

RG-50.462.0543

Summary

[Note that the recording is silent from timestamp 00:30:50 to 00:36:30.]

Ann Spain – Born March 23, 1945, in Stancia Chooo, Kazakhstan, while in transit back to Poland and then to DP camps in Germany. Father (no name given) born 12/19/1905 in Warsaw, but grew up in Chelm where his mother owned an inn. **Mother** (maiden name was Schwartz; one of 12 children) born 6/13/1914 or 1916 in Debianka, a resort town in western Poland.

During the War: When WWII broke out, both mother and father, though they did not know each other, fled with others to the East, living for a time in the woods as they kept moving East. Ann's mother was arrested by the Germans but escaped. Both were rounded up by the Russians and sent to camps in Siberia. The camps mentioned were Novosibersik and Irkutsk. Ann's father was a lumberjack. He tried to escape two times but was shot each time. Her parents did not know each other in the camps. In 1942, they were released from the camps and stayed in Siberia. The mother believed it was dangerous to be single while there, so a friend introduced her to Ann's father and they married within a week of meeting either in 1942 or 43. After being released from the camp, Ann's father worked in a commissary baking bread and her mother dealt on the black market, trading things from Red Cross packages and anything else she could get her hands on.

After the War: When Ann was one, her family went to Szczecin, Poland, a city close to where Ann's mother had lived. They looked for family members but knew of only one cousin who survived and an uncle who had gone to Argentina before the war. From 1946 to 1950, Ann and her family lived in DP camps in Germany. Her sister, Marian, was born in Kosel, Germany, in 1947. Her father wanted to go to Israel, but her mother was concerned about the situation there and did not want to experience war again. Ann's mother had an aunt who lived in Philadelphia, so they went there, landing in NY on May 10th, 1950. The family lived with the aunt for 3 to 6 months, then rented a nearby apartment in the Strawberry Mansion section of the city and finally they bought a home. Her father died in 1975 and her mother died in 1984.

Afterthoughts: Ann remembered the steady stream of survivors in her parents' home who were all searching for loved ones. This continued until about 1955.