



POST-WORLD WAR II RESOURCES

Lesson Plans

Strangers in a New Land

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Introduction

This lesson coordinates with the *You Are There 1950: Making a Jewish Home* component of the *Indiana Experience* at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center.

In this experience, visitors are invited to step back in time to April 5, 1950, to visit the Kaplan family in their Union Street home a year after their resettlement in Indianapolis from a post-World War II displaced-persons camp. The Kaplans, Jewish refugees from Poland, were making a new home and building a new life in Indianapolis after surviving the Nazi horrors in Europe. They resettled in Indianapolis with the help of Jewish Social Services, the Indianapolis Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, and the Indiana Refugee Service.

The curriculum is intended to provide historical context for life in Indiana in the postwar era and the Jewish community in Indianapolis. The lesson may be used to prepare students for a visit to *You Are There 1950: Making a Jewish Home* or it may be used as a follow-up to a visit. In addition, the historical context and themes will be relevant to classroom instruction even if a visit is not possible.

You Are There 1950: Making a Jewish Home opens on October 11, 2011, and will remain open through September 2012.

Overview/Description

Through this lesson, students will understand what it means to be a refugee. They will recognize the Kaplan family as an example of refugees and through their story gain empathy for refugees in general. They will also identify modern-day refugees.

Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- be able to define the term refugee and identify reasons why refugees leave their homeland and go to a new land
- examine a historical photograph showing the Kaplan family on the night of their arrival in Indianapolis
- examine and analyze a historical newspaper article discussing the Kaplan family as refugees
- identify refugee groups in their community
- develop empathy for historic and contemporary refugees

Grade Level

Elementary (grades 2, 3, and 4)

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Academic Standards for the Social Studies

- Indiana Standards
 - Grade 2
 - Social Studies 2.2.4—Describe how people of different ages, cultural backgrounds, and traditions contribute to the community.
 - Grade 3
 - Social Studies 3.1.4—Give examples of people, events and developments that brought important changes to the regions of Indiana. (Individuals, Society and Culture)
 - Grade 4
 - Social Studies 4.1.12—Describe the transformation of Indiana through immigration and through developments in agriculture, industry, and transportation. (Individuals, Society and Culture)
 - Social Studies 4.3.10—Identify immigration patterns and describe the impact diverse ethnic and cultural groups have had on Indiana. (Individuals, Society and Culture)
- National Standards (National Council for the Social Studies)
 - II Time, Continuity, and Change;
III People, Places, and Environments;
V Individuals, Groups, and Institutions;
and VI Power, Authority, and Governance

Social Studies/Historical Concepts

Ethnic conflict, immigration, ethnic diversity, refugees, and community

Time Required

One class period

Materials Required

- Copies of the following images from the Indiana Historical Society collections. Refer to pages ten and eleven of this lesson.
 - “The Kaplan Family on Their First Night in America” (Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections, Item ID M0463_BOX1_FOLDER8_KAPLAN_FAMILY_IN_HOTEL_ROOM)
 - “Tired, Hungry Kaplans Arrive from DP Camp,” *Indianapolis Star*, March 16, 1949 (Indiana State Library, microfilm)
- Copies of the *Indianapolis Star* Article Analysis Worksheet. Refer to page twelve of this lesson.

Background/Historical Context

Refugees are people who have fled their country in order to escape persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social or political group, war, or a natural disaster.¹ The Kaplan family, who came to Indianapolis in 1949 following World War II, provides an example of a Jewish refugee family. The Kaplans were Holocaust survivors and their personal story offers a window into the experience of European Jews in the post-war era.

In 1933 Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany with the intention of creating a German empire dominated by the Aryan race (ethnic Germans) and void of Jews. The National Socialist German Workers Party, popularly called the Nazi Party, blamed Germany’s economic troubles on the country’s Jewish inhabitants. Hitler harbored a deep personal hatred of Jews, which dated to the time he spent in Vienna as an impoverished young adult. One historian writes:

In his memoirs, he [Hitler] claimed that Vienna was crucial to intellectual development: “In this period my eyes were

1. Joyce A. Kelen, “Faces and Voices of Refugee Youth: A Curriculum Guide for Teachers and Counselors Grades K-6” (Salt Lake City, UT: Salt Lake Education Foundation, 2002), 7.

opened to two menaces of which I had previously scarcely known the names: Marxism and Jewry.” (Kershaw, p. 29) He found an ideology that allowed him to explain his failure and a target for his resentments.

