

-TITLE-ROUBEN MARY  
 -I DATE-DECEMBER 5, 1989  
 -SOURCE-SAN FRANCISCO HOLOCAUST PROJECT  
 -RESTRICTIONS-  
 -SOUND\_QUALITY-EXCELLENT  
 -IMAGE\_QUALITY-EXCELLENT  
 -DURATION-1 HOUR AND 25 MINUTES  
 -LANGUAGES-ENGLISH  
 -KEY\_SEGMENT-  
 -GEOGRAPHIC\_NAME-  
 -PERSONAL\_NAME-  
 -CORPORATE\_NAME-  
 -KEY\_WORDS-  
 -NOTES-  
 -CONTENTS-

| Time | Content |
|------|---------|
|------|---------|

0:04:15 Mary was born in Salonika, Greece in 1917. She grew up with her 5 brothers and attended an Italian school. At this time there were no restrictions on them from the government. Before 1912, Salonika belonged to Turkey. When it became Greek, new laws were enforced, but they were not anti-Semitic laws.

0:05:55 The Jewish community in Salonika was strong. There were Hebrew schools and lots of good Jewish organizations. However, there had been somewhat more freedom under the Turks. Before the war, one could feel some anti-Semitism.

0:09:25 In 1917 there was a war with England. A big fine was placed on the people of Salonika. For a long time, Mary didn't know exactly when she had been born. Mary got married in 1941. Soon after that, everyone started moving away from the center of Salonika.

0:10:28 Mary's father was in the family business, a candy factory, which was a very big business. It had been easy to live with the Turks, but there got to be too many restrictions on the Jews with the Greeks.

0:12:12 Mary and her family didn't feel any threat except that World War II was starting. Mary's brothers went to the Greek army. When the Germans came and defeated the Greeks and Italians, in 1941, the Jews began to feel something. There was no resistance from the Greeks to defend the Jewish laborers.

0:13:39 After 1941, the Jews were afraid. They didn't know what their future would be. The Germans started to register and make Ghettos. They took Jews to the Ghettos 1 by 1. Some people tried to escape, but they were always caught.

00:16:09 There weren't many different sects of Judaism in Salonika, so there was just one Ghetto. When the Germans first came, they asked for the names of the Jewish community. Some people thought they'd help the Germans to be comfortable. There were about 20,000 Jews in Salonika.

0:18:45 When the Jews were rounded up, Mary remembers everyone thinking that they were going to work in Poland. People even bought work clothes. The Germans didn't touch the Spanish at this time. They were taken to a separate camp and treated differently.

0:22:41 Every time a convoy of people were taken to the Ghetto, they stayed there for 2-3 days until the trains came. Mary remembers being taken out of the Ghetto at 3 am. to clean the trains. When she got married, she was not allowed to go to the temple for the ceremony. They managed to get in anyway by sneaking in the back door. Her husband had a taxi company which the Germans took over. They kept all their cars and shut them out.

0:26:00 Mary went to the Ghetto in April with her family and in-laws. They knew a person who had come back from Poland but didn't want to tell them what was really going-on. Mary and her husband were not on the list of those to be shipped out because the Germans needed her husband to fix cars. They tried to go with their families anyway, but were caught and put into a makeshift prison.

0:29:10 When the last trains came in August, Mary and her husband had to go. Mary's husband met Italian officers who gave them false identification so they could be sent to Athens. 9 to 10 couples received this identification, but one girl told her friend, whose husband was collaborating with the Germans, and everyone was caught.

0:32:08 Mary's husband knew a Greek guard. He convinced the guard to let the couples go out of the Ghetto to get food for the train. All of the couples had places to hide outside the Ghetto, and never returned. The woman who was supposed to hide Mary and her husband backed out. They were afraid of being recognized, so they went to the Italian Embassy.

0:35:15 The Italians did a lot for the Jews. Mary and her husband stayed at the Embassy for one night. They were sent to Athens on an Italian train. In Athens, she stayed with a friend. Later, a man they didn't know got them Greek identification.

0:40:18 The rest of Mary's family was shipped to Poland. Her youngest brother survived Auschwitz, but the rest died. In Athens, they lived with the man who had gotten them the identification and his family. Mary said she was a teacher and her husband worked in this man's factory.

0:43:09 Mary says they were lucky, but they were still hiding. In 1943, the Germans occupied Athens. In Athens, the government was pretty good to the Jews. They gave them warnings that had not been given in Salonika. The guy who had returned from Poland did finally tell people that they were burning Jews, but everyone thought he was crazy.

0:47:30 There was a large community of Jews in Athens, but for the most part, you couldn't tell they were Jews because they spoke Greek so well. In Salonika, the Jews had spoken Ladino and Spanish. When they started having air raids in Athens, the lady they were staying with wanted to leave the city. They all went to a village outside of Athens which had a big German influence.

0:50:46 Mary and her husband lived in a room their friend had rented for them near his house. There were also 2 men who were working for the Gestapo sharing the room with them.

0:53:52 Mary remembers going to church on Easter so no one would suspect that they were Jewish. Since it was wartime, it was hard to find anything, so they were able to pay for their room with soap and oil which were very hard to find.

0:56:12 Mary and her husband in and outside of Athens until 1945. After that they were free. The people they had lived with never discussed anti-Semitism with Mary. She and her husband remained relatively healthy because they were able to spend a lot of time outside even though they were in hiding.

0:59:50 Mary recalls one day Germans going from door to door collecting guns. The man they lived with had 3, but since the front of his home looked like a factory, they didn't come in. On that same day, the Germans also killed 100 people suspected of being communists.

1:03:31 Mary, her husband, and their friends were in the village until after the war. The Germans in the town tried to fight off the troops with canons, but failed. Then Mary, her husband, and their friends returned to the house in Athens. When people who had known her found out that Mary was Jewish, they were very surprised.

1:08:57 Mary found out about her family right away. When her youngest brother came back from Auschwitz, he told her not to expect anyone else. He had only survived because he had worked in the kitchen and had eaten left-overs. He eventually moved to Israel.

1:11:20 Mary and her husband lived in Athens until they got organized. They moved to the United States in 1956. Mary remembers a time when she was told not to sit next to a black person. She hadn't realized that there was so much discrimination.

1:20:55 The Germans took all their property in Greece, and they never got any reparations. After the war, there were still Jews in Greece, but the government was up and down. Mary and her husband struggled when they got to America because they didn't know the language. They ended up in Oakland CA where her husband's cousin lived. They opened a store there. Now her husband is dead. She has a daughter in New York and a son in LA. She feels that since Auschwitz was so bad, her story isn't so great.  
.END.