**My Grandparents**

At the end of the nineteenth century, my grandparents emigrated with their families from Eastern Europe to the United States. They settled in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, but as adults they all lived in Philadelphia where they married and raised their families.

My mother’s father, Grandfather Louis Rappaport, was a widower with four grown children when he married my grandmother Frances. Louis was a very successful furrier in the center of Philadelphia and he and Grandmom Frances (Weiss) enjoyed a very high life style. My mother Cecile was born in 1920 and their only child together. She enjoyed being the center of attention of her parents and older half-siblings. I was surprised to learn that my mother was named after Louis’s late wife. I asked my mother many questions about Grandpa Louis and so I know he was a kind man and a very caring father. I was close with my Grandmom Frances and still have the "Poor Pitiful Pearl" doll she gave me when I was six years old.

Tragedy struck when, in October 1929, the stock market crashed, the country sank into a deep economic depression and, like so many others, my grandfather lost his business. As a result, my grandmother had to go to work as a registered nurse. Unfortunately, the pressures were too great for them and Louis and Frances eventually divorced, a sadness my mother carried with her all her adult life. I was born six months after Grandfather Louis died and I feel honored to have been named after him.

Max Haupt, my father’s father, was a very intelligent and educated man who had a successful career as a civil engineer in Philadelphia. He worked with many important architects in the area and was involved with the construction of some of the finest buildings in the city. He married Ida Feldman, who was a talented, energetic, and curious woman. From the stories I heard about her as a young woman it is clear to me that she was a woman “born before her time” and sadly did not have the opportunities women have today to fulfill herself as a professional businesswoman. We grandchildren were lucky enough to enjoy her wonderful cooking and baking and I am so sorry I never wrote down the recipe to her unforgettable chocolate cake! Ida and Max had 3 children: Dorothy, Irwin (my father) and Abram. This family too suffered a terrible tragedy when baby Dorothy contracted diptheria and died. My grandmother was not able to speak about this tragedy with me: I remember she once showed me a picture of Dorothy and choked back her tears, unable to speak any further. And many years later they experienced the loss of their youngest son Abe who died of a sudden heart attack when he was about 50 years old. Both Pop-pop Max and Grandmom Ida never fully recovered from this second great sadness and died within a few years of each other when they were in their early 80s.

Yes, there were many difficult and sad times for my grandparents. But there were successful and happy times as well. I am lucky to have known three of my grandparents well and to be able to pass on all these life stories to my children and grandchildren.

**My Parents**

Both my parents were born and raised in Philadelphia. They enjoyed comfortable childhoods until the economic crash of 1929. As a result of that trauma, although they were dedicated to their families and worked hard, they carried with them a constant and nagging fear of financial ruin. They met and married at the time of World War II I n June 1941, six months before America entered the war. My father had already graduated from the Drexel Institute of Technology and my mother was studying at Temple University to become a music teacher. She had to cut short her studies when my father was drafted and transferred to different army bases in the country. When the war was over, they moved back to Philadelphia. My brother Fred was born in 1945, my sister Anita (today, Chana) 4 years later, and I arrived four years after that. We grew up in Penn Wynne, a community of Jewish and Christian families, so I was exposed to people from different cultures as I was growing up. When I was 10 years old my father and uncle ended their business partnership and once again financial worries hovered over our daily lives, but my parents kept this mostly to themselves and continued to provide all three of us with music lessons and a college education. At this time my mother returned to college to finish her bachelor’s degree but she changed her focus to library science and after graduation worked for many years in that field. After we 3 children became independent and left to be “on our own”, my parents sold their house and moved into a senior living community in the area where they remained for the rest of their lives.

When I think of my parents, which I often do, I like to remember how intelligent and talented they were. My father was very interested in technical and mechanical activities and even built his own sailboat which we enjoyed at the shore for many summers. My mother was a very sociable woman who loved to read and go to museums. They both had a shared passion for music and theater. As a parent and grandparent, I can now appreciate how much time and care they devoted to their children even in the most difficult of times. They pursued their hobbies in their retirement years and it was a joy to watch them continue to learn and travel when they could. I was very lucky in that my parents and my parents-in-law (Savta Esther and Sabba Yehuda and Aunt Rouga) had a warm relationship and it was always a pleasure when the two families could get together. Dad died at the age of 92 in 2008 and Mom died at the age of 90 in 2011. I was very lucky to be able to really enjoy them in their later years and needless to say I miss them both very much.

I would like to write a few words here about Grandpop David’s parents Esther, Yehuda and his Aunt Rouga who was a second mother to him. These amazing and brave people who suffered horribly at the hands of the murderous Nazi regime have a story to tell which I cannot possible handle here. But I want to say that from observing them and speaking with them I came to fully appreciate how indomitable their spirit was and how grateful I am for having the privilege to have known them. You are fortunate enough to know Savta Esther and see what a strong and vital person she is even at the age of 94. Being part of the Stobietski family has made me realize all the more how crucial it is for future generations to ensure a Jewish homeland and the continuation of this incredible people and culture.

**Grandmom Louise and Grandpop David**

June 17, 1972 was a very special day in my life because that was the day I met Grandpop David. At the end of my freshman year at the University of Pittsburgh, I was standing in an intercity bus line to Philadelphia and New York with a huge box of my belongings and holding my beloved clarinet close to me. I started to chat with the smiling young man with clear beautiful blue eyes standing next to me. As people started to board the bus, suddenly out of nowhere a downtrodden man without any teeth picked up my box and started carrying it away! I thought he was stealing it but he was just trying to help me as he headed towards the cargo desk so the box could be shipped in the compartment at the side of the bus. I thrust the clarinet into the nice man’s hands and asked him to hold it for me and ran after the box and got it back so I could load it myself.

