

Yiddish far alleh taug

Yiddish for Everyday

Memories as published in
The National Jewish Post & Opinion
2012-2014



By Henya Chalet
The Yiddish name of Mrs. A. Helen Feinn

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*Cover photo: Mrs. Feinn with
her mother, c. early 1960s.*

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appreciation for Mrs. Feinn, by
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October 3, 2012

What My Clever Mother Used to Say

Yiddish speaking friends listen “up”, and let’s speak a little. Not a literary Yiddish, but a common every day one:

- 1) ***Geh nisht mit shlechteh chaverim.***
(Don’t associate with bad friends.)
- 2) ***Ess ah bisseleh nor zaul daus zein eppes goot.***
(Eat a small amount but be sure it is something special.)
- 3) ***Zeye nisht farnotisht.*** (Don’t be a fanatic!)
- 4) ***Vaus der mensch lehrent zich aus gait nisht farloren.***
(Whatever a person learns never gets lost.)
- 5) ***Ah mol iz besser ahz meh shvaikt.***
(Sometimes the best answer is none at all.)
- 6) ***Ahz meh lehpt der lehpt mehn.***
(If you live long enough everything will happen.)
- 7) ***Der mensch dahf zach tzoo grayten tzoom shtarben, nor meh darf nisht varten. Ahz der malach ahmauress haut dein kvitel vet err deer gehfinen.*** (We should prepare ourselves for the inevitable death, but don’t sit around waiting for it to happen. When the angel of death has your ticket, he will find you wherever you are.)
- 8) ***Ah zay vee meh lept ahzay shtarpt mehn.***
(The way you live your life is the way you die.)
- 9) ***Ahz meh kaucht shane, macht mehn ah bissel mere effshare veht imehtzer kumen.*** (When you’re already cooking, cook a bit more – never can tell when someone might drop in.)
- 10) ***Ah mol iz besser ahz meh hert nisht ah zay goot.***
[On her deafness] (Some things are better not heard.)

November 7, 2012

What My Clever Mother Used to Say
(part 2)

Hert zach tzoo Yiddishe frient, dee mahme vil eich zaugen nauch ah por verter. (Listen up Yiddish friends, my mother has a few more words for you.)

- 1) **Mitt ayn tauchess ken men nischt tansen auf tzveh chasehness.** (Since you only have one behind, you can't dance at two weddings at the same time.)
- 2) **Ahz meh vil dem maulzeit orentlich halten dahf menem in tzveh tzoohsch palten.** (If you want to be fair, sometimes you have to divide the portions.)
- 3) **Ahz meh grate nischt aun erev Shabbas, haut men nischt auf Shabbas.** (If you don't prepare ahead as in the case of Shabbas, on Shabbas it's too late.)
- 4) **Far altz coomt ah-tzeit.** (Everything in its own time.)
- 5) **Farnem zich dee hent vet zein shtil dee kaup.**
(Busy your hands and your head will be quiet.)
- 6) **Altz in aynem iz nischt tau by kaynem.**
(In life, no one has it all.)

On the passing of our youngest sister who had been ill for many years, my mother comforted us with these words:

- 7) **Gaut vase vauserr toot.** (G-d knows what's best.)
 - 8) **Gelt feart dos velt.** (Money rules the world.)
- On marriage, mother had this advice for her five daughters:*
- 9) **Cook nischt far shanekeit auder reichkeit, cook far menschlichkeit.** (In a husband, don't look for beauty or riches, look for good character.)

In the spring when the trees and flowers started to blossom she would comment:

- 10) **Altz coomt tzuh rick fun erd nor der mensch nischt.**
(Everything returns from the earth except man.)

December 5, 2013

How We Celebrated Chanukah

Yiddisheh kinder hert zich tzoo un mir vellen redder vegen Chanukah. Oy Chanukah; Chanukah ah yom tov ah shayner. (Yiddish friends listen up and we will talk about the holiday of Chanukah.)

Ven ich hob geven ah klayneh kinde flegen mine mutters mishpaucheh cumen tzoo zamen bye dee bubbeh un zaydehfar Chanukah. (When I was a child my mother's family came together for a Chanukah get together at my grandparent's.)

Mir flegen aun tzinden dee licht un zingen shaneh lidehlach. (We would light the candles and sing lovely Chanukah songs.)

Der nauch iz geven ah Chanukah sudeh. (After the lighting of the candles came a wonderful feast.) ***Gehbroteneh ganz dee bubbeh haut gehmacht schmaltz fun der ganz un gehmacht dee latkes mit dee schmaltz.*** (Roasted goose with latkes that grandma fried in the goose fat that she rendered.) ***Dos haut gehat zayer ah gooten tam un haut farshmeckt dee ganseh hoyz.*** (These latkes had a special taste and the odors permeated the entire house.)

