

Nisyrian Memories -

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(as told to her children)

My mom and dad were born on the small island of Nisyros which makes up the Dodecanese (12) Islands in the Aegean. It was once occupied by Turkey, taken over by the Italians during World War One, and then even the Germans dared to enter during World War 2. Finally, they were taken over by Greece where they rightfully belonged.

My dad came here in the year 1906, served in the first World War in France, and then went back to Nisyros to marry my mom. They came here by liner in October 1920. My mom was carrying me at that time and I was born on Feb. 25th, 1921 on 37th St. in N.Y.C. I was delivered at home by a midwife as my mom was afraid of hospitals. This island they came from was a very small one as a matter of fact it is indicated by a small dot on the map.

At the time my parents lived there, their life style was very crude. By this I don't mean ethnically or spiritually, but physically. There was no electricity or running water, there were no bathrooms in the houses, there was no industry, and the people were very poor moneywise.

However, each and every one of them took pride in their homeland; they loved every inch of this beautiful island. They had their farms and lands which was fruitful. They had their o lives, almonds, fruits and vegetables, pigs, cows, etc. and ate off the fruit of the land.

They had fine traditions in Nisyros and thru my growing years I heard them all. Even though they lacked in material things, their life had many pleasures. If there was a wedding, the whole island was invited and the rituals of a wedding could take several days. They had their musicians. One of the violinists was the best in the land and they would all dance the "Sousta", drink, eat, and make merry.

Every Saint's Day they would honor and celebrate the day in festivities. They had no radio or television in their day but with their mandolins and guitars, the boys serenaded the girls and they would carry on their romances very well chaperoned.

One of the pastimes of the women and young girls was crocheting under gaslight and they became very adept at their craft and took pride in their work.

This particular island was fruitful because it embraced a volcano which kept the land very green with trees. The island itself had 4 different communities, each with a different dialect. The town proper or capital was MANDRAKI where my parents came from. The "LIMANI" was there

where the ships landed for trade. It was, you might say, the main drag. The second port was "PALOUS" where my husband came from. This was all along the top shore of the island and very picturesque, with beautiful sandy beaches. The other 2 parts were on either side of the mountain "NIKIA" and "IMBORIO". The view from both these mountains was magnificent.

You must remember now that there was no form of transportation on this island. All their land tending had to be done by foot and of course they had their little oxen and donkeys. Yet when these people came to America and found their conveniences, a day did not go by that they did not talk of this beloved land. I think one of the first and everlasting words I heard from them was "Nisyros".

When these people started immigrating here, they more or less settled on 37th St. between 8th and 9th Avenue in N.Y.C. Originally, the KAZINIERI "Chrissotimos" family settled there and naturally the newcomers settled there as they wanted to stay as close to their home ties as possible.

My dad worked in the Leski (Gnomagoras) for a while and was able to save up some money. Gnomagoras was the social club of the Nisyrian people and the men congregated there for their coffee and card games which of course carried over from their life in their island.

My brother Mike was also born on 37th St. and during the interim we had a little sister Anna who passed away when she was 2 yrs old. I remember my brother being very sick in those very dingy rooms of 37th St. with pneumonia but, thank God, he survived. There was no penicillin at that time. They used their own treatment of "VENDOUZES" which was a process of lighting candles in glasses and steaming the cold out of your system.

When I was 5 years of age we moved to Astoria. Things looked a little rosier then as Astoria was a much better place than N.Y. We first moved to a spacier 6 room sunlit apartment on Ditmars Blvd. between 35th and 36th St. We had as neighbors Mary Sinaragdas and Georgia Lazaros. At that time my uncles came from Greece and lived with us to help pay the rents. My uncles Mike, Nick, and Ross (my mom's brothers were with us). On Sundays they would take us to the Astoria Park and I remember their buying me skates. I became a very good skater but was never able to ride a bike because my mom was deathly afraid.

At that time a lot of Nisyrians were migrating to Astoria. The Scandalious family was one.

My brother John was born at that house. Soon after that we moved to 27th St. between 23rd and Ditmars and spent about a year there. Our neighbors at that time were the CKzepis (??) family. I started going to school at P.S.122 when I first entered Kindegarten. I did not know one word of English.

When I was 8 years old we moved to 27-05 24th Ave. and I have lived here ever since (65 years). My father was a waiter at the Union News Rest. in Grand Central Terminal. The Scandalious family had managerial jobs there and helped the newcomers with jobs.

