I came to this country with my parents in the early 1960’s from Argentina. This was not the first such trip to a distant and unknown land for a young member of the Urecki clan. In the late 1930’s, my three year old father and his parents fled Poland for South America, just the latest in an endless series of journeys for my people down through the centuries, seeking a better life for my Jewish ancestors. My mother’s parents were also of recent vintage to Buenos Aires, having come also from Poland and Lithuania. Now it was their children and grandson’s turn; to journey to a strange and foreign land, a place that promised them opportunity and a chance to live in freedom.

 In many ways, our arrival to these shores were no more remarkable than millions of others. My parents and I came to this country with just $200, a culture to preserve, a language barrier to overcome, and family left behind.

 But despite what seemed to be just another chapter in our people’s exile and another tale of our wandering through human history, many Jews like my parents felt America was different, that this was a place unlike any other. Jews had always put their trust in G-d, but for the first time, Jews finally believed G-d was deserving of that trust. In America, we had found a land that would shelter us and provide a haven until G-d, in His mercy, would gather the scattered nation of Israel, bring about the messiah and restore us to our ancestral and spiritual home, the land of our fathers and mother, the land of Israel. This beacon of hope called the Unites States gave us reason to trust in G-d.

 “In G-d We Trust” had a special resonance for Jews in this country because we never felt it was a statement of religious doctrine or an appeal to place this a nation under a particular god or system of belief. For the Jew, “In G-d We Trust” was a powerful affirmation of how felt about America and our emotional connection to this land. Like every immigrant the moment they arrive, we crossed oceans praying and trusting that G-d would be with us on this soil. When we saw the Statue of Liberty we knew He was, indeed, with us.

Jews have often found had our trust in G-d tested and that trust was often historically unfounded. G-d had seemingly turned His back of His “chosen people.” Everywhere we went, we found that we would never be fully accepted, welcomed with restrictions, and always waiting for the inevitable eviction notice.

 Not in America. We found the freedom to practice our heritage or not, to be true to our religious teachings or fully embrace the melting pot experience, to be in faith, of faith or out of faith. We could worship freely or be free of worship and no one would harm us. The wandering Jew had found a home.

For Jews, trust in G-d was never a leap of faith but an idea that was built on

a relationship. We trusted in G-d in Egypt, because what we saw confirmed our faith in Him. We felt His love in the Wilderness and in the building of our ancestral land of Israel. But for too long, that faith was challenged and that trust was wanting. Making our way through Ellis Island, Jews came and found a land, a government, and peoples of all faiths and cultures who gave us a reason to once again put our trust in G-d.

 “In G-d We Trust” are words that still inspire us today.