Nauchen sudeh haut mehn geh shplit in dreidel un geh gessen nislach. (After dinner we played dreidel and ate assorted nuts that we had to shell.) ***Unzereh elteren flegen shpilen corten.*** (Our parents played cards.) ***Ahzeh hoben mir farbracht mit unzer mishpaucheh.*** (This is the way our family celebrated Chanukah.)

Tzoom letzden haut der zaydeh gehgeben alleh kinder ah zilber dauler. (At the very end of the evening we would all line up and grandpa gave each of us a silver dollar.) ***Dee tantes hoben unzh gehgeben tzen cent.*** (All the aunts each gave us a dime.) ***Mir hoben zich zayer gehfrayt mit undzer Chanukah gelt.*** (We were very happy with our Chanukah money.)

Haynt iz ah andersheh velt ich vunder tzoo zich ahlayn, velen mineh kinder un kindz kinder hauben dee shaneh gehdanken en zayer eltereh yorn vee ich haub? (The world is so different today sometimes I wonder and think to myself, will my children and grandchildren have the wonderful memories of Chanukah that I do now that I am old?)

Haut ah fraylachen Chanukah un esst dee hayseh zoodekeh latkes mit ayer mishpaucheh. (I hope all of you will enjoy some piping hot pancakes together with your families.)



Mrs. Feinn (front row, far right) with her parents and grandparents and many other family members. c. 1930s.

January 16, 2013

Chicago Winters When I Was a Girl

Yiddisheh kinderlach hert zich tzoo un ich vel eych dertzalen ah bissel vegn mineh yungeh yoren. (Yiddish lovers listen and I will tell you a bit of my life story when I was a little girl.)

Vinter is geven zayer kalt un greyleh shnayen in shtaut Chicageh. (The winters were very cold and snowy in Chicago.)

By unz in hoyz flegen mere brennen holtz in ahn ayven, nor dos haut alleh mol geven kalt. (We had no central heat only a wood burning stove, however we were always cold.)

Shabbes fleckt der tateh gayn frel in shul un dee mahmeh fleckt nemen alleh finif maydlach tzoo er in bet aryn. (On Shabbat papa went to shul very early and mama would take her five little girls into her bed to stay warm.)

Ich gehdenk nauch dee grayseh kishen un dee paraneh vos zee haut gebracht fun Europe. (She had these very large pillows and down comforter that she had brought with her from Europe.)

Mere hauben zich goot aungehvaremt. Zee fleckt unz lehenen dem Yiddisher zeitung der Forvetz. Ah Bintele Breve gehdenkich ich nach hynt. (She read the *Jewish Forward* to us. I especially remember the Letters to the Editor called, "Bintel Brief". Some of the stories were very sad.)

Az der tateh iz geh coomen fun shul iz geven tzoo essen ah hayser cholent. Der cholent haut far shmeckt dee gahnsey hoyz. (When papa came home from shul we had hot cholent. The aroma from cholent permeated the entire house.)

Haynt ahz ich bin kalt, ken ich machen varem in ayn minute nor dos dervaremt nisht mein neshaumeh. (Today if the house is cold it only takes a few minutes to heat up, however it does not warm my soul.)

Zol ach zein varem in der neshaumeh. (May your soul as well as your body be warmed.)

February 13, 2013

A Freilichen Purim
(A Happy Purim)

“Haynt iz Purim morgen iz ouz, git mir ah groyshen un varft mir ahroys.” (“Today is Purim tomorrow it’s over, so give me a penny and I’ll be gone.”)

Many years ago, little children would run from house to house in their little *shtetl* singing this on Purim. I heard it from my grandmother, as a little girl, and I still remember it.

Dem ershter yor ven ich hob gehcumen tzu mein haim in California, haub ich zayer gehbenkt far mein mishpokeh.

(The first year I came to my new home in California I was very lonely for my family and friends.)

Nu menschen vos tult men? (So people, what does one do?)

Meh macht zicht ah nyeh mishpokem. (You make yourself a new family.)

Ah Yid gehfint zich ah veg! (A Jew finds a way!)

Siz iz geven Purim un ich haub gehbackt hamentashen un andereh ziseh zachen, un gehbracht shalachmones tzu meineh nigheh frient. (It was Purim and I baked *hamentashen* and other goodies and I brought *shalachmones* (portions) to all my new friends.)

