

August 15, 1994

Dear Dorothy -

You should be interested in this history of the Heimberg's, according to Charlie. His father was our grandfather's brother, so, of course, Dad was his cousin. You probably knew all this.

Most of the commentary is about his side of the family. Unfortunately, since Dad was the only one of his family who emigrated, the rest were all lost.

Steve sent me this, which he received from Paul Heimberg.

I hope you enjoy it.

Regards to ~~Harry~~ Murray.  
Murray.



**THE**

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**'HEIMBERG'**

**FAMILY**

**HISTORY**

The Real Story as written by

Charles Heimberg



## HEIMBERG FAMILY HISTORY

by Charles Heimberg

1968

### PART 1

Grandpa Aaron Heimberg was a quiet man. A quiet man; but a wise man. He was of medium height, 5'7", had broad shoulders, as he did lots of hard work. He and Deborah Kessler, his wife, were married in Drohobycz, Poland (at that time a colony of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire). They were married around the year 1888. 'Father' as we called him, had blue eyes, a full long face, made to look even longer by the beautiful, not too long beard, always trimmed neatly as was his black hair. He always looked well dressed, businesslike. Of course when he went to work in the 'Fabrik' (the factory) which was one of the largest oil refineries in Poland; he wore his 'arbeiter-anzug', or as you would say in English workclothes like blue jeans and always a blue cap like railroad engineers use. Dad was a vigorous, fine man. He sired nine children. His word was good as any signed contract. He was honest and trustworthy, and also a religious man. Not a fanatic, but a believer in God. Grandpa was in charge of several huge oil tanks for storage. I remember he always carried around a heavy black clock fastened by a black belt around his neck, when on duty making his rounds, checking on those oil tanks. Many a time those tanks caught fire (there was always so much oil creeping up from the ground, the ground was so oil rich - a careless match, and there was an inferno). Sometimes, one of those drums would burn for weeks before it would dry out. Dad had many other duties. He was also the finest telephone repairman and troubleshooter you can imagine. One time they had some trouble in Vienna's telephone system (several hundred miles away). The best telephone men in Vienna worked for weeks without finding the trouble. This factory had a branch in Vienna. They suggested father to the telephone company. It took him two days travel by train and exactly one half hour to resolve their trouble, and he was on his way back to Drohobycz with a nice little bonus to buy us each a new suit and shoes. To look for a good electrician you had to go no further than Grandpa. Then too he was a small time chemist. There was no one in the factory who could make better soap or detergents, ammonia, bleach, or candles. On the side he made wax that all big businesses, as well as the government, used in those to seal important letters.

As for Grandma Deborah, she was some woman! What a pair they made! Sheer witty and smart, never went much to school, yet you could never fool her. You see, she had some uncles and brothers who were Rabbis, that taught her some common sense, but in those days, they never believed in women needing an education. As for her cooking and baking and mass feeding you could have called her a master chef as she could have taught all chefs how to improve themselves. Mom was indeed a very beautiful woman, short but always a little plumpish or 'saftig'. First, because she also liked her own cooking, and then because Jewish people always ate a lot of bread (I think to get even for having to eat so many matzos in the desert for so long.), and delicious dishes made out of dough; but for another thing, it was much cheaper than meat, when you had to feed an army of a family! We ate lots of chicken as Mother raised her own. Mother and Dad also took care of a nice little garden. They planted onions, radishes, beets, peas, and beans. We never had to buy, except potatoes and cabbage; which we ate until it came out of our ears. It was cheap, too. Every year before winter came, Dad bought several sacks of potatoes and lots and lots of cabbages, a few boxes of apples, which they stored in a cellar near the house they lived in which was supplied by the factory. I remember we had huge wooden barrels and we all had to help chop cabbage and apples as Mom made her own sauerkraut. We threw it all in the barrels with sugar and vinegar, and kept mixing it with long wooden ladles. Sometimes we kids stomped on top of the barrels with our bare feet. Is that why sauerkraut stinks so much? But, oh was that good. Just like Limburger cheese, or 'stinky' we used to call it. That was only part of what Grandma stored. She made her own pickled beets, jellies, marmalade and different vegetables and fruits which she 'glassed' then waxed. Also our own honey.

I must tell you now about the 'fabrik-galizien' where we lived. It was like a small town as many families lived there. They had several sections of several different classes of workers. We



lived in the next to best, near where all the wealthy factory officials resided. Ours was a building like a better barracks. It even had inside toilets. Some eight families lived in that unit. Our uncle, Dad's brother Josef Bear Helmburg and his family lived there, too. You see, our uncle and Dad had a lot of the same duties. They each alternated two weeks of day shifts (12 hours), and two weeks of all nights, then off for two days. Our uncle was a tremendously big man, as were most of his three sons; Gustav, Jacob and Benno. I believe, Jim, you are his size. We even had a little hospital, but no stores to do any shopping. The factory was like a compound of many acres. It was really huge. On the front, to get in it, it had tremendous iron gates, which were shut every night. They also had a guard to check on any outsiders not employed there. It had several railroad tracks to import equipment needed there, and of course, many oil-tanker cars to export the refined oil. To do your shopping, you had to ride into the town of Drohobycz by horse and buggy. Now we will get on to the rest of the Helmburgs.