I was very proud of my father because he read English and bought a newspaper each day. He loved to watch the Yanks and we all became interested in playing ball which was one of the favorite pastimes then. We used to go in our backyard and play stickball with the boys and girls in the neighborhood.

This is about the time (8 yrs) when I met Theda and we became lifelong friends. Mike had Andy who was her younger brother. The Crystal Gardens were not built yet and we had a lovely view from our windows which yiayia enjoyed until the day she died. We had an interesting block with a bar, candy store, grocery store, shoemaker, fruit store, drug store, for a lot of our materials things at our disposal.

By that time, the Chrissotimos family had moved to 139th St. and Riverside. The Antonios family to 136th St. and Viollis family to Woodside. The prime targets for all newcomers now was now Astoria & uptown Manhattan.

We had no phone at that time. Very few people did but we would get our calls down at the candy store. They would ring our bell and down we would run.

Greek Church of St. Demetrios was just opening up on Grand Ave. where it is now only it was a basement. Going to church on Sunday was a ritual. My friendship with Theda cultivated this as they were very religious. We knew the parish priest very well as his sister & my uncle Nick were in love at the time. He would visit our house very often.

As I mentioned, playing ball was one of our fun things, and skating. We listened to the radio, there were a lot of programs at the time. Lone Ranger, Amos & Andy, Eddy Cantor, Milton Berle, and one of my favorite musical programs was the Hit Parade.. top 10 musical hits of the week.

Of course we had the movie house at Ditmars and Saturday was our movie day. We went for a dime, took our lunch and spent the day. There were many features to watch...cartoons, serials that left us hanging from one week to another and double features. Reading also was one big hobby of mine.

As I grew a little older, by the time I was 10 I would travel to 49th St. to visit the Chrissotimos family (they didn't go uptown until several years later). I always loved going there because it was my only means of escape. There were always lots of people and kids there & we would end up going to the movies with the boys - Paul, Frank, and John and they protected me like a sister. I also used to go uptown to visit my cousin Mary. Her mother was an invalid due to a car

accident and was bedridden for many years. We would sleep on one bed..Tony, Mary, Phillip, and I and one of the nice things I remember there is breakfast of coffee buns & coffee. You never tasted such coffee buns!

This is about the time we started to take Summer vacations. I remember the very first one we went to a crowded beachhouse on Coney Island boardwalk. After that we met Vaiti (??) (Jim's godfather who owned a cottage in Ocean Parkway) and they used to go to the mountains for a few weeks and allowed us the use of their house. Had a lot of pleasant memories there and that's how we were introduced to Ocean Parkway. That remained with us for many years to come.

Now I must tell you that these Nisyrians were a clannish people and did not like to mingle with the other Greeks. Somehow they felt happier and more comfortable with their own herd. These people congregated in each other's house to pass the time of day and night. I seem to remember our house was always a point of congregation. My mom always had her ouzo or cognac ready for all the bachelors that would congregate. These were the single men who had no families here and they used to come to our house to escape some of their homesickness. It was these guys who used to come around at Christmas with their presents.

I remember how beautiful it was celebrating holidays. During Lent my mom would not eat meat or dairy products and would receive on Good Thursday. She made us fast also, and how she would go to services on Good Friday and to "Anastasi" on Saturday night. In the meanwhile she would bake for over a week, making koulouria, tsourekia, tiropitas, etc. and cook Easter Eggs of course. Easter we had to buy all new clothes & shoes and go to church sermons in the afternoon. She of course would make the lamb with all the trimmings for a big feast...always inviting a house full of people.

The next big holiday would be Panagia. Then again she would fast for 14 days and she always celebrated St. Mary on Aug. 15th with a big feast and the house would fill up with well wishers. She would make meatballs, grape leaves, pork bits, and many other delicacies.

As I mentioned, they looked for any excuse to celebrate. No name day went by without a party being thrown. It started with St. Demetrios in Oct., St. Michael in Nov., St. Nicholas in Dec. ushering us into Christmas, and then bang...the biggest of all...Ayiou Basiliou which was my father's name day and since there were not many of that name, our house was filled up on New Year's Day. I remember how busy we were on New Years Eve preparing the usual feast...and at midnight we had just finished scrubbing the floors, etc. and she would close the lights + take her pot to the window and usher the new year in. There was a lot of tradition in my growing up

which is something I hold dear inside me to this very day and it does make life more meaningful. I'm afraid these beautiful traditions are being eroded with modern times. I suppose that is progress and new ways of life are being formed.