Ich haub gehbeten ah por froyen cumen tzoo mir un mir hauben gehleyent dee Megillah Esther un geh shlaugen Hamen mit unzereh gragers. (I asked some women to come to my home and we all read the Megillah Esther and made noise with our groggers when we heard Hamen’s name.)

Ah zeh macht men nigheh frient ahz meh vil hauben frient, muz men zein ah frient. (This is the way I made new friends. To have a friend you must first be a friend.)

Nu fargest nit braingen shalachmones tzu ayereh alteh frient, un macht nigheh frient. (So don’t forget, bring

shalachmones [Purim gifts] to your old friends and make new friends.)

Ah gooter frient is ah mahtoneh fun Gaut. (A good friend is a gift from God.)



Mrs. Feinn (far right) with her mother and four sisters. c.1940s.

March 13, 2013

Meineh Shayneh Gehdanke Fun Pesach

(My Good Memories of Passover)

Ich gehdenk ahz glych nach Purim flegen mir aun hayben ramen tzu machen dee hoyz Pesachdik. Mir hauben nisht gehhat kein dindzt flegen mir alleh helfen der mahme.

(I remember as soon as Purim was over we started cleaning to ready the house for Passover. We did not have maids so all of us helped mother.)

Erev Yom Tov, zaire free fleckt mein mutter un ich aus pahcken dee teller, teplach un alleh farshaydeneh zachen far dos kauch tzimmer. Ich haub daus zayer gehglichen taun der far vaus dee mahmeh fleckt der tzeylen ah myseh mit yeder zach vaus iz gevein un daus barrel.

(Very early the morning of the first seder night my mother and I would unpack the large wooden barrel that held all the Passover dishes, pots and other things used in the Passover kitchen. I loved doing this as my mother had a story about every item we unpacked. The barrels were very large and it took several hours to unpack. I still remember many things that we unpacked.)

Daus klayneh kestehleh vaus haut gehalten dee Swee-Touch-Nee tay. Ich haub nauch meineh. Ahz meh haut gehkayft ah funt tay flegen zey geben ah mahtahneh ayn yor hauben zehgehben ah grayseh teller un zex klayneh tellerlach far frucht. Ich haub daus nauch heint. Mein yerusheh fun der mahmeh.

(One was the little red and gold metal box that held the Sweet-Touch-Nee tea. Every little girl I knew kept her special things in them. I still have mine. Ask your mother or *bubbe* [grandmother] if she remembers them. If you bought one pound of tea, you were given a gift. One year mother got a lovely bowl and six

small bowls for fruit. We used these for compote every year. Before mother died she gave them to me.)

Dee shayneh gedanken zeinen mein yerusheh fun meineh elteren. Seh iz nisht tauh in der velt gehnoog gelt tzu kayfen meineh shayneh gedanken fun meineh yungeh yoren.

(These lovely memories are my inheritance from my parents. There is not enough money in the world for me to buy my lovely memories of my childhood.)

Haut ah Freylachen Pesach mit ayer mishpauche, un frient. Nempt ah bissel zeit tzu machen shayneh gedanken. Daus iz zayer ah gooteh un ah naytahcheh zach.

(Have a very Happy Passover with family and friends. Take a little time to make good memories. This is a very good and important thing to do.)



Mrs. Feinn's husband and her mother-in-law. c.1950s.

April 10, 2013

Fun Vanen Heybt Zach Aun ah Libeh?

(How Does a Love Affair Begin?)

*Mein libeh haut zach aun gehalten ahz ich haub zich
gehlerent zein ah nurse.*

(My love affair started while I was a student nurse at Mt. Sinai (Jewish) Hospital in Chicago.)

*Mein shziger iz geven krank in hauspehtal un ich fleg err
bauden un iber biten deh kleyder. Ich fleg reddem Yiddish mit
alleh dee eltereh baubehs un zadeys, un zay hauben mir zayer
gehlichen tzileb daus.*

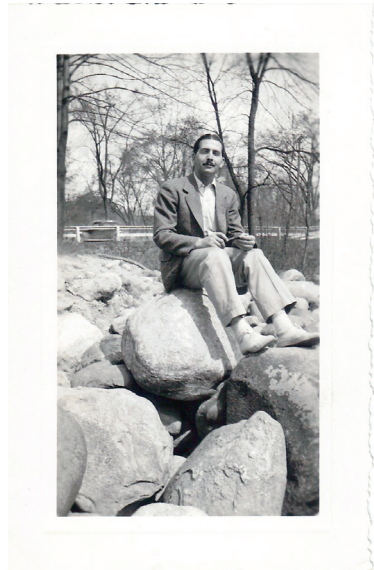
(My [future] mother-in-law was a patient when I was a student. When I bathed her and changed her linen I would always speak to her in Yiddish, as I would to all the grandmas and grandpas. All of them really loved me because I spoke Yiddish.)