First there was born a son George or Gedalia (Yiddish) as the proud parents called him. A couple of years later came our sister Genia. Then (usually two year lapses) David or Duvidl, Regina (Art Tarler's mother), Toni, Henry or Hertzl, Herman or Herschel, and myself, Charley, Karl, or Chaim. There was one more child. I don't remember that, only Mother said the baby died very young. George, the oldest, was born around the year 1889. I, the youngest, in 1904. Pop and Mom didn't waste much time in those days as they had no television or radios, just phonographs, good beds and soft pillows. Mom made her own pillows and covers with pure down feathers. They were the softest and warmest you can imagine. People really loved each other in those days. It was not as phony as today. You see, in those days, women wore very long skirts, and though I think they were a little too long, a man had the pleasure of anticipating so much when he saw no bare legs (but also a disadvantage, his girl could have a wooden leg and he would not know the difference). But tell me the truth, Jim, would you a Helmburg not know the difference, be it 1900 or 1968? Of course, the girls of those days had no falsies either! So you again see, things always even themselves out no matter what age we live in!

When I was about a year old, right after the Japanese-Russian War, there came hundreds of refugees to Poland. Many many hundreds of Russian refugees came to the factory for work. Lots of them were hired. They paid them a mere pittance, yet they were glad to get a roof over their heads again. They lived in lousy old barracks, though cleanliness was strictly enforced. At the time, your Grandmother showed her great wisdom and kind heart. She organized several families, and together they cooked and baked and they fed many hungry people, lonely people.

They invited them to their different homes. I well remember, we kids looked forwards to them coming. Some of them were fantastic accordion and harmonica players, they could play Tchaikowsky, Rachmaninoff, and Mozart concertos. Many others danced the famous Russian 'Kosatzki' dances. They were as strong as bulls, and could do almost any kind of manual, hard labor.

Mother worked like a beaver, and they all loved her, and called her 'Mamale'. I believe the Russians at that time all started to hate their Fatherland, and also their adopted country, Poland, where they bled, starved, were bossed and worked to death, and were it not for the kindness of Grandma, they would certainly have perished! I'm certainly no sympathizer of Communism, in fact I hate them. Karl Marx was already at that time preaching Socialism, the fore-runner of today's Communism. So here we are, faced with it and all its evils. But had our kings and financiers not have been so greedy to our people at that time, ... And even today, merely beautiful sentences and promises, who knows what the world and society would be like? As it is, it's shaking up the whole world and outer worlds. Called progress, or science or the atomic age it is very frightening and exciting.



## PART 2

When I was about 1 or 2 years old, George ran away from home, or let's say Mother had a cousin by the name of Kessler in Vienna in the knitting goods business who she persuaded to give George a job whenever he got to Vienna. That was not very long, as he never liked that small town of Drohobycz and did not want to get stuck there. Like his dad, he always dreamed of the new land America. So George landed in Vienna, worked for Kessler for about a year, and then met another young fellow with whom he became good friends. This friend kept telling George he knew some distant relatives in the new golden land America, where they both could get jobs. At that time, all one needed to get in was a passport, and steerage money and maybe a fortune was awaiting him! (Oh, so easy!!) (Baione!!) This friend of George's had almost enough cash for himself. George had none, but he was determined to go to America, and that decision had a tremendous outcome of life or death of an entire family, including your Father, and the marking and building of all of us. Well, George used to deliver knitting goods to certain customers, and sometimes they would give him the money for his boss. On one of those 'money-receiving' days he pretended to be the boss and skipped town and country with his friend and with his better friend the money. They landed in London, still short some money for passage to the U.S.A. They found some jobs, and saved enough in a few weeks to sign up as flunkies on some tramp-steamer going to Boston, Mass. In no time, the Captain made them official deck-sweepers, washers, fireman, storage clerks, busboys, dishwashers, and cooks. Boy, if Uncle Sam would use you boys in all that capacity today, he wouldn't need so many men!!!! "Thanks, going your way today," eliminates some old time slavery today. Finally after a week on the ocean, they arrived in Boston. His buddy could not locate his cousins or friends, so George dropped the 'cold potato' and got himself a job in a so-called ice cream parlor. He moved from job to job until he was a little older when he secured a position as a waiter. He stayed there quite some time and then moved on to Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, Florida, and then to San Francisco. Most of the time he worked as a waiter in beereries, poor clubs, and high class clubs. That is where he saw how the upper-class lived and started to get the urge to make something of himself, and eventually be able to bring the whole family to America! For years, we did not hear from him. Then once a year he'd send a letter from a new city and in these letters he'd enclose a \$5.00 bill. While he was in Florida, he went to a beach resort city one Sunday where he saw a snackbar. Getting a hotdog, he noticed the owner squeezing oranges and lemons. He observed him for some time and saw this man make what is today called 'orange drink.' He got the idea then and there of someday to move to California and open such an orange drink stand. In San Francisco, he met a Hungarian watchrepairman about his own age, and they became real pals. Eventually, both of them moved to the then small, beginning movie-colony, a little city called Los Angeles. They saved the enormous amount of \$250.00 (then a small fortune), and decided to open an orange drink business. They formed a partnership and called the firm Comets. In the beginning, all they sold were drinks, candy and gum.

