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May 9, 2014

Notes from my sister, Frances Bright (deceased) recently sent to me by my brother-in-law, Judge Bright.

From: [david reisler](#) Notes from my sister, Frances Bright (deceased) recently sent to me by my brother-in-law, Judge Bright.

They are biographical notes that she has from the time she was growing up until the time she was married in 1947. I believe she must have written them between 1995 and 2000. David

I found the enclosed piece in my computer room at home. If you do not already have a copy, save it as it will be of interest.

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Myron H. Bright
Enc.

Notes from my sister, Frances Bright (deceased) recently sent to me by my brother-in-law, Judge Bright.

Dear Dinah, Josh, Amy, Sarianne, & Adam:

I thought that you might want to know a little about our family so you could tell your children about them when the time comes. I will try to write down a little family history for you of things that I know and remember.

Ida Seidelman- my Mother 12-16-1898 (deceased)

Samuel P. Reisler-my Father 10-27-1893 (deceased)

Three children:

Frances Louise Reisler Bright (Fritzie) 8-23-24

Elaine Beth Reisler Magarrell 6-2-28

Three children:

Debra Magarrell Conklin

Lisa Magarrell

Dan Magarrell

Dr. David Martin Reisler 12-1-36

Four children :

1435

Ronald Reisler
Michael Reisler
Larry Reisler
Susan Reisler



At the Congress of Berlin (1878), which finalized Romanian independence, the great powers made the grant of civil rights to the Jews a condition of that independence in spite of opposition by the Romanian and Russian delegates. Jews had been considered Romanian subjects, but now they were declared to be foreigners. Jews were forbidden to be lawyers, teachers, chemists, stockbrokers, or to sell commodities that were a government monopoly (tobacco, salt, alcohol).

. Under the pressure of increasing persecution accompanied by an internal economic crisis, a mass emigration of Jews began in 1900; they traveled on foot as far as Hamburg and, from there, went to the [United States](#), Canada, and [Great Britain](#). Up to World War I, about 70,000 Jews left Romania. From 266,652 (4.5% of the total population) in 1899, the Jewish population declined to 239,967 (3.3%) in 1912.

My Dad, Sam Reisler, was born in Bucharest, Rumania in about 1891. He 'Yas one of 0ve children. The Reisler family had a hard time in Rumania as all Jews did in Europe at that time.

My Father told me the story of a Passover Program that he remembered from his youth. He said that his parents warned him not to go out of the house during the time right around Easter, but one time he didn't listen and went out to see what all the noise was about in his neighborhood. He snuck outside to see the people taking away the family that lived across the street and setting them on fire . They were all burned to death only because they were Jews.

My Father's Father sold books and was a learned man in Europe. The family was very Orthodox and though my Father didn't go to public school like children do here, he attended a Heyder which was a Jewish school. He learned to read and write Hebrew, and he studied the Torah. He was taught by a Rabbi who was mean and beat the boys when they didn't know their lesson. Girls weren't allowed to go to school and were taught to do the household duties by their mother. They learned to keep a Jewish home.

My Father's family came to this country when he was quite young. He and his family came through Ellis Island, and they settled in Chicago, Illinois. My Dad didn't know any English. He had to start over in the first grade so that he could learn English. It didn't take him long to catch up with the other kids, and he graduated from high school at age seventeen. He wanted very much to go to college, and he worked very hard to get just enough money to, start college at the University of Chicago. He worked nights in the Chicago post office and rode the streetcar to school and studied on the way. At the end of the first session, he decided he couldn't afford to go to school, so he went to see the Dean of the school. He told him he wanted to go to school but he just couldn't afford to go. The Dean looked at his grades and said that he could have a scholarship for four years of college any time he wanted to use it.

Father's house. She graduated from high school and from the time that she was twelve she worked. She was a clerk at the dime store in Milwaukee and later she worked for the Milwaukee Bag Company in the office.

My Mom's real older brother Joe put himself through law school going to school at night and working as a bell hop at a downtown hotel during the day. He graduated from Marquette University Law School, and World War I broke out. He joined the Army and was an officer in the famous Rainbow Division. He went to France and fought in all the major battles that the American Doughboys took part in. During his tour of duty, he saved a young man's life who was assigned to his unit. When the war was over, the young man told my Uncle Joe that his father wanted to meet him. Joe went to see the grateful father, and the father turned out to be Adolph Zukor, President of Paramount Films. He offered young Joe a job in the film business, so Joe Seidelman began a successful career in the film industry which was at that time really in its infancy. On my gold charm bracelet you will find a gold ring which has the initials I.S. on it. The ring was made for my Mother in Europe and brought to her by her brother Joe. The ring is unusual as it is a locket too. My Mother really treasured this ring as do I. I hope that you, Dinah, will take good care of it and tell its story to the girls so that they too will cherish it. By the way, I think that you should divide the charms on my bracelet between the girls in the family. I will leave that to you.

