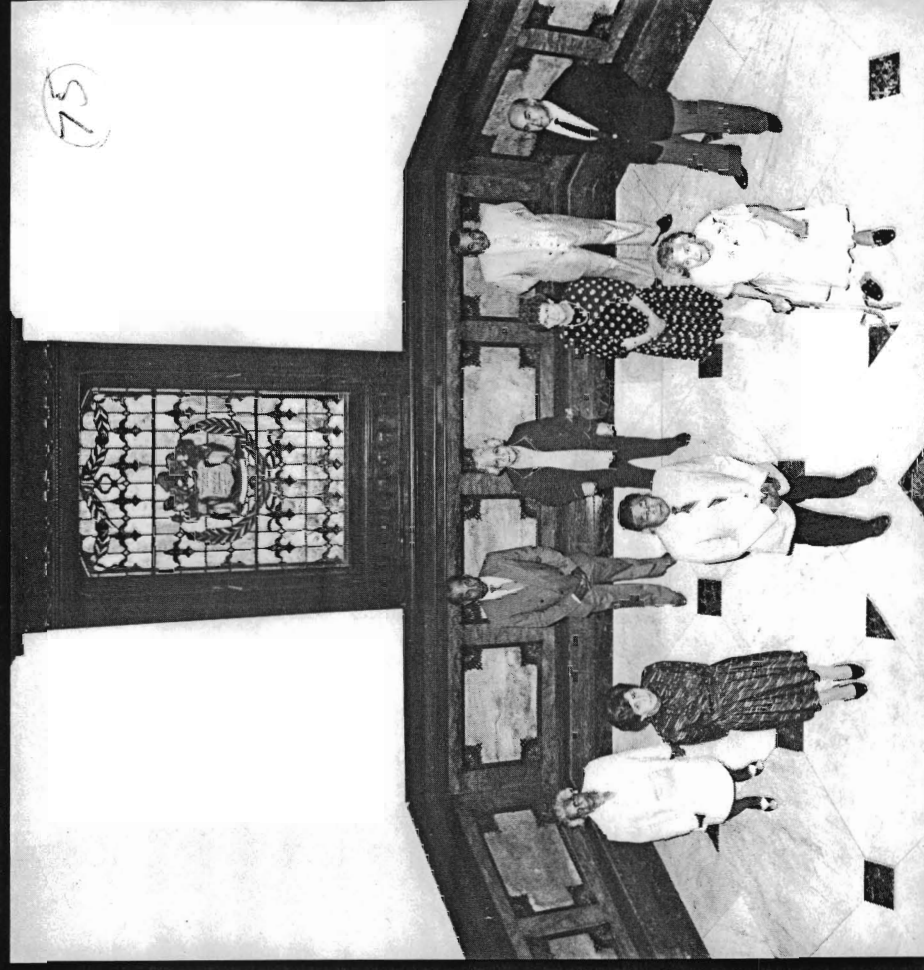


# Looking Back: Eleven Life Histories

Compiled by Giles R. Wright  
Photographs by Donald P. Lokuta



NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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HOWARD L. GREEN, GENERAL EDITOR

TRENTON • NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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This series is based on the Multi-Ethnic Oral History Collection of the New Jersey Historical Commission, Department of State. The collection contains over fifteen hundred life histories of New Jerseyans of varied ethnic backgrounds, tape-recorded by students at several New Jersey colleges. For more information about this collection please contact the Ethnic History Project at the Commission.

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Cover photo (from left): N. Rebecca Taylor, Tilly Stimler, Renford Glanville, George Sakamoto, Rose Giardina, Mary Kenny, Anna Groener, Alejandro Torres, and Michael Stamoulis in the State House, Trenton, 1985. Not pictured: Tamara Kolba, Armando Tabotabo.

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## INTRODUCTION

There are two basic, somewhat contradictory schools of thought about the people of the United States of America. In one view, Americans share essentially the same culture and traditions. In the other, they are divided by their varied backgrounds.

These views are often represented by figures of speech. Those who hold the first view may use the image of a melting pot — a vessel in which separate metals or other substances are gradually blended into one. In this view America dissolves immigrant cultures to form a new mixture.

A prosperous French immigrant farmer, Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, expressed this idea more than two hundred years ago. He wrote that the American abandons his "ancient prejudices and manners" and takes new ones "from the new mode of life he has embraced." In America, he felt, "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race."

Proponents of the second view compare American society to a salad bowl or a hearty stew. The separate ingredients, they say, do not blend together and lose their special characteristics; instead, the flavors and textures of all the ingredients complement each other to make a whole which is better than the sum of the parts.

In the same way, these thinkers argue, Americans keep elements of their original cultures alive for many generations. These thinkers, often called "cultural pluralists," believe many cultures coexist in our nation.

Both metaphors — the melting pot and the salad bowl — recognize that ethnic diversity has been fundamental in the growth of the United States. Since the seventeenth century our history has been the story of many cultures interacting. The meeting and mixing of traditions,

values, and expectations from all over the world give United States history its special complexity.

New Jersey, with more than a hundred ethnic groups, is an excellent example. Few states have so many cultural backgrounds within their boundaries. The booklet you are about to read contains excerpts from the tape-recorded life histories of New Jerseyans from many of these groups.

The tapes were made by college students, most of them just a few years older than you, during the school year 1979 - 80. The people they interviewed, who so readily told the stories of their travels, careers, homes and families, live in your towns and cities. They could be your neighbors, friends or relatives. Remember this as you read. This booklet is based on interviews conducted by students like you with people like many of your acquaintances.

Some of your neighbors speak languages other than English. Others use English with rich, thick accents that may be hard to understand. Often they seem detached from the affairs of community or neighborhood that interest you. But if you knew them better you would probably find that they are involved in communities of their own, communities of people who share ethnicity, who belong to the same ethnic groups.

But what is an ethnic group?

Generally, it is a collection of people who share a culture — people with the same race, religion, nationality, language, history, values, or customs. Different combinations of these elements determine ethnic identity for different groups.

For example, race is the main thing that defines American blacks as an ethnic group. The Chinese and Japanese, however, are of the same race but different ethnicities. Religion gathers Jews of many nationalities into a single ethnic group, but national origin and other characteristics divide Christians and Muslims into many.

Language and other cultural elements separate the Flemings ethnically from the Walloons, even though they share Belgian nationality. But the English, the Irish and the Scots, who all speak the same language, belong to different ethnic groups.

Ethnicity is an elusive concept. But it is one of the keys to United States history. This booklet will bring you closer to understanding it.

In presenting voices from New Jersey's ethnic groups great care has been taken to let them speak clearly. Spoken language must be edited to make it readable. Sometimes the prose has been changed substan-

tially, but every passage accurately reflects the intention, meaning and even verbal style of the speaker.

We have several aims for this series. Oral history — that is, the tape-recording of people's recollections — captures the past in a special way. We hope these booklets show that all people, in the way they conduct their lives, both make history and are made by it. We hope the words of people from so many cultural backgrounds will help you understand your own ethnic background. And we hope to make you more perceptive about the ethnic heritage of others.

## Looking Back

### Rose Giardina

NEWARK

I am eighty. I was born in Messina, Sicily, in Italy. I'm the oldest child. I have two sisters — Millie and Josie. We are about two years apart. I came to this country in 1902, when I was two, with my mother and a younger sister. My father came first, and later on he sent for us.

Because I was so small, I don't remember anything about the trip over. We came to New York. The first place I can remember where we lived is on 106th Street near Third Avenue in Manhattan. I know we moved a few times before we got there, but we always lived more or less in the same neighborhood. It was mainly an Italian neighborhood. There were regular apartment houses, three or four floors.

My father was a mason. He worked in the construction industry. My mother was a housewife. She didn't do any work away from home. She died in childbirth when she was about twenty-nine.

When my mother died I was about eight or so. I remember she was sick in bed and she kept her change purse under her pillow. Any time she wanted to send me to the store she'd tell me to take out a quarter, and she'd say, "Go buy some cheese and a loaf of bread," or whatever. I'd always take out a few more pennies. I'd never tell her. I feel guilty now when I think back.

So, after my mother died, my father put us in a Dominican convent until he got himself adjusted. I really liked the convent. The sisters treated us nicely. We went to school, and we had to go to church every morning at five o'clock. The sisters taught us how to sew and darn stockings and everything. Then our father started to take care of us. My aunt and uncle were there too, helping out. I believe we were living on 108th Street at the time.

Later on, my father decided to get married again. Our stepmother was to take care of us. It didn't work out; she used to mistreat us.

But we never used to tell on her or anything. Then my aunt found out about it and told my father. So they finally separated. But before they did, they had one son. That's Joseph.

I went to school until about the beginning of the eighth grade. I finished public school, and I had the choice of continuing, but I started to work when I was about fourteen. Not because we couldn't afford it; I wanted to go to work. I was a seamstress in a factory.

I knew how to run a sewing machine by then. I had started sewing at twelve. In those times, Italian people used to get you a machine, a trunk, and big quantities of material to make your own pillow slips and sheets. So when I started to work, I knew how to run the machine and how to sew things. But there was a difference between the machine at home and the electric one at the factory. The first time I put my foot on the pedal at work, the whole thing shot up — the shuttle\* and everything. That's the only mistake I made.

Three dollars a week was what they started you off with. But in those days, you had to work the first week for nothing while the employer taught you how to sew. But I got my three dollars, because I knew how to run the machine.

I got more experience as I went from one job to another. I worked at different things. I went from blouses to men's shirts and maternity skirts and all kinds of work. Then I went to real good dresses. I went into dressmaking. I was about seventeen then. We didn't work the whole year like they do now. Now they slow down for a week or two and then they pick up again. At that time we worked by the season, three or four months continuous, and then we would be out of work for a month or so. We didn't have unemployment compensation, so I used to go look for another job.

I worked for Bloomingdale's and Lord and Taylor. I always got good jobs then. At times I made more than two hundred dollars a week. I think they said we were making more than engineers, something like that. This was around 1918 and 1920.

One of my bosses was a designer. They used to copy styles. We would go down to places like Wanamaker's, right down near Wall Street, and I would try on dresses and he would make copies. I was kind of like a model. I had a good nice shape, even if I have to say so myself. He wouldn't be anywhere near me, but he'd copy the dresses I put on.



ROSE GIARDINA

\*See glossary



So, I made good money. I used to spend a lot of it on clothes. I figured up the total cost of what I had on one day: a gabardine suit, seventy-five dollars; twenty-five dollars for high shoes (it took a half hour to lace them); six dollars for stockings; and a mink stole. I figured that all I had on cost about six hundred dollars. I loved good clothes and good things. I always loved dressing.

I had several proposals of marriage. One morning a woman came over to the house — that's the way they used to propose sometimes in those days; the parents would propose, not the fellow himself. So she started telling me, "My son likes you very much. He wants to marry you."

I explained to her that I was very late for work and that I would let her know.

Two weeks later, I was putting on my boots when my father said to me, "Look, I don't want you to think I'm forcing you into anything. But so and so came over to ask for you. He would like to marry you and he asked my permission. I'm not telling you to say yes or no."

So, I was so ashamed. I was blushing all over and I had my head bent down lacing my boots. I couldn't even face him. And I didn't know what to answer.

But all of a sudden I got brave and I lifted my head up and I said, "No, I don't want him. I don't like him."

And that was that. "That's all I wanted to know," he said. That was the way it happened with everybody. They used to ask him and he would come to me and say, "So and so asked for you. Do you like him?" And I would say, "No, I don't like him."

I knew my husband about three months before we got married. In those times I don't think we actually knew what love was. Rather, you might want to get out of the house or go on your own. You had that idea of "someday I'll be getting married," but we didn't know what everything was about. We weren't wise or anything. I couldn't honestly say that I really loved my husband when I married him. Certainly not like they do now when they say, "I love you." It was different in those days.

My husband had five sisters and I worked together with them. We were very good friends. They were always telling me about their brother. "Oh, my brother this and my brother that." So, I felt as if I knew him. They used to tell me, "I would love to have you as a sister-in-law." Finally they made him come over to meet me. At that time he was helping his father on his dairy farm in Montezuma, in central

New York state. Earlier he had been working in the naval yard in Brooklyn.

We got married within three months after we met. My father gave me a beautiful wedding. They got my wedding dress made for me, and I got my veil at Gimbel's. The wedding was held at St. Cecilia's, near 106th Street and Fifth Avenue. We got a lot of gifts. At that time they used to bring a lot of gifts, like cut glass and silver. Now they give a lot of money. My father filled up a big trunk for me with linens, sheets, towels, things like that. Italian people used to do that a lot, give the girl what they called a trousseau. My father did that for me.

My husband arrived at the wedding late. His people lived in Bayonne. On the bridge to New York, a car ahead of them had an accident and delayed them. I was walking up and down, up and down. So, we were late in getting married.

After the wedding we went straight to Montezuma. We wanted to stay in New York a couple of days, but my husband had to get right back to Montezuma. We were late in catching the train. I didn't have a chance to change my clothes, so when I got on the train I still had my wedding dress on. Everybody on the train was applauding and everything. When we got to Albany I changed my dress.

So we didn't go on a honeymoon. In fact, when I was a child, when someone got married, they would not show their faces for a week. For a week they wouldn't go out of the house. They would stay in their new apartment. On the seventh day, we children used to wait near the window to see them. Then we would see them walking down the street, clutching each other. We used to wait for that. We used to look in their faces. I don't know what we expected to see. But we knew they had been married, and we were curious to see if their faces changed and what happens once you get married. We were very innocent and naive then. So after we got married we lived in Montezuma. It was like a village, very small. We actually lived about twelve miles outside of the town. Most of the people were farmers. I became very good friends with some of the women. They taught me how to can and make cakes and things.

I remember they used to go to the Knights of Columbus dances and we used to go along. I liked the square dance best of all; in New York it wasn't so popular. They'd grab you by the arms and have you swirling all around. I would be giggling and laughing. They got a kick out of it — they used to call me the "city girl." I had the time of my life there. I was always very happy, always laughing.

After staying in Montezuma about two years, we came to Newark.

My husband got a job at the Griffith Piano Company on Broad Street, tuning pianos. Later he sold pianos.

I worked between having children. My first, Andrew, was about five when we had the next one, Grace. I had Carol two years later and Joseph two years after that. When Joseph was about two, the twins, Anthony and Vincent, were born.