I shall skip back now many years to when I was about 6. Dad sent all the boys to a 'Cheder' or a Jewish religious school where they had mostly old men, many of them Rabbis, who were very smart when it came to the teaching of Hebrew history, the Talmud, and all the commandments. Sometimes they were mean to us kids. The smallest mistake and you got it, but good, with a stick or a belt. I must say, at times we had it coming, but many times they were still a little hungover from the previous day, the Sabbath, where they had celebrated by drinking plenty of free wine. You see, it was the custom in those days for the very religious teachers and retired and loafer Jews and Rabbis to get together Saturday afternoon in their synagogue. There they finished their Sabbath prayers and most everyone that could afford it brought something to eat or drink. Some spicy appetizers like herring, sardines, sauerkraut, chole bread, pickled beets, lima beans, lentils, and garbanzo beans called 'binis' in Yiddish; and, oh boy, did they produce gas. Often they invited us kids, and we looked forward to the eats, especially the sweets. But we didn't enjoy the terrible odor from all those gassy foods they consumed. Each of them carried a pretty little box, filled with powdered snuff tobacco, that was so strong that it would positively open up any stuffed nose. I usually carried a couple of small corks as they would inevitably start to snuff their boxes at the same time. They would also tell jokes, stories, and sing marvelous songs. So you see, it always evened itself out, as it always does in life. I remember Dad used to take us all to town once a



month, to a Jewish dairy restaurant. They served some delicious food. I liked Mother's better! It was a change though, being all together with Dad and a little rest for Mom from her tremendous chores. We went by horse and buggy and it was real fun. Quite often, Dad took us on a hike. We had some wonderful woods and mountains. Always we went back home with baskets of berries, mushrooms, and our pockets full of hazelnuts. We learned how to shoot bow and arrow and we played baseball and stickball which was lots of fun and skill too. Now, with the Passover holidays approaching, I must tell you of the great 'seders' we had. A week before Passover, Mother and our sisters started to clean the house. The night before the first seder, all the dishes, glasses, pots, and silverware were packed in boxes and put in storage space and the Passover dinnerware was brought out and washed and polished. All the 'Chumitz' or dairy food was eaten up, or given to non-Jewish neighbors. We started off the first Passover day with all new food that Mother had cooked and baked all day. There was enough for an army. A whole case of eggs and many, many boxes of matzos. Mother arranged the Passover table around the main bed. Lots of pillows were put on it so most everybody could sit leaning. Dad was dressed in a white long frock, with his tallis and yomicka, which we boys also wore. The table was really decorated lovely, with a wonderful aroma to the nose. Strictly after we came home from evening Passover services, right after dark, our seder dinner started. It was a beautiful ceremony. Our Dad could really sing those pretty Passover songs. Of course, I, being the youngest; and many times Herman too, had to ask the 'kashes.' And many times if we could find the piece of matzo Dad hid, he would buy us a very lovely present. Many times the songs were so beautiful, that all the girls would start to sing too. It was very nice, and the food that your Grandma prepared was fit for a king. In those days, when it said to drink a glass of wine, you just drank a whole glassful, and we were all a happy hilarious bunch, a little tipsy perhaps, but happy! The schools of the early 1900's were very drab looking almost like Jack-in-the-box buildings. They were just 4 walls with a pot-bellied stove, a blackboard, a high pedestal where the teacher sat on her throne, and about 36 combination desk-chairs. Those seats were so tight that a fat kid had some job going out for a fast fire drill; and God help him if he had to go to the 'can' real fast. Remember, the kids of those days carried no lunch pails, or plastic bags. Their coats and hats they had to leave in the hallway, but a fast-thinking kid could always use his shoe, providing they had no holes in them. The women teachers wore such long dresses that the school never needed any brooms, as those teachers moved about the classroom and those non-miniskirts moved the dirt and dust right along with them. Many a time a bully would empty the inkwell on the floor and those dressstrains would make some beautiful designs. Never-the-less, each school did have a so cold clean-up man. He was dressed like a Prussian or Austrian soldier with shiny brass buttons on his blue coat, blue pants with a 2 inch wide red stripe running down the sides to his cuffs, shoes that always squeaked as he walked along (I suppose to get attention) topped by a high black, stiff policeman's hat with a patent leather strap that he could fasten to his chin, and always a thin stick to show his authority to us kids, as they also used him to discipline the unruly boys. The best thing those guys could do was to stand on top of a platform where we kids had to stand once a year to have our class pictures taken. They also acted as guards, gardeners, and chauffeurs to haul the teachers to school during real bad snowy weather. Whatever they paid them, they earned it.