I am not sure how my Mother, Ida, and my Father, Sam, met, but I know that they were married on December 26, 1922. My father was working for a chain department store called Kline Brothers. I was born in Chicago at the Francis Willard Hospital on August 23, 1924. My mother was pretty nervous about having a new baby, and she stayed for a while with my Grandparents while she learned something about taking care of a baby. My father was managing a store in Clinton, Iowa, and we lived in a house that was turned into apartments up on the bluff. I don't remember very much of that time. I know that I was sick and had a bad kidney infection and spent a lot of time in the hospital. I also remember standing up on a chair and winding

I never remember my Grandma sitting down at a table to eat. She was always helping everyone else. The house was full of aunts and uncles and cousins. Sometimes I would eat with my Grandpa in the kitchen. I remember he loved to eat soft-boiled eggs and would kind of slurp them through his teeth. He drank tea the Russian way. He would put a cube of sugar between his teeth and drink the tea through the sugar cube. I knew that he loved me. He had a short grey beard and always wore a yamulka. He would pat me on the head and say zeesah maidelah. That meant sweet girl. The old house was in the Jewish ghetto of Chicago on the west side. You could walk a block to Kedzie Avenue, and my Grandpa would buy me a big Kosher dill pickle from a barrel at the deli, or we would go to the drugstore and get a chocolate phosphate for a nickle. My they tasted good. One time when we were visiting, Lanie and I got the chicken pox. We were put in the bedroom off the big dining room. We would peek through the sliding doors and watch everyone eating and talking. Usually, we slept on the couch and the big lounge chair in the living room.

Daddy had to go to Grand Rapids, Michigan and close another store. After that we moved to Galesburg, Illinois. We moved into a little house on Bateman Street. I went to Silas Willard School. School was right across the street. I loved school, and I can still remember all my teachers and some of my friends. My best friend was Charlene Metcalf. I took music lessons and was learning to play the piano. My favorite thing to do was to read. I read my books and my Mom's books too. In second grade, I got my red bike. I thought I was really lucky as a lot of people didn't have enough to eat and some of the kids didn't have shoes to wear to school. Nobody threw anything away.

My Mom started a Sunday School, and they brought a girl from Palestine to teach us Hebrew. Her name was Malkah Friedman. Our classes met in the building upstairs of my Daddy's store. My Mom worked at Daddy's store, and we had a hired girl who took care of us and the house. We moved to a bigger house on Seminary Street. I remember walking to the little neighborhood store and getting an ice cream

that the Reisler house was a place to get a meal. There were so many homeless men traveling around looking for a job. I think I remember that my father was making \$60.00 a week. It doesn't sound like much, but that was a big salary in those days. We weren't rich, but we were far from poor. Still I remember when business was really bad how worried my father got. Everyone, even the children, knew people who lost their jobs and didn't have enough to pay the rent or buy food.

My little brother, David, was born on December 1, 1936. My Mother had a rough time as she was thirty-eight years old and having the baby was not easy for her. We had help in the house, and Mom seemed to feel sick a lot of the time. The next spring Dad told us we were moving to Clinton, Iowa. It was a town we had lived in when I was very little. I was really upset. I loved school, and I didn't want to leave my friends and my teachers. I was in junior high by then, and it was terribly hard for me. I don't remember Lanie being so sad as she was four years younger and looked at it as kind of an adventure. Daddy said that we would pack up our things and that he had found a wonderful cottage for us to stay in for the summer at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. He would go to Clinton and look for a house to rent and come to the Lake on the weekend when he could. I remember we would drive to Elkhart, Indiana to meet him when he came to the Lake. The Lake was a neat place, and I had a lot of friends. I had to help Mom a lot as David was a baby and there was a lot to do.

