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Summary

Fanny Labin (nee Findling) was born in 1929 in Cologne Germany to parents David & Ella, her father from Galicia, Poland, came to Germany after WW1. She remembers growing up with good memories of Sabbath dinners and rituals with her 4 siblings (Joseph, Zigmund, Martin & Regina) and then slowly being targeted as a Jew but not having money to leave, vivid memories of Kristallnacht at age 9 and her dad & uncle being deported to Poland in Fall of 1938; her mom taking the 4 older siblings to the train station and placing them on train to Belgium to a large home taking in children; staying together with her older brother while the other 2 boys stayed together in different home; hearing that her mom walked across border with her younger sister and how she left her in an orphanage while she went to Antwerp to work as a housekeeper; her mom finding her in Brussels and taking Fanny with her while the three boys were now together in a new home; learning her dad tried to get to them in Brussels, but was arrested and sent back to Poland; Germans taking Belgium in Spring 1940 and traveling with her mom by many trains to Paris and ending up going back to Brussels as Germans were already in Paris; hiding with a family for 6 months in Ghent and then taken to a convent to stay with nuns in Rochefort, Belgium; finding out her brothers were taken to Southern France to an abandoned castle; having her name changed to Fanny DeKoster and being baptized/receiving communion and feeling very secure with the order and structure of the convent; memories of narrowly escaping gunfire as Germans advanced towards convent and hiding in the cellars to take shelter; crisscrossing paths with her sister when war was over as each tried to find the other and eventually finding each other; finding out her mother was picked up during a sweep and transported to Auschwitz, her dad being taken to a mass grave and shot; being very upset with her mother's family who came to visit her at the convent thinking they did not do enough to save her mother; learning her brothers made it to Detroit, MI; eventually traveling to London to visit her Uncle and securing exit papers for her and her sister to come to the U.S.; taking a boat to New York and meeting up with her brothers in Detroit in 1948; getting married for first time which only lasted one year then remarried again; adopting a girl and boy; her daughter dying in a car accident at 16 years old; her son lives in San Francisco.

Russia to refugee parents Henrik & Helen Bekker discusses her family moving to Lublin, Poland in 1921, growing up securely without anti-Semitism, being educated at home early on and then going to private university in Warsaw, meeting her husband Stanley in 1937 and getting married in 1939 when Germany had already taken over Poland; her parents staying, she and Stanley leaving for a part of Poland that was occupied by Russia, trying to get back to her parents but unknown to her the Lublin Ghetto was already liquidated and her parents were sent to Treblinka and then later died at Majdanek; arriving at the Warsaw Ghetto instead where Stanley worked in a bakery and she in a factory; their luck in escaping by jumping off of a truck on the way to work on a farm one week before the Warsaw ghetto uprising; getting in touch with her great-uncle in Grojec (a suburb of Warsaw) who they went with to Rembertów on the west bank of Warsaw to a villa; getting false Polish documents; being on the run after escaping from the villa once Germans arrived and murdered all who lived there; trying to get back to Lublin in January 1945 once Russian tanks came and finding out her parents were killed and Stanley's parents were killed; settling in Berlin where she became pregnant with her daughter

Helene; finally getting papers after 4 years and coming to the United States in August 1949; finding her husband's family in Boston and then moving to New York and then Chicago and finally buying a small chicken farm in Hebron, Indiana; selling the farm after five years and deciding to raise their family in Gary, IN; Irene working for 16 years in Methodist Hospital in Gary IN as a medical technologist after getting her license and finally moving to California where their daughter had settled.