We got report cards every six weeks, and when we got worse than C's, we were afraid to take them home. Herman and I also took violin lessons, but when they found out that Fritz Kreisler's we would not be, we got a reprieve. One more thing stands out in my mind when I was in school. First in Poland and then again in Vienna. That was anti-semitism. In Poland it was 'Jyd, Jyd' (Jew) and in Vienna, 'Lausiger Jude' (lousy Jew). Many times I came home with a bloody nose, but I think Herman and I sent home many a bully in worse shape than we were. I was a skinny cool kid, never got mad except when they called me those anti-semitic names. Now, when I reflect on it, I ask myself, "Why did I really get mad when they called me a Jew?" They only lied about the word lousy. After all, the Jews gave the world Jesus Christ. Of course, we feel different about different events at different ages in our lives. One becomes more subdued and mellow, and mostly closer to God. In Drohobycz, they still believed the Jews drank blood for Passover rituals. I think they got us confused when Abraham was to offer Isaac, his son, to God. Sure, we killed our own chickens every week to eat because it was cheap but so did everyone else. The non-Jews killed pigs, rabbits and many other animals that made good eating, and was cheap. Our neighbors many times offered us ham, bacon and sausage, but we never accepted any, not that it was against our religion but rather our



dietary laws. Seeing all those pigs eat all that stinky, filthy so-called SLOP made you sick in the stomach. But today with the good clean food and the modern methods they feed these animals, we all enjoy a good piece of ham or bacon. Good morning, any ham and eggs today?

I must tell you of several more interesting things that happened in our factory in Drohobycz. There was one wealthy family by the name of Bielberg that had a couple of pretty daughters. Occasionally the girls who played piano gave recitals and invited Henry, Herman and myself. They were beautiful girls. Their parents served excellent fancy food and dessert and we always had a good time. One day, around 1912, there came a large buggy loaded with the most beautifully decorated small gift packages wrapped in different colored silver paper foil. The buggy was draped with a big banner reading "To the children of Drohobycz, a gift from your Kaiser (Emperor and King Franz Josef) of Austria-Hungary and Poland on his 50th anniversary of being on the throne." Those packages, which they handed out to us kids, contained the finest chocolates I ever ate. There was also a small paper flag, and to top it all, the King was to ride on a white horse that Saturday afternoon in a huge parade. It was really something. The King was in front on a horse; behind him 8 other horses pulling a red carriage, where the Queen and the heir-apparent, Franz Ferdinand were seated. (All were of the historical name of the house of Hapsburg.) It was this Franz Ferdinand who was assassinated in 1914 that brought on World War I.

Our sister Regina stands out in my mind very much. She looked as beautiful as any girl you've ever thought of, with big blue eyes and black silky hair. She wasn't very tall and a bit fragile. Did she ever have talent and a brain. She could knit and embroider like no one I ever saw. She made all of Mother's dresses as well as Toni's and Genia's. She also made all the boy's pants and jackets. I'll never forget the most fantastically embroidered pillows and tapestries like pictures, she made. She also had a marvelous memory and lots of common sense. When there were battles (and there were many amongst us kids) she was always the peacemaker, the Samson. The family always called her the politician. Then there was Toni, a beautiful red-head, that always liked to wear pretty ribbons and flowers in her hair. She could make up the beds better and faster than all the others. Genia, the oldest sister was Mother's righthand. A good cook and housekeeper, she too was a red-head, but not quite as fiery as Toni. Most of all she was looking for a husband for in those days when a girl was not married by the time she was 20, she was considered an old maid. Finally, she met a fellow named Filip Fruchter, an Austrian tailor by trade, who lived in Boryslav, a couple hundred miles from Drohobycz. The town of Boryslav consisted mostly of oil holes. From there it was shipped by tankers to Drohobycz, where it was refined. The wedding was really something. The folks rented a dance hall in town. At least 2 weeks before the wedding, Mother and the girls and our Aunt and her daughter Laura, began to bake all kinds of cake and cookies and also to cook. They stored it in our cellar which was like a refrigerator. Regina made Genia a most gorgeous wedding dress. Dad hired a band for the dancing and a special man in those days that specialized in singing rhymes like in square dancing. Mother set up a huge sugar table near one of the entrances to where the wedding took place. This sugar table consisted of many sandwiches, snacks, and desserts of all kinds, and it was for the real poor people of the town, strangers! More than 100 took advantage of it. Besides about 200 guests, friends, and family were invited and showed up. The bridal couple got many gifts, but mostly cash money. Dad also gave Genia a dowry. Besides a pretty maiden, the men of those days all got a dowry to boot, to get them started. So don't forget, get a dowry when you get married. Say it's an old Jewish custom. With the money received as gifts, Filip opened a tailor shop in Boryslav. He was a darned good craftsman. A year after they were married and no kids, Genia got very homesick, so on the Passover season, they sent me to spend a week with them. I was treated like a prince and had the best of toys and food. Filip, who used to make Purim masquerade outfits, made me such a costume, and a very pretty suit. The only thing I disliked about being there was I had to sleep on top of their piano. The smell of the oil from the earth did not bother me so much, as we had that all our lives in Drohobycz, too. In fact, the oil was so close to the top of the soil that we used to take sawdust, roll it in the ground, made large balls, and it saved us quite a bit of money for fuel. What a marvelous cheap fuel that was. Dad also ordered a small carload of black coals that took care of heating for the whole winter. Even to this day, I