I stayed home until the twins were about one, and then I went back to work. I hired a lady from an agency to come in and take care of the children. I was only making ten dollars a week, but this was during the depression, and everything was cheap. I worked on and off a lot during the depression. I helped to pay a lot of bills. I would walk to the Hudson tubes and get the train for New York, and I would get off at Thirty-third Street and go to work. Sometimes they would give me work to bring home. Wedding dresses and evening dresses I often brought home.

We lived in Newark for about twenty years. We started on Sixth Street, and then we built a nice house on Newark Avenue. It's still there. By this time my husband had left Griffith and opened up his own piano business with another fellow, also a piano tuner. The customer would buy a piano and then pay you so much a month. But when the depression started, it was hard for many of them to continue to pay. There was little my husband and his partner could do. You couldn't take all the pianos out. Where would you put them? So this made income from my work all the more important.

After Newark we lived in Bloomfield for about twenty-five years. That's where the last three of my children finished high school. They have all graduated from high school. They all have good jobs and their own homes and everything. So they came out okay.

When the twins were four or five I had a job in Newark, and I used to put them in a nursery school. My husband would pick them up around three o'clock and I would leave work at five. One day they decided to come and meet me at the bus stop. They started walking, and they walked and walked, and they landed in Newark. They walked from Bloomfield to Newark. It was summer, and hot, and they crossed I don't know how many streets by themselves, hand in hand.

As I was coming home, my oldest child, Andrew, met me on his bicycle and said, "The twins are lost." My husband and some of my neighbors had been out looking for them. We called the police, but they had received no reports of lost children. About eight o'clock it started to get dark and still there was no sign of the twins.

What had happened was that when they got to Newark they stopped to watch some children play. When it got dark and the children had to go home, they were left alone, and they started crying. A police car passed by and spotted them crying; the officers asked if the people around there knew these children and they didn't. So the patrol car called the station in Newark, and that's how they were found. The station called us up right away and said, "Come on down. Your children are with us."

So we went over to Newark. We parked across the street from the police station, and we could look up in the window and see the backs of two small boys. My husband went in to get them. Their faces were full of dirt and they had eaten an ice cream cone that the police bought them. They wouldn't let anyone wash their hands and faces. You never saw two kids so calm in all your life; they were not a bit frightened. I asked one of them, "Where did you go?" He said, "Oh, we went for a walk." We didn't scold them or anything. We were so happy to get them back.

The next morning their picture was on the front page of the newspaper — it had been taken at the police station. Under the photograph it read "Twins Lost." In the evening paper there was another photograph. The whole neighborhood came marching over to our house. The twins had become famous. The next day I got so many things from different people, holy pictures and crosses and things. Many wrote that God must have watched over them, for them to have been missing for so long and to have crossed so many streets.

It's been almost eleven years since I moved back into Newark. It's almost the same since my husband died. I love Newark, but I love New York more. I'll always love New York. I don't know why. Every time I go to New York I get a thrill. Recently my son Andrew treated us to a show one Wednesday. It was so crowded. The traffic was so bad. We spent almost two hours going around the block, and finally we decided to walk and let Andy find a parking lot. I got out two blocks away from the theater.

In those two blocks, I became alive. Those two blocks took me way back to when I was working in New York, hurrying to work, hurrying to get home. I was going. That sidewalk was filled with people coming and going and I was going in and out of the crowd like a rabbit. I was so thrilled and happy.

So as I look back, it wasn't a bad life actually. I got so many things to look back to. Good things and bad things. There were bad times, like when we were short of money and we were raising the children.

But if things got bad, I went to work. It wasn't too easy. But thank God, I made it. Like I always used to say when things were really bad, "All I want is that God give me health." I always wanted health first for my family and myself. And I really got that much. If you got your health, you could go through anything.

So, it's not been too bad. Now I'm settled. I'm happy. I can have peace and quiet. I'm really satisfied the way everything turned out. I can't complain. I do my own work, my own cooking, my own shopping. I still do a little sewing. What else do I want?

## Renford Glanville

### BRIDGETON

I'm fifty-six years old and I was born in Jamaica, the West Indies. Jamaica was a British colony.

I first came to the United States in 1943 when I was nineteen. It was during World War II. In Jamaica the government gave you a choice: you could go in the army or come to the United States and work to provide food for the soldiers. They wanted a certain number of men to come here. I had seen some Jamaicans return from this country, all dressed up and driving new cars, and that excited me. I was young, and so I said that I wanted to come here.

I came with five thousand other Jamaicans as part of a contract between the British government and the American government. When the contract was over, we were to go back home.

Our journey was rough. We had over five thousand men on one boat, and this was too crowded. Also, I got seasick. So I really didn't enjoy the trip. We had to sleep in what were called decks. I knew no one else on the ship. No relatives or friends came with me.

The trip took five days and five nights. We landed in New Orleans, and after we came off the boat they put us in an army camp. We stayed there until they found different places for us to go — so many to this place, so many to another place, and so forth until we had all been split up. I was assigned to Seabrook Farms in Seabrook, New Jersey.

I came straight from New Orleans to Bridgeton, New Jersey. After we got to Bridgeton, there were buses waiting to take us to where we were going to live. They had these little houses for us to live in. They put two men in each house; although we had to share, it was decent housing.

I worked at Seabrook Farms from 1943 to 1944. They put me in a warehouse. I used to lift cartons of asparagus, loading and unloading trucks or boxcars. Load and unload, that's all I did. My wages were fifty cents an hour, and we would work ten hours a day.

We lived about five miles from the place of work. They had buses to take us to and from work and to lunch and back. Lunch was provided for us.

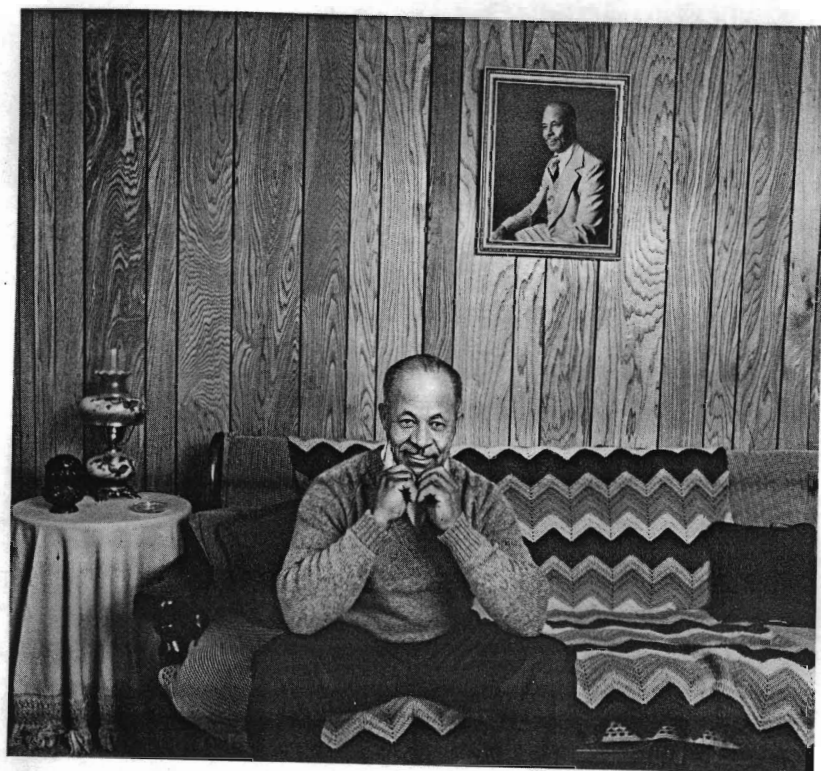
We worked with Americans, black and white. There were no other foreigners there at the time. Since we were foreigners and on contract, we didn't have a union. The Americans did. Still, we were treated nicely. We had heard that white Americans hated black people, so when we came here we were prepared for some discrimination. We let the whites know we weren't going to put up with any foolishness, and they didn't mess with us.

One time we went to a restaurant in Seabrook. We had worked all night, and some of the fellows wanted to get something to eat before we went home. The restaurant people wouldn't serve us. They served all of the other people before us. So we kept sitting there. Finally some of the boys got mad and they said, "We're not going to put up with this stuff. We worked all night long and we want something to eat. We want some coffee; we want some eggs and toast." So they jumped over the counter and started breaking up the dishes, tearing up the place. All for one and one for all, you know. And the people who worked in the restaurant called Seabrook, and Seabrook said, "Feed them. You better feed them." So that was it. That took care of that.

In 1944 we had to go back to Jamaica. The contract was over; the war was almost over. The men coming back to the United States had to have their jobs back and we had to go home.

During my stay in Seabrook, I got married and fathered a little girl. I met my wife, Anita Butts, a black American, at church. I was brought up in the church — I'm a Baptist. My grandmother always told me that I should marry someone who goes to church. She said I should never get someone who goes to bars. We call them trashy people. This was instilled in me.

So when I came to this country I started going to church. My wife



RENFORD GLANVILLE

and her mother attended the church I was going to. I watched her for a long time, and she was nice and quiet. I never saw her out in the street cutting up and carrying on. She was in high school at the time. We got married before I returned to Jamaica.

Before I left, I made all of the arrangements for coming back here. I had a lawyer write a letter, which I took to the American consul in Jamaica. Because I had a wife and baby here, I was able to return. I came back to Seabrook after nine months in Jamaica.

The time back home was spent where I was born and raised, in

the country about sixty miles from Kingston. We lived up on a mountain. It's a beautiful place; you can look right down into Montego Bay and the sea. It's not hot. All year round it's sixty-five to seventy-five degrees, and we get a sea breeze there. It's very, very nice. Everybody has their own farm and they raise a lot of cows, chickens, pigs, goats and sheep. They make their living from farming.

I was raised by my grandparents. My parents separated when I was very young. My daddy took me away from my real mother, and his mother, my grandmom, took me away from him and raised me from the time I was eighteen months old. My father had other children after me — ten in all — and they are my half brothers and sisters. I'm his oldest child.

My grandfather, Thomas James Glanville, had a lot of land. He grew coffee, oranges, and spices. He was a blessed man and was well off; everything he put his hands on turned to gold. My grandmother, therefore, had nothing to do but stay at home and wash, cook, and clean. People used to be jealous of her because of this.

My grandparents had thirteen children. When my grandfather died he left a will, and his children got his land and money. I was just his grandson so I was left out completely. I was about eleven or twelve then. When I got to be about seventeen, I began to start thinking for myself. I didn't have anything. I worked for my uncles, and they almost worked me to death. They would hire me along with other people, but then they would work me hard and wouldn't give me what they gave the others because I was one of the family. So I had to start thinking about myself. This helped me decide at nineteen to come to this country.

I didn't go too far in school; I went to the fifth grade. Then my grandfather died and my grandmom got sick and I had to stop school and help take care of her. One of the things I remember about school is that as soon as the teacher came into the classroom, we were on our feet automatically and said, "Good morning, teacher." After that they read the Bible and then we said the Lord's Prayer. Then they would call the class roll.

The teachers were very strict; they would whip you if you misbehaved. They had a special whip. They whipped you because they wanted you to learn. And you had to be clean, especially on a Monday morning. If you weren't, they'd ask you, "Why are your clothes dirty? Have you been fighting?" And you would have to tell them or they would put you in a corner.

After I stopped school, I spent the rest of my childhood working.



I didn't have time to play games. All I did was work, work, work and work. I'd get up early in the morning and take care of the cows, pigs and chickens. I'd have to feed them before I left for the fields and feed them again when I came home. I'd have to separate the young calf from the mother so I'd have milk in the morning. If I didn't do that, the calf would suck all the milk out of the breast. So I had to pen them, put the calf away from the mother.

After I milked the cows in the morning, I'd put the milk in these big cans and take them to the road. A truck would come by and pick them up and take them to a place where they would process the milk. I can remember drinking milk straight from the cow. I never got sick or anything.

After I finished my chores at home, I'd go into the fields to work. If you had coffee trees, you'd have to pick the beans by hand. Since the beans didn't all ripen at one time, you might pick some beans this week, and next week you'd have to pick some more. My grandmother had other crops I had to reap, like oranges and grapefruit, stuff like that. I had to store these in big houses, like sheds or barns. Then they would be sold.

So this was the kind of life I left when I first came to this country in 1943. When I came back in 1945 to join my wife and baby daughter, I started working at Seabrook Farms again. I had made a good work record there. So, although they were about to lay off some people, I simply walked in the office and the man put me to work right away. I worked the next ten years at Seabrook.

What made me leave Seabrook was that they started laying people off. They eventually got to the warehouse, where we had sixteen men working. At first they cut the ones who had been hired recently, and since I was one of the older ones, they kept me. But they finally laid me off for the winter. They said they would call me back when the season started.

But it took so long for them to call that I just went to Vineland and started working for a company that had a contract with the gas company. I was a laborer. A pipe fitter there taught me how to cut pipe. My job was to dig a ditch and connect the pipe from a house to the main gas line. All the gas man had to do was come and turn the gas on.

I stayed at this job for about two years. I left because it took so long to get a raise. The boss kept promising but I never got a raise. He was paying me \$1.35 an hour, but his contract with the gas company

would indicate that he was paying me and the other men much more. So I kept asking him about a raise. But all he did was let me put in more hours.

One day a friend came to my house and told me that an oil company in Delaware City, Delaware, was building a plant. He said, "Man, look, you better come over to this oil place and make some good money. The work is not that hard." So I said, "Do you have to join a union?" He said, "Yes." It cost thirty-five dollars to join. I didn't have that amount, and he said he would loan it to me.

So I sent word to my boss in Vineland that I wasn't going to come in Monday morning. I went over to Delaware City; I walked into the union office and joined the union, and I started making \$2.12 an hour right off the bat. And after 4 o'clock, you'd get double time for every hour you put in. I worked there until the construction was completed, and I made a lot of money. The job lasted for about five years. Since that time I have acquired more skills. I'm now a licensed fireman.

From the skills I have acquired I was able to build one of the two homes I own. My first house I built myself. I used to work with carpenters and cement finishers, and I watched every move they made, so I knew how to build a house. I did get a carpenter to cut out the windows and doors and put them in the right places. He also raised the front of the house. The rest I did myself.

So all my life I have worked hard. I worked very hard trying to put my children through school. We have six girls and one boy. My fourth daughter is the brightest. She went to Delaware State College and graduated with honors. She was an honors student from junior high school straight through college. She now lives in Philadelphia and is a manager for International Telephone and Telegraph. She's also a photographer with about eight thousand dollars' worth of cameras and is an expert in karate. My son Thomas, who came after her, went into the marines and now attends Delaware State College. He's going to be a certified public accountant. My baby, my sixth daughter, is at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania.

