

It 'only' took me (almost) five years, but during my vacation, my family and I finally had the opportunity to spend some time in Pella, Iowa. We booked a hotel, got lost on backroads through the cornfields and enjoyed pizza with Gouda cheese al fresco. (Never mind that no Dutch person would ever put Gouda on pizza, but now I'm just being a *nudnik*).

We explored the Historical District and the Windmill. I bought a Delfts Blue tea caddy (how could I not?) and we visited the *Jaarsma* Bakery, piled high with Dutch or Dutch-like treats; be it pastry, bread, baked goods or imported items from the Netherlands. I bought several bags of 'double-salty' liquorice and other delicacies. We enjoyed eating Dutch treats like 'poffertjes' (mini-pancakes slathered in butter and powdered sugar) and raw (yes, raw!) herring. It was really fun showing my kids a little bit of our family's heritage out here in the Midwest and to be somewhat mournful that we have failed to transmit to them a love of salty

goods, Tulip Time and other flourishes of Dutch heritage, they have lost touch with anything that is meaningfully Dutch; they have become thoroughly Americanized and have no real connection to the living, breathing culture of the Netherlands.

Please note that I am not intending to be prescriptive; only observational. Pella – and other immigration stories - provides us with a model of successful assimilation into the American story. My own children – who no longer speak Dutch – are interwoven into that story too. But I also couldn't help but contrast Pella with the cultural transmission of Judaism over thousands of years across oceans and continents.

This week, we will honor the day of Tisha b'Av, the fast of the Ninth of Av. Superficially, Tisha b'Av is about the destruction of both the First and Second Temples and a number of other calamities that have befallen our people. More profoundly, it is a day that memorializes trauma and creates a sacred