love the smell of oil refineries whenever I pass them in Long Beach or Redondo Beach. David had early signs of being a mechanic, and especially an electrical wizard. Of course, he had a good teacher in Dad. Around 1912, he became so efficient as an electrician, that Dad got him a job as an apprentice in the branch of Simmons-Schukert in Vienna (an electrical giant of those days like General Electric today). He moved to Vienna and lived with Mother's sister, Aunt Minche. She had a son also named David, who later became the owner of a large knitting goods factory.

Henry, I always remember as the neatest dresser of the family. He would press his trousers so they would have a sharp crease in them. He was also very smart in school. He sure was good in figures. What a mathematician he would have made. Herman, your Dad, was the quiet one of the family. Nothing bothered him. Only when some strangers got him mad, God help them. He was as strong as a bull as he always exercised a lot. Later he even took up wrestling and also became a fantastic chess player. I think he was one of a dozen of the best chess players in Vienna. One more thing before I close this part, there was a supervisor over Dad and his brother, that was the meanest bastard that ever lived. First, he hated Jews, he was jealous of Dad because Dad knew more than he did; he always tried to fire Dad or to make him do the most dangerous jobs. I built up an awful hatred for that son-of-a-bitch, and were it not for the fact that we all left for Vienna a couple of years later, I certainly would have beat him up somehow, although he was a big bully.



### PART 3

After David left for Vienna, everyday life went on just as usual in Drohobycz. We had a little excitement. Our cousin, David Kessler, the son of Mother's sister in Vienna where David now stayed, visited us with another cousin; a most beautiful girl, sometimes a showgirl, named Toni. She was a sister of Max Wegner. They both made a great impression on us as they had money and were dressed and acted like it. She even had on rouge, something sinful in those days. David was a tall handsome man, very smart and quite a bit educated. I was to work in his knitting goods factory in Vienna a few years later. They both brought Mother many beautiful gifts and stayed about a week. We all had a ball. Also, I believe in 1912 or 1913, Gustav Helmborg, the son of Father's brother, Josef, who also went to America a few years before, came home for a visit to surprise the whole family. We were very anxious to question him of the whereabouts of our own George. Perhaps they had met somewhere in America. They never did until about 20 years later. Gustav too, brought us all nice 'American presents.' Soon after he left, things went back to normal. We always waited now for letters from George and David. A few months after David was in Vienna, he became lonesome. So our aunt with whom he stayed invited one of the girls to come and join David and stay with her. Toni was the youngest girl and eager to go. We hated to see her go, but decided that if that was what she wanted, go ahead! You see Jim, all the Helmborg's had and have the wanderlust. At first she stayed with our aunt. Later when she got a little older, she got a job in a luggage shop, a very high class joint. She and David then rented an apartment and moved into a home of their own. In the early summer of 1914, Toni came home for a very short visit. It was shorter than she or we expected as you shall see. Early in 1914, one could hear and see rumblings from the different world powers in those days: England, Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, Russia. And even Turkey was powerful then. Austria-Hungary and Germany were trying for some kind of a Tri-Party Pact. For the German Kaiser, Wilhelm the II, things did not move fast enough to suit Germany's shenanigans and war preparations. He was feverishly building up the German Army. The 'Krupp Ammunition Plants' worked around the clock to enrich their clique. France and Austria were also building up their armies. I believe it was early in July, 1914, that the heir-apparent to the throne of Austria, visited Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hungary, which was a colony of Austria-Hungary. Thousands of people were crowding the main street to get a glimpse of the future king and his wife who were riding in an open carriage in a parade. It was to be a festive occasion. Suddenly, a shot rang out, which was to plunge the world into WWI; and from which all the nations still have not recovered. It was the beginning of the topsy-turvy world we live in today. And where round and round, no one knows where it will stop. Some claimed it was a Frenchman, others a Slav or a Russian, who fired that fateful shot. Austria, guided on by the German Kaiser, wanted satisfaction from the (who) supposed country that offended them. They haggled back and forth for about three weeks. I think the Kaiser wanted war very badly. He thought he was ready militarily to lick England and France and become overlord of all, a second Napoleon. But he forgot one thing, to 'reckon with Uncle Sam' sounded to Jewish, and the US was not considered a powerful nation. Before long, ultimatums were sent by Austria to France, England, and Russia. They tried (for show) to try to make a settlement, but the German and Austrian governments got the people so excited and war crazy, that the people actually danced in the streets (the dumkops) when war was declared. What fools, they didn't know what a modern war could do, because up to WWI, they still fought war primitively with sword and cavalry and small cannons. I well remember when we got to Vienna real soon after that, just as the war started, the men all wore little feathers in their tyrolean hats. The women threw flowers at them and were eager to send them away. (Of course, they had no love-ins then.) What stands out in my mind was they were happy and gay to see their men go to war in Europe, whereas in America, at the time of Pearl Harbor, all the people, and particularly the women, were grim and sad and only eager to get revenge of a dastardly act. Get the job done and get it over with. When these ultimatums were given, we knew for sure that it would only be a couple of days before we were in war. Most of the families in Drohobycz decided, on the advice of the government, to flee to Vienna, which was considered safe from the Russians, who were close neighbors of Austria. So, Father decided we too should go to Vienna, as the next day would be the last day the train would leave for Vienna; save one exception--, he didn't tell us that he would stay behind, a devoted slave to the fabrik and his job, even though that bastard supervisor treated him so miserably for so many years. In fact, it was that louse and the director who pleaded with Father