It is impossible to explain the precise cause or the exact beginning of Hitler’s hatred of the Jews; but it is also clear that anti-Semitism was the oxygen of his mental life.²

Very early on, Hitler established laws restricting the lives and freedoms of German Jews. For example, in April 1933, a series of laws banned Jews from practicing certain professions, including medicine, law, accounting, and teaching. The law also limited the number of Jewish students allowed in schools and universities. In September 1935 enforcement of the Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of their German citizenship and made it illegal for them to vote or marry non-Jews. Systematic discrimination continued as the government took control of Jewish-owned businesses and barred Jews from public places such as parks, movie theaters, and eventually public schools.³ To further isolate Jews from German society, Hitler established walled ghettos in cities, where Jews were forced to live. Jewish ghettos were common in the Middle Ages; the term was first used in the sixteenth century to refer to a section of Venice to which Jews were confined.⁴ The Nazis

revived the practice during World War II. Living conditions in these ghettos were very poor and work was difficult to find.

To expand German influence over Europe, Hitler’s army invaded adjacent countries. In March 1938 Nazi troops entered Austria where Hitler immediately extended his anti-Semitic policies. On September 1, 1939, Hitler’s troops invaded Poland, an act that resulted in the outbreak of World War II.

On the eve of the Nazi invasion, Poland had a robust and thriving Jewish population. For example, more than 352,000 Jews lived in Warsaw.⁵ During the war, Poland lost 19.6 percent of its population. Three million Polish Jews were killed as well as two million non-Jewish Poles. Between July and December 1941, at least one million Polish Jews were shot, mass-execution style in front of graves they had dug themselves. Later, the Nazis abandoned this method “because of its deleterious effect on the morale of those who had to carry it out.”⁶ Death camps, where Jews were gassed, replaced the Nazi firing squads. The mass destruction of the Jewish population continued. The loss of three million Polish Jews represents half of the total number of Jews killed during the Holocaust, a figure that illustrates how devastating the events of World War II were to that country.⁷

At the time of the German invasion of Europe, Berek Kaplan, who used the nickname Benny in America, was a soldier in the Polish army. Kaplan fought in Warszawa (Warsaw) until defeat was eminent. Shortly before the siege ended on September 29, 1939, Kaplan’s Polish commander told his troops to return home. Kaplan managed to make it home to Radom, Poland, without being captured. While other members of his family were sent to a Nazi extermination camp near the Polish village of

2. Larry L. Ping, “Adolf Hitler: Biography and Character,” Southern Utah University, accessed September 22, 2011, <http://www.suu.edu/faculty/ping/pdf/HitlerBiography.pdf>.

3. Deborah Cardin and Elena Rosemond-Hoerr, “Lives Lost, Lives Found: Baltimore’s German Jewish Refugees, 1933–1945 Teacher Outreach Kit,” Jewish Museum of Maryland, accessed September 13, 2011, <http://www.jhsm.org/sites/default/files/LLLF%20Curriculum.pdf>, p. 11.

4. Anatoly Liberman, “Why Don’t We Know the Origin of the Word Ghetto?” Oxford University Press (blog), 2009, accessed September 22, 2011, <http://blog.oup.com/2009/03/ghetto/>.

5. “Ghettos Established by Nazis in Poland,” PolishJews.org, accessed September 13, 2011, <http://polishjews.org/shoah/shoah7.htm>

6. “Polish Jewry during World War II.” PolishJews.org, accessed September 13, 2011, <http://polishjews.org/shoah/index.htm>.

7. Ibid.

Treblinka, Kaplan and his wife were among the 32,000 Jews from the Radom area who were forced into the Radom ghetto.