One of the nostalgic events of my growing up is my social life. We were very protective (??)proactive (??). Our parents did not have much time to spend with us and we had to learn ourselves. As I mentioned when I went to school I did not know a word of English. Yet several years later I was tutoring some of the Scandalious children when they first entered first grade. I remember becoming so exasperated when they could not read or retain any words - and yet some of these kids have become very successful in their field. At that time one of the neighbors of the Scandalious family was a secretary and she had a typewriter. She took a liking to me and invited me to practice on it which I did. I think that may have formed my vocation and I became so adept with the typewriter in later years. I sometimes feel like a concert pianist when my fingers cross the typewriter keys and type away to beat the band.

Getting back to the social life I mentioned, although I was not allowed to go out, I had a very happy one. I mentioned that my father had the leski for a while. A month never went by without some sort of an affair going on. Whether a christening, wedding, masquerade party or any other such reason for get together. We had no tapes at these parties but 3 or 4 pc bands and we did a lot of dancing. There was always a young crowd of Nisyrian boys and girls and new ones coming to America regularly. The young boys started coming over to help support their families and to get a dowry for their sisters in order to marry them off. Your dad came over when he was 15 and went to school , later Stuyvesant + became an arista member.

Getting back to vacations, when I was about 15 we graduated from Ocean Parkway to Long Beach or Island Park. One of our relatives - Atlanti Georgakis (she was a Lazarus relative of my dad) had a home in Island Park. They operated a tailor shop with rooms in the back. Sometimes we stayed with them or rented. I would always walk to Long Beach which was about a 10 minute walk from their house. In Long Beach there were some Nisyrians who owned boardwalk bath houses and eating places and I had some friends there. I loved the beach there and really had some memorable times there, specially with the owner's daughters Athena and Callie (Dicks). The parents at one time wanted Mike to marry Athena. After one date Mike said no soap. So, actually my teenage years were very pleasantly spent in Long Beach.

When you fellows were born we stayed in Ocean Parkway, and as you grew older and we got car rides from Uncle Mike or Uncle Jim, we went to Long Beach...only this time we didn't go to

Dicks but we went to Costidis who also had a place on the boardwalk...After that of course came Greenport which still exists.

I may be jumping around on my subjects but bear with me. I'm putting these thoughts down as they enter my head.

My very first recollection of the "Leski" I mentioned may have been before I was 5 yrs. old. At that time the Charleston was the rage and I don't know how I picked it up, but I did. Every time there was a party they would have us little ones (Mary Plousiades, Irene Hazoglou and me) dance and they would crow over us.

My father was a very liked person. He was very generous and kind. As I mentioned, he was one of the few Nisyrians with money at that time and he would help out a lot of the newcomers. He never really let my mother know because she would have put a stop to it but he lent thousands of dollars to fellow Nisyrians who never paid him back. When my father passed away my mother found his little black book and tried to retrieve some of it with no luck.

My mom was 23 yrs old when she came here and she was the only daughter. She had 4 brothers three of which I mentioned and Uncle Dimitri who came here at Mary's wedding. He died soon after, preceding yiayia by a few months. We never told her of his death. My mom never really liked it in America. She missed her family very much and her whole life was devoted in sending clothes and foodstuff to her parents and relatives there. She did without in order to send what she could. She never heard or saw her parents again which was very sad and which of course saddened me. There was no phone at that time, no airplanes. She never went into a boat because she was seasick during her maiden voyage. She was afraid of planes when they first came into being. We went through a depression and a war during the interim. There was talk of Typhoid in Greece so she was afraid to go back. Of course there was a lot of letter writing and I heard a lot about my grandparents. Everyone that came over would relay my grandparents love and kisses. They had pictures of us and I am told that my grandmother idolized them and would talk and brag about her American grandchildren incessantly. I remember I felt very sad when they died. Sad for myself for never knowing them and for my mom who never saw them again.

My father loved fishing. He made friends with some Castorians—one of them was George Pethanas and they used to go fishing often in Bayville. They used to catch many fish, and one of my chores when he came home was to bring fish to friends and neighbors. That's one job I didn't like very much. When Mary was a baby we went to Bayville a few times.