Since 1945 I have never gone back to Jamaica. I have promised my wife that when we get all the children through school, I will take her there for a visit. My grandmother is dead now, but I have uncles and sisters still there. And I have property there. I sent money home and my grandmother bought me a piece of land — one acre — with a beautiful house on it. But a hurricane blew the house down, so all I've got there now is the land. I've got coffee, oranges, and tangerines

on it. One of my uncles works it for me. This land is worth plenty now because they built a road nearby and the value of everything around it has gone up.

Although I have not been back to Jamaica, I still remember some of the things we did there. We celebrated weddings in a certain way. A little before the wedding they would put a young pig in a special pen and feed him corn, salt, and water so he wouldn't give you much fat and the meat would be better. When they got ready for the wedding they'd kill the pig, scrape all of his hair off, and take the insides out. They would run a pole through him from his mouth to the back end. Next they would put him over a big fire and keep turning him slowly and slowly until everything was well done.

It would take a long time, about a day, before the meat would be ready. Then they'd take the pig off the stick and cut him up. To go along with the roast pork they would have rice and peas. Jamaicans are famous for rice and peas. The peas would be little red kidney beans, and they would cook them down, smelling up a breeze.

At the wedding they would serve a special bread. It's long, maybe about sixteen inches, and they'd slice it real thin. They would have home-made butter for the bread. They didn't buy butter in those days; everybody churned their own. And they would bake three- and four-layer cakes with all kinds of decoration on them. Some of the decoration looked like pearls but it was really candy.

They would have wine to drink with the food. For those people who were regular drinkers, they would serve liquor during the day. We have a rum they call "white rum," which is made from sugar cane. It is very strong, one hundred and fifty proof. You can take one quart of white rum and make two gallons of a drink that is strong.

They would do something at weddings that I have never seen done here. They called it the ball dance. After the wedding everyone would go to the ball dance. They would dance all night long, and there would be a lot of drinking and carrying on. Everybody would have a great time. The whole community would be there. This was a big event. The couple couldn't go on their honeymoon until the ball dance was over. It was really something to see. I haven't seen anything like it since I left Jamaica.

## Anna Groener

### NAVESINK

I was born November 22, 1899, in Germany. My father was a locksmith and my mother was a housewife. They had a lot of children, ten in all, including a couple that were stillborn. In fact, when I left to come here, one was on the way. There were two more born after I was here. I am the oldest.

I came to America when I was eleven. My aunt (my father's sister) and her husband brought me over. After living here for twenty-seven years, they had decided to visit Germany and see their relatives. They brought along their granddaughter — my cousin Tessie. They stayed with us about a month or two.

I don't know what happened, but I was chosen to come back to America with them. I imagine it was decided within the family. Of course, I was real happy and quite proud. I remember singing a little song, "I'm going to America."

My aunt also brought a daughter of a friend of her school days. Her name was Anna and she was eighteen. I was eleven. My cousin Tessie was four. The five of us arrived here on Labor Day in 1910.

The night before we left Germany we all gathered together and said our farewells. Then we went by train to Holland. When we got there, they took us out to our boat in a smaller boat. The next morning my uncle lifted me up and we could just barely see land. He said, "Now you are on your way to America."

Our boat was called the *Rotterdam*. It was a fine boat, and our accommodations were good because we came second class. We had our own rooms. There were loads of people in steerage. We could see them below. I was too young to realize how well I came over.

When we arrived in New York my aunt brought us right in. We didn't have any trouble because she and my uncle had been here twenty-seven years and were citizens. Even the other girl, Anna, had no trouble because my aunt and uncle vouched for her.

From the boat we went right to where our trunks were. Then we got a train to Newark. There we got a trolley car and came out to Fifteenth Street and Avon Avenue, where my aunt and uncle lived. They had two three-family houses and a saloon. The neighborhood was mostly German. Here we lived until we moved to Irvington.

So I've been in this country since 1910. I never went back. At the

beginning I cried a lot of times because I wished I was back there. But I never went back and none of my relatives from Germany — my parents, sisters, brothers — ever came here. So I never saw any of them again. Everyone is dead now except my younger sister. I have never seen her because she was born after I came here.

I always wrote to my mother, and I would send her money from time to time. Then, after she died, the sister next to me and I wrote to each other. Then I corresponded with the wife of a brother. She wrote in English, and I got closer to her than I ever did to any of my sisters. She was a wonderful person. Now it's my younger sister. She writes in English because I can't write in German any more. She gets it done by somebody else. She's sixty-five and the only one left.

In Newark they sent me to St. Ann's School, where they taught German and English. I was in school for only four years. There my aunt said, "You're fourteen now and you can do more work here than what you could learn in school." So I started working at fourteen. I won't even start to tell you what I did. I scrubbed, I cleaned, I washed; I worked around the house.

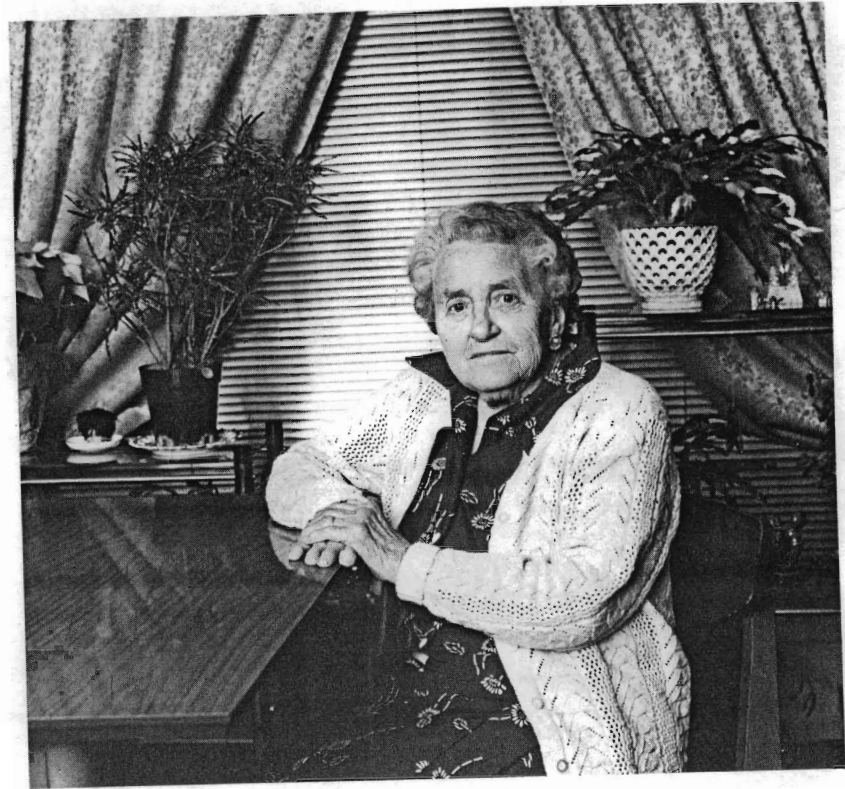
My first job outside the home was with Bamberger's as a waitress. I worked there from the age of eighteen until I was twenty-three. It was in downtown Newark, and I took a trolley car to work. I worked from eleven to five and got twelve dollars a week. Out of the twelve dollars, I paid seven to my aunt for room and board.

We weren't allowed to have tips. We asked for a raise, so they gave us a half cent on every dollar that we took in. If you didn't drop anything, you got a fifty-cents bonus a week. That bonus I put in a little jar and I saved.

I loved this job. The bosses were nice, and we worked with a lot of other ethnic groups. There were a lot of blacks in the kitchen, and some Polish and American girls. I made friends with some of them too. They all liked me.

While I was working at Bamberger's my aunt sold the saloon, and we moved to Irvington. She bought a three-family house there. I got married from that house in Irvington on June 14, 1923, to Joseph Ruck. He was an American, but his parents were from Alsace-Lorraine.\* They were German more or less. His mother spoke German.

He came over to the saloon one day and asked if he could take me out. I refused. Then later, one day, he called to me as I was coming home from work. He waited for me and said, "Can I take you to a show?" and I said, "Yes." We knew each other a little more than two years before we got married.



ANNA GROENER

My aunt thought he was a little too old for me, but otherwise he was a very good man. I had to quit working. He said "You are not going to work. You are going to stay home." So, I married well. My husband was a printer with the Newark News. He made good money, and he built us a home in Leonardo. I had a good life with him.

He died on Christmas Eve in 1935. He died of pneumonia almost overnight. That year there were four or five people in the neighborhood

that died just like that. I was thirty-five, and our son, Franklin, was just about eleven. He took his father's death very hard.

I stayed single until 1939, when I married Frank Groener. He's an American, but his mother and father were both born in Germany. I met him through my sister-in-law. She said, "I know a man who lost his wife a year before you lost your husband." So she said, "Easter Sunday, you come over and meet Frank." So I did.

We got married four years later. We're married forty-one years this year. Frank worked as an electrician at RCA. Like me, he brought a son to the marriage. And after we were married almost two years, we had Herbert. So it was mine, yours, and ours. The boys got along well. I don't even call Frank's boy my stepson. I'm his mom, believe me. Today from the three boys we have twelve grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. In another month, I'll have two more great-grandchildren.

So looking back, I believe I was the lucky one of my family. I was able to come to America, and I really had it nice for the most part. I'm glad my aunt brought me over. When she died, it was like I buried my own mother. She was the only mother I really knew. She was strict as she could be, but I loved her. My first husband made good money and was able to build a house in Leonardo. My second husband and I get along well. We have been together for forty-one years. I hope everybody has it as well as I did.

## Mary Kenny

HAZLET

My birthdate is July 21, 1938. I was born in Kilkenny, the Republic of Ireland.

Kilkenny has a population of about fifty-two thousand. I was the second of nine children, the oldest girl. I had four brothers. Nine children wasn't that large a family in those days; most people had between six and twelve. We just somehow seemed to manage beautifully. Maybe we didn't have a lot of material things, but there was

something else — love. We had a closeness that maybe children from smaller families don't always have.

My father was in the insurance business. In those days the insurance man had to cycle out in the country to collect the premiums every two weeks. So my father was home quite a bit. He did a lot of his work from the house.

We also had what I guess you would call a huckster shop, a small shop. We sold groceries — sugar, butter and stuff like that. We all had to help out in the store and also at home. On Thursdays I usually helped my mother at home. And of course we didn't have a washing machine, dryer, dishwasher, or any of the conveniences I have gotten used to over here.

Food was simple. We grew a lot of our own, like potatoes and vegetables, and my father's sister was married to a farmer so we used to get bacon and stuff from them. She also used to make butter and bring us some. They were more affluent than we were; there were only four in that family. My father's sister helped out quite a bit.

The Irish are really a very friendly and caring people. They care about their neighbors and are willing to help anyone with a problem. In fact, about twelve years ago, my mother and stepfather were approached by the Sisters of Charity to take a little girl whose mother was in the hospital. After the mother recovered she was still unable to take care of her twelve children. My mother and stepfather grew to love little Brede. She was only three when she came to them, and they have raised her for the last twelve years. She's like a younger sister. If it hadn't been for them she would have been put in an orphanage like some of her sisters and brothers.

My father died of cancer when I was eighteen. He always had a tremendous fear of cancer because both of his parents were cancer victims. Strange that that's what took him in the end.

My mother was expecting my youngest brother. Because my father was well insured we were all right for a couple of years, but things got difficult. My mother tried to make ends meet and put the others through school and everything. This necessitated my helping even more at home. We did have this little shop and that helped.

After my father was dead for about three years, my mother met my stepfather and remarried. He's a lab technician at a hospital in Waterford. They have quite a nice life together; life is easier for mother now. She has a washing machine, freezer, dryer and all the things she could have used when we were young and there were so many of us.



Of the nine of us, seven finished high school. Two went on to college. All the boys went to the Irish Christian Brothers Academy. All the girls went to the Presentation Convent. I was the first. I went from the first to the eleventh grade. I took a commercial course in high school; this trained me for my first job, which I got when I was about seventeen. When I was in school the emphasis was on educating the boys. The girls were trained to be good housewives, mothers. At the end of my years in school we were just beginning to realize that girls should have a little education too. My father was all for education. Maybe it was because his parents were schoolteachers.

My father handled the financial end of things. He paid most of the bills. But I would say my mother was the stronger of the two. My father was very quiet, so my mother handled a lot more than would normally be so. My mother, for example, was the disciplinarian in our house. I don't think I remember my father ever striking me or doing anything of this sort. He would threaten us with a switch, but he never followed through. My mother, however, was a different story. We didn't get away with anything.

Also in those days, they allowed you to use the paddle in the schools. If you didn't do your homework or whatever, you got six of the best. The brothers were worse than the nuns. I can remember the boys — especially my older brother, who is a schoolteacher himself today — coming home with blisters on their hands.

Being the second oldest, I was one of the first to help the family by working. I started in a furniture store working for my aunt and uncle. My pay was four dollars a week, out of which was deducted taxes and insurance. I brought home about three dollars. My mother usually got two and I got one.

While I was working at the furniture store, I met my husband, Patrick. He is also from Kilkenny. When I met him he was leaving for America within a few months. He left in October, 1958, and returned on a visit after two years. I guess we fell in love. We got engaged. He returned to America, and I followed two months later. We married within one year.

I came to New York on a plane in 1961. It was the beginning of the jet age, and I came in seven and a half hours. The John F. Kennedy Airport was just overpowering. We landed at night. Seeing lights all over the city, I had never in my wildest dreams imagined anything quite so beautiful.

It was such a new life that I had here. I had freedom I never had. At home, even though I was twenty-two, I never went outside the



MARY KENNY

door without asking permission. I had to ask permission to go to the movies. This is the way things were done. So when I came over here, I really enjoyed not having to answer to my mother.

I got a job through an agency shortly after getting here. I worked for a brokerage house down on Wall Street. I earned about sixty dollars a week. We saved our money for the first year to buy our furniture and pay for our wedding.

I regret that I wasn't able to have any of my own family at the wedding. I'm sorry I didn't make a little more effort to bring my mother over. That would have really pleased her. Especially since she made our wedding cake. It's a tradition in Ireland to have fruitcake for special occasions. My mother made this four-tier fruitcake for our wedding and mailed it over here. Every bit of it was eaten the day of the wedding. Years later I found out that she was very annoyed because I hadn't sent a piece of it back to her. In Ireland the cake is cut up after the wedding and a piece is sent to all relatives and friends. It's considered lucky and traditional.