After his wife and two children were taken to the Treblinka extermination camp, Kaplan was placed in a forced-labor camp at Pionki. He worked in a leather factory and later a shoe factory, walking long distances each day from the barracks to these factories. After becoming ill with typhus, Kaplan was taken to the Krynki ghetto. From there, he was placed at another work camp, managed to escape, and hid in the woods near Bekiesza until the end of the war. At some point, the Nazis killed Kaplan's wife and two sons. Kaplan returned to Radom sometime after January 1945.

Frania Goldstein, who went by the name of Fanny when she moved to America, began her wartime experience in the Warszawa (Warsaw) ghetto, which housed approximately 450,000 Jews. According to Goldstein, when the Germans were rounding up Jews in the ghetto, they called for all Jews to come to a central meeting place, where they were supposed to be taken to work camps. Pregnant at the time with her first child, she walked with her first husband, Haskel Goldstein, following a crowd toward the designated place. In the mass of people, Goldstein became separated from her husband, who was sent to the death camp and was killed. Goldstein hid in the Warsaw ghetto, where she gave birth to a boy, Ruben. He was killed when the Nazis discovered their hiding place. After the Nazis captured Goldstein, she was placed in various work camps in Poland. Although her exact journey is unknown, she spent time at the Majdanek annihilation camp and the Skarzysko and Czestochowa work camps.

As distant cousins, Kaplan and Goldstien knew each other before the war. After the war ended, Kaplan heard that Goldstein had survived and was living in another Polish city. Since they had both lost their spouses, he sent for her to come to the town where he was working. They married and began a new life together. Eventually, the Kaplans made their way to a displaced-persons camp in Stuttgart, Germany, where they remained

until they immigrated to the United States in 1949.

The Kaplans were among the six and a half to seven million displaced persons that the Allied armies liberated at the end of World War II. More than four million of these displaced persons were repatriated, meaning they returned to their country of origin. However, some displaced persons did not return to their homeland for various reasons. Returning home was not a realistic option for eastern European Jews. Their countries were occupied by the Communist Soviets. "The thriving Jewish communities had been destroyed; the anti-Semitism which continued unabated after the war doomed any attempt at rebuilding these communities."⁸ Pogroms, which were systematic attacks on Jews, continued in Poland following World War II. For example, in the Kielce Pogrom of 1946, forty Jews were killed.⁹ Like millions of other Jewish displaced persons, the Kaplans had nowhere to go. In the words of one survivor, "The Jews suddenly faced themselves. Where now? Where to? For them things were not so simple. To go back to Poland? To Hungary? To streets empty of Jews, towns empty of Jews, a world without Jews. To wander in those lands, lonely, homeless, always with the tragedy before one's eyes . . . and to meet, again, a former Gentile neighbor who would open his eyes wide and smile, remarking with double meaning, 'What! Yankel! You're still Alive!'"¹⁰

Immediately after liberation, the U.S. Army scrambled to find accommodations for those displaced

8. Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, "Displaced Persons, 1945-1950: The Social and Cultural Perspective," Cengage Learning Historical Archive, accessed September 20, 2011, <http://www.tlemea.com/postwareurope/essay5.asp>.

9. Rebecca Weiner, "The Virtual Jewish History Tour—Poland," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed September 13, 2011, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Poland.html#Post World War II /Communist Era>.

10. Königseder and Wetzel, "Displaced Persons," 2.

persons who were “non-repatriable.” “The U.S. Army set up camps that were technically known as assembly centres. They varied in size from sites with fifty people to camps housing over 7,000 persons. They comprised barracks, former POW and slave labor camps, industrial workers’ housing, tent cities, hotels, apartment buildings, garages, stables, monasteries, hospitals, sanatoriums, schools, and so forth.”¹¹ In some cases, Jews were housed alongside former Nazi guards. Despite these conditions, Jewish survivors in the displaced persons camps created a community of support, helping each other through their grief and making the best out of difficult circumstances. Although the camps were intended to be temporary, in many cases it took years for Jewish displaced persons to settle in a new land.¹²

The Kaplans spent more than four years in the Stuttgart camp. Known as one of the better camps, Stuttgart was part of the American-occupied zone and housed Jews who lived in requisitioned apartment buildings previously filled with soldiers. A Talmud Torah (religious elementary school) and a kosher kitchen were also located in Stuttgart.¹³