We had a lot of company as all our relatives came to see us. I remember Uncle Max Pittelman, who was the only fisherman in the family, would go out on the Lake and stay for hours. I really don't remember him bringing in any fish though. Mom would cook on a little two-burner kerosene stove on the back screened porch of the cottage. We had running water but no hot water, and outside of David we all took our baths in the Lake. There weren't paper plates, and we heated the water to do the dishes for each meal. I don't remember how we washed clothes, but I remember Mom boiling David's diapers on the stove and everything got so hot in the cottage when she washed his clothes. I remember using a scrub wash board to get the stains out and cutting up bar soap. I still can close my eyes and smell the big bars of P. & G. soap

Two of the things I truly enjoyed about school were music and acting in the school plays. We had a wonderful choir and also a good drama department, and those things made school a lot more fun for me. I remember my favorite role was Mary in "First Family." The narrow minded fundamentalist thought the play was anti-Christian because it depicted Jesus's family as real people. Of course, they didn't like the idea of a Jewish girl playing Jesus's mother. If there was a Jesus, he had to have a Jewish mother to be Jewish. That was typical of the problems that I had being a Jew in a small Iowa town in those days. Thank God it is better today!

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Of course, I went off to college when I finished high school. I really wanted to go to a small private school, but I went to the University of Iowa because it was cheaper and closer to home. I joined a sorority and settled into school life. I really didn't enjoy the life and found all kinds of projects and causes to work on besides school. It was a frustrating and unhappy time for me. After a year of being unhappy I decided that I should do something else. Our country was at war as the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, and a lot of my friends and people I knew were going off to fight in the war. The country needed nurses, and I decided that I would go to nursing school.

I chose Denver General Hospital in Denver, Colorado as my choice of schools. They were rated as a top school, and it was far from home so off I went. The school was a good one, but the work was very hard. When I first got there, we were issued student uniforms and probbie caps. We went to school six hours a day and spent three hours a day on the wards. The work was hard, and we had only Sundays off from classes. I had to do a lot of studying as, the courses were really hard too, and I wanted to keep my grades up. After the first three months, we went on eight hour shifts of ward duty and five hours a day classes. It was terribly hard work, but I learned a lot. The hospital was for really poor people who had no other place to go when they became sick. It was very hard and depressing work. My roommate, Kay Wood, quit and joined the Navy after about a year of training. She kept writing me and telling me how much she liked the Navy and she got to **?O** very interesting, important work. I

house. We didn't have a refrigerator that worked, so we would use a hole in the closet that was cold most of the time. The food either froze or spoiled. It was a pretty terrible place by today's standards, but we thought it was wonderful because it was ours. PopPop finished law school and did very well his last year. He started trying to find a good job and after some looking and worrying took a job in Fargo, North Dakota with the Vogel firm.

We came to Fargo in May of 1947. We loved living in Fargo. In 1952, we adopted Dinah Ann Bright. She was born in Fargo at St. Luke's Hospital on August 6, 1952. Her first home was an apartment house on the corner of Eighth Street South and Fourth Street. On December 1, 1952, we moved into our little house at 225 19th Avenue North, Fargo. Our next door neighbors were the McLellan family. When Dinah was six months old, we formally adopted her.

Fritzi (and David's) father, Sam Reisler, was born in Bucharest, Rumania, October 27, 1893. He was one of five children. The Reisler family had a hard time in Rumania as all Jews did in Europe at that time.

Sam told the story of a Passover Pogrom that he remembered from his youth. He said that his parents warned him not to go out of the house during the time right around Easter; but one time he didn't listen, and he went out to see what all the noise was about in his neighborhood. He snuck outside to see the people taking away the family that lived across the street and setting them on fire. They were all burned to death only because they were Jews.

Sam's father sold books and was a learned man in Europe. The family was very orthodox. Though Sam didn't go to public school like children do here, he attended a heder, which was a Jewish school. He learned to read and write Hebrew, and he studied the torah. He was taught by a rabbi who was mean and beat the boys when they didn't know their lesson. Girls weren't allowed to go to school and were taught to do the household duties by their mother. They learned to keep a Jewish home.

Sam's family came to this country when he was quite young. He and his family came through Ellis Island, and they settled in Chicago Illinois. Sam

didn't know any English. He had to start over in first grade so that he could learn English. It didn't take him long to catch up with the other kids, and he graduated from high school at age seventeen. He wanted very much to go to college, and he worked nights in the Chicago post office and rode the street car to school and studied on the way. At the end of the first session he decided he couldn't afford to go to school, so he went to see the dean of the school. He told him he wanted to go to school but he just couldn't afford to go. The dean looked at his grades and said he could have a scholarship for four years of college any time he wanted to use it.

Sam was probably one of the brightest men I (Fritzi) have ever known. However, his family needed him to help support them, and he dropped out of school after two years.

He served as a soldier in World War One. He went to France but did not fight in any major battles. He brought back the old field glasses that we have at the lake and the petit point picture of the three little girls that Dinah has in her home. Those things are real treasures, and I thought you should know about them. Sam's parents were **Mayer and Anna Reisler**. Dinah's middle name is after her great-grandmother Anna.