*Ayn taug haut zee mir
gezaukt ahz ear zun ah soldat
gait ear cumen zen. Zee haut
gevault ahz err zun zault
bahkenenzach mit mir.*

(One day she told me her son the soldier was coming to visit her. She was very anxious for her son to make my acquaintance.)

*Ich haub zach balt far liebt
mit ear zun der soldat.* (I fell in love at first sight of her son the soldier.)

*Ah zeh heybt zach aun ah
ehmehseh libeh, doz iz geven
bahshert.* (That's the way true love begins, it is destined.)



Mrs. Feinn's husband, Harry.
c. 1939.

June 12, 2013

Meineh Yungeh Yorn

(My Early Years)

Yiddisheh kinder hert zach tzu ich vil reddem mit eyech hynt fun meineh yungeh yorn. (Listen and I will tell you about my early years.) **Ich haub zich gehaudevot in oremkeit, auber ich haub alleh mol geven tzufreden mit vos haut pahsert. Der far vos ich haub gehat mein mutters mishpaucheher zayer naunt.** I was raised in (financial) poverty. However I was always happy with what was going on. I believe this was because we lived so close to all of my mother's family.)

Meineh chaverim zeinen geven meineh koozeenez. Mir flegen zen dee Baubeh un Zaydeh kimat yeder taug.

(My friends were my cousins. We would see Bubee [our grandmother] and Zydee [our grandfather] almost every day.)

Heint iz ahn andersheh velt. Yeder mensch gait

vuh zein parnahseh iz. Mishpauchehs zeinen aus gehsprayt iber der ganser velt. Ah sach kinder vaynen veit avek fun zayer bubbeh un zaydeh. (Today the world is very different. Everyone goes to where their work takes them. Families are spread over all the world. Many children live very far from their grandmothers and grandfathers.) **Heint reddem zay offen Internet. Zeinen zeh tzu freedem? Ich freg eich?** (Today they speak to each other on the Internet. Are they happy? I ask you?)



Mrs. Feinn's husband, Harry, with their children, (l – r) David, Naomi, and Dan, 1956.

August 14, 2013

Childhood Summers in Chicago

Ah gooten tog eich Yiddisheh kinder. Ich vil eich fregen ah frahgeh. Zeit ear hays? (A good day to you all my Yiddish friends. I want to ask you a question. Are you hot?)

Mein mahmeh haut gehot ah naytzeh far altz. (My mother had a solution for all her problems.)

Vehn mir hauben gehven klayeh kinder in shtaut Chicahgeh flegen dee zummers zein zayre hays. Mir hauben nisht geh kent chappen dem autem in hoyz. (When we were small children living in the city of Chicago, summers were very hot. You could not catch your breath indoors.)

Arum fear ahzayger flekt dee mahmeh ein pahken dem essen uhn mir flegen gayn tzoo ah park nisht veyet foon unz uhn zach aup killen. Mir flegen zitsen unter ah grayseh baym. (Around 4 p.m., mother would pack a picnic supper and we would go to a park close to our home and cool off. We would sit under a large tree.)

Mein tahteh flekt cumen nauch der arbite un mir flegen alleh essen tzoo zahmen. (My father would join us after work and we would all eat supper together.)

Ahz daus is gevoren finster flegen mir layfen unter der vasser shpritzer zach aup killen. Der nauch flegen mir shlofen ahfen graus. Zayer free flegen mir gayn tzoo rik ah haym. (After dark we would all run through the water sprinkler to cool down. We would fall asleep on the grass. In the early dawn we would walk back home.)

Dos iz geven mein mahmehs naytzeh far dee hayseh vetter. Siz nisht gehven kine luftkiller in der tzeyet. (This was my mother's solution for the hot weather. There were no air conditioners available to us at that time.)

September 25, 2013

Childhood Memories in the Sukkah

Ah gooten un gehzunter yor alleh meineh Yiddish lehenershaft un frynt. (A good and healthy New Year to all my Yiddish readership and friends.)

Ich vil eich dertzalen vegen mein zaydes sukeh. (I want to tell you about my zayde's sukkah.)

Yeder yor glych nauch Yom Kippur fleckt der zayde tzuzamen shtelen zein sukeh. (Every year right after Yom Kippur my zayde would put up his sukkah.)

Err haut dos gehmacht fuhn bretter un zeh flegen zich tzuknaytzen tzu avet laygen. (He made them from wooden boards and they would fold up to store.)