While living in the Stuttgart camp, the Kaplans had two children, a daughter named Rosza (Rosie) and a son named Moszesz (Morris). Rosie writes:

In Germany, we lived in a displaced person’s camp (DP Camp) which was probably an apartment building in Stuttgart. My father started a business which was probably like a thrift shop, buying what he could and reselling it for a bit more. We must have gotten help from the Jewish agency there. The photos of that time make us look pretty prosperous. My mother even had a helper, a German woman named Rose. My parents regained their health and confidence. There was a community of survivors who supported each other. My aunt Hannah (my father’s sister) and her husband Joseph were with us.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 3.

13. “Stuttgart West,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed September 13, 2011, <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/dp//camp10.htm>.

Hannah was the only survivor from both sides of my parents’ families.¹⁴

As the Kaplans considered their future, they had to decide where they would live. The United States and Israel provided two possibilities. According to Rosie, “When Israel became a state, in May 1948, we were given the option of going to America or Israel. My parents chose America, safer for a family with two small children. My aunt and uncle went to Israel, lived in a tent and dealt with yet another WAR.”¹⁵

Finally, in March 1949, the Kaplans left the camp and immigrated to the United States as refugees under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. This act ultimately resulted in the immigration of 205,000 displaced persons and 17,000 orphans to the United States.¹⁶ Under the sponsorship of the Indianapolis Jewish Social Services Agency and the help of the United Service for New Americans, the Kaplans arrived at New Orleans aboard the U.S. Army Transport *General S.D. Sturgis*, a former troopship. After docking in New Orleans, they boarded a train for Indianapolis, where they were met at Union Station by Nathan Berman, director of the Jewish Social Services Agency in Indianapolis.

The Kaplans began their new life in Indianapolis. First housed at the Hotel Michigan, they moved into a home shared with another Jewish family, and then found a home of their own at 1250 Union Street on Indianapolis’ south side. The Kaplans received assistance from various Jewish agencies in Indianapolis as they settled into the community—the Jewish Social Services, National Council for Jewish Women, and the Indianapolis Committee for Refugees to name a few.

The Indianapolis Jewish community provided a much needed support network for the Kaplans and other refugee families. When the Kaplans arrived in Indianapolis, they spoke only Yiddish

14. Rosie Kaplan, e-mail to Elosie Scroggins, Indiana Historical Society, July 5, 2011.

15. Ibid.

16. “Displaced Person Transports: Cargo of Hope,” American Merchant Marine at War, accessed September 12, 2011, <http://www.usmm.org/dp.html>.

(a combination of Hebrew and German) and Polish. The National Council of Jewish Women provided a visiting English tutor for Fanny and the children, while Kaplan attended night classes at nearby Manual High School. Jewish Social Services provided Kaplan with a job at Kraft Bakery, helped the family find housing, provided furnishings, and more. A caseworker named Dora Burton guided the Kaplans through this important transition period and helped them prepare for U.S. citizenship.

Teacher's Instructional Plan

Introduction

- Begin the lesson by asking students, “What is a refugee?”
- Draw a cluster web with the word “refugee” in the center.
 - An example of a cluster web appears on Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s Education Place Web site at http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/cluster_web3.pdf (accessed September 19, 2011).
- In order to help students fill in the offshoot circles, you may want to provide students with the following definition:
 - A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.
- Ask students to use this definition to brainstorm reasons why people may be forced to leave their homeland.
 - Examples include:
 - Religious persecution
 - Persecution due to their race or ethnicity
 - War has destroyed their home
 - Persecution due to their political beliefs
 - War/violence
- Famine
- Floods
- Earthquakes
- Students should also consider and write down other issues related to being a refugee.
 - For example:
 - Leaving family behind
 - Going to an unfamiliar place
 - Having to find a new job
 - Having to find a new home
 - Having to learn a new language
 - Learning new customs, etc.
- In addition, you might have them brainstorm about the emotions associated with being a refugee.
 - For example:
 - Fear of the unknown
 - Loneliness in an unfamiliar place
 - Sadness at leaving their homeland or family
 - OR, ALTERNATELY:
 - Hope at being able to start a new life
 - Comfort at being able to go to a safe place

Procedure

- After introducing the concept of refugees, tell students that they will be learning about a refugee family that came to Indianapolis after they were displaced from their country due to religious persecution and war.
- Give each student a copy of the “The Kaplan Family on Their First Night in America” image.
 - Refer to page ten of this lesson.