When I went to P.S. 122 I also attended Greek School after hours to learn Greek. I wasn't too happy about this but it had to be. We also had Sunday School at St. D with Father Polizoidis (whom I mentioned before). At that time they would give gold pieces to the top students and I remember getting a few of them. My parents were very proud. At Greek School we performed many Greek plays and I had the star role in one or 2 of them and I was an instant success. At one of them "the errors of Stamata" I was Stamata who was a waitress doing all the wrong things. My employer was Nick Penatrakis (??)..Peratsukis (??) who was also fat and funny. To this date we still talk about it when we bump into each other. He still lives in his parental home in Astoria. We also did some Greek plays at the Leski which constituted some of our fun times.

By that time we were teenagers and our soirées at the Leski were going strong. That's where the young people met and danced and had some very innocent flirtations. Also more and more families were coming from Nisyros and the ties with each other were stronger and stronger and the longing for their little island was always there.

During the interim my uncle "MIXALI" went back to Nisyros and married and had 2 boys and a girl (Anna). My uncle Nick married schoolteacher Calliope and they came to Astoria & lived on our block where John and Anna spent their baby years until my aunt got a job in the Bronx where they moved & lived until they went to Greece. My uncle Ross married Paul Kulakis sister who died soon after childbirth. His son John was reared by his uncles..Paul's brother and uncle Dimitri and his wife, who had no children.

First your father came to America then Uncle Jimmy. He must have been about 15 when he came over. They were both very good looking guys. It was soon after that Uncle Jimmy paired off with Irene.

What I remember most about my mother was that she was always cooking. She made such delicacies as KALAMARIA, STEFFATO, STUFFING, PIGS FEET, PORK KABOBS,.. My father spent most of his non working time either fishing, coffee house, there was one right up 27th St. near 23 Ave or watching baseball. He loved to invite his friends over & have yiayia cook for them because he was proud of her cooking.

After P.S. 122 I went to Julia Richman H.S. I had to go 5 years because I lost a year when Mike and I had Typhoid fever which we developed after eating "KOLIVA" at church. All the Greek kids who ate it ended up in St. Johns Hospital where we were quarantined & stayed for over a month. Mike was the one who almost died but thank God - all survived.

I took a Commercial Course and had A's in shorthand + typing which became my bread & butter item. Upon Graduation I had to prepare myself to go out and work. My mom did not like

the idea of sending me out in a “strange world”. Finally we found a Nisyrian who was in the import-export business and got my first job with him at \$12.00 a week. I’d give my mom \$10 and kept 2 for the week to pay for my carfare & lunch and sometimes I was able to save. Carfare was 5 cents - sandwiches 10 cents. Those were very interesting working years with this man “CAVALLIOTI” and I did learn a lot from him. He was one of the most intelligent and self-made men I ever met. This island produced a high percentage of intelligent and professional people of whom we are all proud. Permit me to say that many sons from the island became professors and maintained some of the most prestigious jobs of teaching. 2 became principals of Greek Schools...KATSIMATIDES, ..HADZIDEMETRIS (??)...and our own Aunt Calliopi was the #1 teacher here - plus many learned men like STRIKES..POLYCHRONIS (whom you’ve all met) and many others. At that time scholars were few and far between but Nisyros was top of the list with great sons.

I stayed with Cavallioti for about 4 years. It was at this time that war broke out and your father + I made our promises to marry. Communications with Greece were cut off and many war related jobs were cropping up. One day when I was sitting at Theda’s doorstep a woman approached and asked if I was interested in a job. This was at Hunt’s Point Station at a Zipper Co. (WALDOS KOHINOOR). I went there and stayed until Mary was born. My salary ranged from \$25 - \$45 week which wasn’t bad.

