

Interview with PAULETTE SEVI
Holocaust Oral History Project
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Interviewer: Eveline Fielder
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Q: I AM EVELINE FIELDER, AND IT'S AUGUST 8TH, 1989. I AM AT THE HOLOCAUST CENTER IN SAN FRANCISCO. I AM INTERVIEWING PAULETTE SEVI FOR THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.

GOOD MORNING, PAULETTE.

A: Good Morning, Eveline.

Q: WOULD YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU WERE BORN, WHEN YOU WERE BORN.

A: I was born in Salonika, August 21st, 1922.

Q: AND DID YOU -- DID YOUR PARENTS --

A: My father had died when I was young. My mother was alive, and I had four brothers. The one was in concentration camp during the war, the second war. And he was in Italy as a prisoner. And my three other brothers and my other sisters and myself and my two other sisters, married with a family, were in Salonika. They were all in Salonika.

Q: AND YOU WENT TO SCHOOL IN SALONIKA?

A: I went to a private school, a French school, in Salonika.

Q: DID YOU -- WERE YOU ORTHODOX JEWS?

A: No. We didn't have -- we were just -- it wasn't anything like orthodox or conservative or anything. It was just regular Jews. I mean, one kind of temple. As a matter of fact, we have quite a few temples in Salonika, small temples. Nobody would drive or even take the bus to go to temple. It was close to home.

And my father with three more other friends built the temple. They were sponsoring the temple. The one gave the lot, the other built, and the other was taking care of the expenses. The rabbi was sent from the Jewish Community Center, and there was no cantor. They would perform everything, and there were no expenses. The one pay the electricity bill, the other the water, everything. It was the four or five, four of them. And every Saturday -- I remember I was very young -- women didn't go to temple, you know.

Q: OKAY.

A: And every Saturday they would have the service, and they would have the kaddish. And then each one would bring whatever they could, and they had a nice -- they call it *tanda*. It was a -- I really don't know. I don't think it was a Greek word. Latino, maybe.

Q: YES. DID YOU SPEAK LATINO, *TAMBIEN*?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: UM-HUM.

A: And one would bring Greek cheese and the other hard-boiled eggs, and the other would bring some halva and another some ouzo. And they would have -- all the attendants to the service would have a kind of breakfast, because the service finished at 10:00 o'clock. It was nice.

And during the holy days, the high holy days, the women will go and sit by the kitchen, the kitchen of the owner, the one who gave the lot, and follow the service from there. They were really excluded, but just attending. And my mother was in charge.

They would make a donation. It was no ticket, no membership, nothing. If you had an occasion and you wanted to donate some money, that was it. So we were surprised, my husband and myself, when we came

here and say: What temple do you belong to? And we thought it was ridiculous.

Q: WHAT LANGUAGE DID YOU SPEAK AMONG YOURSELVES?

A: Well, usually, almost all the Jews would speak in Salonika, Latino.

I spoke at home with my parents in French, because my mother finished (le universite). She used to speak French with us. My oldest two brothers also went to private school. We were nine in my family, and they went to a private school. They were taking German then. And my mother would speak German with them.

Q: HOW INTERESTING.

A: Yes.

Q: WERE YOU A LARGE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN SALONIKA?

A: Very, very large. Very large.

Q: WHAT WAS THE PERCENTAGE OF JEWS TO THE NON-JEWISH COMMUNITY? DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA?

A: It was time -- not at my time, before, it was about 50 or 60 percent Jewish population.

Q: IT WAS THE LARGEST IN GREECE THEN?

A: Yeah. It was then. Then they started in 1920, or something like that -- they start to go to Israel, the first. In Haifa they built, the Jews from Salonika, they were the poor ones, the rich wouldn't move -- they built the Haifa port. They were very strong.

Q: DID YOU FEEL AT ALL ANY ANIMOSITY FROM THE NON-JEWISH GREEK PEOPLE?

A: Personally, yes.

Q: WHEN --

A: Yes.

Q: WHEN DID THAT START? WHEN ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

A: Well, we only had Jewish friends. It was just the family. We were a very big family. My mother had nine brothers and sisters, and they were all married.

Q: SOUNDS WONDERFUL.

A: Yeah, it was. And my father was a big family, but especially with my mother. We were more closer with my mother's family.

Q: WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO?

A: My father was in a wholesale business, an oil, olive oil. And he had -- I remember when I was young, he would take me to his store. And I would sit in a tall chair. They had a bookkeeper in the store. They had a warehouse, too. And he would take me there on vacation so I wouldn't bother my mother.

Q: UM-HUM.

A: Yeah.

Q: AND YOU WENT TO SCHOOL?

A: I went to school.

Q: YOU WERE ABOUT 12 OR 13 IN 1939?

A: No. I was older than that. I was 17.

Q: WERE YOU ABLE TO FINISH SCHOOL?

A: Yeah, I just finished school. So it was exactly the summer that I finished school. That is what I said. I was 16.

Q: YOU WERE 16?

A: I was 16.

Q: AND WHEN THE WAR BROKE OUT, COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT HOW IT AFFECTED YOU?

A: Well, when the war broke out, I had four brothers. And they all went to the war. Then, later on, they sent the oldest one, because he was supposed to protect us. He was the only one man in the family.

And I was going to his office. All my brothers were partners; the three were partners. And I went -- I remember, I was going to the office with my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, and another sister her husband went to the war, too. So we had her home with her daughter. We were a very close family, very, very close.

It started. It was hard. And then we had -- we had some friends staying with us because their children, my brother's friends, were away in the war, too. So we tried to help each other. We had a big home.

And when the Germans obliged us to move, to leave the house, and to go to -- it was like a ghetto -- because they wanted to get a full group of Jews and from one area, so they had put us together in different areas.

Q: IN SALONIKA?

A: In Salonika. Salonika was very big, very well-populated, you know.

And we went to stay with my aunt, my mother's family. All her brothers were Spanish citizen, and they were protected by the government. The Italian government protected all the Jews, the Italian citizen Jews, and Spanish citizens were also protected. They didn't go to concentration camp. That's another story altogether. I'll tell you later on about it.

Q: YES.

A: Before we left the house, my neighbor across the street that we grew up together -- I mean from two years old, maybe that -- came over. His parents had died before. And he comes and says: Mrs. Amarillo --. My maiden name is Amarillo.

Q: AMARILLO?

A: Amarillo, yellow.

Q: YELLOW.

A: Yellow.

Q: THAT'S RIGHT. YOU REPEATED IT. I THOUGHT IT MEANT YELLOW IN SPANISH.

A: Yes.

He says: Mrs. Amarillo, if my parents weren't away, they would protect you. I want to take care of everything. I know you have to leave the house. All you have to do is give me the keys, and I'll take care of everything.

Q: HE WAS JEWISH OR NOT JEWISH?

A: No, Christian. Greeks.

So, he is youngest boy.

Q: DID HE THEN --

A: Yes. He came over. So we were very happy. My sister brought their own things to the house. And my two sisters -- and we were well-off. And we gave him the keys. And we went to my aunt and stayed there for a while.

My uncle, my oldest uncle, said he wanted to protect my mother. She was older. I mean, she was 60, and then you were old by 60. And he said -- he took my mother with to his house -- and said if the Germans say anything, she is in my protection. She is Spanish. She was Spanish citizen before she got married, you know.

Q: I SEE.

A: But it was a group of Jews, with the one who was involved with the Germans. They said that we were -- she wasn't Spanish. She was just a

Greek. She was married to a Greek guy. And she couldn't be saved. So they came and picked her up.