My first daughter, Patricia, was born about a year after we were married. After we were married three weeks, my husband went away for six months duty with the army reserves at Fort Dix. I was six months, more or less, on my own. I worked during that time. And, of course, I found out I was pregnant. It was kind of tough, and I realized then that I didn't have anybody here from my family to help out.

My husband had relatives, an aunt who was very good to him. She sponsored us when we came over. She had to sponsor me too because you just couldn't come on your own. You had to have somebody to claim you and be responsible for you for a couple of years. She was very good to us. But I wasn't that close to her either, so that time was kind of lonely.

I had my first three children — Patricia, Caroline and Siobhan — close together. They were born within the first four years of our marriage, and it was tough trying to raise them. Patrick worked and I had to take care of them. We didn't get out much because we didn't have relatives to babysit. We couldn't pay a babysitter. When we came back from our honeymoon, I think we had a hundred dollars or something in the bank after paying for the wedding and the furniture. But we managed somehow. God provided.

After we married we settled in an apartment on Fordham Road in the Bronx. We stayed there for two years; then we moved down to 161st Street, right beside Yankee Stadium. After four years there, we decided to invest in a house. My husband worked at a brokerage house down in the Wall Street area. We had saved a few dollars and invested in some stocks and made what you might call a killing on the market. We finally had enough money to put a down payment on a house. We came down here to Hazlet through friends of ours, the O'Neills. They bought a house here in Hazlet, and within two months they told us about this house. They live across the street. Our fourth daughter, Jennifer, was born here in 1973.

Since moving to Hazlet we have gotten involved in a number of activities. I'm a member of the Cosmopolitan Association, a women's club that was started by a couple of GI brides — Englishwomen who married American soldiers during World War II. They came out here and found, I guess, that like a lot of immigrants they were very lonely and longed to meet girls in the same situation. They started this club. It's mostly for foreign-born women. We have many nationalities in this club, all first-generation immigrants. We have a meeting once a month and an annual convention and dinner in Atlantic City. This club was started in New Jersey and now there are chapters all over the United States.

I am also a member of the Irish Federation of Monmouth County. This is a social and cultural club. My husband is its president. So we are both very much involved in Irish activities in Monmouth County.

We try to carry out certain Irish-American traditions. On St. Patrick's Day we usually go to New York City for the parade. We march with the Kilkenny Association, our home-county group, from 48th Street all the way up to 89th Street. After that, we usually go out to eat with friends from home. Of course, we have the traditional corned beef, cabbage and soda bread. Then the following Sunday we have a traditional dinner at our home. I make a special fruit cake called simnel cake. It's kind of a traditional Easter cake in Ireland, but can be baked for special occasions in the family.

I suppose we tend to mix with people from Ireland. I guess there is a bond between us because we grew up in the same country. We have more or less the same type parents and background. And my husband and I have become an "aunt" and "uncle" to our friends' children here, a ready-made family. It's not so lonely anymore.

We have been very fortunate in America. Five years ago my husband and I both became American citizens. We decided that America had been very good to us. Thank God! We've made a good living. My husband has never been out of work. I feel that it's been important for me to stay home and raise the children.

Still, I think there might have been some prejudice, some coolness towards us because we were Irish. But I think that at some time or another all groups have had some prejudice directed at them. I learned that at one time the Irish were told they need not apply for certain jobs. That's different today. I think people take you more or less for what you are. I don't think they label you as Irish, German or Italian as if it's something bad.

For after all, this is a land of very few native Americans. We all

immigrated from other countries. I think it makes life so much more interesting to have all these different nationalities. My cousin Anne is married to an Italian. We love him a lot. He's come down to our home and eaten cabbage and turnips for the first time in his life. We go to visit them and he's introduced us to antipasto and lasagna. And I have some of his recipes which I make when he's coming here. We get a great kick out of this. Where else on earth could you find this? Only in America could you find so many different nationalities.

This is the land of opportunity. I have found that out. Pretty much whatever you want to be here you can become. There are a lot more opportunities here than in Ireland. You can always go back to school, as I have, to finish your education. The opportunities are here.

So, over all, America has been great to us and we owe it a lot. If I had the chance to come here again, to do it all over again, I would.

## Tamara Kolba

### TINTON FALLS

I was born in Byelorussia. I left with my family in 1944 when the Russians began to advance.

We had seen the atrocities the Russians committed the first time they were in Byelorussia, in 1940 - 1941. My parents had been persecuted — especially my father, because he was an elected official, a congressman, and because he had been fighting for the country's independence. The Russians had declared him an enemy of the people and taken his citizenship away. They had confiscated our land.

Most likely they would have executed my father or sent him to prison in Siberia if he had not gone into hiding. In fact, the whole family was on the list for Siberia. So the second time the Russians came near, we left.

I was the only girl in the family. I had three brothers. When we left Byelorussia in 1944 my oldest brother was in Dachau.\* He had been arrested by the Germans because he was carrying a political

message. They had sent him to two other concentration camps before Dachau.

We left Byelorussia without him. There was a lot of traveling by horse and wagon and then by cattle car through Czechoslovakia and Germany. Then we were in Berlin for a while. Berlin was awfully scary because it was being bombed by the Americans and British day and night. Finally we were assigned to Austria, to work in the vineyards, but when the Russians approached Vienna we had to flee again. This time we went toward Dachau because we had learned that my oldest brother was there.

On our way to Dachau we were liberated by the Americans. We were in Bavaria.\* The first tank came over the hill, and it was frightening because it had this white star. Was it Russian? Was it American? We were uncertain, because the Russians have stars. But we found out soon. It was American, and we were very happy to be in the American zone. This was in 1945.

In time, the Americans allowed my oldest brother to join us. Then the entire family moved to a displaced-persons camp\* in Mittenwald, Bavaria. Everybody was trying to get into a displaced-persons camp to get food, clothing and housing. There were many nationalities in the camp — Poles, Lithuanians, Russians, other Byelorussians and a lot of Ukrainians. I learned to speak Ukrainian there.

I also learned to speak English there. We went to school six days a week from about eight o'clock to three or four. Because our schooling had been interrupted by the war and the constant traveling, they tried to cram us, to teach us as much as possible before we left for different countries. We had philosophy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, Latin, English and German.

We even had Spanish lessons because it so happened that a Spanish professor lived in the camp. As I look back I realize how lucky we were. Our teachers were camp refugees like ourselves, and most of them were college professors. Some had taught at the leading universities in Europe. We got a good education. Our high school was accredited by the German education system.

We stayed in the displaced-persons camp in Mittenwald until 1950. Mittenwald is in the mountains, near the Alps. I love mountains; the beautiful scenery compensated somewhat for being cooped up in camp.

The Germans didn't want the displaced persons, so each country tried to take a certain number. A lot of people from our camp went to England, France and Belgium. A lot went to Australia and quite



TAMARA KOLBA

a number to South America. A great number also went to Canada.

Of course, many came to the United States. Most tried to. At first my father was not one of these. He felt that living in Europe would make it easier to go back to Byelorussia, and he was hoping to be able to go home soon after the war. If Byelorussia had a chance to be independent, he wanted to be there to fight for it. After several years, however, he began to see that this was not going to happen. So on the questionnaires we indicated that we wanted to go to the United States. It was far away from the war and all of the misery associated with it.

We were not able to leave the camp immediately. Most of the people who left early had relatives or friends where they intended to settle. We had nobody. We had to wait until one of my brother's friends established himself in the United States. He came to New York, got a job, lived here a while, and then sponsored us. We came in 1950.

We had to go first to another camp in Munich. At the American consulate we went through all kinds of examinations and checkups, both medical and political. Finally the visas came and we took a train from Munich to Bremenhaven, where we got a ship that carried us to this country.

Our hearts were broken because we had to separate from my older brother again. He was in the hospital with tuberculosis, which he had contracted in Dachau. He had had two operations, but the United States did not allow anyone with active tuberculosis to come into the country.

After we got here I wrote to several congressmen and tried to get him in, but to no avail. Finally a Jewish hospital in Denver, Colorado, which specializes in bronchial diseases, sort of sponsored him and he came over some years after we did. He was married by that time and had two children. In Denver they operated on him and removed part of each lung. He was doing fine for a while, but about five years ago he died.

Leaving him behind when we sailed from Bremenhaven made us quite sad. And as the ship began to move away, somehow you also felt, "That's it. Goodbye Europe. You'll never see Europe again."

The trip took about eight days. We came on a Navy boat with some people we knew from the refugee camp. It was a very difficult trip for my family. My father was the only one who didn't get seasick; the rest of us didn't try too much of the food. Still, I remember a particular dessert — ice cream with chocolate. It was so delicious.



We didn't have sugar or chocolates or anything like that during the war. It was really fantastic. I still remember that particular dessert.

When we arrived in the United States, we had to wait overnight. We saw the lights of Coney Island (of course we didn't know it was Coney Island at the time). We wanted so very much to see the Statue of Liberty, so some of the officers woke us up at six o'clock. It was May 8 — my younger brother's birthday. The morning was very hazy. We saw the sun breaking out, and there she was, the Statue of Liberty. It was very moving, almost like a religious moment.

We came into New York City with a frightened feeling. We were in a new country. We had no money. Nothing. No possessions. The noise, the buildings, and the people were just overwhelming — and, of course, we did not know the language well. I must say, after Europe, New York frightened me.

We were met by our sponsor, my brother's friend. He took us to an apartment on 100th Street between Second and Third avenues. It was maintained by a Byelorussian organization for newly arriving immigrants. It was a walkup, five flights up.

The New York around us was terrible and dirty. It was not the New York in photographs of Fifth Avenue and the Empire State Building. We were dying to see a tree, but there were no trees except in Central Park. I believe that this shocking situation contributed to my mother's illness. The doctor told her to leave New York, so we were only in the city for a short time, a couple of months.

I had a girlfriend in Cohoes,\* New York. I wrote to her, and she invited us to come and live with her family. We shared a little apartment with them in the back of a store for a while, and finally we got our own apartment. In time my father and brother got jobs, and conditions began to improve.

I stayed in Cohoes for about a year, helping to nurse my mother, and then I entered Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio. I had applied to several colleges in the United States when I graduated from high school in the displaced-persons camp. This one accepted me and gave me a full scholarship.

My parents stayed in Cohoes until 1953, when they moved to New Brunswick because it has a larger Byelorussian community. My father was the vice-president of the Byelorussian government in exile, and living there helped him stay in contact with other Byelorussians. My parents still live there.

I graduated from Western College in 1954. After that, I found out

that I wanted to be an artist. I had studied art at Western, but I felt I did not have enough background, so I studied fine arts for half a year at New York University and then switched to Columbia University. I graduated from Columbia in 1956 with an M.F.A.

Two years later I married a Ukrainian immigrant I had known in the displaced-persons camp in Germany. He was my brother's best friend — that's how I met him. We were just children who went to the movies, hiking and mountain climbing together. The friend of my brother who sponsored my family to this country also sponsored his family. So they were three friends — my brother, my husband, and this friend who sponsored our families.

After I got my M.F.A., I had an opportunity to teach. But I didn't want to teach; I considered myself a painter. So I started painting. I started exhibiting commercially. I did some textile designs.

Gradually I got interested in illustrating and writing children's books. Initially I was painting in oils, and then I decided I wanted to take up graphics. I went to the Art Students' League and studied etching and lithography. I did a small etching of a cottontail, and one gentleman saw it and asked whether I had ever thought of doing illustrations for children's books. Through a contact he gave me I started illustrating children's books and later, with the encouragement of a good friend and editor, writing them. The latest is called *Chickory: A Red Squirrel*.

Of course I still exhibit my graphics and paintings. I have had over one hundred group shows and about eight one-woman shows. I have received a number of prizes and awards. I have done a poster and two Christmas cards for UNICEF.

I am also very interested in Byelorussian folk tales. I started translating some of them years ago, and I hope in the future to present them in a book. Some day I also hope to do some research on Byelorussian designs, to try to find out what each design (like a triangle or square) means, and why we only use red and black. These are the kinds of things that interest me. I'm very much concerned with preserving Byelorussian arts and crafts.

My life has been rough and a struggle. I have not let money play a big role in it. I saw my parents lose everything, so I don't measure a person's life by financial accomplishments. Through my art I hope to contribute much more to others.

Recently, since I started my work with children's books, a couple of schools have asked me to speak to their students. I gave a couple

of lectures about what it takes to write and illustrate a book. I had the most wonderful time of my life. It was beautiful. I hope I contributed something to the students. One little boy asked, "How old do you have to be to write a book?" I hope I might have created some excitement in his mind that when he gets older he can go into writing. It's things like this that to me are so important in life.

## George Sakamoto

BRIDGETON

My birthplace is Sacramento County in California. I am a Nisei.\* I'll be sixty-five years old in five weeks.

My parents were both from Hiroshima. My father moved to Hawaii in the 1890s and to San Francisco around 1906, right after the big earthquake. My mother came with the intention of marrying him — around 1910 or 1912, through Seattle, Washington, I believe. Our family was small. My brother lives right here in this area. My sister died when she was nineteen.

I spent the first twenty-six years of my life in northern California — Lassen County, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It was a small community in which there were quite a few Japanese, mostly fruit growers, sharecroppers. My father was one of these, and I became one. I owned a fruit orchard that was about thirty acres in size.

I was married and had my first child, Barbara Joan. Then Pearl Harbor came — the beginning of World War II. One day we were living a normal life and the next day, because of Pearl Harbor, we were evacuated and restricted to a concentration camp. We were notified by posters that we were not wanted in the area. We were supposed to leave with whatever we could carry.

Everything that was left behind was lost. We tried to save some of our possessions by boarding them up, but it didn't do any good.

Years later, when we were able to go back, they were all gone. Neighbors and so-called friends or whoever had taken them. We put in a claim for our property, but we only got a couple thousand dollars. For things like cars and trucks, we were offered a hundred dollars when they were worth a couple thousand. And we were just forced to accept whatever we could get.

We were sent first to an "assembly center" in a godforsaken part of the state where nobody wanted to live. We were there from April to May or June, 1942. They put us in shacks. It was miserable as hell with all the mosquitoes.

Finally they relocated us in a permanent camp at a place called Tule Lake, near Marysville. It was half swamp and half desert. If you went there now you would say, "Don't tell me people lived here." It looked like an old-style army camp. There were common bathrooms, showers, washrooms, and mess hall. Each family was thrown in one room, whether it had two people or eight.