not to desert them, but O.K. to desert us. I remember Dad hired some farmer who had a large covered wagon and four strong black horses. He promised to give him quite a sum of money that Dad had saved for years as a dowry for the girls, when he delivered us safely to the railroad station Lemberg, about 100 miles from Drohobycz. We had quite a conference with many arguments, as we didn't want to go without Dad. Finally, Regina, the politician, said that if Dad didn't want to sacrifice the whole family to the Cossacks, who would surely arrive in a few days, and if his job was more important than his family, he could stay behind and we all would go without him. He insisted he had to stay so he could earn the money to support us in Vienna. What a courageous man your Grandfather was! We argued, how did he know whether he could send any money to us in Vienna. He said the factory branch in Vienna would see to it that we got some money. On the strength of that promise, he stayed behind. We finally parted with great sorrow, not knowing whether we'd ever see him again. He was going to have his meals with his brother's family, who all decided to stay behind. Father gave Regina a bag full of silver for the farmer after he would deliver us safely to the train; and another little bag to Mother to buy railroad tickets and a little extra to tide us over for a little while. I remember, like it was yesterday, when we got started in that covered wagon, with as few personal belongings and some food Mother packed along. We were all frightened at once when that powerful, mean-looking, Jew-hating farmer and his 4 powerful black horses came that were going to pull us to safety? And also by the fear of being intercepted by the Cossacks, the meanest cavalry soldiers in existence. So help me God, midway of our journey, we heard terrible gunfire. The Russians already were firing their cannons from far away. Yet its sound and fury came closer and closer, and I know we were all scared and praying to come through it all without mishap. Every once in a while, the horses literally raised their whole front body and legs in the air, and screamed terribly as they were more frightened than we were. One good thing though, they ran like racehorses. To make things worse, one of the wagon wheels broke down. We were sure we'd never make it. After a couple of hours, it was already getting dark and the farmer got the wheel repaired. We took off again, and after a very long, hard, scary trip, we arrived at the station with very little time left to purchase tickets and just before the last train departed. I think we were almost the last people to get on. We felt sorry for the ones turned back. It was just like a cattle car, cold with the windows blacked out. After a couple of days and nights, we arrived in Vienna. Normally it took a day and a night, but because of the many troop trains, we were derailed and delayed and were lucky to make it in two days. Dad had notified David and he and Mother's sister and son met us at the station in Vienna. A happy reunion, but all sad to have left Dad behind. As he promised, Dad arranged with the branch office in Vienna to give Mother a certain allowance each month. How that man sacrificed his life so that we all could survive. We got our own apartment after we stayed with Mother's sister for awhile. Toni and Dave helped out by working steadily. After awhile, Dave went into the army and Regina went to work as a nurse in an army hospital. We kids kept making cigarettes for Dave and sent him a couple hundred every two weeks. For quite a spell, Dave was fighting on the Russian-Austrian frontier. There he contracted some sort of lung ailment and was sent back to Vienna to recuperate. Regina managed to transfer him to the hospital where she was then the head nurse. It was a very large hospital. They even installed a movie theater for the men. Dave was the projectionist, as he was the only one with some knowledge of how to operate the projector. I think he stayed there the rest of the war. Regina managed to bring us some food home, as it was almost impossible to get anything worthwhile to eat. There was a huge open air market, where we went shopping for rationed potatoes, the only food then obtainable. Many a time, while standing in line for hours, we went home empty-handed, or if we got a couple of pounds, they would be frozen and inedible. But we all survived!!!!