Q: THE GERMANS?

A: The Germans, yeah.

And so we went with her, too. Even though we weren't supposed to, we went with her group, with my two brothers, myself. Meanwhile, my sister, my oldest sister, and my brother, youngest brother -- I am the youngest in the family from the nine. But the other brother --

Q: YOU WERE NINE?

A: We were nine.

They went to Athens. Athens was -- it was Italian government in Athens.

Q: ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

A: Yeah. So they went to Athens. The way they could, it took them about ten days to go there. It wasn't easy to travel. They wouldn't let you go. It was another state.

So they went ahead, and they rented a place to live, hoping that we would move in, too. But when they took my mother, that was it. We went to concentration camp in Salonika, close by to the railroad. And at 5:00 o'clock in the morning they would put you in on the train. They had the convoys, you know. So we were ready to go -- I remember we were ready to go -- a small bag with a few underwear and some crackers and biscuits and so forth to have. We didn't know where we would --

Q: DO YOU REMEMBER THE DATE?

A: Not really. It had to be sometime in May. Yeah, it was in May.

So my two sisters were already in concentration camp, and they were to leave on the same convoy.

And my niece -- I had a sister, she died of meningitis when she was 22. And I don't even remember her. I was very -- I must have been very, very young, two or three years old. But she had a child, a daughter, and a son. They went on the same convoy. We were all ready.

Q: THEY MUST HAVE BEEN REALLY SMALL.

A: Yeah. No. They were my age. The girl was two years younger than me, and the son was four. My sister died when she was 22, and the children grew up with their father.

Q: DO YOU REMEMBER, WERE THERE MANY CHILDREN AMONG THE CONVOY, IN YOUR CONVOY?

A: Oh, yeah, there were too many.

Q: YEAH?

A: And my niece, my oldest niece -- my number two sister had two boys, the one was just bar mitzvah, and the other was younger. And my other sister had a daughter, she was about three years old. And when we were going to the -- were deciding where to go to the refuge for the bombing -- and my sister would tell her daughter "Oh, Tatika, we are going to speak Greek, because it is not good to speak --." She spoke French.

"Oui, Mama," she would answer in French. And then she would start to talk. It was fun for her, lots of people together sitting there. And she would start to talk.

And her mother says, "Tatika."

"Oui, Mama."

She forgot to speak Greek.

Q: I THOUGHT THEY SPOKE FRENCH.

A: It was our second language.

Q: YOU SPOKE IN ALL THREE LANGUAGES THEN?

A: Oh, yes. Actually, four. Italian, too. But the three languages we used. Yeah.

Q: BUT IN SCHOOL, GOING FOR YOUR EDUCATION, WHAT LANGUAGE DID YOU SPEAK?

A: French was the main language.

Q: FRENCH?

A: And Greek was the second language, and Latino -- we didn't speak that.

Q: IT WAS A NON-JEWISH ONLY?

A: It was a Jewish school.

Q: OH, IT WAS A JEWISH SCHOOL.

A: It was a Jewish school. It was a private Jewish school. Actually then the rector was my mother's first cousin. It was all the family. It was a huge family.

Q: YES, AN ENORMOUS FAMILY.

A: Yes, yes. I didn't have any friends, because all my friends were the family.

Q: SOUNDS GOOD.

A: We were all the same age. You know, for each child it was a whole bunch of children the same age. So when --

Q: IT WAS IN 1939?

A: No. It was '43.

Q: OH, IN '43.

A: '43, May 1943.

Q: I HATE TO KEEP JUMPING AHEAD OF YOU, BUT WHAT HAPPENED FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, 1939-40?

A: Nothing. Everything was fine. Everything was fine and calm and with some restrictions to go home early at 8:00 o'clock, I guess, they should close.

Q: SO THERE WAS A CURFEW?

A: We had a curfew. And we didn't have electricity, you know. But everybody -- the curfew was just for the Jews. But it wasn't -- you could leave. I mean, it was a restricted life, but it wasn't bad.

Q: WERE YOU AWARE OF WHAT HAPPENED IN GERMANY AND IN POLAND?

A: We didn't know, exactly. No. Nobody knew.

Q: IN THE NEWSPAPERS?

A: Oh, there was no newspapers that you could, no. We had two French newspapers, but they would write what they would let them, you know. There were no radios, no.

Q: IT WAS JUST WORD OF MOUTH, SO TO SPEAK?

A: Not too much, not too much. But, as I said, we wanted to go to Athens, because the Italians were nice. Especially for my mother. But all they told us is you go to Germany. You are going to work for them. They will treat you right, and they will even pay you.

Q: THAT IS WHAT YOU WERE TOLD?

A: That is what they were telling us. That we had -- from the Jewish community -- they had -- the chief rabbi, he was from Germany. The Germans put him in.

Q: HE WAS SENT TO YOU?

A: He was sent by the Germans, yeah. So maybe he knew it. I don't know. But, yeah, my parents and my brothers, they were involved with the Jewish Community Center. They were volunteers, you know.

It was the same life. We had lots of Jewish organizations with the orphans, the building for the orphans, the girls and another for the boys. We had lots of social life, clubs, the Jewish clubs, you know. We didn't have anything to do with Christians. We really didn't have too much in common.

Q: COULD YOU JUST TELL ME, FOR THE REST OF GREECE, HOW MANY JEWS DO YOU THINK WERE OUTSIDE OF SALONIKA?

A: Salonika, Salonika had about 60,000 Jews in it.

Q: YES.

A: And the other in Athens, there were about 5,000. And there were a few on each islands, and the small cities, and --

Q: NOT TOO MANY?

A: No, not too many. Maybe -- I don't think it was 60,000 all together. But Salonika was the main Jewish town.

I remember the holy days. All the towns were there, during the high holy days. Everybody was closed. Not Saturdays, but high holy days, you can see a block of stores. They all were mostly -- I mean, the only people I knew -- they were very well-off. And they had their own businesses and their own friends. And so coming back to --

Q: TO 1943?

A: When we were in concentration camp back in Salonika, and we were ready to leave by 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon. They came in while --

We had lots of friends, Italian friends. And the consulate, from the Italian consulate in Salonika, send us the paper as being Italian citizens. So they took us out -- the Germans sent for us. And they took us out with my mother, my two brothers, and myself. And we went and stayed with some friends.

And before we left for Athens, going to the Italian government there, we went to take some clothes, some things from the house. So the house was empty and some refugees already took over, and we went to see this friend, this neighbor, the Greek neighbor.

Q: THE ONE YOU MENTIONED BEFORE?

A: Yes. He said, "What things do you want? You didn't give us anything. What are you talking about? We didn't take anything. I never talked to you. I never saw you."

So that is why I resent the Greeks. I mean, not everybody was the same, but mostly they weren't very friendly. They were jealous. I don't know if this part should be -- you know, just -- but it's the truth. It is the truth.

So we went to -- we took the train with the other Italian citizen. It took us almost a week. And it takes one hour to fly or eight hours on the train. It took us a whole week.

Q: TO WHERE DID YOU GO IN ITALY?

A: Not in Italy. In Athens. From Salonika to Athens.

Q: THAT ONLY TOOK AN HOUR?

A: Yeah. But it took us a whole week, because we were stop-and-go, and the Germans, and the underground, because it was the underground. A few Jews survived with the underground. They went to the underground.

And we went in Athens. We stayed about three months, maybe. And the Italians lost the war. So the Germans took over. A couple months later they went from house to house to get the Jews. Then we were much smarter.

Q: YEAH.

