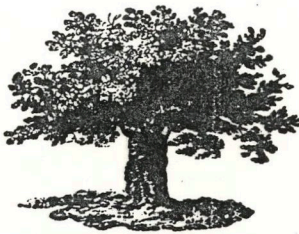


Bridging the Generations: A Grandparent's Reflections and Shtetl Scenes

Along with 10,000 other readers and book enthusiasts, I recently wandered through the aisles of the Jewish Book Fair in New York City. Many books caught my eye. However, two captured my attention and ultimately came home with me: Reflections: A Jewish Grandparent's Gift of Memories and Life in the Shtetl.



Roots and Branches

By MIRIAM WEINER



In his Life in the Shtetl (Holmes & Meir: New York, 1986; 140 pp., \$49.50), author Ilex Beller provides a record through his colorful paintings and recollections of the world of

Yiddish culture that once thrived in the shtetls of Poland and exists no more. Beller grew up in Grodzisko, a Jewish village in southern Poland. The paintings depict both his personal experiences and daily life there. The characters in his pictures are based on relatives and schoolfriends, all of whom perished in the Holocaust.

The eighty color plates contained in the book are accompanied by poems and selected prose pieces along with Beller's illuminating commentary. In 1983, the author returned to Grodzisko, after an absence of 54 years. At that time, he was unable to find any trace of Jewish life, even though Jews had once accounted for 95% of the population. All that remained was his grandfather's tombstone, which was too large for the Germans to haul away, according to an old peasant who remembered.

Both Reflections and Life in the Shtetl preserve the past and provide a legacy for the future.

A Beginner's Guide (55 pages) on how to research your family history, which includes charts, list of archives and libraries, maps, bibliography, family groups sheets and more can be ordered from: Miriam Weiner, 136 Sandpiper Key, Secaucus, NJ 07094. (Cost: \$10)

next section is entitled "All About Your Parents" and is followed by "All About You". Space is provided for a description of the family celebration of Jewish and American holidays. Towards the end of the book there is a catalog of family facts that people should have: birthdates, addresses, yahrzeits, anniversaries, recipes, and heirlooms.

Names of family members who perished in the Holocaust also have a place to be identified and remembered.

Perhaps the highlight of this book of memories is where each grandparent has space to leave an ethical will for his or her grandchild. This written legacy for children reflects the hopes and desires for the future and how the grandparent would like to be remembered by his or her children and grandchildren.

"Part of the book is chronological, part is generational, and part is eternal," said co-author, Leora Isaacs.

Reflections (Jason Aronson Inc.: Northvale, NJ; 1987, 163 pp. \$20.00) provides a handsome, easily referenced and enduring format for grandparents to commit to paper what they would usually try to pass on to their grandchildren orally -- their vital sense of the unbreakable bond between past and future generations.
