

Un articolo di Donald D. Ross apparso sul «New York Daily» del 6 febbraio 1946.
Fonte: <http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html>

FEBRUARY 6, 1946

11

'We Want to Belong,' Plead Oswego Refugees

Long for a Home
After Many Years of
Uncertainty

By DONALD D. ROSS

In Prague, in 1939, the year the war began, Oskar and Livia Finger had a two-room apartment on the sixth floor of a house that overlooked a flower-filled park.

Evenings, after Oskar had come home from his little stocking and lingerie shop, they would sit alone on their tiny balcony, and look out over the park. Other evenings Livia would sing at the German Opera House in Prague.

That was the last home that Livia and Oskar knew. Oskar, 48, a delicate man with a white, drained face, and Livia, 37, a plump little woman whose brown eyes have unaccountably remained lively, are now at the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America, 425 Lafayette St. So are a couple of hundred other people.

Suzie Born Here

The family is larger now than it was in Prague: there is Arnon, 5½, an undernourished little boy with large eyes, who was born in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, when the Fingers were fleeing from the Nazis. There is Suzie, 4½ months old, who was born in the Fort Ontario Refugee Camp at Oswego, N. Y., where the Fingers spent more than 18 months.

Suzie is the only American citizen in the family. But Oskar and Livia have applied for their first papers.

Between Prague and 425 Lafayette St., Livia, Oskar and Arnon lived the familiar and terrible life of refugees from Europe: they fled; they died slowly each day with fright; they starved; they were caught; they lived like animals behind barbed wire fences. This is the only unusual thing about them: they were, in the end, liberated.

Oskar, a carpenter by trade and an experienced shop keeper, has a small green photo album with the Star of David on the cover. The first picture shows Livia and Oskar in their wedding dress. Livia's brown hair is circled by a gay chaplet of flowers; Oskar looks serious.

Another picture shows Arnon, three years old then, inside the barbed wire of Ferramonti, an Italian concentration camp. Sprinkled through the album are pictures of people who were swallowed up in Nazi camps: Livia's father and mother, Oskar's two sisters.

Want a Home

Today there are two things above all that Livia and Oskar want. Somehow, before it is too late, they must recapture the feeling of belonging—now terribly dim—they once had on that balcony above the flowery park in Prague. They want two rooms, of their own, a kitchen and a bathroom. They have a little money to pay for it.

That kitchen is important. Arnon must have special reinforced food to restore him completely to life. The Immigrant Aid Society, with the best will in the world, can't substitute for a home. Livia and Oskar feel passionately that Arnon must stop being an institutionalized child.

There are 170 other refugees from Oswego at the large brown sandstone and red brick Immigrant Aid Society. The things the Fingers want, they want too.



Oskar and Livia Finger, homeless for six years, sit with their children, Arnon, 5½ and Suzie, 4½ months, in the reception room of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society. On the table are applications for their first citizenship papers. Photos by John Albert, FM



The Fingers pore daily over the ads in the papers hoping that somehow that elusive two-room apartment will turn up. They haven't had a home of their own since they lived in Prague in 1939. Photos by John Albert, FM



The food at the Immigrant Aid Society is good, but the Fingers think that Arnon, who has lived in institutions all his life, should have the security of a home of his own. Mrs. Finger is shown in the background with Arnon, who wears a cap. Photos by John Albert, FM