A: We pay a lot to -- when the truck, the charcoal truck, they would use to carry charcoal, and we went in there. And we pay, I don't remember how much, for each person.

Q: TO WHO?

A: To the owner, the truck owner. It was a private business, you know. They knew we were Jewish, and they were taking advantage, of course.

It was then my mother, my three brothers, and my sister, and myself because my sister was already in Athens. We were all unmarried. We weren't married then. The married ones, they left with the husbands in concentration camp in Germany.

Q: WHERE?

A: When --

Q: DO YOU KNOW WHERE?

A: May. We never heard about them.

Q: YOU NEVER FOUND OUT?

A: No, never. Nobody came to tell us.

Q: IT WAS GERMANY, NOT POLAND?

A: Huh?

Q: IT WAS THE CONCENTRATION CAMP IN GERMANY?

A: I don't even know. We never heard anything about them. We just try to -- nobody could remember where did they go and how long. Maybe they went straight to the ovens.

Q: DID YOU KNOW AT ALL WHEN?

A: What? The day -- we were supposed to be on the same train. We left at 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon from the camp, and they left the next morning at 4:00 o'clock. We were going to go with them. We were supposed to be on the same train.

Q: AND WHAT KEPT YOU FROM GOING ON THE SAME TRAIN?

A: The Italians sent us the paper as Italian citizen.

Q: THAT'S WHAT SAVED YOU?

A: That's what saved us.

We were more concerned about my mother. We thought we were young, we were going to work. We didn't know what was expecting us. And then we hide the truck. Because it was, as I said, this charcoal truck. My mother never spoke Greek.

Q: SHE DIDN'T?

A: It was always French and German.

Q: AND LATINO?

A: And Latino. So I remember, it was winter already. She was wearing a coat, trying to -- and a bandanna, a black bandanna -- and she was supposed to be mute, deaf-mute, because if she opened her mouth they would know right away that she was Jewish. The Greeks were aware of the Jews.

Q: DID YOU FIND THAT IF YOU LOOKED VERY PRONOUNCED JEWISH THAT GAVE YOU AWAY IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES?

A: Yes, the accent.

Q: THE ACCENT, NOT THE LOOKS SO MUCH? IT WAS MORE THE ACCENT?

A: No, the accent. No. We don't especially -- like here they say, the nose. No. It wasn't that, even though my husband had the Jewish nose.

Q: YEAH.

A: But not everybody. I was surprised when I heard here that, oh, you can see his nose is Jewish. No. We didn't have this problem. Did you have the same thing in Germany?

Q: WELL, IN GERMANY, IF YOU LOOKED PRONOUNCED JEWISH, I WOULD SAY YOU WERE IN MUCH GREATER DANGER THAN IF YOU DID NOT. I SUPPOSE IT WASN'T THE ACCENT AT ALL.

A: We had the accent. No. We had the accent. Nowadays, they don't anymore, but they did have the accent.

Q: I HEARD THAT BEFORE FROM OTHER GREEKS.

A: Heavy accent like I have it. I don't have a Greek accent speaking English, but I do have foreign accent, a very heavy one, of course.

Q: YES, LIKE ME.

A: No. No, you don't.

Q: SO IT WAS '43, AND NOW YOU WERE ON THE TRAIN?

A: Yeah, '43. And we got in the truck. And while we were sitting there, some other people came and, believe you me, they were my mother's first cousin.

Q: YOUR FAMILY MUST HAVE BEEN ENORMOUS.

A: My mother's first cousin, they were went on the truck with us. It was the three brothers. They had a very, very good position in Salonika. And the one was married to a non-Jew. And she was with them, too. The other wife stayed behind, but we were --

Q: BUT SHE WAS JEWISH -- THE OTHER WIFE?

A: Yeah. The other two wives were Jewish. But they didn't come.

Q: WHAT WAS SHE?

A: She was Greek. She would be the one to go around and do errands for us because she had a Greek accent. She was Greek.

But we met on the truck, and sure enough, we were heading for the same place. We didn't even talk to each other. We didn't supposed to know each other.

Q: DO YOU FIND THAT -- OF COURSE IT WOULD HELP -- IT HELPED YOU A LOT HAVING MONEY?

A: Oh, absolutely.

Q: IF YOU WERE POOR, YOU COULD NOT HAVE --

A: I don't think so. They went underground, but not with my mother, no, and with us, no. The boys, maybe, and I doubt. No. The money, it was --

Q: SO REALLY YOU HAD TO PAY YOUR WAY THROUGH?

A: Absolutely. Absolutely. Life was expensive then. So we went to the city named Carditsa. We arrived there in --

Q: IN GREECE?

A: In Greece, Carditsa. We didn't leave -- we were always in -- and no hotel, no place to stay. And it was evening, so my brother said -- called this town -- the town, you know, just a few --

Q: TOWN, SURE.

A: -- the big shots and he said, "Isn't there a good Christian family here who can give some refuge to my mother and the girls?" And right away they opened their house, and the boys slept some place else.

And we slept two in a -- if you call it beds. They were threw down. No beds, just the blanket. And mouse was around us, and, you know, they just didn't have the facilities. They were poor, and we spend the evening there.

And the next day, we take a mule for my mother --

Q: A MULE?

A: A mule. And we walked and went up in the hills, in a very, very small village, that small that they didn't know. They wouldn't take a bath, because if they did they would lose the oil from the baptism. They

never saw a car, they never, they just -- in winter one of each family would go to the higher mountains to take care of the sheeps. It was really something.

Then we rented a room there, and then we were talking. We were seeing our cousin. And we were in the same village. So --

Q: WHAT LANGUAGE DID YOU USE THEN TO TALK?

A: Well, it was between us, and we were free. We were free then.

Q: YOU WERE FREE. WHAT ABOUT THE LOCAL POPULATION?

A: It was a very, small one. It was a very, very small one.

Q: BUT STILL, DIDN'T THEY KNOW?

A: We were Greeks from the underground, and the Germans were after us.

Q: UH-HUH.

A: That's what we told them. No, they didn't know we were Jewish. They didn't know. The Jewish had a tail -- you know, you know. They didn't know what Jewish was. They thought it was something out of this world -- yeah, yeah.

So we were from the underground, and we had to save ourselves because we had a big, it was an important job. We were asked to save ourselves and to take care of the underground. I don't know. They believed what we told them. They were completely ignorant, I mean completely ignorant. They hardly spoke Greek. They had their own --

Q: DIALECT?

A: Dialect, yeah.

Q: NOW WHEN THE GERMANS CAME AND DEPORTED YOU, YOU DID NOT HAVE TO WEAR A YELLOW STAR --

A: Absolutely, we did. At the beginning, in Salonika. Well, after that we had to throw it after. Yeah, otherwise we wouldn't -- but in Salonika we all did. And we don't go to certain areas.

And that was a very short time, because they took already when they put on the stars. Then they started to gather the Jews and send them to Poland. It was 1943, the beginning of '43.

Q: AND WHEN YOU WENT INTO THAT VILLAGE, DID YOU ALWAYS WEAR YOUR YELLOW STAR?

A: No way! When we went to Athens, we took it away.

Q: YOU TOOK IT OFF?

A: We took it off.

Q: WAS THERE DANGER THERE?

A: We weren't supposed to be Jewish.

Q: I SEE.

A: We couldn't wear it. Who wants to wear it anyway?

Q: OF COURSE.

A: We were supposed to be from the underground, from the Greeks. And they were afraid of the underground, the villagers.

