him a lot."

Dean Brown smiled kindly at me and then turned to Lee. "Mrs. Huneke, we're always very happy here at Stanford when our young men and young women find each other during their school years. Terry Blaine sounds like a nice young man. I'll look into it further for you but I'm sure Marge has said all we need to know."

"But as for Marge and her study habits – that's something I'd like to work on with her personally. Marge I want you to set up an appointment to see me as soon as possible. I'm going to make a time chart with you and we're going to determine just what it is you need to do to allow enough time to work on your studies and improve your grades, as well as enjoy social time with your friends. When we chart your time I think you'll find that you will have time for both your studies, as well as your social life."

She continued, serious now in her advice to me. "In addition I'm going to enroll you immediately in a special speed reading course that we have here in our counseling department at Stanford. That course will teach you to read more material, more quickly and comprehend it better. You're beginning to take courses now that will require that, if you are to successfully complete your studies at Stanford. I will look forward to watching your progress each quarter as your grades improve and will expect you to report to me as you make that progress. You'll soon have to pick a major and it will be important for you to have all of these improvements in your time allotment and your study habits in place, before you make that selection."

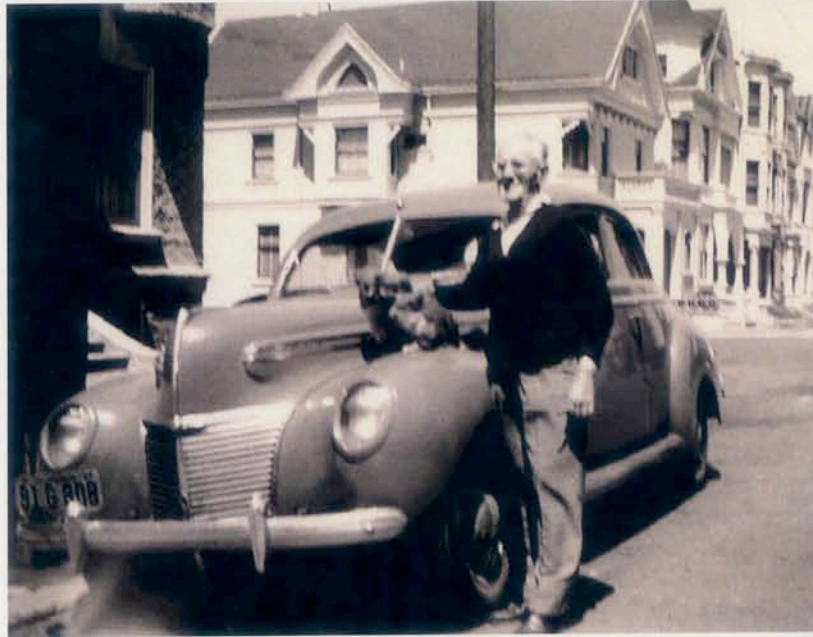
And that is exactly what happened. Mother stopped stalking me. I carried out all of Dean Elva Brown's suggestions. My grades improved almost immediately and I soon had picked Speech Therapy as a major course of study. And Mother was gratified at all



of it. She never forgot Dean Brown's attention to her concerns about me, as well as her practical advice to both of us.

I brought Terry Blaine, my friend from Stanford, home to meet Mother and Daddy, Rudy and Ev and their children. My parents talked of their plans to travel to France and Germany in the summer. They expected me to go with them. I said I wanted to go and would work on my schedule for the next year. Soon after, I told them that I could not go to Europe with them. A prerequisite course required for my major, Speech Therapy, was only given in the summer. If I missed that course, I would not be able to graduate with my class in 1955. Daddy was deeply disappointed although he understood and said nothing to me. He had enjoyed our time together in Mexico. He felt that "the girls" made his trips with the Stained Glass Association go more smoothly and Mother acted less assertively with them along. But clearly my education was more important at this time in my life. And Mother felt sure for the first time in her life that I was really going to graduate from Stanford University. And maybe Terry Blaine wasn't so bad after all. He seemed like a nice young man. She'd just wait and see.





Above left, Gus Tham at Page-Lyon.  
Above, Right: Marina Court Apartments 1944.  
Left: Gus Tham at Page-Lyon  
Below left: Margaret at Page Lyon.  
Below: Lee and Gus in Park.







Evelyn, age 21



Above: Ev, Rudy, Carl and Margaret visiting at Dominican

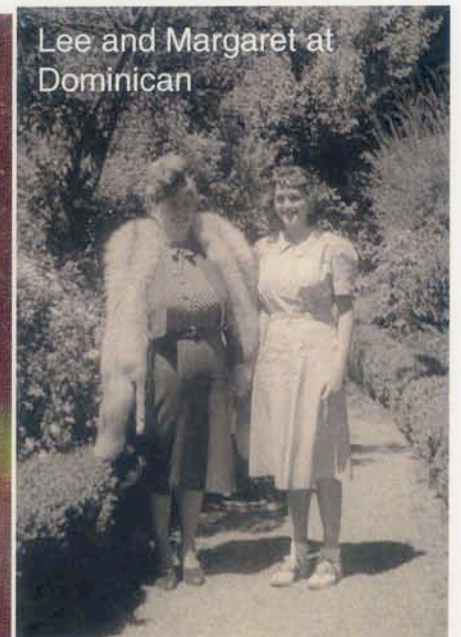


Lee, age 42, Margaret, age 15

Below: Margaret, Carl and Lee



Graduation at Dominican, May 1951



Lee and Margaret at Dominican





Above left: Margaret at Fini's house in Mill Valley.

Above Top Right: Margaret with Judy at Fini's house

Above Right: Lee at Fini's house in Mill Valley.

Lower: Fini and Mike in later years at Mill Valley house.







Upper Left: Lee at Vernal Falls. Upper, Middle: Lee at Yosemite

Upper Right: Carl, Lee and Margaret at Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite about 1947

Lower: From Left; Lee, Evelyn, Hilda, Elmer and Margaret at Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite about 1947