In the meantime, David Stobicki (as he was known in America), my new acquaintance, had boarded the bus and saved the seat next to him for me. We sat together for the 6-hour ride from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia and had plenty of time to talk and get to know each other. I learned that he was from Israel and was on his way to Kennedy Airport pick up his aunt Rouga Goldberg and sister Lea who were arriving from Israel to visit him. I also learned he was taking courses in electrical engineering at the university. When we arrived in Philadelphia we had already agreed to get together when we resumed our studies in the fall. He got off the bus to help me unload my luggage and shared a friendly handshake with my father who had come to pick me up. We said our goodbyes and I was happy to know that we would see each other again in a few months.

When we met again in September, David introduced me to his friends in the Israeli community studying in Pittsburgh. I became swept up in the Israeli culture and gradually realized how much I enjoyed being a part of it even though I didn’t speak a word of Hebrew! As the year progressed I began to become involved in the community activities and started taking Hebrew courses. I realized that David was the man I wanted to marry and that I wanted to live in Israel and immerse myself in the culture. These were huge decisions to make at the very young age of nineteen. It has always been wrenching for me to have to part from my family and friends at the end of every visit to Philadelphia but I have never once regretted these life-changing decisions that I made.

Our wedding was held in August, 1974 at the Gan Oranim Hall in Tel Aviv. My parents and sister Anita (Chana) were there and four of my parents’ dear friends planned their summer trips in order to attend the wedding, too. How wonderful of them! It was a very happy occasion of music and dancing. David and I returned to finish our studies in Pittsburgh. Our first daughter, your mother Michal, was born there on September 25, 1976 at McGee Women’s Hospital. What an unforgettable day that was! We moved to Israel on January 24, 1977 to start our new life together in this exciting and complicated country.

 **Life in Israel**

Grandpop David and I and our 3 wonderful children, Michal, Ronit and Ofer, enjoyed our family life together. We first lived in a lovely apartment at 62 Shderot-Chen in Rehovot only two blocks away from Savta Esther and Sabba Yehuda and Aunt Rouga. Grandpop David worked as an engineer in the flight navigation department at “TAMAM”, a branch of the Israeli Aircraft Industry which is located in Yehud. I worked as a high school English teacher and (eventually) department head at the Ramla-Area High School.

In 1982 we decided to move to Moshav Sitryya, only 10 minutes away from Rehovot, and try our luck as amateur orchard farmers. We bought an orange orchard farm and renovated the house which was located on it to fit our family of 5. We moved in in August of 1983. Michal started second grade at Kibbutz Hulda, Ronit was in nursery school at Moshav Bilu, and Ofer stayed at home for one year with our wonderful nanny Aviva Shato and then went to day care on the moshav the following year. Things went along smoothly and every summer or two we either welcomed my parents in Israel or flew to America to visit them and the rest of the family there. We enjoyed being close to our Rehovot family and saw them at least once a week, sometimes more.

But the decade starting in 1990 did not go well for us and we faced the saddest and most challenging times a family can face. Sabba Yehuda became ill and died at the age of 72 in February 1991. The family was devastated at the loss of this kind, generous and loving father, grandfather, and father-in-law. But harder times awaited us yet. Six months later Grandpop David was suddenly hospitalized. After a very long and difficult operation during which I sat in a waiting room with Savta Esther and my dear friend Tova, the surgeon came out and gently informed us that Grandpop David had stomach cancer. I am sure you can imagine how horrible this news was for all of us. I still remember every second of every moment as if it were yesterday. Life was an uphill climb after that. Grandpop David fought his illness with infinite strength and courage, but, as you know, he sadly left us in May 1995. He gave every ounce of his time and energy to his family and his job until he could no longer go on. There are no words to describe how much we all love him and miss him and I like to believe that he is watching and enjoying us all from above.

But as if these two tragedies were not enough, our beloved Aunt Rouga, a kind-hearted and generous soul if there ever was one, suddenly collapsed a few hours after the first memorial gathering and prayers for Sabba Yehuda. She was special in her unique objective view of life and the world despite having lived through such personal horrors, above all the loss of her dear husband Avraham a week before the liberation of the concentration camp he had been incarcerated in. How much sadness can one family take? I asked myself.

After the terrible loss of these dear and wonderful people, our family worked hard to rebuild itself and “move forward”. We continued to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. I felt blessed to be able to stand under the chuppa at the weddings of Michal and Yaron, Ronit and Ilan, and Ofer and Sigal. The arrival of the next generation, my beautiful grandchildren: you Yael, Itamar, Elad, Roni, Ariel, Uri, David, and Danielle, have brought a new and special joy to my heart.

My children and my grandchildren represent for me the future I was hoping for. My grandparents ran from the pogroms of Eastern Europe to the free and promising United States of America where they lived and prospered. My brother and his family live there still. My sister and I have made our homes in Israel. I often wonder what my grandparents would have thought if they knew that two of their grandchildren live in the reborn Jewish homeland. I know that the Haupt family donated money to the building of the Technion many years ago, and I remember my Grandmom Ida showing me pictures in Life Magazine of what she still referred to as “Palestine”. So I have good reason to believe they would be proud of the fact that we live here.