And so one day -- we had one room. So my mother and my, the whole family, there were seven of us -- no wait a minute. My two sisters, and my mother, three, and three boys, six of us. We were living in one room. That was a bathroom. That was a kitchen. That was the -- we had the oven. We baked our bread down in the ground. They had a place to burn the wood and then cleaned the place and then baked the bread.

Q: YOU GOT THE INGREDIENTS? YOU COULD BUY THE INGREDIENTS?

A: Yeah. From the, from the --

Q: LOCAL PEOPLE?

A: -- villagers, yes. We buy the grain, and we went to make the grain as a flour, with mill. And then we did make our bread. We wash in the river. And one thing I'll tell you, we had a maid living at home, so, but you adjust yourself. You adjust yourself.

Q: COULD YOU BUY FOOD IN GREECE?

A: It was just some vegetables, regular food. Not too much. Not too much. No chicken.

Q: FROM THE LOCALS?

A: From the local, but we pay very, very high prices for everything.

Q: DID YOU TAKE MONEY WITH YOUR OR JEWELRY OR --

A: Gold. Gold. Gold pounds. I have one to remember. Gold pounds.

Q: DO YOU WANT TO SHOW IT TO THE CAMERA?

A: Yeah.

(Video close-up of ring.)

Q: THAT'S BEAUTIFUL.

A: Yeah. It's gold.

Q: IT'S ENGLISH?

A: Yeah, this is English.

It was each -- everything we buy was with gold pounds. The drachma was -- I mean, one day you would have one thousand drachs to buy a loaf of bread. Next time, if they would take the money -- next day, it was two thousand, three thousand.

It wasn't too much. But the air was clean, very clean, and the bread was good. And we didn't even think of eggs. We had eggs.

Q: YOU HAD EGGS?

A: Yeah. But meat, I don't think. I don't remember.

Q: I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE YOU HAD THAT GOLD, HOW IT WAS VALUED. LET'S SAY --

A: Oh, they knew.

Q: IF YOU WANTED SOME EGGS AND SOME FLOUR, THEY FIGURED IT OUT?

A: They would take as much as they wanted to. Nobody would stop them. You wanted bread, you would pay for it.

Q: YEAH. AND HOW DID YOU CARRY THE GOLD? DID YOU HAVE POCKETS OR --

A: Yeah. We had a big --. No. We had a big, like a corset. We women were wearing it, and it was inside. We made it. It was from cloth, pockets inside. We make the whole thing, and we were wearing it all the time, even when we were sleeping. There was no nightgowns, not such a thing. We were all lay down on the blankets.

It was miserable. It was hard for my mother. Especially for my mother.

Q: HOW OLD WAS YOU MOTHER?

A: She was in her early 60's. She was 65 when she died. She died young, yes.

Q: OUR AGE, THAT'S YOUNG, ISN'T IT?

A: Yes, well, she had a tough life.

Q: YEAH.

A: It was hard.

Q: YES.

A: And one evening we were all sitting. The big shots of the village there, the community --

Q: YES.

A: -- came over and said that the Germans are coming, and we had to go even higher at night in the very top of the mountain. And we put my mother again on the mule. The mule, if you are aware of it, they go to the very end of the road -- the edge. Oh, God! We were so afraid. My poor mother. She really wept a lot.

Q: SHE WAS VERY COURAGEOUS.

A: She was.

She wasn't herself anymore. She was very bright woman, a very strong woman, but not any more.

Then finally, then we spent a couple of days right in the middle of just outdoors. We took with us a little bit, some food, some bread, I guess. We were satisfied with the bread. As long as we had bread, we were satisfied.

Q: AS LONG AS YOU HAD WATER TO DRINK, OF COURSE?

A: Yeah, the water was good. And olives, they had olives, and eggs, and olives, and bread, and some vegetables, but --

Q: NONE OF YOU WERE SICK?

A: No. That reminds me, talking about sick. Before my husband died he was sick; he had a brain tumor. And I was always the sick one. I had pneumonia three times. When he got sick, not even one day, I wasn't even sick one day. All the time I had to take care of him, I was never sick.

Q: YOU DID NOT HAVE TIME TO BE SICK.

A: I didn't have time to be sick. And I didn't want a nurse. I was there with him and going from doctor to doctor, and really I was there. I was day and night. I stopped my life completely, and I was taking care of him.

Q: YOU TOLD ME BEFORE THAT YOUR HUSBAND ONLY DIED LAST YEAR.

A: Yeah, October.

Q: YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT THAT TIME RIGHT NOW.

A: Yeah. That's what I said. But when there's some pressure, I guess, you are not sick. We weren't sick.

Q: I'VE HEARD THAT FROM SO MANY PEOPLE.

A: We were very strong and just taking care of my mother.

Q: KEEP GOING?

A: Yeah. Keep going. Now I feel I am not so well. Like I said, when I don't feel any more as strong as I used to be.

Q: YOU LOOK GOOD TO ME RIGHT NOW.

A: Thank you. No, I don't feel too well. Anyway.

Q: OH, I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT.

A: Anyway.

Q: TELL US A LITTLE BIT, NOW, YOU WERE IN THAT VILLAGE, AND THAT WAS IN 1943?

A: In '43 or '44.

Q: OR IN '44. AND YOU STAYED THERE FOR HOW LONG?

A: A year and a half, a bit more than that.

Q: AND YOU FELT RELATIVELY SAFE THERE?

A: Relatively. As a Jew -- nobody knew we were Jews. We didn't -- we weren't very much in contact with the villagers.

They were busy working anyway. And the Sundays they would get all together in the cafe, and the boys would go there. The boys spoke Greek well, because they were in business.

Q: HOW OLD WERE THE BOYS THEN?

A: Well, my oldest brother was 15 years older than me and the other about 10 -- and 10 years younger, and the other one was about seven -- no,

five. He is five years older than I am. I was the youngest one. Now he is sick in Athens. He lives in Athens, and he is sick. And I lost two brothers.

Q: YOU LOST -- HOW MANY MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY DID YOU LOSE?

A: Well, two nieces. My sister was already dead. Two nieces, a niece and nephew, they were a little bit younger than myself. Then my other sister, her husband, and the two boys.

Q: WHERE DID THEY GO?

A: Concentration camp. We never heard anything about them.

Q: THOSE ARE THE ONES YOU NEVER HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT?

A: No. And another sister and her husband and her daughter and all my mother's sisters and their husbands and my father's sisters and brothers. But my mother's brothers, they were all alive. Now, they die after the war, little by little.

Q: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY, HOW MANY MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY PERISHED IN THE HOLOCAUST?

A: I have -- cousins and everything?

Q: HOW MANY?

A: 170 people.

Q: A HUNDRED AND --?

A: Seventy people. The children and -- I told you each my mother's brothers, each one had a family and their children were married with children. So you know how it multiplies. And my mother had five sisters. They were all married. So my mother's youngest sister had a son,

and he was -- he had finished high school, (name of school in French).

The was going for the baccalaureate there.

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Q: HIGH SCHOOL?

A: Well, the Germans took all the Jews, the men, to the --. It was, let's say the park. The place was not too many trees, but downtown Salonika. And they kept them in summer, in August. And they kept them, I don't know how many hours, all day long.

So this guy, he wasn't used to be exposed to the sun. Two days later he got meningitis, and he died.

Q: FROM THE --?

A: From the heat. He was 19 years old.

So, a hundred and seventy people in the family. My uncle in Israel has -- when my grandmother died -- my grandmother survived as a Spanish citizen. She went with --

Q: HOW OLD WAS SHE?

A: When she died, she was in the hundred, when she died.

Q: SHE LIVED WHERE? IN SALONIKA?