Mein baubeh fleckt bah shanen dee sukeh mit ah forhang ahf dos klehneh vindeh un klehneh eppelach fuhn zayer baim. (My grandmother would beautify the sukkah with little curtains on the window and she hung crabapples from their tree.)

Yeder nacht flegen zeh einladen ayn taucher un eareh kinder essen in zayer sukeh. (Every night they would invite one [of their five] daughter[s] and her children to eat in their sukkah.)

Shabbos nauch shul flegen dee gantzeh mishpokhe zein tzuzamen far Kiddish in der zaydes sukeh. (Shabbos after shul the entire family would have Kiddish in zayde's sukkah.)

Mein zayde fleckt essen un shlaufen in der sukeh. (My grandfather would eat and sleep in the sukkah.)

Daus zeinen meineh gooteh zichroynes fuhn dem leiber yomtov sukahs. (These are my good memories of the loving holiday of Sukkos.)

November 20, 2013

Daus Yiddish Vort far Heint.

(The Yiddish Word for Today.)

Der zummer gait avek un balt vet shane veren kalt.

(Summer is over and soon we will be getting cold weather.)

Ahz ich haub geven ah clayneh ven der vetter is gevoren kalt flegen mir gain yehder mitvauch in shvitz baud. (When I was a little girl living in Chicago, as soon as the weather was cold every Wednesday we went to the Turkish bath house.)

Mir flegen zach tresen dorten mit mein baube un mine mutters fear shvoester un zayereh maydlach. (We would meet up with my grandmother and my mother's four sister and their little girls.)

Mir flegen zach goot oys varehmen in der hayser shvitz. Dee mahmeh fleckt unz vashen fuhn kaup biz dee fiss mit zayfik bletter fuhn ah baym. Klop, klop in playtzeh. Zee fleckt zaugen daus is goot far dee bluten. (We would get our bodies nice and warm in the hot steam room. Mother would wash us from head to toe with soapy oak leaves tied together. Smack, smack she would go on our backs. She would say it's good for your circulation.)

Nauch daus baud flegen mir zach laygen ahf klayneh betlach in ah sinstereh tzimmer un shlafef far ah halbeh shpundeh. (After the bath we would all lay down on cots in a dark room and sleep for about a half hour.)

Nauch der rue flegen mir alleh eppes essen un trinken ah glehzeleh chai. (After the rest we would have something to eat and a glass of hot tea.)

Ich haub daus zayer gehglichen un heint ahz ich bin alt kumt mir daus alleh maul in zinen ahz daus vert kalt. (I loved this very much and today when I am old I always think of this when the weather gets cold.)

February 5, 2014

Mein Mahmeh Dee Shneiderkeh

(My Mother the Dressmaker)

Ich haub geh kayft tzveh klayneh shticklach vareh vaus ich haub dos zayer geglichen. (I had purchased two small remnants of fabric not really knowing why but just because I liked them so much.) *Dee Mahmeh iz geven balt finifun oxtzick yor.* (Mama was about 85 at the time and had been a dressmaker most of her life.) *Ich haub ear gebeten, "Effsher kenst do mir machen ah klayd fun dos shticklach vareh."* (I asked her if she thought she could make me a simple outfit from these small pieces of fabric.)

Dos haut ear nisht gehnumen lang tzu ausklerin vaus tzu machen fuhn dos. (It did not take her long to put her ideas together and soon she was cutting out a pattern from the brown paper [cleaners] bag.) *Zee haut dos gehdrayt ahin un aher biz vanen zee haut dos gehmacht vee zee haut gevault.* (She twisted and turned the fabric on the paper pattern she had cut out over and over again until – Viola! – she made it work for her.) *Tzu mir haut dos geven ah vunder ahz zee haut nauch gehkent machen eppes fuhn gornisht.* (I marveled that her great enthusiasm for creating "something out of nothing" was still there as I remembered it.)

In ear gantzen leben fleckt zee dos tzoeres drayen ah hin un ah her biz vanen zee haut dos goot gehmacht. (The same twisting and turning played a role in every facet of her life. She lived through many wars and depressions in her lifetime of 98 years.) *Zee haut geh glichen altz tzu zein richtig, ahz meh haut dos gehzen auder nisht gehzen.* (She worked her problems twisting and turning them until she made them work for her.) *Zee haut unz gehlerent "ahz meh nemt tzeit machen eppes macht men vee goot mehken."* (She took great pride in her

finished product; the inside had to be just as well tailored as the outside. "Anything you spend your time on should reflect your very best," she would say.)