David's mother, Ida Seidelman, was born in Russia in a village outside the city of Kiev. (December 16, 1898). She had two older brothers. Her mother died when she was born. She lived with a Russian peasant woman until she was about three years old. The woman nursed her with her other babies, and they lived in a hut with a big oven in the center. They cooked their food in the oven and at night they put a mattress on the oven and went to sleep, all in one bed. Ida's brother died of scarlet fever while they were still in Europe. Her father left the children with the grandparents and went off to the United States with another woman whom he later married.

Ida's grandparents brought the two children, Joe and Ida, with them when they left Russia. They settled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Ida's grandparents died when she was still going to school, so she went to live with her aunts. First one would take her for a while, and then the other. These two wonderful women were Auntie Schifra Rice and Aunt Jennie Pittleman. I have some wonderful memories of these two women in my growing up years.

Ida's father, Henry Seidelman, had another family by his second wife. They were Ida's half brothers and half sister. Their names were Max, Sam, and Selma Seidelman. My mother was truly an orphan, as she was not welcome in her father's house. She graduated from high school and from the time that she was twelve she worked. She was a clerk at the dime store in Milwaukee, and later she worked for the Milwaukee Bag Company in the

office.

Ida's real older brother, Joe, put himself through law school, going to school at night and working as a bell hop at a downtown hotel during the day. He graduated from Marquette University Law School, and World War One broke out. He joined the army and was an officer in the famous Rainbow Division. He went to France and fought in all the major battles that the American doughboys took part in. During his tour of duty, he saved a young man's life who was assigned to his unit. When the war was over, the young man told my uncle Joe that his father wanted to meet him. Joe went to see the grateful father, and the father turned out to be Adolph Zukor, president of Paramount Films. He offered young Joe a job in the film business, so Joe Seidelman began a successful career in the film industry, which was at that time really in its infancy. On my gold charm bracelet you will find a gold ring which has the initials I.S. on it. The ring was made for my mother in Europe and brought to her by her brother Joe. The ring is unusual as it is a locket too. My mother really treasured the ring, as do I. I hope that you, Dinah, will take good care of it and tell its story to the girls so that they too will cherish it. By the way, I think that you should divide the charms on my bracelet between the girls in the family. I will leave that to you.

(Milwaukee journal November 29, 1945

"Biggest" film group officers started here

Two former Milwaukee men and J. Arthur Rank joined in a new alliance. Two men from Milwaukee and a British multimillionaire have got together to form what is expected to be the biggest motion picture producing combination in the world. The men from Milwaukee are Nate J. Blumberg and Joseph Seidelman, president and vice president respectively of Universal Pictures Inc. The Briton is J. Arthur Rank, the industrialist who has vowed to set up a British film industry to rival Hollywood.

Blumberg and Seidelman with several colleagues have just returned to New York from several weeks of conferences with Rank in London. Formal announcement of the collaboration of their British and Hollywood studios will be made shortly, it is indicated in New York dispatches.

The amalgamation will produce not only standard size film but will go vigorously into the 16 mm education film, a medium close to the heart of Rank, a staunch Methodist who entered the picture business by making

nonprofit religious short subjects.

Blumberg who is widely known in Milwaukee theater circles was born in Racine, 51 years ago. His family moved to Milwaukee when he was a boy, and Nate sold the journal downtown, worked in theaters, ran errands for the actors and took bit roles in plays. As a young man he was named manager of the Rialto theater in Racine, and then became a district manager of Universal theaters in Wisconsin

In 1931 Blumberg joined the RKO radio organization as division manager for western theaters, and he was promoted to RKO vice president and general manager of theater operations. In 1938 Universal named him its president and the company, which had been losing heavily, has shown big profits since.

Another former journal newsboy is Joe Seidelman who operated at 3rd and state streets, (Nate's corner was third and grand Ave). Joe was born in Milwaukee, attended the Siefert grade school and west division high school, and was an office boy for the law firm of Charles I Aarons and John M. Niven. He studied law at Marquette University and was graduated in 1917, just in time to join the army. As a lieutenant he served in France with the famous fighting 69th, and became a good friend of father Francis Duffy, the chaplain and col. William (wild bill) Donovan)

Another big man Joe met in his war years was Adolph Zukor the Paramount film executive, who gave him a job in New York. Joe worked up to become chief of foreign distribution for Paramount and later for Columbia pictures. When Blumberg became head of Universal, he took Seidelman into the organization as executive vice president and foreign chief.

During the Second World War Seidelman again had the opportunity to serve under his old superior, Col. Donovan, in the office of strategic services.