A: No. No. No. No. She was Spanish citizen. The Germans took -- the Spanish took them to Germany first. And then from there sent them to Morocco and then Spain and from Spain to Israel. And then in Israel they were left alone.

Q: AND SHE DIED IN ISRAEL?

A: She died in Israel. And when she died, my uncle wrote in the stone all the names of the family who died in concentration camp. So I have the copy he sent me, a picture of it with all the names and --

Q: DID YOU BRING IT WITH YOU?

A: No, I did not.

Q: I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE SEEN IT.

A: Yeah, it has the picture and all the names and from each family, yeah.

Q: AND SHE WAS OVER A HUNDRED WHEN SHE DIED?

A: My grandmother was a hundred, yeah, but she wasn't staying with her children. She was staying in old-age home in Israel. Meanwhile, my uncle had lost all their money. Their property was in Salonika. But they went back, and they got most everything. They can go back to Salonika after the war. And they got almost everything -- the business, the property, the houses, and everything.

Q: IT CAME FROM -- THE GREEK GOVERNMENT GAVE IT BACK TO HIM?

A: Well, they fight the Spanish government.

Q: THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT?

A: Made it easy for them, yeah.

Q: OH, I SEE. THEY HELPED.

A: No. The Spanish and the Italians, especially the Italians, were so good. They saved so many people, like the Jewish people, like they saved us. We weren't even Italians. They were giving false papers.

Q: IT ALL CAME FROM THE ITALIANS?

A: Yeah. They were very, very good.

Q: IT'S A LITTLE-KNOWN FACT.

A: Yeah. We were friendly with the Italians. My sister, older sister and my mother, they had lots of Italian friends and my brothers, you know. So that really helped. They did do as much as they could and maybe more.

Q: SO YOU STAYED ALL DURING THE WARTIME IN GREECE?

A: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: YOU NEVER LEFT GREECE?

A: No. We left the town.

Q: I UNDERSTAND THAT.

A: But, no, we never did.

Q: YOU NEVER DID.

A: No, we never did. Because whoever -- some young people who were in Athens, and when the Germans took over, they went -- they took small boats, and they went to Turkey and from Turkey to Israel, but most of them died.

Q: THEY DID?

A: Yeah. And with lots of money, and they had to pay lots of money, lots of friends and relatives. And they died. Some survived, but not too many. Yeah.

Q: WHEN YOU GOT MARRIED, WHERE DID YOU GET MARRIED?

A: I got married in Salonika. I met my -- I was living in Athens, 1948. My mother died. She was, well, she would always say: The children are coming. She couldn't believe that everybody was dead. She couldn't. I mean, it was impossible to believe it.

And, of course, we didn't go back to Salonika; we stayed in Athens. Too many bad memories.

Q: DID YOU EVER GO BACK TO SALONIKA?

A: Afterward. After the war. My mother never went to Salonika. Just a few months before she died, and we moved there.

And then she said, she always said: Let's sit by the window. Let's put a sign in the windows, a big sign that we are living here, so the boys and the grandchildren will know where we are. They will be looking for us. That was -- that brought her death. I mean, she was just thinking, always, the girls and the grandchildren, especially grandchildren.

Q: WHAT DID SHE DIE OF?

A: Infection. It was the beginning. She died in '48, generally it was 1948. And after she died, I moved to Athens with two of my brothers who were working in Salonika. And two were working in Athens. And I was staying in Athens with them.

So I was in Athens and 1948, then, generally, by March they had an unveiling. My mother and I went to Salonika for the unveiling. And my husband was there. He used to go once a year to take inventory. He was partner with his brother-in-law. And he was in Salonika. And I went to Salonika.

Then we met to a restaurant. I was with my aunt and uncle, and he was with some friends. So Jews who were there would get away together. And we had dinner together, and then he asked permission if he could take me to the movies. So we went out and were talking, so much talk.

And the next morning was Sunday morning. And he called around 10:00 o'clock and said: May I come and see you? Do you mind? So I said: Fine. I was still in bed, and he sent me beautiful flowers. And I have a thing for flowers. I love flowers.

Q: IT SOUNDS VERY ROMANTIC.

A: Yeah. He always brought me, every Friday night, all the time we were married, he would bring me some flowers. Yeah. And since then, since that Saturday night, we were together all the time.

Q: WERE YOU CHAPERONED VERY MUCH AT THAT TIME, OR COULD YOU GO OUT ALONE?

A: When we were engaged, yes. Only then, not before. No. I had four brother; they wouldn't let me. No, I didn't have a boyfriend. It was very,

very restricted. Very. I would go out to the movies or theater with one of my brothers. No.

Q: YOU WERE VERY PROTECTED, HAVING SO MANY BROTHERS.

A: Yeah, yes. I -- here, my friends here, they had boyfriend they were steady with and I said: Oh, my God. I never had a chance to do anything like that.

No, but we were married within two months that we met, because I had to go back to Athens and he had to go back to Athens. And my brother wouldn't permit us to be in Athens, same city, with no chaperones. They were busy working.

So we got married. He was a really wonderful person, very, very sweet. Very sweet. Very much involved --

Q: IN 1948?

A: In 1948.

Q: SO YOU WERE MARRIED FOR 39 YEARS, RIGHT?

A: Forty years. We had our forty -- our daughter gave a kaddish in our honor at the temple. He was sick already.

Q: IT WAS A WONDERFUL LONG TIME.

A: He was involved in so many organizations. He was going from school to school, talking about the holocaust. He was one of the -- even before Michael, Michael Theller. Even before him, with what's his name, Mark Garcia, the first president.

Q: DID YOU EVER GO BACK TO GREECE?

A: Yes. We went to Greece --. The first time, he went by himself in 1966. He went to Israel. He went for ten days. It was his nephew's bar mitzvah. And he went. I was taking care of the business. We had our own business in Richmond.

Q: DID YOU GET ANY RESTITUTION FOR YOUR PROPERTY FROM THE GREEK GOVERNMENT AT ALL?

A: To be honest with you, we didn't get any money from anybody. And we didn't even ask for anything. When they came -- somebody came from New York and asked to know the survivors, the ones who were in concentration camps, not myself, like Isaac. And when they called and they told him what it was all about, he said: Nobody can replace my parents. Nobody can pay for them. I don't want that money. I don't want anything to do with them. No.

The other friends of ours, they all still take some. But Isaac never would. And I said: Honey, you don't want it. I don't want it. You are right. We don't want that money. But how about giving to Israel, give it to other causes. But no, he said. One year, I'll give it to Israel. The second to this one. The third one, I'll change my mind and get that money, and I don't want it.

Q: HE DIDN'T?

A: He never wanted it. He had -- he was very strict. And he had his own ideas. And he was fighting with everybody. He was involved with the young generation. He lived in Berkeley.

Q: HE WAS?

A: He was a member of the board for many, many years. He was a member of the temple. He was a member of the board and talking care of the religious things. He had a beautiful voice, and, really, he was for many years, he was cantor at the temple. I mean, doing this as volunteer.

Q: YEAH?

A: Yes. But then he also was involved with the Holocaust Center. He was one of the founders. He was involved with B'nai B'rith. I don't know, so many organization and I can not even remember.

Q: YOU CAN'T KEEP TRACK?

A: They honored him in March 1988. He died in '88, in March of '87. There were 500 people at the Hyatt Regency on Union Square. Yes, it was really something.

Q: HE MUST BE A WONDERFUL PERSON.

A: Yeah. He really was. He was wonderful.

