

Name: Frances Spiegel (Faiga Singerz)

Birthdate: April 14, 1926

Birthplace: Chrzanow, Poland

Religious Identity: Jewish

*How old are you?*

More than you think, 90

*How many siblings do you have?*

3, I was the fourth

*Holocaust Story:*

I was 13 when the war broke out 1939 Hitler came to Poland and he conquered the whole country when they fought in Warsaw. Shortly after they made a ghetto and pushed us all together in a very small place and we were not allowed to go to school or go sit in the streets, it was surrounded we couldn't do anything. I was there until the beginning of 1942 they came and took me out and put me in a cattle car and took off for concentration camps, first it was a rock camp 1942 beginning, and year late it became a concentration camp,, the lagerfurher went for training and came back an SS she called us kinder, and after that it wasn't kinder anymore. I didn't know what Auschwitz was, my parents used to go there for selling my father was a tailor selling clothing they went a couple times, I was so young. They went one time and another time they went to another city when we were on summer vacation it was far from us we had to hire a buggy and a driver on a regular basis, they even left the tables that they put out the only thing they took with them was the merchandise it was about 2/3 hours. Each time it was another kid with them, we enjoyed it. When they took me in concentration camp one of my sister went 6 weeks before me to another camp my oldest sister was with my father working for the Germans like sewing different things for the war, in 1943 town because "judenfree", no more Jews. I wasn't home but my sister told me, so they said they were going to change the cards for food, and one time they took 7 people out and they hung them. They were not very nice, shortly after they occupied our city; they locked our merchandise and took it all away. Separated us left right, my father was the only one home took everyone away. I guess they took them to Auschwitz because they never came back, my father didn't survive, my one sister wanted to go to where my other sister was and by chance she came to the camp that I was in, she was my savior I don't think I was making it without here I was very young I was only 15 years old at the time, because of her I'm pretty sure I'm still alive 3 years and 3 months. We replaced the people who worked in the factories. Josef Mengele, he would make a selection and he would take them away. They replaced people all the time, there were new people ones that could work I was there for three years and 3 months. My sister 3 weeks before liberation on my birthday there was a train wreck there were replacing the rails, another train came and it threw all the girls off, we had a

doctor in our camp. My sister had her leg cut off, they didn't care about us. When the war ended she lost the leg in April 1945 May 9<sup>th</sup> last ones to be liberated, towards the end the Germans knew it was the end we didn't know. A lot of people didn't make it. Whoever died died and because of that we were the last ones to be liberated. By the Russians. When they came to the camp when we were free to go, we didn't trust them so I was with my oldest sister and the one who lost the leg but we didn't know I had typhus they didn't think I would make it, I was in quarantine. My sister came to see me and she got sick but she got better. A day went by and she didn't come and she was saying something's wrong, my older sister went and saw what happened about her leg, she didn't want to tell me what happened. I didn't like her answer so I made her tell me. I said I want to see her and I went and when I got there she was in a hospital it wasn't easy but I made it, she said just don't cry because if she sees you cry that's not good. I started balling she's the one who comfort me she says god was with us, he's not going to abandon us she thanked god for her faith. After the war everybody could go back to Poland they wanted to see what happened. We couldn't do it, my older sister met someone who came from Russia, he was Jewish and he had deserted, my oldest sister said I can marry him and we can go away but you'll have to take care of our other sister. She left in the meantime. We were actually in Sudetenland Czechoslovakia. 1945, 1946 they had elections and didn't want any foreigners so we went back to work in the same factory because we needed money to survive, Oberaltstadt (name of the city). I was in Oberaltstadt, she was in Prague. Gross Rosen / sub camp. The girls from the train wreck also had sisters and we all went back to work and we needed money to live in the beginning you had to pay already ya know. One day they stopped the machines and arrested us, they wouldn't tell us I said I have to know what crime did we commit and they had a Jewish person there and they let me talk to them he told us that Marshall is coming and they were afraid that they would do something, they don't want you here those are the tricks that they'll use to get you out of here. Tell them that you need a vacation and you need an advance in money for two weeks, they did. I guess I have an honest face; a letter got to the premise and asks if your sister can make the trip. It was bought off so we went from Czechoslovakia to Germany on the German side in DP camps. One day they're going to take you to the polish border and do what you want. I went to the hospital and talked to the doctor and he gave me a letter, as soon as she comes she has to go right back in the hospital. Went through the other operation, it didn't heal so well, she was in the hospital for a long time. When my sister left and got married, it was in 1946 already. Israel was not Israel the British wouldn't let them in no one wanted us. They needed young people for Israel I had to make sure that my sister is going to stay with me, I had many chances to get married, I knew him for two years before we got married he had papers to go to Canada, I wanted us to go together. I said wherever we go my sister goes with us,, and he was a good man she lived with us for 10 years and she got married, and met him in Israel and then she came by herself and worked on papers to get him out. We all wanted to be together. We all got out here, we wanted to be together. You had to have someone who vouched for her, so she would not be a burden, the one who lost the leg there wasn't a day someone had to support her she was terrific. Her boss gave her papers for the rest of the family, he wasn't worried. I got married, 1948, in Germany of course. Daughter was born there and then we applied to come to the US. The federation sponsored you to come here, we came to Pittsburgh. Sister came to Pittsburgh also, we came by plane and my sister came by boat. Being that we had a baby, pregnant woman and people with small children were able to come by plane. We didn't go with the first class. She was in the ship port and she was there four months and I said what's happening I'm going

back what's the reason why she's not coming? They had to make sure that she wasn't going to be a burden. We only had one room and a kitchen and a semi private bath for three families. She rented a room on the street further down she ate with us and I did the laundry I had a baby. She lived with us for ten years, in New York and later on her husband got sick, she moved to Florida.

*When did you meet your spouse, can you tell us about them?*

I met him in Germany, we were like in the DP camps but it was like a kibbutz style, my sister worked in a hospital and when she left I took over her job, so while I was working my husband was working in administration in the office. On and off for two years. I did pretty good, he was a good man, Harry.

*How many/if any children do you have? Do you have any grandchildren?*

Two children, four grandchildren, many great grandchildren,

*What is your favorite thing to do now and why?*

Reading, go to the JCC, when I was able to walk better I went there an awful lot.

*Do you think your experiences during the war held you back or motivated you?*

Neither. I did what I needed to do.