We were fed things we weren't accustomed to. Beef brains, tongue, kidneys and liver were the mainstay of the kitchens. We had very few Japanese staples. Rice and certain meats were hauled out of the warehouse before they got to our kitchen, because some of the administrators were saying, "Hell, we don't get enough meat. Why should we feed it to these concentration camp people?"

We had a pig farm and a chicken farm to raise meat for the camp. Then, because we had so much idle time, there were courses we could take. A lot of people learned something there. Women learned crocheting and making brooches. Other people made shelves and tables. Sometimes they exchanged things they made.

In September 1943 we were reassigned to a camp in Colorado. Our son, Gary, had just been born, but they wanted to separate the family. We fought it, and finally they decided to send us together. We were put on a train with the shades drawn. There were two armed guards at each end of the car. Even when we had to go to the bathroom we were restricted. It was hot, no air conditioning. We couldn't see daylight or night. We only knew we had reached our destination when we were told to get out. That's all. I would say we were shipped like a bunch of cattle.

After we arrived my children had to be put in the hospital. I don't think they were fed properly on the train; my son, for example, was suffering from malnutrition. So the train ride was quite an ordeal, and

it was about two or three weeks before our family got together.

Colorado was much like the first camp, but it was a real dust bowl. You constantly had to protect your face from the dust. When you looked out and saw a dust storm coming you just had to hide and cover your face with a wet cloth. It was an awful place.

I didn't stay there long. I was soon allowed to go look for a place to relocate my family. I guess the administration realized that they would have to close the camp eventually because the war was going to end. So they were encouraging people to look for places to go.

Seabrook came to my attention on a train from Chicago to New York. I read in the *Reader's Digest* that Seabrook had gotten government contracts to furnish food for the army and that they were looking for help. I was traveling with a friend. When we got to New York we inquired at the Work Relocation Authority\* and were told Seabrook was especially interested in people from the detention camps.

We were brought to Seabrook from the WRA office in Philadelphia, and we took a tour of the plant. The people were very nice, I thought. We were told that they would furnish rent-free housing. There was a school right here, and the system wasn't bad. Water and electricity came with the house. The company would provide transportation to work, and would even furnish pots and pans.

My friend and I stayed for a while. The wages were low: we started at 49 cents an hour. But we couldn't be too fussy because we were broke and really needed a place. We were more or less desperate.

This was in January 1944. In September I went back to the camp to see my family and encourage others to come out here. My brother came back with me. My family didn't come out until April of 1945.

Seabrook became a real cosmopolitan community. Some nationalities, including the Italians, were here before the Japanese. After we came, there were displaced persons from Europe — Estonians, Poles, Ukrainians, Germans and others. I think we got along well. All of us were considered just about the same: outcasts. The others were "DPs from Europe," and we were "DPs from California."

I have worked with Seabrook ever since. I now supervise the repack line. Seabrook has changed the last few years. We used to produce a lot of frozen fresh vegetables, but now we just pack frozen goods. We don't have fresh products anymore.

I moved from Seabrook to Bridgeton in 1970. My daughter, Barbara Joan, works at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. She's been



GEORGE SAKAMOTO

there for seventeen years now. My son lives in Rochester, New York, where he works for a television company. He has four daughters.

My children are rather cool to being told about our detention. It's hard for them to accept the fact that they, as American-born citizens, were treated in such a way. I think many in their generation resent hearing that we were shoved around by the government without too much complaining — that we simply shrugged our shoulders and said, "What can we do?"

None of the Sakamotos ever went back to Japan. I don't have the desire to go back. I know no one there. Our parents didn't say much about Japan and Japanese culture. Celebrating these things wasn't too popular when I was coming up — Japanese New Year's, maybe, but not too much — because we were more or less outsiders in California. People tended to say that we were clannish, or that we were different; things like that. So showing an interest in Japanese traditions wasn't too popular.

Today I think people realize the importance of ethnic culture. Ethnic groups show more interest and more pride in their old customs than they did forty or fifty years ago.

I went back to our old area in California about twenty-five years after I left. There were no more fruit trees. Most people were commuting to work in the cities. Few were working for themselves. The community had changed completely. So we really had nothing there to go back to.

It hasn't been bad here. Many Japanese families came here with practically nothing, and now their children are well educated and are doctors and lawyers. The Japanese have done well here. The people in New Jersey were more tolerant and understanding than those in California.

## Michael Stamoulis

### HAZLET

I am forty-nine years old and I was born in Cairo, Egypt.

My father was born in Greece. My mother was born in a city called Izmir, in Asia Minor (which is now Turkey). She was not one-hundred-percent Greek; she was half French. Right after the First World War, the Greeks were pushed out of Asia Minor by the Turks, and a large number migrated to Egypt. My mother went to Alexandria with her family. In the early 1920s my father, who was a sailor, happened to visit Alexandria with his ship, and that's where he met her.

My father died at age forty-seven. He was what today you would call a maitre d'\* in charge of the dining car on a train that ran from Jerusalem to Upper Egypt — a branch of the famous Orient Express. He had a heart attack on the train.

My mother was left with three sons, a widow at twenty-seven. She was very much in love with my father, so much so that she never remarried. She never removed her black clothing. She wore black until the day she died. That is a tradition among Greek women. She also wore no makeup and had no social life. She never went to the movies or dances. She raised us in our father's faith — the Greek Orthodox Church. She adopted all of the Greek customs, although she was half French.

After my father passed away, we moved to Port Said.\* It was very difficult for my mother. This was during the 1930s, during the depression, and things were bad in Egypt at the time. My father left a little money and my mother invested this in stock in some company. From this she received dividends. She also worked. She catered luncheons and took in work at home like sewing. She tried to work at home while she was caring for us.

We lived in an apartment in Port Said. Our apartment, incidentally, was the first place in Africa to be bombed during the Second World War. The first bomb that fell on Africa fell on our apartment building. There were twenty-one people killed. Fortunately, it was in the summer and we were still on vacation. But we lost all of our belongings, and so we had to start from scratch again. Imagine that — a widow with three children starting all over again.

Port Said at the time was a very cosmopolitan place, a multinational city with many European groups — French, Spanish, British, and Italian.





MICHAEL STAMOULIS

The Greeks were the largest European community; there were about twenty thousand. They had their own churches and schools and so forth.

I attended a Greek school for twelve years, six years of elementary school and six years of high school. They put a lot of emphasis on the classics and languages in the schools. So, in addition to the languages I picked up from my friends, when I graduated from high school I could speak six languages fluently — Greek, French, English, Italian, Spanish and Arabic.

I was a very good student in school. I graduated with honors from high school and managed to get a scholarship from the Greek government. At the time I planned to be an agricultural engineer. But as I was making plans to continue on in school, the government was overthrown and the new government postponed the scholarship. I was asked to wait a year or two and, of course, I couldn't. That's when I decided to go to the sea.

I went to the Naval Academy of Alexandria and took navigation courses. After two years, I joined the merchant marine in Greece as an apprentice cadet officer. I sailed all over the world with a merchant ship, a cargo ship. I really liked this work, and I decided to be a sea captain and sail the seas for the rest of my life. Then my good fortune came; we arrived in the United States. This was in 1947.

I had been interested in America ever since my early years of high school, when I was collecting stamps. I was a philatelist. A student, a good friend of mine, had an uncle in Chicago, and I asked him if he would be kind enough to get me some American stamps. Shortly thereafter I received an envelope which I still have, with a stamp of Lincoln on it which had one of his famous quotations.

It interested me very much. I took the stamp to school and the teacher elaborated on Lincoln. We spent umpteen hours on the subject. This was when I first became interested in America. I would say to myself, "It would be wonderful to live in that country. I wish I were his uncle in Chicago."

Before I came to this country, I envisioned it as a place where all you needed was the desire to advance, to progress. If you were a good citizen and worked hard, you moved ahead, no matter what. In Egypt, and most of Europe, it's not just what you know, it's who you know. If a boy finished high school or college and went back to his home, he just couldn't apply for a job and get it on his own merits. He would have to have a rich uncle or someone in politics to get him a good job. I envisioned that this was not so in America. I had read stories of successful people who had started with nothing.

My first stop in the United States was San Francisco. We stayed there about a week or so. Several months later we came to the East Coast, New York. Being Greek, and fresh from home, I sought out Greeks. In those days, in 1947 and 1948, in New York City there was a very large Greek community. Every Sunday they held dances in different parts of the city. While my ship was in berth in New York, I said, "Well, let me see how the Greeks enjoy their life here in America."

So I picked myself up and with a few friends went to a Greek dance at the Manhattan Center. This is where I met my wife, Mary. She was there with her mother and friends. I asked her to dance, and we danced. She asked me where I was from, if I liked the country, and what my plans were. Then I asked her some questions. She was going to New York University and taking some courses in economics.

My ship left after a few days and we promised to write each other. And we did. It just so happened that my ship never came back to the United States. We corresponded for two years.

By this time I had completed the service for my degree and my license as a captain. I had to go to Greece to take my final exams and to receive my diploma to be a first officer. When I wrote Mary of this, she was very upset. She figured if I got my license, then I would proceed with my plans. She asked me to come back to the United States and start my career here.

But it wasn't easy. There were immigration laws which made it almost impossible. There was an answer for this: if I would come over and get married, I could stay. But Mary never said this to me, out of pride. She was afraid, I realized later, that if she proposed to me in this way it would appear to me that she was almost bribing me. It would be like saying, "If you marry me, then this is a way you can stay in the United States." And I would never have accepted those terms. I would have wanted to arrange to stay here on my own.

To make a long story short, we stopped corresponding. Although I cared for her and loved her, I could not say, "Marry me so I can stay in the United States." So I told her that I would just have to pursue my career in Greece.

Some time later, my records were reviewed, and I was told that I was three months short of the service time I needed to qualify for my degree. I had to serve three more months in the merchant marine. So I joined a ship that was supposed to go to the Persian Gulf and return to Greece. But fate and fortune were working on my side. While we were sailing we got an order to head for Baltimore.

I was worried that a trip to the United States would make me late for my test. The captain said there would be no problem, the trip was to be short. But in Baltimore we were told to sail to South America. I had to sign off in Baltimore and come to New York to get a plane to fly back to Greece in time for my test.

I said, "Well, I'll go see Mary and see if she has married or not." I found out that she was helping in her family's bakery. We talked, and as I was leaving she ran out of the store and grabbed me. To

make a long story short, I stayed. I never got the plane. I've been here ever since.

After it was agreed I was going to stay on, I went down to the immigration office and told them I was going to marry an American girl and asked what I should do. They told me that as a seaman I had thirty-one days leave here in the country and when the thirty-one days were up, I should come back to them.

When I went back, all hell broke loose. They told me that I was in the country illegally, that I had violated the law. Being misinformed cost me dearly. I almost left the United States. My father-in-law had to post a bond of two thousand dollars, and eventually I had to get an attorney who cost me almost three thousand dollars. It took almost three years before I finally got the green card I needed to settle here permanently.

After Mary and I got married we lived with my in-laws, and then we got an apartment next door to them. We both worked in her father's delicatessen, and I went to school and studied mechanical drafting for two years.

Then I got a job in College Point, New York, with a manufacturer of paper cups. I started in 1953 as a quality control assistant at fifty dollars a week, but within two years I had been promoted to foreman. The company started to grow, and that helped my career. I went back to school and picked up a little engineering. I went to Rutgers for a couple of years. I worked very hard, and in 1962, I was made division supervisor at the company's new plant in Holmdel, New Jersey. In 1969 I took over the whole plant. That was a major accomplishment, the dream of my life. I managed it until a couple of years ago, when I suffered a heart attack. At the present time I'm on a leave of absence.

When I was transferred to Holmdel in 1962 we bought our present home in Hazlet. We were here when the last of our three children was born. We had our first child, Paul, in 1952, and seven years later we had our first daughter, Lorraine. Seven years later we had our last, Angela.

We have tried to hold on to a lot of the Greek traditions and pass them on to our children. All of our children have visited Greece. My son, who will finish law school next year, has gone three or four times. Both of my daughters have gone twice. Still, I feel entirely American. I first realized and felt I was not just Greek, but at least part American, when I was told I could remain in this country permanently. That was when America accepted me. That is when I said, "This is my country. This is my home."

## Tilly Stimler

WEST ORANGE

I was born in 1930 in a small town in Rumania. I come from a very strict religious background, very strict Orthodox Jews.

I also happen to come from a very comfortable home. We owned a lot of property. We had fields where we grew our own corn, potatoes and vegetables. We also had cows, horses and oxen. We had our own milk; if we had too much, we would give it to poor people. We also had fields where we grew hay, which we sold. People from all over the community would bring their sheep and cows to our fields in the summer to graze. We had hired help to work with the land. Often they didn't receive wages but chickens and eggs instead.

My father was a very strong, authoritative person. Unlike my mother, he was very strict with us. We were a close-knit family. We were brought up to be very respectful at all times. I remember my mother saying that we should always be good to the other person.

There were ten children in the family, and I was the youngest, the pampered one. So when I was growing up, I already had some sisters and brothers who were married and were not at home. At home there were six children. I remember only six.

I went as far as grade school in Rumania. At that time you had to make seven grades before you were eligible to go to high school. Since I started school at seven, I was in my last year of grade school when my studies were disrupted by the Germans in 1944. So I really didn't complete grade school.

In 1944 we were all taken — my parents, my family — to concentration camps. I lost my parents, a sister and a brother. I was left practically alone the whole time. I went through plenty of hardship. I ended up in Bergen-Belsen,\* one of the most notorious camps. But, thank God, I survived. Not many people my age survived. That's why I consider my survival to be one of the greatest miracles.

My father was taken first. He was like the head of the Jewish community in my hometown and this is why he was taken away before us. As I look back, I imagine the Germans were afraid because of the Warsaw uprising. So they took away the influential people first. Afterwards I met someone from another town who had been with my father, and he told me that my father had gone through a lot of torture.



TILLY STIMLER and her husband, Samuel

Later the rest of us were taken to Auschwitz.\* We traveled for six days to reach there. I can't explain to you how it looked when we saw it. I think hell will never scare me. We saw the smoke and the Germans, people dressed in leather coats. It was so unbelievable.

As we came off the train, we were told to just go. Then, as I started to go with my mother and my two sisters, we were told to leave everything there. Later my mother and my oldest sister went back to get some things, and I've never seen them again.

Then we were told, "Five in a row, five in a row." So I looked and I saw that my other sister was in the other row. We were taken to these barracks and all of our clothes were taken off and our hair was shaved off. We looked like we weren't normal. We didn't know what was going on. We were told that we couldn't say anything, couldn't talk to a German.