Q: COULD I ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, WERE THERE ANY MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY WHO WERE IN THE CAMP AND WHO SURVIVED AND CAME BACK?

A: No. None. None of my relatives. None of my immediate family. Nobody. No. Nobody. Absolutely nobody. Yeah, it was really painful.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL US ABOUT YOUR LIFE IN GREECE UNDER THE GERMANS WHEN YOU WERE INVOLVED?

A: It was hard. But you know when you are young, you don't fully realize the situation. You are young, like it's one poem from -- I don't know even remember -- who said, "A kid was panning and he was crying, asking for money, asking for bread, and so forth. And then he turned around and he was singing. So the guy turned around and said: You were laughing, now -- Do you understand French?

Q: A LITTLE.

A: (Something in French). I was laughing for myself, because I am young, and for them I am crying because I know they don't have enough food." And that's why -- Ramon de Young. I don't even remember it.

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So I was young and didn't see the full -- I didn't realize the full situation.

Q: DID YOU EVER COME IN CONTACT WITH THE GERMAN OCCUPATION AT ALL?

A: No. With the Germans, no. No way. It was hard. We were scared.

I remember, one thing I will always remember, all my life. We were staying in my aunt's house, and we were under the shade looking. And they had one convoy.

Q: THAT WAS IN SALONIKA?

A: In Salonika. They had a convoy, and it was ten Germans with big horses. And they were on the horses ahead, and then all the Jews walking. They walk at least five miles to go to the concentration camp, and with the small bags and all scared to death. Lines, lines -- I don't know how many, but over 1,000 people in the convoy, children and everything. This is something that will last with me all the rest of my life. I can see it.

Q: SO THE GERMANS WERE IN THEIR CARTS WITH THE HORSES?

A: With the horses. And then was the big lines of Jews, and on each side they had the Germans with the guns and everything. And they walk all the way from up in the city to downtown to walk to the concentration camp over there in Salonika, where the very poor people lived, the maids and so forth.

And at first, they sent them first to Poland, and they emptied the place. And they were bringing convoy after convoy.

Q: ALWAYS GREEK JEWS?

A: Only Greeks. Only Jews, only Jews.

Q: AND HOW FAR DID THEY HAVE TO WALK DO YOU THINK?

A: At least five miles.

Q: IN THE SUMMER?

A: Summer and winter. All the time, yeah. Within four months they clean up the whole city. I remember while we were in concentration camp, they called it (barronish). That was the name of the -- what do you call it. What do you call it. Well, just the place where the poor people lived. It was a kind of ghetto, I would say it was just only Jews there.

Q: OH, I SEE, IT WAS THE POOR JEWS.

A: A kind of ghetto. They very poor Jews. Their houses were made of plaster. I mean, just was nothing, live in a very bad condition. There were lots of poor Jews, you know.

Q: THERE WERE?

A: Yeah, there were quite a few.

Q: WERE THEY FARMERS? WHAT WAS THEIR INCOME FROM?

A: The Jewish Community Center would help them, each family. You know, we didn't pay taxes to the Greek government, we Jews.

Q: OH, YOU DID NOT?

A: No. We paid to the Jewish Community Center. And if you didn't want to pay, you said, well, they don't do my anything. I mean, then, if
counter → you had a death in the family or a wedding or a (brese), you couldn't do thing. So you had to pay everything you owned. So with this money, they would take care of the poor people. So the Greek government -- we had our own government.

Q: A STATE WITHIN A STATE?

A: Yes. That's right. And the rabbis was not private rabbis. The temple wouldn't pay the rabbi or the cantor. It was the Jewish Community Center. And the rabbis weren't wealthy.

Q: THE HEAD OF IT -- LET'S SEE, THE LEADER --

A: The leader was --

Q: A RABBI?

A: Was a rabbi. A very nice person. Very religious. His daughter was a friend of mine. We went to the same school. We were in the same class.

Actually, they survived. Not the rabbi, his daughter and his son are in Israel. But I never saw them. I don't know why.

Q: WHY DIDN'T HE SURVIVE?

A: He went right to the oven. Absolutely. I remember my brother used to tell us -- my oldest brother. He loved my brother. What do you call it -- a special name, in Greek, rabbi, on top of all the rabbis.

And they told him to sweep the streets. So my brother was around, and he said: Rabbi, please let me do it. He says: No, they, the government, is the law. It is God's law, and I'll do it. He wasn't young. I mean, he probably was 50. But then you think it's old.

Q: OF COURSE, IF YOU ARE A CHILD --

A: Yeah, I was a child.

Q: -- 50 WAS OLDER THAN EVERYTHING.

A: That's right. He was a really nice person. But nobody, nobody was paid by the temple. Just for the Jewish Community Center. It was a big organization, very big organization.

And all the poor, they would send charcoal for the winter and the wood for the wood stoves. You know, they would send bread and everything and give them money.

Q: DID THEY OWN THEIR PIECE OF LAND, OR HOW DID THEY --

A: No. They didn't own anything.

Q: THEY MUST HAVE WORKED AT SOMETHING?

A: Yes. But they weren't paid too much. The girl or the woman would stay home. The girls and daughters would be the maid, live-in maid. And they would go to see the family once a week on Saturday. And the men will do transporting things, heavy things.

Q: HAULING?

A: No, on their back. I don't think there is a special word in English.

→ In Spanish or a Spanish word, or Turkish word, "harman." They were very, very strong.

What they ate was: in the morning, one loaf of bread, two or three onions and whole bunch of Greek olives, and feta cheese. Which it is all good for them.

Q: HEALTHY FOOD?

A: Very healthy food. They couldn't afford meat or anything. Maybe once on Saturday, Friday night, they would eat some meat, maybe.

Q: THE CHEESE GAVE THEM PROTEIN?

A: Yeah, the cheese was very cheap. The olives were very, very cheap then. And onions and lots of bread, lots of bread.

Q: AND THEY HAUL IT ON THEIR BACKS?

A: On the back. Yeah. They haul on their back. They had some kind of cushion that they would wear. And then they would put -- I mean, they didn't have elevators. And they just carried on their back everything.

Q: NOW, THESE POOR JEWISH PEOPLE --

A: There were quite a few, believe me.

Q: -- DID THEY COME TO YOUR SYNAGOGUE, OR DID THEY HAVE THEIR OWN SYNAGOGUE, OR DID YOU ALL MIX?

A: Well, they had -- I'll tell you what. They didn't come to our synagogue, because each part of the city had a synagogue. There were so

many synagogues, you couldn't take any transportation. You had to walk. So everything was within walking distance. And there where they were living they had a synagogue. And not everybody attended synagogue.

Q: WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE SYNAGOGUES, WERE THEY --

A: Nothing, nothing. The cemetery is where they built the university, at the Jewish cemetery. They took the stones -- they had beautiful stones, and they made the streets.

Q: PAVED THE STREETS WITH THE STONES?

A: Yeah, the stones. And this is in Salonika. Anyway, my niece was taking me around. She showed me, when I went.

Q: THE GREEK PEOPLE DID THIS?

A: The Greek people, yeah. So, you know, what they would say? Well, I'm sorry you survived. How come they didn't make soap out of you?

Q: THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO ASK YOU. THAT THE GREEK POPULATION AS SUCH, DID YOU FIND THEM ANTI-SEMITIC?

A: Yes, yes. Most of them. Not all of them, but most of them.

Q: THEY ACTUALLY SAID THAT?

A: Yes. And they all would say : Oh, I have so many Jewish friends. Everybody, even here today, they say that.

Q: NOWADAYS?