- Tell students that this is a photograph of the Kaplan family.
 - Mr. and Mrs. Kaplan were from Poland. They were Jewish and during World War II their families, like millions of Jews, were killed because of their religion and culture.
 - After the war, they could not go home because their homes had been destroyed and because they feared for their lives. Instead, they made their way to a displaced-persons camp in Germany, where they waited to come to the United States to begin a new life.
 - The photograph shows the Kaplan family, —Benny (father), Fanny (mother), Rosie (daughter) and Morris (son) on the night of their arrival in Indianapolis.
- Ask students to consider what they might have felt that night if they were one of the Kaplan children.
 - Would they be sad at leaving loved ones behind?
 - Would they be scared at being in a new, unfamiliar place?
 - Would they be excited about beginning a new life?
- Allow students twenty minutes to compose a diary entry from the perspective of either Rosie or Morris Kaplan.
 - The diary entry should focus on the emotions related to the refugee experience.
- Next, provide students with copies of the *Indianapolis Star* article, “Tired, Hungry Kaplans Arrive from DP Camp.”
 - Refer to page eleven of this lesson.
- Tell students that this article was published in the *Indianapolis Star* on March 16, 1949. It will give students additional perspective on the Kaplans’ experiences.
- Read the newspaper article together as a class, clarifying any difficult vocabulary.
- Hand out copies of the *Indianapolis Star* News Article Analysis Worksheet.
 - Refer to page twelve of this lesson.
 - Allow students fifteen to twenty minutes to complete the worksheet, either on their own or in groups.
- After they have completed the worksheet, regroup students for a discussion of modern-day refugees.
- Ask students if they know anyone who was forced to leave their homeland due to war, persecution, or natural disaster.
 - For information about refugee groups in your local area, consult the directory on the Refugee Works Web site at http://www.refugeeworks.org/about/links_refugee_agencies_local.html#i (accessed September 12, 2011).
 - Scroll down to the information about Indiana.
- Indiana, for example, has a large population of Burmese refugees.
 - You may wish to play the following National Public Radio audio report or excerpts of it for your students: “Burmese Refugees Find New Home in Indiana,” <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=14841071> (accessed September 12, 2011).
- Ask students to make a list of things that they might do to make any newcomer (refugee or otherwise) feel welcome in their classroom, school, or community.
- You might also have students put together a Welcome Kit for a local refugee family.

- Below is a partial list from the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Web site, <http://www.refugees.org/about-us/where-we-work/albany/services/community-connections-uscri.html> (accessed September 20, 2011), that describes items that would be good to include in a Welcome Kit. Contact a local refugee service to inquire about specific local needs. Refer to the Refugee Works Web site, <http://www.refugeeworks.org/> for contact information.
 - Cleaning supplies: mops and buckets, brooms, dustpans, toilet brushes and holders, wastebaskets, bottles of dish detergent, cans of kitchen cleanser, laundry detergent, and packs of sponges
 - Paper and plastic supplies: rolls of paper towels and toilet paper, boxes of facial tissue, packs of food storage bags and trash bags, plastic shower liners, shower rings, and rolls of tape
 - Personal hygiene items: bars of soap, bottles of shampoo, bath towels, washcloths, toothbrushes, packages of toothpaste, disposable razors, sanitary napkins, Band-Aids, and deodorant
 - Kitchen goods and miscellaneous items: bathmats, laundry baskets, packs of clothing hangers, paper, notebooks, pens and pencils, packages of light bulbs, scissors, corded telephones, sets of flatware for four to eight people, alarm clocks, pillows and pillowcases, twin and double sheet sets, flashlights, mixing bowls and cooking utensils, dish and glass sets, pots and pans, can openers, and school supplies of all types.

