

**ANGELA VELLOU KEIL**  
**BORN: 1936**  
**SALONIKA, GREECE**

Angela Vellou Keil was born in 1936 in Salonika, Greece. She is a Christian woman and relates her experiences of the German occupation of Greece during World War II. She was the oldest child in her family. Her father was a merchant and also had some mine leases. She shows a map of Greece and a picture of the port area and of the Venetian castle, a tower near the edge of the old city.

Salonika was part of Turkey until 1912 when it was incorporated into Greece. The Jews came in the 15th century and did very well under Turkish rule, but many left when the territory for their business activities was no longer available. The city then became predominantly Greek. A German family lived next to them but suddenly left, possibly in anticipation of the war. The Greeks were poorly prepared for the attack by the Italians but pushed them back until the German army entered into Greece and took over. Her father was in the Greek army but later came back. To escape from the bombing, they moved to a one-room place near the Jewish neighborhood. There was a curfew for everybody, and she first became aware of the star that had to be worn by Jews. She still remembers a Jewish woman who came to help with the weekly wash and who went to Australia after the war. One Christian neighbor boy was taken away by the Germans, but they did not find out what happened to him. The Nazis took over the school building and used it to house horses.

Only three thousand of the original sixty thousand Jews survived the war, and one Jewish survivor helped her father after the war. She does not know how property was transferred to the Nazis but remembers that Jewish tombstones were used to cover sidewalks. There was a 6-story concrete building filled with tobacco that served as their bomb shelter until 1944.

There were serious food shortages, particularly in 1942, and about one-seventh of the Greek population died of starvation. They had no school and spent most of their time hiding from Germans and bombs. Once, two Germans were killed by partisans and, in retaliation, an entire nearby village was destroyed and everybody caught was burned to death.

She does not remember much about the liberation by the communists and the following civil war. Her father was imprisoned for a time by the communists.

She is lucky that her family survived, but they were in bad shape for several years. She had only little schooling but did learn to read and write in two years. During the war, she was too young to realize how terrible her experience had been and also because everyone was in the same situation. People shared everything and made their own clothes from parachutes and used old tires to repair shoes. After the war, there was little talk about the Jewish community, but they heard stories and rumors about what had happened. At age 18, she obtained a scholarship and came alone to the United States on an Israeli boat, the "Jerusalem," with mostly Jews and some others who went to New York or Canada.

War is terrible and she is glad to have survived. She has been frightened all her life and is still afraid of borders, even the Canadian border. She is disturbed about the amount of food that is wasted and also is ashamed that she does not know more about the Jews. It is important to have accurate knowledge to break down barriers between different groups. She is left with tremendous empathy for people who are suffering and feels that the best way is to live a decent life, love people and be as creative as possible