#### PART 4

Life in Vienna, during the war wasn't easy in general. Toni was at home helping the family. Henry, Herman, and myself still went to school. I believe I forgot to tell you that Genia and Filip stayed behind in Boryslav, Poland when we left for Vienna as Filip did not want to give up his business. Occasionally, we would get a letter from Father, telling us he was not well and hoping he would be able to join us one of those days, real soon. He would insert in Yiddish, a word now and then telling that the Russians were mean and beat him regularly. Finally, in 1916, the factory got him an exit visa to Vienna, as he was a very sick man by then. When he finally got to us, we got him to rest pretty well. He was happy to be with his family again and that made him feel a little better. We opened a small store where we sold all sorts of soap, detergents, candles and wax, and some chemicals. Of course, Dad helped us with his ideas and knowledge of chemistry and refining. But, as fate wished it, that happiness did not last long. Dad became sicker and weaker and he told us that the Russians beat him savagely due to his religion. The only reason they didn't kill him outright, was that they wanted and needed his knowledge of refining which they had to have to stay in the war. Dad always had trouble with his stomach and during the Russian occupation, all he got to eat was dark bread, potatoes, and herring. They offered him 'crap' like sausage which he couldn't eat. After he took sick in Vienna, we had to take him to the hospital where he had major surgery. He lived only about a week when this fine gentleman and teacher died at the tender young age of 54.

After the family regained its composure, Mother had to give up the store. The war was coming closer to the end and Henry had joined the army, but was with the reserves in Vienna. Toni got a job in a high class luggage shop and Herman got a job as a shoemaker. Sometimes he would get ahold of a few extra shoes and he would then take trips to small farm towns where he would peddle the shoes to anxious farmers, for some money but mostly food, which we badly needed. Your Dad had lots of guts. Antisemitism was in full swing already but Herman had no fears. I wouldn't be surprised if on those trips he got himself a little 'shiksa' (Yiddish for non-Jewish girl) and being my brother, I'm sure he did. Herman helped plenty to supplement our food supply by bringing back many goodies. All during the war, we never heard from George in America or from Genia and Filip. Near the end of the war, they managed to get to Drohobycz where they stayed with Father's brothers family. When the Russians quit the war, we managed to send railroad tickets for Genia and Filip and they finally joined us in Vienna. We now needed a larger apartment. At that time, Gretl, (Dave's future wife) had a grandmother who had and operated a small grocery store. She was in her 80th year and some character. This lady (we called her Tante Eldale) wanted to teach Mother the grocery business and eventually turn it over to us if she could move in with us and still do all the buying. That included going to the open air market to shop for groceries and vegetables. When Mom agreed, we boys were included in the deal. I'll explain. This little old lady had a two-wheel pushcart to haul the merchandise. I would say it was some 15 city blocks from her store to the market. She'd make out a list of what was needed, get on top of the pushcart, and have 2 of either Henry, Herman, or I to pull her to the market. She was constantly praying from her Bible. You should have seen that little businesswoman, as shrewd as an businessman I ever saw. She would bargain with the different dealers until she got her way. I think she made some of them feel sorry for her on top of it, secure her, and then our job really started. She tried to make race horses out of us, but we were more concerned with her falling out. All that time she tried to direct us how best and fastest to get to the store. I remember one time for Passover, she bought a big load of matzo. She just said she saved a dollar for buying so much. To get rid of all of them by Passover, she put on a large sign saying 'SHORTAGE OF FLOUR, LESS MATZO THIS YEAR, GET THEM WHILE THEY LAST.' You know, we could have sold a carload. She did move in with us in a larger apartment. You never saw a more religious person. She'd get up at 3AM, stand near the east window with a prayer book in her hands, and kept rocking back and forth while praying for a couple of hours. She did this three times a day. She ate very little and fasted almost one day every week. She was a real pious, brainy, good old lady. Mother learned a lot from her, and I believe, got to be a little like her. They both lived to a ripe old age of 83. You know, your Grandma liked a little 'Shnapps' (whiskey). She always had a little bottle which she deluded with water, and it would last her a few weeks. She said she used it for medicinal purposes. What a clever, grand, little lady she was, too.