A: Even nowadays. My friends are all Jewish. Unfortunately, no, they weren't -- for money, they would do anything. No. This is my opinion. I don't know how other people are.

Q: DO YOU KNOW, CAN YOU IMAGINE, HOW MANY JEWS ARE LIVING IN GREECE NOW?

A: In Salonika, about 1, 000.

Q: ABOUT 1,000?

A: In Salonika. And about three or four, I don't know exactly, in Athens.

Q: THREE OR FOUR?

A: Thousand, thousand.

Q: THOUSAND.

A: Thousand, of course. Not too many. It's not a Jewish life any more. The Jewish Community Center is very, very wealthy, extremely wealthy. But they cannot do too much with the money, because so many Jews never came back. And they had property, and nobody asked for that. So that it went to the Jewish Community Center.

Q: IT DID GO TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER?

A: Yeah.

Q: NOT TO THE GREEK GOVERNMENT?

A: They put their hands, too. Also lots of Jews in Greece. Even now, nowadays, you cannot take as much money. You are not free to take money out.

Q: NOW?

A: Even now, never did. So what they were doing -- when you were traveling, you can take so many dollars and no more. It's a limit of about \$200, and, I don't know exactly, a certain amount. And then it was even worse. What they would do, they would find a way and they would send it to Switzerland.

Q: WHAT YEAR ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

A: About during the war. Even before the war. They had money in Switzerland, so when they would travel, they would take money from Switzerland. Okay, lots died, and they had the money there. And nobody

knew the number. So even if some -- I don't know -- maybe some of my relatives had money there --

Q: AND YOU WOULDN'T KNOW?

A: You wouldn't know, no. And I think the government, Swiss, took the money. It was the law. They have to wait so many years and then --. So that was another government that -- another state -- who did take advantage of the Jewish money. They were very, very wealthy. They were very, very poor and very wealthy.

Q: THERE WAS NOT A SO-CALLED MIDDLE ECONOMIC CLASS?

A: Not really.

Q: IT WENT FROM RICH THEN TO POOR.

A: Yes. The poor were extremely poor, extremely. Every time something were going from house to home to home -- every Thursday I knew they would come and ask for bread or for money. And we knew the old ladies, the old men, the young sick ones, they would come from house to house. I don't know what word is in English -- (mendash) is a French word beggar.

From house to house -- is something we don't have here. They, wouldn't go do it. But then during the war, the time we left, we lived in Salonika. They would come one day.

Q: YOU HAD THAT JEWISH COMMUNITY SPIRIT. YOU SEE, YOU HAD THAT LARGE JEWISH COMMUNITY SPIRIT THERE.

A: We only were between us. It was such a large population. The Jewish population. We didn't have to -- see, I don't any of my family that had any Christian friends, Greek friends.

Q: DID ANY OF YOUR FAMILY MARRY OUTSIDE THE JEWISH FAITH?

A: Are you kidding? They had nothing to do with it. They didn't have anything to do with it. One friend, my brother's friend, his sister married a gentile. And they never talked to her. I think she's alive in Athens. I'm not sure. It was very, very, very seldom, very seldom. My family, they wouldn't even dream of.

We had enough between us. It was our life. We had our social life, our orphanage with our hospital, everything was Jewish. And you had nothing to do with that. And the doctors, the lawyers, the doctor, the newspaper, they had a Latino newspaper written in the Latino. My husband knew how to write Latino.

Q: LATINO IS -- IT'S SPANISH?

A: It's something similar. It is a Spanish -- 1494 when Isabel threw the Jews out. They went to Turkey. They went some in Italy and some in France, and some -- Greece was Turk then.

My husband was born two weeks, he was two weeks Turk. And the Greeks came over, so he had a dual citizenship. Then came the war -- the 1917 big fight in Salonika. The papers, everything was big fight in Salonika.

But it was just a beautiful Jewish life. Friday night was a feast, you know, the big dinner and high holy days. It was just something to see -- everything is closed.

Q: DID YOU FEEL BEFORE THE WAR THAT THE GREEK, NON-JEWISH GREEK, POPULATION WAS ANTI-SEMITIC? DID YOU FEEL --

A: Yes, yes, yes. It was in another ghetto, the other part of the city. And the Greeks were attacking the population there. And --

Q: ATTACKING, WHAT DID THEY DO?

A: Burning houses, hitting. I mean, you know. And I remember that we had friends from the high society, the officers from the army, Greeks.

Q: NON-JEWS?

A: Non-Jews, yeah. We called Greek, because we never considered being ourselves Greek.

Yeah, and they sent to all the friends, they sent two soldiers. When my father died, they had Greek music from the -- they send it from the officer, from the city -- from the city of (Oakland) through this big officers, commanders, and generals and so forth.

But it was a very few. Whatever friends we had there were very, very few. And they weren't born in Salonika. They were from the islands, which in Athens wasn't as much anti-Semitic, like Salonika. In Salonika they were jealous. They were jealous.

Q: YOU WERE ALL PROSPEROUS?

A: Yeah. They were all prosperous. They only looked at the prosperous ones, of course. They were well-educated, very well-educated.

Q: AND YOU ONLY BOUGHT IN JEWISH STORES, AND --

A: Yeah, of course. They say, were you kosher? We weren't kosher. I didn't know that kosher business. I found out here. We never bought meat from the Greeks. It was kosher meat and kosher chicken and everything. But we didn't have two sets of dishes and that.

Q: OH, YOU DID NOT?

A: No, never did.

Q: AND YET IT WAS KOSHER?

A: The meat was kosher. We never mixed, eat and cook with cheese with it.

Q: WITH DAIRY?

A: With dairy. But we didn't have two sets of dishes. Passover was a big thing, where everything separate. For a whole year we had the pots and pans and everything just for one week.

Q: IT SOUNDS REALLY WONDERFUL.

A: It was a different life in the United States. Everything was new for us here. It is completely different.

Q: AND YOU CAME OVER HERE WHAT YEAR?

A: 1956.

Q: 1956?

A: 1956. It was end of April.

Q: SO YOU WENT, LET'S SEE, FROM THAT VILLAGE --

A: We went back to Athens.

Q: YOU WENT BACK TO ATHENS.

A: Went back to Athens.

Q: AND STAYED IN ATHENS?

A: And stayed in -- no, no. No. We went to Athens, and then my, two of my brothers went to Salonika to work. And the other two were in Athens. They had the business all together. There was a transportation.

Q: (INAUDIBLE)

A: No, we didn't not have the oil business. No. We had -- all my brothers, they had a partner, a Greek guy they used to do business, the youngest one with him. And he took them as a partner from Athens. And very nice.

After the war we did have Greek friends in Athens, not Salonika. They weren't too many Jews left anyway, but they really were wonderful people. And as I said, after my mother died, came back to Salonika.

And then I met Isaac. And then we went to Athens to live. And our daughter was born in Athens.

And one year before we came to the United States, business wasn't so good. And they didn't have to have two offices. So we went to Salonika and spent a year there and from there came to the United States.

Q: FROM SALONIKA?

A: From Salonika.

Q: WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO COME TO THE STATES?

A: Actually, for our daughter's future, because we thought that Greeks were always, and they would always be, anti-Semitic. I don't care what they say, this is my feeling. And I know, I think I know enough. So we wanted -- Isaac -- I didn't want it -- my husband wanted to --

Q: YOU DIDN'T WANT --

A: No. I had my family there. I was the youngest one. I was always, before I was married, and I was spoiled by my -- you know, after nine children. And they always used to spoil me, and they always continue.