Now those years (21 - 25)* were dark years for us because all the men went off to war. We were busy working and worrying. Your father was one of the first to go. He spent a little while in the states going to officer school, etc. ...and for a while I saw him occasionally which of course was great. When he went overseas it became an ordeal. Then Uncle Mike left and we thought Johnny wouldn’t go because of his glasses...but no soap! He was taken also. Mike went to Hawaii. Uncle John went to Germany. Very grim but alls well that ends well. All came home Safe and Sound. Well the war was a long one - 5 years. All of a sudden the boys started coming back. Everyone was anxious to get on with their lives. I was going on 25 - your father’s wedding bells started ringing. First Mike and Irene Chrissotimos, Second us, the week after Callie from Long Beach. Then the following months - Jim & Irene, George & John Chrissotimos, Theda. We lived with yiayia and I kept on working. Your father was making plans to go to Greece now that everything was opening up. He had to check on his mom & sister whom he had not heard from for many years. They went through a tough period in Nisyros during these war years. We went to Darien Conn for our honeymoon in Feb. That’s where I first saw “Winter Wonderland”. There

** I’m sure mom meant (41-45) but, as I said, my intention was to copy everything exactly as written*

had been a snowstorm just before we got married. St Demetrios church was filled to the door. Father Polizoidis was a bishop then and came to officiate. My wedding dress cost 125 which was a lot of money at that time. Our wedding was held in Steinway and everyone was invited. It was not a catered affair. My mom and helpmates did all the cooking and my dad and helpmates served the food on bar. I think a merry time was had by all. We got a lot of gifts and collected about 2,000 which was a lot of money at the time. We spent 1 week of our honeymoon with Mike and Irene. We played a lot of pinochle together. We came back to attend the wedding of Callie.

In April I became pregnant. At that time my father had his first heart attack and had to spend 6 weeks in bed. It was a very sad time for us and it was only the pregnancy that brought us some light during that period.

Before I continue in this vein, let me go back again to the period when I was about 15 yrs of age. That's when tragedies started to hit us. We lost our beloved uncle Ross at that time. He died in Pligras (???) house and that saddened us. My uncle had strayed from the Nisyrian circle and had made a niche for himself. He connected himself with Jews and he managed exclusive resorts in Florida for the Winter and New Jersey for the summer. He made a lot of money in his time but he was a good time Charlie. He lived it up and spent money like there was no tomorrow. He was the life of the party sort of man who was a comedian to boot and kept everyone entertained. Everyone loved him. He was a boozier which we attribute to the early death of his wife. After that we lost Chrissotimos mother who was sort of a legend. She's the one who always had open hours + she sat and took snuff all day while cousin Anna did all the work + kept house for the 5 brothers, Dad and Boarders. Yes there must have been a half dozen of them. You didn't have to go to a Kafenio at that time. "Pappou's" house was the hangout. He was my grandmother's brother so we tenderly called him Pappou, which healed some of the sadness of not knowing our grandparents. Then we lost Mary Plousiade's mother who was very beloved by us. She was yiayia's best friend from Nisyros. Mary's father (??) family (??) and mine were beloved friends + cousins so all this shook us up.

Then happy events started to crop up. Anna Chrissotimos got married to Christofis and that had to be the gala event of the season. I was 16 and taking end terms at the time so it was tough. She got married uptown. I was a bridesmaid and I stayed over at Mary Plousiades that night. Then Mary's uncle Polidoro got married to Georgia and there was a double wedding. Georgia's brother got married the same time. I was a bridesmaid there. The reception was at the Lobster Rest on 45th Str. off Broadway. George Lazaros was the Matre di there and it was one

of the elite restaurants in town. The meals there were superb- mainly lobster and fish delicacies. Had some very exciting times there. Growing up we went to many interesting places because we knew the maitre di + waiters. For instance the Waldorf gave us some exciting times, Hotel Roosevelt and Edison and last but not least Ruben's where uncle George Sarris had worked. I would think that the Rueben sandwich originated there. That was the hangout of the theatrical crowd after their shows. Quite a place. And then one of my unforgettable times was when I went to the Copacabana, a night club where Paul Kulaki worked. He took me there and it was great.

I also remember the first time I went to Radio City. I saw Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire and it was like magic. This Nisyrian man who had a German wife took me there. They worked in a brownstone as cook and gardener and I also went there which was also an exciting occasion. They used to come to our house on holidays because they loved yiayia's cooking. The name of the place in Jersey that my uncle Ross managed was Ross Fenton Farms and I always thought it was named after my uncle. Maybe it was! Your father used to work there during the Summer & made nice spending money. It was an exclusive place. I went there was and was fascinated.