The biggest impression I have of that day is that it was raining, pouring rain. In May it's still very cold in Europe and especially in Poland. You remember your mother always saying, "Don't go out in the cold and rain; you'll catch cold." Here we were with our shaved heads and in short sleeves, standing in the pouring rain. I remember thinking, "Don't the Germans realize I'll catch cold?" And I remember trying to shield myself from the rain and having a German woman push me. Then I was told, "Don't you ever do that again. She could have shot you."

We couldn't believe that there could be such inhuman treatment, that you would be forced to stand in the rain. Of course, I was to find out later on that things could be worse. In fact, we were told later in the barracks that the best thing was to get out of Auschwitz. They said, "You see that smoke? That's the only way you'll get out — through smoke — unless you can get into another camp where they'll put you to work."

I remember at Auschwitz that we had to be assembled to go places. We never knew where we were going to go. If we were told we were going to the bath, it could have been our last bath. We know now what they did there. Another girl there was from my hometown. She was a friend of one of my sisters and about ten years older than me. She looked after me.

We were finally selected to go to another camp, which was smaller and a little better. My friend was able to get a job in the kitchen. This enabled her to get additional food for me, and she was able to take care of me.

We stayed in this camp for several months. Had we stayed longer, many more people would have survived. But as the Russians came near, the Germans made us move. There were no trains, and we had to walk for days in the snow. My feet are still affected from it. Finally we reached Bergen-Belsen.

Bergen-Belsen, as I said, was one of the worst camps. People were dying of disease and hunger everywhere. You just stepped over dead people. In a way, I think sometimes you waited for a person to die

so you'd have more room on the bed. We were sleeping so close in a bed that you couldn't turn over. One time I slept in a bed with a person who later died of typhus. Somehow I didn't catch it. I guess that when you are young, the fight for survival must be very strong.

Now, the last few days at Bergen-Belsen were unbelievable. Just before liberation the Germans brought in more people from the other camps. As they were bringing them in, I saw three girls from my hometown and I called to one of them. I told her whose child I was and she said, "Oh My God. That's you." I told her I was very weak but she made me get up.

She said, "Don't worry, it could just be a matter of hours. Don't you hear the shooting? You know what's going on? We could be liberated tonight." And so she and her friends helped to get me up. I was so weak. But seeing them gave me some kind of moral support. And they were right. The next day the British arrived and liberated us.

But the Germans had poisoned the bread so we didn't have bread for a few days. Even after we were liberated, many died. Although the British tried to help us, they just didn't have enough doctors and trained people. We hadn't eaten for such a long time, and were so hungry.

The food that was given to us after liberation was too fat. Lots of people got sick. My gums were so deteriorated that I couldn't take anything in my mouth. That helped to save me, because I couldn't eat the food. They gave me pills, which helped tremendously. Still, it took a long time before my gums really healed, and I have suffered with my teeth ever since.

After we were liberated, we were moved to another camp where I was with many other Jewish children. Several months later we were transported by plane to England. I had a brother who had gone to Belgium and then to England to escape the war. I joined him and his wife and their two children. I went to school for a year to learn English, and then I went to high school. But I found it hard to compete. I was a little withdrawn; I felt I didn't have too much in common with them. Here they were, youngsters complaining about their parents; I felt that they were so lucky to have parents. I remember in particular one girl who complained about having to practice the piano. So I dropped out of school after a year and went to work in a factory.

Several years later I went to Belgium to visit a cousin. While there I met the man I married. He was also from the camps and I guess we had something in common. I married him when I was eighteen,



and we lived in Belgium until 1952. Then we came here by ship with the help of HIAS.\* I was pregnant with our first child and didn't know quite what to expect.

I had a brother here, and distant relatives and friends. But still it took some time getting used to this place. We lived in Newark for a short while and then moved to the Bronx. My husband went to work in a leather-goods shop, and we adapted well. Later on someone in the family suggested that my husband try to become a butcher and go into business for himself. He agreed, and after working a long time he was able to open his own store in West Orange.

Eventually we bought a house in Newark and stayed there for a while. About ten years ago we moved to West Orange.

I'm proud to say that my husband and I brought up two well-adjusted children. My son was born in 1952 and has a wife and child and lives in New York. He is very bright; he finished college when he was nineteen and then he took Talmudic studies. He's dedicated to studying the Talmud. My daughter lives in Baltimore, is married and has twins.

As I look back now, I really think that being very religious is the most important thing. It helps you to understand that there's a purpose in life. Even if you go through hardships, you are able to make it.

I remember my son asking me once, "Mommy, if the camps were so bad, how did you survive?" And my only answer was, and has always been, "For some reason, God wanted me to live."

## Armando Tabotabo

### MATAWAN

I'll be forty June 18, 1980. I was born in Cebu City, the Philippines. My nationality is Filipino at present, but I'm applying to be an American citizen.

There were six children in my family. The boy nearest to me is now a doctor in Cherry Hill. One of my sisters lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and another lives in Cebu City. My younger brother took

the bar examination three months ago. My youngest sister is a mongoloid. She doesn't go to school.

My father was a dentist, and my mother was a schoolteacher, so we had maids to help look after us while my mother was working. Still, we had certain duties. I mopped the floor in certain parts of the house. My brother mopped other parts of the house. My sisters washed the dishes and set the table. The cooking was done by the maids. Generally, the boys did the heavier work, while the lighter work was for my sisters.

My father was the more influential parent; my mother was the stricter one. My father always imparted to us that it was an obligation to go to school. But we could take whatever course we wanted, nothing was forced on us. If you didn't want to be a doctor, you were not told to become a doctor.

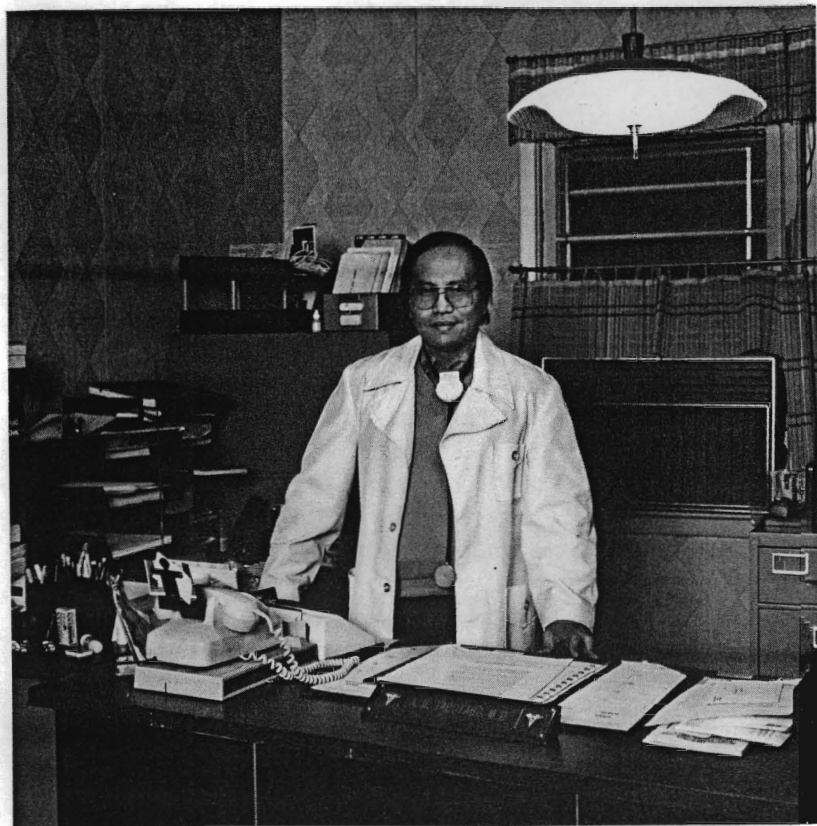
But I wanted to become a doctor. I finished medical school and my internship and residency in the Philippines. Then I did a stint of private practice. It lasted only for a few months because I was coming here.

I had decided to leave the Philippines around 1957. The living conditions are not as good as they are here. People don't have so much money there, and they don't have many job opportunities. Also there is no dignity of labor. By this I mean that if you are a student and you take a job as a department-store salesman, people will tend to look down on you, especially if you are from a middle-class family. You're not supposed to work if you are rich. Work is supposed to be shameful.

I left the Philippines in 1966. I thought I could make a better life for myself here. I thought I would have a better chance as a doctor. My aunt and uncle in Honolulu and a lot of friends and classmates who had come here told me about this country. I also read about it a lot, because it was my dream to come here, especially New York City.

I came alone by plane. My aunt and uncle met me at Honolulu International Airport. When I came through immigration they checked my X rays again. If I had shown evidence of tuberculosis they wouldn't have let me in. They don't take the readings of the Filipino doctors — not because they think Filipino doctors don't know how to read X rays, but because they feel that the doctor may be your friend and may have read the X ray as normal so you can get in.

My destination was Pittsburgh. I worked for one year at a hospital



ARMANDO TABOTABO

there, doing my internship all over again. Everyone was very nice. I've been to several places in the United States, and I think the Pittsburgh people are the friendliest.

The hospital in Pittsburgh did not have a residency in internal medicine, so I went to Lorraine, Ohio, about twenty-eight miles west of Cleveland. I was late in applying and no other hospital would accept

me a month late. But I didn't like the hospital in Lorraine very well. The training was not so good.

Still, this is where I met my wife, Sonya. She started at the hospital as an X-ray technician. She's not a Filipino but an American. We got married in 1972, after knowing each other for four or five years. When I told my parents that she was divorced, they didn't interfere; they said, "Well, if you claim that she is good, if she makes you happy, then marry her. Anyway, you're going to be the one to live with her." They were very open-minded.

We have three children. Gina, the daughter from my wife's first marriage, was born August 19, 1968. Armando Rene was born June 1, 1973, and John Derek was born June 26, 1976.

It would be hard to pass Filipino ways on to my own children. They are here in this country. And, like they say, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." I would not want to try and change them.

I have gone back to the Philippines once, in 1974. The place had changed a lot; there were many more buildings. Still, I never lost the feeling that I belonged to the community where I was reared. Community is very strong. For example, my cousin, a problem child who only my mother could control, lived with us for about two years. We also had a lot of respect for our older relatives, and sometimes we called other older people aunts or uncles.

As a doctor, I look back on some of the remedies and traditional cures of the Philippines. For example, when you step on a rusty nail they strip a tobacco leaf, dip the stem in oil, light it, and drop it in the wound. It burns like hell. I had this treatment once, and after that I stepped on several rusty nails but never told my parents. This treatment works in a certain way: the hot oil sterilizes the wound.

If you develop an allergy or rash after eating a certain food you cover the leftovers with a banana leaf, boil them, and inhale the vapors. I've seen it with my own eyes. The welts or rash disappear, and you feel better. Maybe the vapor contains something that combats the allergy or rash.

As children we played basketball, baseball and cards, just like here. We played marbles, but in a different way. We also played a game where you keep a gadget up in the air by kicking it. You count how many times you can kick it, how long you can make it last.

I remember a lot of stories about ghosts. The way they told them made them seem so real. It gets to you; it gets to your thinking. Although I've never seen a ghost, I think I'm a coward and afraid because of

all those stories. Maybe sometimes these stories were used to scare us kids so we wouldn't stay out late at night.

Overall, I think coming here has been a good experience. I have learned a lot. I've met a lot of different people and learned about their cultures. I also think I'm more aggressive in my thinking now. I have learned not just to keep quiet when you are dealing with your superiors, but to tell them when they are wrong. At home you usually don't say anything, because they are supposed to be the authorities. But now I've learned to talk back.

So if I had it to do all over again, I would still come to this country. I have applied to become a citizen. I await word about my examination date.

## N. Rebecca Taylor

PLAINFIELD

I am seventy-six years old. I was born in Clinton, South Carolina. That's in Laurens County.

My first name is Nanny. I dislike it very much. My grandmother's name was Nanny, and my great-grandmother's name was Rebecca, so they named me Nanny Rebecca. But I don't like Nanny. My parents always called me Rebecca, and I never used Nanny at all.

On my father's side my great-grandparents came from Pickens County in South Carolina. They were slaves. My great-grandfather had smallpox when he was a boy, so when he was grown he was sent to Newberry, South Carolina, to help take care of people during a smallpox epidemic. After the epidemic was over, out of gratitude, his master gave him his freedom.

He bought the freedom of my great-grandmother, who lived on the adjoining plantation, and they got married. They moved to Newberry and then to Laurens. He was a barber; he barbered for whites just like my father did. So he and my great-grandmother stayed in Laurens and raised all of their children there.

My grandfather, my father's father, went to Atlanta University. Then he was sent by the American Bible Society to teach back in Laurens.

There he married my grandmother. He taught, and then he was made clerk of the court. This was during Reconstruction, and when they ran the carpetbaggers\* out, they also ran him out. He went to St. Louis, Missouri, and my grandmother and their two children went out later.

My grandmother died soon after, and my father and his sister were sent back to Laurens. My father was about three then. My grandfather stayed in St. Louis and married again. So, my father was raised in South Carolina by his grandmother and didn't have too much of a relationship with his father.

My father owned his own business. He and my mother had eleven children, six girls and five boys. I was the second child.

Clinton was a small town. It must have had about eight thousand people when I was growing up. It was also a very racist town, one of the most racist towns, I guess, in South Carolina. This was because it was a mill town, and in the cotton mills there were poor whites who were very racist. I think there were three lynchings in Clinton, and they all occurred in the mill section. Still there were some nice white people there. In many respects it was like any other southern town at the time.

When I was about six years old, I went to live with my aunt in Columbia, South Carolina. I used to say that because my parents had so many children, my aunt felt sorry for them and took one. I lived with her off and on until I was about thirteen. At her house there was no one but me. I saw streetcars, trains, and a lot of things that kids in a small town like Clinton didn't have an opportunity to do — but my aunt was a schoolteacher and very strict. She didn't want me to play. I had to read or crochet, or knit, something like that. I had to be doing something all of the time. She used to say, "Idle hands, the devil's workshop," and I think that that really did something to me because I never sit down now unless I'm crocheting, knitting or doing something.

While I couldn't play much when I lived with my aunt, my mother let us play when I went home. Since our relatives lived all around us, all the children I played with were related to me. My maternal grandfather owned the land around us, and as his children got married, he would build little houses for them. The house where I was born was a street down from my grandmother's, and later we moved next door to her. I was in my teens before I knew many children who were not my relatives. We lived together, played together and went to school together.