And so he decided to come for our daughter's future. And he had enough. He couldn't take it. He wanted to be involved. He wanted to scream about what happened. He wanted the world to know. But you turned around and said, How come they didn't make soap out of you? How come you came back?

Q: THE GREEKS?

A: The Greeks.

Q: THEY ACTUALLY SAID THAT?

A: They actually said it. Yes, they did. They did, as a joke. But it's not a joke for us.

So when we came here, we had to start from scratch. We had some money. We brought some money with us. But it wasn't easy. Even though we both spoke English, but it was very poor. I mean, they didn't understand us. Maybe we understood them.

And I started to work. I was making a dollar an hour. And so --

Q: WHERE DID YOU LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES?

A: In Oakland.

Q: OH, YOU CAME RIGHT AWAY?

A: Right to Oakland. We never moved from Oakland. Yeah.

And then we joined the temple, and we made lots of friends. I can say we had lots and lots of friends, good friends. And they are all from the organization. Mostly from the temple, because we got involved.

I was involved with the sisterhood. As a matter of fact, I am a vice-president of the sisterhood. I was before my husband was sick. Now they started to get me involved again. I am on Ways and Means, and I work with -- I'm on the board with women's league, the guild, in home for Jewish parents. We both, my husband and I, we were both were involved, giving one day a week at it.

Q: DO YOU STILL HAVE RELATIVES NOW IN GREECE?

A: In Greece, yes. I have a sister. In Salonika I have a sister with her husband and a daughter. And I have one brother and his wife and a sister-in-law. My brother died, but sister-in-law and a son. And in Athens I have another brother and one sister-in-law that her husband died -- my oldest brother.

Q: WHAT IS THE LIFE FOR THE JEWS LIKE IN GREECE? DO THEY TELL YOU ABOUT THAT?

A: No. They don't say too much. They don't have too much of a life. It's not like here. They cannot do a lot. First of all, they don't do any volunteer work. They don't believe in doing any volunteer work.

Q: BUT THEY HAVE A TEMPLE?

A: Oh, yes. They have two temples in Athens and in Salonika, too. They have two temples. But it's not really a Jewish life, not too much. In Athens a little bit more than Salonika. But they are not involved. They are just not involved.

Q: DO YOU PLAN TO GO AND VISIT AGAIN?

A: No, no, no more. Since my husband died, I have no -- we went about two or three times. We went to the reunion in Israel in 1982, I guess.

Q: THE GREAT BIG REUNION --

A: We were there. Yeah, we were there. We went about three times to Israel.

Q: OF ALL THESE MEMBERS WHO PERISHED, ARE THEY ACCOUNTED FOR? OR DO YOU FIND A LOT OF MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY JUST VANISHED, AND YOU DON'T EVER KNOW WHERE THEY --

A: We don't know anything.

Q: YOU DON'T NOW ANYTHING AT ALL -- ANYBODY?

A: Nope. They never tried. We tried --

Q: OF COURSE YOU TRIED. YOU NEVER WERE ABLE TO FIND ANYBODY?

A: No. None of -- none. Not even one survivor. Not even one survivor in the whole family. My family and my mother's family, you know, the girls and all my brothers. Not even. The only survivor is

f 02 → Rene Moho. He was interviewed. He's my second cousin. But nobody, nobody that I knew. Nobody that I knew survived. Just to ask -- nobody.

Q: NOT THAT THEY SURVIVED, BUT TO FIND OUT WHICH CAMP THEY WERE SENT TO?

A: No, nobody ever saw them or were in contact. Whatever people who survived, I didn't know them at all. They couldn't -- you ask questions, and they were bringing the survivors in Athens in one school. The first stop from Poland or Italy, different places. And I would go there, every day, and see the people who were coming and asking questions. Nobody knew.

Q: YOU WENT TO THAT MEETING IN ISRAEL, THE SURVIVOR MEETING IN '82?

A: Yes, nothing.

Q: YOU DID NOT MEET ANYBODY THERE?

A: No. No. Nobody. And you know how it is, you work from groups and groups and groups and nothing. They just -- mostly they were from Poland, some from Czechoslovakia. Hungary. But nobody from Greece and not too many survived, I guess.

Q: THE GERMANS KEPT BOOKS SO METICULOUSLY.

A: I know, but we don't have those books.

Q: NO, OF COURSE NOT. BUT, I MEAN, THE BOOKS WERE THERE.

A: Yes, I know. I know.

Q: THE RED CROSS HAS BEEN TRYING ALSO.

A: We looked at names -- what do you call it -- in Israel?

Q: THE (YAVASHAM.

A: Yeah. Yavasham and they had names.

Q: BUT YOU DID NOT FIND ANY NAMES?

spelling <

A: No, nothing. Nothing, nothing, nothing. It's like they disappeared from earth.

Q: VERY DIFFICULT, YES.

A: Our daughter is involved with the second generation, and she tries to do as much as she can. She was married to a non-Jew in Chicago, which was very painful for us. But I would say thank God. I don't know, what I should I say -- she got a divorce.

And now she is going with a nice Jewish guy from New York. His grandparents, both sides, they were from Salonika, yeah. Well, they have a lot of things in common, because they live in New York. And they still have their old -- but they cook -- they eat and cook the sephadic way, which I don't have too much myself. He's a very nice guy. Hopefully, they will get married whenever they are ready.

Q: WE HOPE SO. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO TELL US ABOUT WHAT COMES TO YOUR MIND? ANY INCIDENT, ANY STORY. I KNOW IT'S HARD TO REMEMBER.

A: It's hard to remember, especially now, after I lost my husband. It's just my whole life stopped. My life was around him. We had a beautiful, beautiful life. I mean, with too many things in common. He liked to be involved, and I like to be involved. Sometimes, he retired in 1979, and from '70 to '88, we were busy all the time. I mean all the time. Only in the evenings we would do things together or the weekends. And he used to say, I don't understand how I could work before. I don't know. That was the time we really -- the time he retired. We were working, too. But after that, starting in 1979 we used to travel once a year. A month, a trip to Europe, or different places. We really enjoyed ourselves. I mean --

Q: DID YOU VISIT GERMANY?

A: No way. We never would. When he went to Salonika -- here's a story. He went first time in 1966, and his sister got a beautiful crystal vase. This is for Paulette. And he turned around and he looked "Made in Germany." And he said, I'm ashamed of you. He made her cry. How do you dare to buy anything German and give it to me? You know better than that. He never kept the vase. No. He never would take anything. No, no.

Q: DID YOU GO TO ITALY?

A: Yes, Italy and France and Switzerland, and the Untied States. We took and spent time in England. Yeah, but not Germany. We went three times in Greece to stay for two weeks between Athens and Salonika. Israel, of course. But never Germany.

Q: I DON'T BLAME YOU.

A: No.

Q: IT'S CERTAINLY BEEN WONDERFUL TALKING TO YOU, PAULETTE. AND THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THIS INTERVIEW.

A: Well, I understand. I understand --

Q: AND I HOPE YOU CONTINUE TO FEEL WELL AND DO WELL.

A: Well, I hope so, too. And thank you for interviewing me.

Q: THANK YOU.

A: Okay.

THE CAMERAMAN: I think I'll let the tape run a little bit.

Q: YOU WERE EASY TO INTERVIEW.

A: Well, thank you. I don't have too much to say, you know.

Q: WELL, YOU DO. EVERYBODY HAS A STORY, YOU KNOW. BUT YOU WERE VERY EAST TO INTERVIEW.

A: There is a lot of in between that I cannot. You know, you block your memory. You don't want to remember. I don't want to remember to what my mother --