During one of my Long Beach stays I may have been about 17 (I was there with Scandalious) my father had an accident at work. He was hospitalized and lost a lot of blood and almost lost his life. He fell and glass cut his jugular vein in his wrist. As a result he lost the nerve of his pinky & a couple of fingers. I'll never forget we were all sitting at Dicks Rest. with a group of people. Polychronis was there and he asked me if my father was out of the hospital. Not knowing anything about it, I was in shock. I felt very bad that I was not home during this trying time. Of course I came right home. He was home and his arm was in a sling. He's a fighter though and was able to pursue his waiter duties even with this disability.

Another event I seem to recollect is spending a week with a cousin Scandalious in Williamsport, PA. She had no children and I must have been 7 - 8 when Johnny was born and she wanted me to stay with her for about a week. I seem to recall pleasant memories there. She had a canary and years later I heard when it died she wore black in mourning.

I think now I've covered most of the highlights of my hey days. Before I finish this period, I want to iterate that I had no experience with boys to speak of. I remember once I went to a Sweet Sixteen Party with Theda and even then I had to pull teeth to get yiayia to let me go. They played spin the bottle and I was terrified I would be kissed. I did get one and on the way home I was worried that it would show and yiayia would find out.

When we went to dances yiayia keep an eye on me. At one time a boy came and sat next to me. I caught her eye across the way and she had her fist in her mouth which was her way of

saying stop what you are doing and get here. That's enough of my courting days. If I remember anything else I'll insert it here and there.

Now let's get to the part when Thea Saridena came and lived upstairs from us. I was about 17 and she was very nice to have around. She always had a house full of people and I adored her little children. I spent a lot of time with them. George Sarris was a great man too. Your father + Jim came to visit often and at one point lived with them before they were inducted into the army.

There is another little church affair which keeps cropping into my mind. I was about 17 - and all our young eligibles were there. When the first round of dances started it seems I was spun around by all of them, one cutting in after the other. I swear that was one time in my life where I felt I was the belle of the ball and it was that time when I started paying attention to your father. He always was nice to me, and of course I was flattered at his attention. Our meetings were at these functions that we had many of and at his aunt's house. My mom considered him a "good catch" so she did not discourage anything here. I remember one night in particular I must have been 18 when I went to a hospital in N.Y. to visit Mary Plousiades father who had a hernia operation. As I got into the elevator to leave there was your father. Of course we were surprised at our meeting. It happens that his father was in the hospital also and he asked me if I would go and see him. Of course I went and I think that the old man was pleased to see me because his son was gallivanting around and I think he considered me a "good catch". You see, the island, small as it was, knew the history of all of the families and classified them according to their worth. God forbid if anyone strayed or erred. Then you dropped a notch.

Another thing I want to mention of my grandfather. He was a little bit of a man whereas my grandmother towered over him. His name was John and he was the matchmaker of the island. Many marriages were prompted by him. Also when it came to dancing he always led the parade and he always wore a flower in his lapel. I will always treasure this memory of him.

So getting back to your father. We were thrown closer and closer together since his uncle George moved into our house. Although we never dated we were seeing a lot of each other so when the time of his draft came up he asked me to wait for him and that's how it all happened.

One name which I failed to mention during my growing up years was Anna Franzi or little Anna (she was shorter than me as you all know). Her son christened Jimmy. Whatever she lacked in stature she had in heart. She was a warm, welcoming, energetic person. She lived upstairs from Mary Plousiades and if I did not go up to visit her she would reprimand me. She was a dear cousin of yiayia. We have eaten many a "Kifte" and vine leaves her house and she would throw a party for any little occasion. It was always fun being with her. In fact, during the war years, she

was one of my dancing partners. She loved the waltz. With Mary Plousiades, we used to tango. Even with the lack of men partners, we got our kicks during the dark war times.

Another house where we found a pleasant refuge was the Viollis home in Woodside. There we would feast on french fried potatoes, which I had never tasted until then. Yiayia never ate potatoes so we never had them. It was when you guys were born that she spent a good part of her life french frying for you. Pete, Mike, and Mary Viollis were close comrades during my growing up years. Mike was my father's godchild and he was our "protector" at dances and of course one of our dancing partners. He was a jitterbug bug. He ended up marrying Mary Ckzepis, whom I mentioned way back was a neighbor of ours on 27th St. Now Pete, the older brother was in love with with Theda, my girlfriend and she waited for him to return to her after the war, but he never did come back to her. He met a nurse in Cal. when he was wounded & married her. Of course Theda was heartbroken but fortunately she met a nice younger man whom she married.