Joe, who was born humbly, is an American success story. His father, Henry Seidelman who operated an umbrella shop on Vliet St used to tell Joe: America is a land of opportunity my boy. Work hard. You can get someplace.)

Fritzi: I am not sure how my mother, Ida, and my father, Sam, met. But I know they were married on December 26, 1922. My father was working for a chain department store called Kline brothers. I was born in Chicago at the

Francis Willard hospital on August 23, 1924. My mother was pretty nervous about having a new baby, and she stayed for a while with my grandparents while she learned something about taking care of a baby. My father was managing a store in Clinton Iowa, and we lived in a house that was turned into apartments on the bluff. I don't remember very much of that time. I know that I was sick and had a bad kidney infection and spent a lot of time in the hospital. I also remember standing up on a chair and winding an old phonograph and playing all the popular tunes of the day. I think I learned all the words to all those songs and still remember many of them. Before I was four, dad was transferred to Cedar Rapids Iowa. The economy of the country wasn't too stable.

My sister Elaine was born just before we left Clinton. (6-2-28). I remember I went to kindergarten in Cedar Rapids and I remember being picked as postmistress on Valentine's Day and getting my picture in the paper. We lived in a house on the edge of town, and I remember picking violets in the woods with my mom.

The depression came and dad was transferred to Hammond Indiana. We lived upstairs in a very tall house. I remember daddy being very worried as things were very bad in the country, and he worried that he would not have a job. There were a lot of people that didn't have food or shoes or a place to live. Elaine got really sick and my mom had to take us to Chicago on the train every week to see the doctor. Everyone in the house was very worried.

We visited grandma and grandpa in Chicago. Grandpa had a little factory on the back porch of his house. He had a lady who helped him make men's ties. Fritzi loved to sit on a stool and watch them cut the beautiful silk and use the hand machine to make the ties. Their house was full of lots of people. Grandma was always cooking. She kept kosher and had two kitchens: one in the basement for meat and one on the first floor for the milk meals. Fritzi couldn't talk to her as Fritzi didn't understand Yiddish and she didn't speak English. She was so tiny and was always working so hard.

I remember sitting with grandma at the synagogue. No one rode on the Shabbat.

I never remember my grandma sitting down at the table to eat. She was always helping everyone else. Grandpa had a short grey beard and always wore a yarmulke. The house was in the Jewish ghetto of Chicago on the west side.

The family moved to Galesburg Illinois and Fritzi loved school, had friends, read books, and took piano lessons. Ida started a Sunday school and

brought a girl from Palestine to teach them Hebrew. Her name was Malkah Friedman.

In 1936 Sam bought a new car and they took a trip to Colorado. Ida was pregnant with David. The depression was terrible and the farmers were in terrible trouble. There had been no rain to speak of and dust was everywhere. The fields looked like piles of dirty sand drifted against the fence lines. A gas station man told Sam that he hadn't raised so much as a radish in almost four years. Sam asked: "why do you stay here?" the man said "I haven't got enough money to move." Sam was making \$60 a week. It doesn't sound like much, but that was a big salary in those days.

David Reisler was born on December 1, 1936. Ida had a rough time as she was 38 years old and having the baby was not easy for her. They had help in the house, and Ida seemed to feel sick a lot of the time. The next spring Sam told the family they were moving to Clinton Iowa. It was a town they had lived in when Fritzi was very little. She was really upset. She loved school and didn't want to leave her friends and teachers. She was in junior high by then, and it was terribly hard for her. She doesn't remember Lanie being so sad as she was four years younger and looked at it as kind of an adventure. Sam said that they would pack up their things and that he had found a wonderful cottage for the family to stay in for the summer at Lake Geneva Wisconsin. He would go to Clinton and look for a house to rent and come to the lake on the weekend when he could. Fritzi remembered they would drive to Elkhart Indiana to meet him when he came to the lake. The lake was a neat place and Fritzi had a lot of friends. She had to help mom a lot as David was a baby and there was a lot to do.

Just before school started, the family moved from the Lake to Clinton. Fritzi missed her friends and rebelled against authority. There were practically no Jewish families in Clinton so they were practically alone in celebrating the holidays.

While they were in Clinton Ida developed arthritis and was sick a lot of the time. Her knee swelled up and she had a great deal of trouble walking and a lot of pain. The knee never got any better for her whole life.

After high school Fritzi went to nursing school in Colorado, but early on got an attack of appendicitis and was really very sick for a while. After she got out of the hospital she worked on the wards for a while, and then joined the navy.

She met Myron Bright on Thanksgiving Day 1946 and married him less than a month later on December 26, 1946.