Assessment

Use a teacher-developed rubric to assess student analysis of primary sources and participation in class discussions.

Suggested Modifications

- Ask your local refugee service if someone from their agency or a refugee they have helped might be able to come and talk to your class about local refugee communities.
- View other images of the Kaplan family and their adjustment to American life on the Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections at <http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm4/searchpdp>. Enter the word, Kaplan, as the search term.

Additional Resources

Publications

Gifford, Clive. *World Issues: Refugees*. Mankato, NY: Black Rabbit Books, 2003.

This book discusses the flight of refugees from their homelands, where refugees must seek help, and how we can help refugees return safely to their own homes.

Maddocks, Steven. *Face the Facts: Refugees*. Chicago: Raintree, 2004.

An introduction to refugees with chapters on what are refugees, refugees in history, and discussions about refugees.

Marriott, Janice. *The Refugees*. New Zealand: Learning Media, 2000.

A young boy and his sister are separated from their parents and are forced to leave their home after soldiers ransack it. The children end up in a refugee camp for a month before being allowed back to what remains of their home.

Web sites

“Just for Kids.” Azerbaijan International.
http://azer.com/aiweb/categories/magaine/71_folder/71_articles/71_justforkids.html
(accessed on September 12, 2011).

Read poems by an Azerbaijan refugee girl named Lamiya.

Mayell, Hillary. “Refugee Children: Victims of War and Want.” National Geographic.
http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/06/0619_030618_refugeechildren.html
(accessed September 14, 2011).

Read an article about refugees written from the perspective of a refugee child and view a gallery of photos documenting the lives of refugee children.



“The Kaplan Family on Their First Night in America” (Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections, Item ID M0463_BOX1_FOLDER8_KAPLAN_FAMILY_IN_HOTEL_ROOM)

Tired, Hungry Kaplans Arrive From DP Camp

Tired, hungry, and the two children with heavy colds, the Kaplan family arrived from a German Displaced Persons camp last night to become citizens of Indianapolis.

The father, BereK Kaplan, 41 years old, has a job waiting in an Indianapolis bakery. His wife, Franla, 33, is a seamstress, but will have her hands full taking care of Rosza, 3, and a son, Moszesh, 2.

They arrived at 9:30 o'clock last night from New Orleans, supperless, and just a little bit frightened at all the bustle and blaze of lights after three years in the German camp.

THEY WERE MET at Union Station by Nathan Berman, executive director of Jewish Social Services, which sponsored them, and who had temporary quarters waiting for them, two rooms with adjoining bath, at the Hotel Michigan. There they will live until permanent quarters are found.

They were ready to drop with fatigue. The interview was terse:

"Are you glad to have reached the end of your journey?"

"Ja, Sehr gut."

"What do you think of this country?"

An expressive shoulder shrug that seemed to say, wait until tomorrow or the day after that and we'll feel better and know what we're talking about.

THE PARENTS blamed the heavy fog and steady rain through which the U.S. Army Transport Sturgis nosed into New Orleans for the heavy coughs the children had picked up.

Although the food was good on shipboard during the 15-day voyage from Bremerhaven, Germany, the children were unable to digest it, the parents told Berman in Yiddish. It was richer than they had been accustomed to in the DP camp where both children were born.

The Kaplan parents, Polish, served in Germany as slave labor-

ers during the latter days of the war. Kaplan's first wife met death in a Nazi extermination camp.

"Tired, Hungry Kaplans Arrive from DP Camp," *Indianapolis Star*, March 16, 1949 (Indiana State Library, microfilm)

***Indianapolis Star* Article Analysis Worksheet**

1. This article was published on March 16, 1949 in the *Indianapolis Star*. According to the article, when did the Kaplan family arrive in Indianapolis?
2. What kind of help was provided to the Kaplan family upon their arrival?
3. Based on the writer's description of the Kaplan family after their arrival, and his account of his interview with the Kaplans, what do you infer their emotions were?
4. In the last paragraph, the author of the article refers to the Kaplans' experiences during World War II. Based on what the author has told you about these experiences, what might it mean to the Kaplans to come to America?