Having so many brothers and sisters and cousins and all, we'd have

a good time. We used to play hopscotch, jacks, and ring plays like "Little Sally Walker Sitting in a Saucer" and "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush." I even remember that my grandmother used to tell us all kinds of tales and stories. She was a great storyteller, and we loved to listen to her. She used to tell ghost stories. I can't remember any; but I do remember that she'd frighten you to death.

I went to two kinds of grammar school. In Columbia I went to a Presbyterian school. When I came back to Clinton I finished up at a public school. Then I went to Barber-Scotia College in Concord, North Carolina. This is a Presbyterian school. My father was a staunch Presbyterian because his grandparents were Presbyterian. Both of his aunts went to this school, and early as I can remember I was told I was going there. My older sister and I both went. We got scholarships. I think my father had to pay about six dollars a month. He also sent us a dollar a month for spending money. This lasted, because we didn't go to many places.

At Barber-Scotia we wore uniforms — middy blouses, pleated skirts, black stockings and black shoes. The meals were horrid sometimes, I thought, but we all kept well. They were very strict at the school. Lights went out at 9:30 P.M., and you couldn't leave the campus unless you went with a teacher. You couldn't dance because this was considered sinful.

While I was at Barber-Scotia I started working for the Presbyterian Church during the summer. I would work in various towns. One summer I organized a vacation Bible school. My father had to pay my way to these places. At the end of the summer the church would give you thirty dollars. In the twenties that was a lot of money. I could buy books and some clothes with it.

I graduated from Barber-Scotia in 1924. I taught two years, and then I went to James Island as a parish worker. James Island is off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina. It is one of the Sea Islands or Gullah Islands. In these islands some African customs survived among the black people. They had, for example, certain ways of expressing themselves, so that when I first went there it was kind of hard for me to understand some of the things they were saying. I worked with the children in the Presbyterian missions on the island. I taught sewing and handicrafts and conducted recreational programs.

I worked on James Island for five years. I met my husband — Leslie Allen Taylor — when he came down to the island to work about two summers before we married. He was from Cordele, Georgia, and was a student at Lincoln University's seminary. We got married in 1930



N. REBECCA TAYLOR

in Charleston; then he went back to school and I went back to work. He graduated in June and then came to Plainfield to serve as the pastor of the Bethel Presbyterian Church. He pastored there until he died in 1952. Shortly after he came to Plainfield, New Jersey, I joined him.

Our two children were born in Plainfield. The older is Leslie Allen Taylor, Jr. My daughter is named Olga Louise. When my husband died, they were eighteen and seventeen, and I worked and sent both of



them to college. This was with their help, because they really did help.

I'm proud of both of them, and I think they've done well. My son finished high school, served in the army, and then went to North Carolina State College. He's married now and has four children and one grandchild. He is director of a senior citizen center in Brooklyn. My daughter graduated from Douglass College and then from Atlanta University's school of social work. She's now in New York, studying for her doctorate at City University and working as a counselor at City College.

After my husband passed away, I began to work again. I worked at Muhlenburg Hospital for about six months and then went down to Barber-Scotia College. I worked in the personnel office there for about three years. Then I moved to New York instead of coming back to Plainfield, because I thought I could get a better job.

In 1956 I started working in the Bethlehem Lutheran Home, a place for delinquent children. At first I was a counselor; eventually I was made the supervisor of counselors. When I retired in 1968 they gave me a big testimonial. It was one of the nicest work experiences I ever had. The children were sent from the courts of New York. Some came from neglected homes and most had gotten into trouble. But I think they were the nicest group of children I ever worked with. The only thing they needed was attention, love and care.

After I retired I moved here to Plainfield. I had lived here for over twenty years and I felt that most of my friends were here. Also I felt I knew Plainfield better than any other place. My husband is buried here too, and I said it won't be so far to carry me when I die. So, I came back to Plainfield.

## Alejandro Torres

CAMDEN

I was born September 9, 1924, in Puerto Rico. My father was a carpenter and my mother, who died in 1948, was a housewife. They were both

born in the same town in Puerto Rico. They had thirteen children altogether, but some died before they were five or six. So there are nine of us; I have three brothers and five sisters. I'm the third oldest son.

My father was a carpenter. He worked for somebody else constructing houses for about six or seven years. Then he started a grocery and at the same time went to work in a sugar-cane factory. He would work six months in the factory, from January until it closed down in July. Then he would work in the grocery store and take carpentry jobs. He also had a farm. He grew oranges, coffee, bananas, avocados — things like this. When I was seven or eight I started giving him a hand on the farm. My brothers and sisters and I would clean the coffee trees, pick oranges, and things like this.

I've got a very good father, a really strong father. I am very fond of him. After he lost my mother in 1948, he never took another wife. When she died there were three or four young children in the house. He raised them all. You can imagine what kind of a man he is to do that. He and my mother were very close. I believe this is why he decided he wouldn't marry again. He didn't want another woman to teach the children different from himself and my mother. Now he's eighty-one years old. He stays on the farm. One of my younger sisters takes care of him.

I stayed in school until about the eighth grade, when I was about thirteen. Then I left home and lived with my older brother in San Juan for about two years. I first got a job in a hotel working in the kitchen. Then I worked as a waiter in a large casino. I was also a taxi driver for a couple of years. Then I got married. This was 1952.

I lived with my first wife only one year. She was really a good wife but very jealous. I was a professional singer in those days; I started singing at fifteen. I was part of a group — two guitars, a violin, and the piano — and we would sing at nightclubs, restaurants, parties and weddings. I sang Spanish music, Puerto Rican music, Puerto Rican country music. I was very popular, and my wife thought too many women liked me. So we agreed to get a divorce.

One week after I was divorced, I took a plane and came by myself to the United States. I came on August 23, 1954. I came to Camden because I knew many people who had come here. About two weeks later I found a job as a dishwasher at a restaurant in Merchantville. A few months later I started working in the salad department as the cold-meat man, making all kinds of salads, salad dressing and cold



ALEJANDRO TORRES

meat platters. Between 1957 and 1960 I worked as a cook at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel in Philadelphia. Then I was a cook at two other hotels in Philadelphia until 1964.

Then I worked for about twelve years at the Hawaiian Cottage, a restaurant in Merchantville, until it burned down. I was the head man there for several years. Because it had had some union troubles, arson was suspected. I collected unemployment for three months and then

worked in a restaurant at the Echelon Mall for three months. Then it burned down. Arson was also suspected in this fire. So I collected unemployment again for several months and then got my present job in the cafeteria at the Bank of New Jersey in Moorestown.

When I first came here I rented a room in South Camden, Porter Street. Very cheap — twenty-five dollars a month. I went to night school for about six months in North Camden, at High Point, trying to improve my English. But I had to quit because it interfered with my job.

After a couple of years on Porter Street, I got a room in a house on Sixth Street, near the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. My present wife was living with a family there. I got to know her, and in 1958 we got married. She was born in Puerto Rico but comes from a different part of the island.

After Sixth Street, we lived for about seven years on Grant Avenue. Then we bought this house on Lansdale Avenue. We have been here about twelve years.

I only have one child. Her name is Lisa. She was born in 1959. From about age four until she finished high school she went to Catholic schools. Then she went to Rutgers for a couple of semesters, and she now attends Harris College.

I come from a very religious Catholic family. We were all in church every Sunday. I continue to go to church here in Camden, where there is a large Spanish-speaking community. It's a Spanish parish. Most of the services are conducted in Spanish. A few are in English, but on days like Christmas, Good Friday and Easter, all of the services are in Spanish.

Some Puerto Ricans here celebrate holidays in a different way than in Puerto Rico. For example, Christmas is not celebrated on just one day. The celebration starts on December twenty-fourth and ends on January sixth. During this time people make visits to their relatives and there is a lot of dancing, singing, and playing of the guitar. The foods are similar to what is eaten here — usually chicken or turkey. However, the traditional dish of rice and beans is also served. On Christmas Day everyone goes to church. Here I don't see Puerto Ricans going to church on Christmas; they tend to be busy visiting friends and relatives and having parties. While this is also true in Puerto Rico, when the time comes to go to church there, you go.

Easter is a very big day in Puerto Rico. In fact, the entire week before Easter — from Monday to Sunday — is a big week. We have Good Monday, Good Tuesday, and so forth — not only Good Friday. In Puerto Rico people go to church throughout the week, especially

in the rural areas. No meat is eaten — just fish, often codfish. But here a lot of this seems to be ignored. On Easter you might even see someone eating a hamburger.

I have lived in Camden for twenty-eight years. That is a long time. But I go back to Puerto Rico just about every other year. Many Puerto Ricans who live here visit their families in Puerto Rico often. Someday, if I can't get a job and if it is difficult for me to live well here, I'll sell my property here and go to my country. But for now, I'm here.

## CAPSULE HISTORIES OF THE ETHNIC GROUPS

**Afro-Americans.** In 1980 the census counted about 26.5 million Afro-Americans (also called blacks or Negroes). They are one of the nation's largest ethnic groups. Their ancestors came from Africa south of the Sahara desert, particularly a 300-mile-wide strip along the west coast from Senegal to Angola.

The Afro-American experience began in 1619, when twenty blacks arrived at Jamestown, Virginia. Unlike other ethnic groups, blacks were brought here forcibly. In 1790 there were 757,000 Afro-Americans in the United States. Nearly 700,000 were held as slaves in various states, especially in the South; the rest were free.

The cotton gin, invented in 1793, enabled southern planters to raise ever-increasing amounts of cotton. As a result, they needed more and more slaves. Since the slave trade was outlawed in 1808, virtually cutting off the supply of new slaves from Africa, this demand was met mainly through childbirth. The number of slaves increased rapidly; the 1860 census listed almost 4 million slaves out of about 4.5 million Afro-Americans.

Slavery existed here for more than 200 years. Blacks protested against it in various ways, from running away to staging full-scale rebellions. The Thirteenth Amendment, which was adopted in 1865 as a result of the Civil War, abolished it.

From then until the turn of the century 90 percent of America's blacks stayed in the South. Many continued to farm, renting land in a system called sharecropping. They suffered new kinds of oppression: sharecropping trapped them in endless debt, and Jim Crow laws

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NOTE: We are indebted to the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* for much of the material in these histories.

restricted the activities of blacks in the city as well as the country.

Afro-Americans struggled against these injustices as they had against slavery. Some protested by migrating. They began their first massive movement from the South during World War I, when there was a sudden demand for their labor in northern industries. This exodus was interrupted by the Great Depression, but it resumed at the start of World War II and continued through the 1960s. Since 1970 almost half of all black Americans have lived outside the South, and about 90 percent have been in or near cities.

There have been blacks in New Jersey since the early colonial period. In this century southern blacks have moved here in large numbers; Afro-Americans are one of the state's largest ethnic groups, making up about 13 percent of the population. Most are in cities. There are black majorities in Camden, East Orange, Newark, Orange and Plainfield, and sizable black populations in Atlantic City, Elizabeth, Irvington, Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, and other New Jersey cities.

**Byelorussians.** The Byelorussians (White Russians) are a Slavic people from an area in northwestern Russia. Byelorussia became an independent country in 1918 but was absorbed by the newly created Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1919. Many Byelorussians took part in the massive central and eastern European migration of 1861 — 1914. Most were peasants caught in the economic squeeze of late nineteenth-century Europe: there was not enough land for everyone to farm, and there were not enough industrial jobs to absorb the extra people. We do not know exactly how many Byelorussians arrived, because immigration and census officials lumped them together with Russians and Poles, but there were probably about 100,000. Most came after 1880.

A second wave of Byelorussians has immigrated since 1920, mostly after 1945. Unlike the first group, these immigrants are professionals, artisans and skilled workers who feel a strong ethnic identity. This group constitutes most of today's identifiable Byelorussian community of 200,000.

Both waves settled in the industrial regions of Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. In New Jersey most of the earlier wave settled in Bayonne, Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark, Passaic and Paterson, with small rural communities in Hunterdon County and the Egg Harbor - Hammonton - Vineland area. Later immigrants have settled in the same cities and in Elizabeth, New Brunswick, South River and Trenton as well.

**Filipinos.** The Philippines are a group of about seven thousand islands in the Pacific Ocean southeast of China. Filipino immigration began in 1899, when the Islands became a United States possession after the Spanish-American War. As American nationals, Filipinos could enter the United States without restriction.

Most settled in Hawaii or California as agricultural workers. In the 1930s Hawaii had about fifty-five thousand Filipinos, and the mainland had about forty-five thousand. During the depression two groups — supporters of the Philippine independence movement and people interested in reducing unemployment — pressured the government to restrict Filipino immigration. In 1934 Congress enacted legislation that defined Filipinos as aliens.

In the early 1960s about three thousand Filipinos entered the United States each year. Much larger numbers came after the immigration laws were reformed in 1965. Between 1974 and 1980 Filipinos were the second or third largest group of immigrants every year. In 1980 nearly eighty thousand Filipinos lived in the United States, the second largest Asian group in the nation.

Most of the recent Filipino arrivals have been professionals such as doctors, dentists, pharmacists or nurses. They have settled in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Honolulu and other large cities. New Jersey has a sizable Filipino population, much of it located in the northern part of the state.

**Germans.** There have been Germans in North America since the seventeenth century, but they did not begin to arrive in great numbers until after 1820. Since the colonial period more Germans have immigrated to the United States than any other ethnic group. Roughly 35 million Americans have some German ancestry.

About 6.9 million Germans came here between 1820 and 1970. Nearly 5 million arrived in the peak period from 1840 to 1900. They began emigrating in the 1820s because the Napoleonic wars and a series of poor harvests had disrupted the European economy.

During the following years they found a variety of other reasons to emigrate. Political repression drove liberals out in the 1830s and late 1840s, and forced socialists to flee in the 1880s. Religious intolerance drove out many non-Protestants in the 1870s. Some Germans left to avoid military conscription.

However, most Germans emigrated for economic reasons. The population rose until there were too many people for the land. At the same time German factories were undermining the cottage indus-

tries that helped many agricultural workers live, but they were not able to offer jobs to everyone.

Most German immigrants came from the southern and southwestern German states. The majority were agricultural laborers and small farmers; the rest were mainly artisans, tradesmen and shopkeepers.

About one-third of the German immigrants were Catholic. Most of the rest adhered to the German Protestant churches — Lutheran, Evangelical, and Reformed. There were also Jews, Methodists and Pietists.