Fuhn vaus ich haub gehzen in mein mahmehs leben haub ich zach aus gehlerent ahz der leben is amol nisht gring, dahf men drayen ah hin un ah her biz vanen ear mach dos goot. (I learned so many positive things from watching my Mama sew a garment. Life is not always easy, just take the "fabric" and twist and turn it one way then another until you make it work for you.)

Zaugt nisht ken maul ahz ear kent nisht, haut haufening ahz ear velt dos drayen ah hin un ah her biz vanen ear vet dos machen goot far eych. (DON'T EVER GIVE UP HOPE – you can always make something out of nothing. Just use my Mama's formula: twisting and turning. I remember so many ways she had for making it work for her. Even when she had ample fabric she never wasted.)

Macht eppes fun gornisht dos iz ah gooteh zach far dos velt. (Remember to make something out of nothing. It's good for the environment.)



Mrs. Feinn's (far left) with her mother and four sisters. c.1982.

March 19, 2014

My First Income – 25 Cents a Day

Hyent vil ich dertzaylen eyech ah myseh fun myne kinder yoren. (Today I will tell you a story about my childhood.)

Mein mutter haut gehat finif shvester, un mir hauben gehvaint zayer naunt tzuzamen. (My mother had five sisters and we all lived very close together.)

Dee tante Anneh is gehven dee reicheh. Ear man haut gehat ah gehsheft fun allerlay essen varg. Dry maul ah vauch fleckt zee gain oyshelfen em in gehsheft. (My aunt Anna was the rich aunt. Her husband had a small supermarket. Three times a week she would go to the shop to help him.)

Ich haub gehven ah maydel fun tzen auder elef yor alt ven zee haut gehbetten mein mutter effsher ken ich zein ah nonsheh far ear tauchter duchen zummer. Dee maydel is gehven dry auder fear yor alt. Mein mutter haut dos nisht gehvauld lauzen mir gain, nor ich haub ear eingehret. Dee tante haut mir gehzaught zee vet mir bah tzaulen finif un tzvantzik cent ah taug. Ich haub daus zayer gehvauld. (I was a girl of ten or eleven years when my aunt asked my mother if I could babysit her daughter that summer. The girl was three or four years old. My mother did not want me to do this, but I persuaded her. My aunt said she would pay me 25 cents a day and I really wanted this very much.)

Dee maydel is gehven zayer ah gooteh un fleckt shlofen mit taug. Dee tante fleckt mir gehben andehreh arbeit tzu taun. Ich fleg aus pressen dee maydelehs clayder un zee fleckt mir lauzen arbeit in kich, aupshalen dee cartaufel, un farshaydeneh andereh zachen. (The little girl was a very good child, and would sleep all afternoon. My aunt would ask me to press the child's dresses. I would also help in the kitchen peeling potatoes and other small tasks.)

Ich haub nisht gezaught mein mutter veefil arbeit ich haub gehtaun. (I never told my mother how much work I had to do.)

Dos is gehven dee airshteh gelt vaus ich haub ahlayn fardint un ich haub gehven zayer tzufreeden mit zich ahlayn. (This was the first money I earned myself and I was very happy and proud of myself.)

August 6, 2014

Dee yungeh yoren gayen aveck
(The young years go by)

Ah gooten morgen tzu eich tyereh Yiddisheh kinder. Onshuldicht mir far derfar vaus ich haub nisht gehret mit eich far etlehcheh maunahten. Ich haub geven nisht gezundt, uhn in hauspital. (Good morning, my dear Yiddish children. Please excuse me for not writing to you these past few months. I was ill and in the hospital.)

Danken Gaut, ich haub gehhaht a gooteh refueh, un ich bin yeder taug besser. (Thank G-d I have made a good recovery and get better every day.)

Ich vil eich zaugen vaus haut pahsirt mit mir hient in der free. (I want to tell you what happened to me this morning.)

Ich cook ahrine in daus shpigel un ich zeh ah alteh froy shtayt mir onkegen, un ich der ken ear nisht, frehgich ear "Vair bintz duh?" Un vaus tuhst do in mein shpigel? (I looked into the mirror and there was an old woman that I didn't recognize starring back at me. So I asked her, "Who are you and what are you doing in my mirror?")

Entfert zee mir "Daus bin ich Henya Chaiet, un ich vayn shane dau mit dir far ninetzick yor." (She replied,

“It’s me Henya Chaiet and I have been living here with you for ninety years.”)

Mineh tyereh kinder ah zay layfen aveck dee yungeh yoren, un meh vert alt un meh ken zich ahlayn nisht derkenen in daus shpigel. (My dear children, this is the way the “young years” fly by and you look at yourself in the mirror one day and you do not recognize yourself.)