Finally, one day, we received a letter from George through the good graces of the Red Cross. In that letter was a \$20.00 bill. He told us he had saved it in the U.S. Army fighting against his brothers in the Austrian Army. Thank God, the war came to an end in 1918 after 4 long brutal years. I remember, right after the war, while still in school, we got dally hot chocolate and cake through the 'Hoover Relief Commission.' Dave was now again an electrician. After working for awhile, he opened his own shop. He sold electrical fixtures and repaired appliances. He did very well. Soon he met Gretl through this old lady, who told him, that's going to be your wife, and sure enough, shortly afterwards, they got married. Gretl was really a beautiful woman. Henry went to work in a bookstore and Herman became a full-fledged shoe salesman and a chessplayer whom very few people could beat. I finished junior college, then went to work for our cousin Kessler in his knitting goods factory. Another cousin of ours, Max Wegner, worked side by side with me. Filip had a job to make us boys new suits, remodel old clothes, and did a little repair work for some of the neighbors. All this time once a month, we received a letter from George, always with some money in it. He said he now did very well, had about 4 stores with a partner, and started intimating that before long, he would be able to bring some of us over to America. He never asked or said who would be first to go. One day in October, 1922, we received a letter with entry visas and two ship tickets--made out to Henry and Charles. I always wrote him that I'd like to go to California some day, so maybe that is why he chose me. Evidently, he wanted a little older person to come with me, that's why Henry.

I believe in 1920, Regina met a wise fellow, Sigmund Tarler. He was a smart dresser. He never had a steady job, but was more or less a tobacco salesman, and whatever else he could talk people into buying. She eventually married this Tarler fellow. Arthur was born about a year later just before we left for the U.S. Regina never quite recovered from that birth and the flu epidemic at that time, and after a few years of struggling, she passed away very young and beautiful. The brain of the family was no more until we got to the promised land and discovered a new brain in George. A few weeks before we left, Toni was going with a nice young man, Sol Kornblau. The week before we left, they got engaged, and we all celebrated a nice party. A few months later they got married. Lillian, Curt, and Edith are their kids. [Curt, Edith, and Lillian is the order from eldest.]

Henry and I finally got to L.A. on November 22, 1922. George and Ida and 2 year old Adelle met us at the station. We were very happy to finally see each other after all those many years. They had just moved into their new house. It was a beaut. The first thing they did was to make us take hot baths. The next day, George took us downtown and both of us got new suits, shoes, and hats. Two days later, he took us to a manufacturer of lighting fixtures, where we went to work a day before Thanksgiving. When we got through that day, the boss gave each of us a turkey for the holiday. George and Ida were wonderful to us, like we were their own children. After 10 days, Henry and I moved into a room of our own. But we had to eat with them for quite a while. Shortly after, we went to work for George and his partner. They were now very successful. They kept opening new stores, and at one time had 15 units. Now that we could talk better English, they could take it easier as we now managed the business. Ida and George made a trip to Vienna. In the meantime, all three of us sent the folks in Vienna a monthly allowance and they began to live a little better. With the stockmarket crash of 1929, things really became tough for a few years. Business got so bad around 1933, that George and his partner could not afford to keep us any longer as they had to give up many stores. Henry and I left for New York, where we worked for a while after we finally got jobs. Then George sent us some money to open our own store. Things were bad. We only lasted about 4 months and then went back to work. A few years later, George sent us some more money after he finally got back on his feet. This time, our store went over real good and I stayed in New York until I returned to L.A. near the beginning of World War II. Around that time, the Nazi party came into power with that maniac Hitler. First George got Mother and Arthur over, then Dave and Gretl, and finally Toni, Sol, Lili, Curt, Edith, and Herman. Genia and Filip wanted to wait a little longer, but then it was too late. They lost their lives, as did 6,000,000 others did by those barbarian Nazi swines.



Today they raise such a big fuss over what is right on the Civil Rights Issue, but no one tried very hard when they killed the Jews. The Pope for one could have done more, had he tried a little harder. Even in our U.S.A., our Jewish Secretary of the Treasury, H. Morgenthau, who was approached by the Nazis to ransom several hundred thousand Jews for money and other materials, was refused by higher ups, including Cordell Hull, the lousy Secretary of State until it was too late.

Finally, the U.S. and England helped to save the few thousand who were left alive. Yet today, they are still persecuting the Jews in Russia, and they are again starting to subjugate them to suffer in Poland. Had the Jews of Nazi Germany, Russia, and Poland fought back like the colored people are doing today, perhaps they would have helped to achieve a little civil rights of their own. They hated the Jews for centuries and it looks like the people in the South will hate the Negro just as long, if America survives that long. Remember, always be proud to be a Jew. Fight back if they try to hurt you. God save our beloved country. May it stand for the liberty of all our people, as the Constitution provided for it to be. It is still the greatest land, but it ought and can and will be greater for all the people.

So you see, your Uncle George saved us Heimberg's, and we all shall always think of him as an apostle that God sent to save a certain clan of his 'Cohenim' (direct descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses), a bunch called Heimberg, of which you too are an offspring and which you too will try to perpetuate—, particularly now that you are a little bit more of all of us. God bless you.

Charles Heimberg  
In the year 1968