Though Germans scattered throughout the United States, most settled in the Mid-Atlantic and upper Midwestern states. Boston, Charleston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York City and Philadelphia all had large German communities. A great German triangle of settlement developed between the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, bounded by Cincinnati, Milwaukee and St. Louis. Germans worked at many of the same skilled occupations here as at home: tailoring, cigarmaking, cabinetmaking, retailing, mining, manufacturing, agriculture, baking, and brewing. Relatively few German women worked. Those who did generally chose to provide services — to be servants, laundresses, or bakers, for example — rather than work in factories or do clerical jobs that required English.

New Jersey attracted many Germans. German communities are scattered throughout the state, with heavy concentrations in Essex and Hudson counties. Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark, Union City, Weehawken, West Hoboken and West New York all have large German communities. Carlstadt (Passaic County), Egg Harbor City (Atlantic County) and Guttenberg (Hudson County) are predominantly German.

**Greeks.** There are between 1.5 million and 3 million Greek-Americans. The statistics are not precise because many Greeks came from Turkey, Rumania and Egypt and were not listed as Greeks by the immigration officials. Like other southern European groups, the Greeks immigrated mostly from the 1880s to the 1920s, when restrictive immigration laws were passed.

Greeks left their homeland for the same reason as many other southern European immigrants — there were too many people for the land. But of the millions who emigrated, nearly half eventually returned home. Some were sojourners, some returned for military service, others simply found it hard to choose between Greece and America and went back and forth several times.

Most Greeks chose to live in cities, where industry offered steady employment. California and the industrializing states of the North, such

as Illinois and New York, drew the largest settlements. Greeks went to work in textile mills, steel mills, tanneries, slaughterhouses, railroad construction crews, and small businesses such as flower shops, fruit and vegetable stands, and restaurants.

Poor economic conditions and political unrest produced a second wave of Greek immigration after World War II. Most of the new immigrants were unskilled workers, but there were more professionals and skilled workers than in earlier groups. About 46,000 Greeks came here between 1946 and 1960, and more than 142,000 arrived between 1961 and 1975.

New Jersey's Greek population is large and dispersed. The largest communities are in Newark, the Oranges, Jersey City, Clifton, Dover, Fairview, Paterson, Tenafly, Hackensack, Perth Amboy, Piscataway, New Brunswick, Red Bank, Westfield, Wyckoff, Trenton, Cherry Hill, Toms River, Colt's Neck, Vineland and the shore communities of Atlantic City, North Wildwood and Asbury Park.

**Irish.** From the colonial period to the First World War Ireland provided America with large numbers of immigrants. The Irish were the second largest immigrant group in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; only the Germans exceeded them.

Some Irish Catholics came to Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay area as servants in the seventeenth century. Many Protestants came in the eighteenth century; by 1790 about 40,000 Irish, half of them Catholic and half Protestant, had settled here.

Between 1820 and 1920 about 4.7 million Irish immigrants came. Four million, almost all Catholic, arrived during the nineteenth century, driven from home by overpopulation, high rents, tenant evictions, and a succession of bad harvests. Many came to escape the famine of 1845.

A smaller wave of Irish immigrants came in the 1920s. Another began in the late 1940s and lasted through the 1950s.

Most Irish immigrants settled in cities. The early settlers went to Baltimore, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and Providence; later arrivals settled further west in Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, San Francisco and other cities. By 1870 the Irish outnumbered every other immigrant group in California. In 1880 a third of all Irish immigrants lived outside the Eastern Seaboard.

The Irish are unique among immigrant groups in that more women immigrated than men. Generally, the new arrivals found unskilled or semiskilled work. The men became laborers, soldiers, policemen, railroad workers and miners. The women worked mainly as domestics.



The few skilled or white-collar workers tended to settle further west than the others.

The Irish have made up a significant portion of New Jersey's population for some time. They have large communities in Elizabeth, Jersey City, Newark, New Brunswick, Paterson and Trenton.

**Italians.** The Italians are one of the largest ethnic groups in the United States. More than five million have arrived since 1820, the vast majority between 1880 and 1920. Before 1860 most came from northern Italy; nearly 14,000 arrived between 1820 and 1860, the majority in the 1850s. Although they scattered throughout the nation, the largest numbers went to California and New York.

A massive emigration from southern Italy began in the 1880s. In 1860 Italy's many rival, independent states were united into a single nation. Southern Italian peasants supported unity and hoped to benefit from it, but were disappointed. There were too many people for the land, the agricultural economy was weak, and northern Italians controlled the country and discriminated against them.

The majority of the southern Italian immigrants were sojourners — young men who planned to work for one or two years and then return to Italy with the money they made. Between 1899 and 1924 about 3.8 million Italians entered the United States and 2.1 million returned to Italy. Immigration stabilized after 1900, when more women and children began to come.

Although they were peasants, most Italians settled in industrial areas and held a variety of jobs. Men worked in the clothing industry, the building trades, restaurants and other service occupations, and the fishing and shipping industries. Women took jobs in the garment, silk, artificial flower, candy, lace, and cigar industries. A few Italians became successful farmers — particularly the northern Italians in California.

Large Italian communities developed in industrial cities like Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Kansas City, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. There are also many Italians in the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.

Italians are New Jersey's largest ethnic group. The state has significant Italian populations in its main industrial cities — Camden, Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson, Trenton and Union — and in its southern agricultural areas, especially in and around Vineland.

**Jamaicans.** Jamaica is a Caribbean island south of Cuba. Jamaicans began

moving to the United States in significant numbers early in this century, attracted by the prospect of better wages and a higher standard of living than they had at home, where the farms were poor and there were not enough jobs.

We do not know exactly how many came during the first quarter of the century. There was a surge in Jamaican immigration after World War II. Almost 20,000, mostly contract laborers, arrived in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

A meager West Indian quota was imposed in 1952, and immigration declined until the United States reformed its policies in 1965. Since then many more women have immigrated from Jamaica than men. Although many of the arrivals are white-collar or skilled workers, the number of unskilled workers, many of them female domestic servants, is steadily increasing.

Jamaicans have settled primarily on the East Coast. Two-thirds of those arriving before 1924 settled in New York City and most of the rest went to Boston, Miami and Philadelphia. More recent arrivals have settled in these communities and in the large cities of California, Michigan and Illinois as well.

New Jersey's sizeable Jamaican population lives mainly around metropolitan New York and Philadelphia, especially in Essex, Hudson, Camden and Burlington counties.

**Japanese.** One of America's largest Asian ethnic groups is the Japanese. In 1980 there were 791,000 people of Japanese descent in the United States.

Significant immigration began in the 1890s to supply cheap labor in agriculture, railroad building, mining and other industries. In 1890 there were twelve thousand in Hawaii and three thousand on the mainland, mostly in California. In 1920 there were 220,000 in the country; half of these, mostly first-generation immigrants, were on the mainland, particularly on the West Coast. In all, nearly 300,000 entered the country between 1891 and 1924, but some remigrated.

The Japanese faced considerable racial hostility. Discriminatory laws denied citizenship to first-generation Japanese and limited their property rights severely. In 1924 the Japanese, along with other alien groups, were denied entry altogether.

In the early 1940s, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, there was a wave of hysteria against the Japanese on the West Coast. More than 110,000 (of whom two-thirds had been born here and were therefore American citizens) were unconstitutionally confined in concentration

camps on the allegation that they posed a threat to national security. Hawaiian Japanese were not detained.

New Jersey had few Japanese until the end of World War II, when three thousand people from the detention camps accepted jobs at Seabrook Farms in the southern part of the state. This was the only concentration of Japanese on the East Coast. Japanese immigration resumed in the 1970s. The 1980 census reported that there were approximately ten thousand Japanese in New Jersey.

**Jews.** The Jewish ethnic group is one of the largest in America. It is also one of the very few whose members did not come here from a specific geographical area. It is impossible to find out exactly how many Jews have immigrated because they were counted in the statistics for the countries they came from.

There have been Jews in the New World since the seventeenth century, though there were not many until the middle of the nineteenth. Most of the early arrivals were Sephardic Jews from Spain or Portugal. Millions of Ashkenazi Jews came during the mass European migrations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Three more groups have arrived since the 1930s.

More than 250,000 Jews immigrated before 1880, mostly from Germany or the German-speaking parts of Central Europe. Generally young and unmarried, these immigrants settled in cities across the United States and worked in many of the same occupations they had had in Europe: tailoring, small-scale merchandising, shoemaking, and peddling.

These immigrants adapted quickly to middle-class life in the United States. Jewish communities developed along the peddlers' distribution network: in Chicago, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, New Orleans, St. Louis, San Francisco and elsewhere. By the 1850s Jews were involved in meatpacking, shoe manufacture and large-scale retailing.

Between 1880 and 1920, 2.7 million Jews came to the United States from eastern Europe — Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary and Rumania — where the laws had forced them to settle in designated areas, limited their economic activities, and allowed their neighbors to persecute them intensely. These immigrants settled in the large cities of the Northeast and Midwest. They supplied the garment industry and other trades with skilled workers, and immigrant neighborhoods with small shops and businesses.

The flow of Jewish immigrants slowed greatly in the 1920s, when the United States imposed drastic quotas. But three separate Jewish

immigrant groups have arrived since then: victims of Nazi persecution, Israelis, and Russian Jews.

Although immigration was reduced to a trickle during the Great Depression, about 150,000 Jewish refugees came from Nazi Germany during the 1930s. These were generally well-educated business people or professionals, most of whom settled in New York, Chicago, San Francisco or other large cities. The Depression made it difficult for them to resume their old professions, but most eventually established themselves.

About 300,000 Israelis have arrived since Israel was established in 1948, the majority since the late 1960s. They have come for the same kind of reasons as many other groups. They want to find economic opportunity, to live less austere than at home, or to avoid military duty and war. Half of these immigrants, including New Jersey's sizable Israeli community, are in metropolitan New York. The rest have settled in large cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles.

The other recent Jewish immigrant group is from the Soviet Union. About 130,000 have arrived, mostly since 1969, when Soviet emigration policy changed.

In 1970 New Jersey's Jewish population was 400,000, almost 6 percent of the state's total population. Nearly 7 percent of all the Jews in the United States lived in New Jersey. Seventy-five percent of New Jersey's Jewish population lives in the corridor that runs from Middlesex County north through Bergen County, but other large Jewish communities have formed in Trenton, Camden and along the shore.

New Jersey is one of the few states in which Jews established farming colonies. The first of these colonies was established in the 1880s. They were located in the southern counties in Alliance, Farmingdale, Woodbine and several other communities. They thrived for many years, though now most of them have gone out of existence.

**Puerto Ricans.** The island of Puerto Rico has been a United States possession since the Spanish-American War in 1898. Puerto Ricans are American citizens subject to American law, but they cannot vote or send voting representatives in Congress, and they pay no federal income tax.

About 1.5 million Puerto Ricans have moved to the United States mainland, most of them Catholic. This migration began in the 1820s, but did not reach major proportions until the end of World War II. Puerto Ricans came here for many reasons. Unemployment was high at home, transportation to the mainland was cheap, travel was unre-

stricted, and there was an established Puerto Rican community here.

More than half the immigrants settled in New York City, which has more Puerto Ricans than San Juan, Puerto Rico's capital and largest city. Other large communities are in Boston, Los Angeles, Miami, San Francisco, and several cities in New Jersey.

Generally, Puerto Rican immigrants are young and unskilled. Most arrived just as the cities were beginning to lose the kind of industrial jobs that sustained previous immigrant groups.

New Jersey ranks second to New York in the size of its Puerto Rican population. Camden, Elizabeth, Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark, Passaic, Paterson, Perth Amboy and Trenton have large Puerto Rican communities. There are also significant numbers of Puerto Ricans in Atlantic City, Dover, Lakewood, Long Branch, New Brunswick, and the farming region around Vineland in Cumberland County.

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Alejandro Torres



## **SUGGESTED READINGS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:**

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## GLOSSARY

**Alsace-Lorraine:** A region in northeastern France. It was part of the German empire from 1871 until the end of World War I. It is predominantly Germanic in language and culture; more than 90 percent of its inhabitants have Germanic roots. Alsatians have immigrated to this country since the colonial period as part of the general movement of Germans to the United States.

**Auschwitz:** The largest of roughly twenty concentration camps operated by the German government from 1933 to 1945. It took its name from the German spelling of nearby Oswiecim, a small town in south central Poland near the Czech border. Perhaps two million people were murdered here in gas chambers built for this purpose by firms selected through competitive bids. The gas they used was a commercially available pesticide. The ovens in the crematorium could dispose of two thousand bodies in twelve hours.

**Bergen-Belsen:** A Nazi concentration camp opened in 1943 near Hanover, Germany. It was the first camp to be liberated by the Allies. It was originally planned as a transit camp where prisoners could be held for exchange. More than fifty thousand people died there, about a quarter of them after the liberation.

**Carpetbaggers:** A label used by Southern whites to refer to Northerners who came South after the Civil War. The term was derived from the type of suitcases they carried. It suggested people seeking political and economic gain. Today it describes outsiders meddling in political affairs.

**Dachau:** One of the first Nazi concentration camps. Located about fifteen

miles from Munich, it opened in March 1933. Hitler began sending Jews and other supposed enemies of the state to it shortly after he took power. No one knows how many people perished there, but the number is at least forty thousand. German doctors and scientists experimented on the prisoners, often permanently maiming those who were not killed.

**Displaced-persons camp:** A temporary settlement for people dislocated by World War II. At the end of the war, roughly 8 million civilians were living outside their national boundaries and either could not return home or needed help finding new homes. These people were classified as "displaced persons," and during the next several years they were relocated in Allied countries or former enemy territory. While they waited they lived in "assembly centers" that were set up on communications routes near food supplies and large towns. When possible, national groups were gathered together. The camps, administered by the United Nations as well as the allied forces, were self-governing.

**HIAS:** The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, formed in New York City in 1902 to assist Jewish immigrants entering the United States.

**Maitre d':** Headwaiter; the abbreviated form of *maitre d'hôtel*, a French term meaning "master of the house."

**Nisei:** A child of Japanese immigrants who is born and raised in America, especially the United States. The word is a compound of the Japanese terms for "second" and "generation." Immigrants from Japan are called *Issei* (from "first generation"). The children of Nisei parents are called *Sansei* (from "third generation").

**Shuttle:** A sliding holder for the lower thread of a sewing machine. The shuttle carries the lower thread through a loop of the upper thread to make a stitch.

**War Relocation Authority:** The federal agency that administered the Japanese detention program during World War II.