Halt tyer yehder taug, un tuht epess goot far zich ahlayn un far daus velt vaus mir ahleh vaynen in. (Hold dear every day and do something good for yourself and for the world we all live in.)

Tzen tehg far Pesach haub ich (kein ein horeh) gevoren nintzich yor alt, un ich dahnk gaut vaus ich ken nauch zein mit myneh kinder, un kinds kinder, un mit aleh myneh gooten frynt. (Ten days before Passover on April 7, 2014, I celebrated my 90th birthday. I thank G-d every day that I can still be with my children, grandchildren and their children, and all my wonderful friends.)

Daus cuhmt mir ah Mazel Tov. Ich bin gevoren ahn elter baubeh, tzuh tzveh maydehlach. Zayereh nehmen zeinen Zara uhn Harper. (I have a *Mazel Tov* coming as I have become a great-grandmother to two little girls. Their names are Zara and Harper.)

Zaulen zeh baydeh hauben goot gehzundt uhn tzu langen yoren uhn brayngen nahches uhn frayd tzu zayer mahmeh – mein eynekel Hindi – uhn ear mahn zayer tahteh Adam. Amen. (I pray that they may have a long life with good health and much joy. May they be a blessing always to their mother – my granddaughter Hindi – and her husband, their father, Adam. Amen)

October 1, 2014

Der "Malach"

(The "Angel")

Tyereh Yiddisheh kinder, ich vil eych der tzalen hyent vaus haut aun gegangen mit mir dee leitzteh pour vauchen. Ich haub veyeter geven in hauspital, far etlechheh tehg. Gaut tzu danken ich bin itzter besser un in myn ehgehner haym. (Dear Yiddish readers, I want to tell you today what has been going on with me these past few weeks. I was hospitalized again for a few days. Thanks to G-d, I have recovered and am back home again.)

Ich haub ah myseh tzu dertzaylen eych vehgen der "malach" vas is mine shkheyneh. (I have a short tale to tell you about my next door neighbor, who I think is an "angel".)

Ah maul is mir shver gain ahroof uhn ahraup fun dee treap, bet ich Ha Shem err zaul mir schiken ah "malach" mir helfen. (Sometimes it is difficult for me to get up and down the steps to my apartment. So I pray to G-d to help me accomplish this task.)

Vehn ich haub gehcoomen ah haym fun hauspital is ha shem gehenfert mine tfiles. Ven ich haub em gehdaft baruch ahbaugh is mein shkheyneh der "malach" geh shtanen ahnt kegen fun mir tzuh aushelfen mir. Daus haut zach mir nisht gehglaypt daus haut pahsirt, haub ich zich gehgehen ah knip, tzu zen ayb siz cholemt zach mir auder nisht. (When I came home from the hospital, it seemed as though my prayers were being answered. Whenever I needed to go up or down the stairs, there he was standing in front of me, my neighbor the "Angel", waiting to help me.)

Effsher haub ich gehstorben? Nayn ich bin nauch lehbehdick. Ken das zine ahz err is tahkeh ah "malach"? (I could not believe that this was happening, so I pinched myself to see if I was dreaming or not. Perhaps I had died. Could it be that my neighbor is an "Angel"?)

Nuh, kinder, ich vil by eich fregen vaus daynkt ear. Ken err tahkeh zine ah "malach"? Shrypt mir ah email auder ah brief mit ayer entfer. (Dear children, I ask you, what do you think? Is my neighbor really an "Angel"? Write me an e-mail or even better, a letter to the editor with your thoughts.)

Ah shaynem dank eyech far lezenin mine mysehleh. (Many thanks for reading my little story.)

Daus bin, Henya Chaiet, eyer Yiddisheh mahmeh. ('Tis I, Henya Chaiet, your Jewish mama.)



Mrs. Feinn's (second from the right) with her four sisters. c.1946.

November 1, 2014

Dee Bubbeh Chaikah, z"l

(Grandmother Ida Weinstein, z"l)

Ahmol clair ich tzu zich ahlane ven ich vil shane nit zein auf der velt, velen meineh aynicklach mir gehdayken un dermaunen zich vegen mir? (Sometimes I think to myself, when I am no longer here in this world, will my grandchildren remember me and speak about me?)

In mein lehbun haub ich gehven zayer glicklach tzu hauben mein Bubbeh Chaikah biz ich haub gehven fearuntzvantzich yor alt. (In my lifetime I was very fortunate to have my grandmother until I was 24 years old.)

Mein mutters familia hauben alleh gehvaynt zayer naunt tzuzamen. Dee Bubbeh un der zaydeh hauben ayechet geven naunt tzu alleh zayehreh kinder. (My mother's family all lived close together including grandpa and grandma who always had their children close by.)

