

NOTES / STORIES FROM LOGAN MINI-REUNION, MAY 29, 2008

In attendance: Aunt Miki, Uncle Eddie, Uncle Fred, Aunt Helen Mae, Cousin Peter, Cousin Fred, Cousin Stephanie, Dorothy Kohn Glick and her son Garry Kohn; Skip, Tip, Logan, myself

Irene

Aunt Miki told an incredibly poignant story. Irene had leukemia. Grandma and Papa Rudy had made an appointment at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore to have her seen by experts there (though it is probable nothing could have been done back then in the early 1900s). But the pregnant Grandma delivered Aunt Miki and then was recovering from the delivery and nursing Miki. When Miki was 10 days old, Grandma was in her bed nursing her. Irene climbed up in bed with them, curled up and died at their sides. Neither Papa Rudy nor Grandma talked much about Irene until Papa Rudy was in the hospital with a hernia at age 93, a month before he developed the embolism that killed him.

A Good Cook

Papa Rudy and Great Uncle Sig were fast friends. Uncle Sig married Aunt Charlotte, who was a great cook. They had Papa Rudy over for dinner one day where they were all living in Norfolk, VA, and Papa Rudy said if he ever met a woman who could cook like Aunt Charlotte, he would marry her. Soon after, Aunt Charlotte fixed him up with Giselle, also a wonderful cook, and the rest was history.

The Great Depression

Aunt Miki talked about how the family was hard hit by the Great Depression. Instead of going out for clothes shopping as before, Grandma made all her clothes, stopped buying boys' clothes at the more expensive stores, and took to taking collars off of dress shirts, turning them around and re-sewing them to make it look like they weren't as worn as they really were. Papa Rudy had to close his grocery business. Aunt Miki talked with visible emotion about how much her brothers sacrificed for her. They took turns taking a leave from school to make more money for the family when she was still living at home. Dad left college for 2 years before returning and graduating.

Baseball Girl

Aunt Miki said she played baseball with her brothers and other boys when she was growing up in Logan.

Billy Goat Junction

Uncle Bill and Dad were born in the first Logan house at Monitor Junction – or Billy Goat Junction, as Uncle Bill dubbed it. That house was flooded, and they moved to the Stennet Street house where the rest of the children were born.

Devil Anse Hatfield

Papa Rudy mentioned how Devil Anse Hatfield shopped in his store a couple of times. Aunt Helen Mae had a story that Papa Rudy had sought protection from a storm at Hatfield's house and been invited to stay for dinner. Aunt Miki had a different version of this story.

She said Hatfield merely stopped in Papa Rudy's store. In both versions however, Papa Rudy referred to Devil Anse as "a nice gentleman."

Great Uncle Hugo Redux

The story we've all heard is that Gisella's sister was Paula. Her husband was Hugo Gruner. Hugo worked for a while for Papa Rudy in his groceries business in Norfolk, WVA (not VA). He either skimmed from the top of Papa Rudy's supplies, and/or started signing up Papa Rudy's customers for his own grocery business. I didn't know Papa Rudy sued him and lost.

The Exodus Connection

Hugo had a brother who had a child named Dov. Dov Gruner went to Israel to fight for independence and was hanged by the British government for treason. Paula tried to get Senator Taft to intervene on behalf of her nephew, but to no avail. The character of Dov Landau in *Exodus* is based on Dov Gruner.

Book Recommendation

Uncle Eddie recommends a book by Deborah Weiner called *Coal Field Jews*. It mentions Papa Rudy.

Bartender

Papa Rudy worked in a saloon in Pocahontas, VA before he moved to Norfolk, WVA, and then to Logan in 1912.

Which Syndrome?

According to Aunt Miki, Leon, Paula's and Hugo's son, had St. Vitas Syndrome (actually St. Vitas Dance, or Restless Legs Syndrome), not Tourette's. Mom and Dad had always said Tourette's.

Lost

Henry, Leon's brother, was lost at sea with the rest of his battleship crew during the war in a storm near the Philippines.

Missing

Rudy's niece, Irene Breisacher (spelling?), lives somewhere in Indiana.

The Honeymoon Drag

Mommie Rae's dress caught in the door of Mom's and Dad's honeymoon car as they were leaving, and she was dragged a small distance over the road, injured and taken to the hospital.