Douch der vauch fleckt dee mameh meineh zaugen mir, "Shtel zach aup nauch der shooley un zeh effsher dahf dee bubbeh eppes hauben tzu taun far deer." Ah maul fleg ich vashen ear kich, ah maul fleckt zee dahfen eppes in mark. Zee haut mir alleh maul gehgehben eareh maun kichel tzu aunbisen mit ah glauz milch. (During the week my mother would always say, "Stop at grandma's and see if she needs help with anything." Sometimes I would scrub her kitchen or she might need something at the market. She always gave me some of her delicious poppyseed cookies and a glass of milk)

Ahz zee fleckt kauchen auder bahken fleg ich zitzen un vatchen ear. Ich haub zach ah sahch ausgelehrent fuhn vahtchen ear. (When she would cook or bake I always watched and learned.)

Mein mutter is gehven ah schneiderkeh un zayer farnumen mit ear arbet. Zee fleckt mir zaugen vaus tzu kaunchen nor ich fleg daus getidaft aus lernen ahlayn. (My mother was always busy as she was a dressmaker. She would tell me what to cook but I had to learn to do it on my own.)

Ich fleg iber reddan mit Dee Bubbeh Chaikah ah tzoreh vaus haut mir gehdieget. (Many times I would talk over with my grandmother something that was worrying me.)

Ven der zayde is gehshtorben haut Dee Bubbeh Chaikah gehcoomen vaynen mit unz in unzer haym. Zee haut gehven zayer frum auber nit farnatisht. Ich haub shane domaulst



Mr & Mrs Feinn (far left) with two of his four brothers, their wives and children. c.1959.

geh lerent zach zein ah nurse. Ven ich haub-gehkent fleg ich coomen ah haym zein mit ear uhn zach aus redder vaus gayt auhn mit mir. (When my grandfather died my grandmother chose to come live with us as she was closer to my mother than her other four daughters. At the time, I was already in nursing school, but I came home as often as I could to be with her. We would always talk about what had been going on with me.)

Mein Bubbeh's Chanukah sudeh haub ich allehmaul zayer gehglichen, vil ich eych gehben tzu farzuchen. (I always loved her Chanukah feast so I will give you a taste of it.)

Menin

- 1) *Forshpiez – gehockteh herring auder gehocktehleber – zoureh gehrkes*
 - 2) *Suppe – shvoymen mit beblach*
 - 3) *Gehbrauteneh ganz mit latkes fuhn kartaufel. Zee haut geh pregelt dee latkes mit genzeneh schmaltz*
 - 4) *Compote fuhn floymen, eppel, un rauzingkes*
 - 5) *Mandelbrot, tayglach un maun kichel un hayseh*
- Sweetouchnee chai*

Menu

- 1) Appetizers – chopped herring or chopped liver – sour pickles
- 2) Soup – mushrooms and lima beans
- 3) Roasted goose with potato latkes that were fried in the goose fat she rendered
- 4) Fruit compote of prunes, apples and raisins
- 5) Mandelbrot, tayglach, poppyseed cookies and of course Sweetouchnee hot tea

Zaul eych vale bacoomen, ess gezunter hayt. Daus bin ich, Henya Chaiet eyer Yiddisheh mahmeh. (May you digest your food well and in good health. Tis I, Henya Chaiet your Yiddisheh mother.)



Henry Chaiet is the Yiddish name for Mrs. A. Helen Feinn. Born April 7, 1924 in Chicago, her parents had come to America one year prior. They spoke only Yiddish at home so that is all she spoke until age five when she started kindergarten. She then learned English, but always loved Yiddish and spoke it whenever possible. Chaiet was raised in Chicago with her four sisters and one brother. She lived in La Porte and Michigan City, Ind., from 1952 to 1978, and then resided in Walnut Creek,

Calif., until her passing on May 13, 2016.

She was very committed and loving to family, both her own and those related through marriage. She made no distinction. She was engaged in many volunteer organizations and as a nurse, gave generously of her time and caring to ease the suffering of others. She had numerous friends of different religions and races, and was able to enjoy close and meaningful relationships over many years with both people who were significantly younger as well as her contemporaries.

At the time of her passing in May 2016, Mrs. Feinn was survived by one sister Fay Chaiet of Chicago, two children Naomi Feinn of Oakland, Calif., and Davia Feinn of Montreal, two grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and nieces and nephews. Her husband Dr. Harry Feinn predeceased her in 1978 as did her son Dr. Daniel Mark Feinn in 2000.