Hello, my name is Fargo Bank and I'm an assistant professor of history here in the School of historical philosophical and religious studies at Arizona State University.

Today I want to talk about a very important story that concerns the Holocaust. It's a story of rescue and resistance is also a story of my gratation of survivors here to Arizona to Phoenix to story of a kind of a renewal of Jewish life in Phoenix.

And it is also a very story of many other facets of our state in our city that I'd like to share with you.

Into this and let me share a PowerPoint that I have prepared.

Here it is.

And a fever is a mi century.

Cinema here in Phoenix in downtown Phoenix and first I'm going to talk about the lowly family. They're amazing kind of rescue or 1500 Jews.

And non-Jews from the Vichy camp in what would you want to talk about their resistance are the two sons joined the resistance and fought against Roman troops.

I want to talk about why they left from France and how they came to Phoenix. I'm also going to think a little bit about the renewal of Jewish life in Phoenix.
Because they found it or they helped found Beth Hebrew as the city’s first orthodox synagogue. But I also want to talk a little bit about what the circle became after it was a Synagogue and how the current state of this building that encapsulates so many and so important stories.

Of the Holocaust of Phoenix.

And of who we are today.

And we’re doing this with a whole group of people, I would like to present particularly Mark Vance’s a graduate students here in our school

He has done a lot of archival research for this project, but there is a host of others, particularly have to our Samuelson, who is the director of Jewish studies here is you she’s part of this.

Project. So is our colleague Jason Bruner who’s in religious studies here and issue. And we’re also working with

colleagues in the School of geographical sciences and urban planning particularly David PF guy and Kevin you who help us frame the story in the context of geography and urban planning, particularly when it comes to the synagogue here in downtown Phoenix so

Let me also introduce the other groups with whom you’re working. I'm very grateful to Dr. Larry, Larry bell from the Arizona Jewish Historical Society, and they have a wonderful archive that

We could use and the the archivist they are mighty rituals of was very, very helpful. They have all the documents on the Lewis story.

And there was wonderful to work with them.
Rescue, Resilience, and Renewal. The Story of Beth Hebrew, Phoenix - transcript

03:44
I'm also grateful to Michael Levine and the Barleycorn word Michael Venus, a real estate developer who saved Betty Boop save this building from almost certain dream in the current

03:57
housing boom.

04:00
That we have here in Phoenix.

04:03
And he owns the movies really lovingly restoring it which is wonderful. So this gem that encapsulate so many important stories here in Phoenix is being preserved to him.

04:17
We're also working with the National World War Two Museum in New Orleans. We have a standing master's

04:24
Degree that we offer, together with the museum. This is a wonderful collaboration of which I'm a part

04:29
But we also have continuing education courses and some of this work, new feature in continuing education courses that we offer, together with a museum.

04:38
And there's a whole lot of a few institutions, the library with them. We're working

04:44
The School of geographical sciences and urban planning Jewish Studies, very importantly, and of course the School of historical philosophical and religious studies. So maybe get to the story that I'm going to talk about is this family, the lowly family.

05:01
And so in the top row you have data in the years the parents and the bottom row, these are their children, Fred Anna and Max lonely and their story is truly remarkable because they

05:21
Rescued 1500 people from this camp, the camp dogs in southern France. So let me backtrack. How do they end up in this cabin. How did they manage to free all these people so they were originally in Germany.
05:41
In battle in particular is from a German Jewish family.

05:45
After what we're to alliance Louie ends up in Frankfurt or mine where we need to switch your wife.

05:53
But in 1926 they decide particularly leaves low in decides that economic opportunity as much better in the other side of the Ryan as, as in France, where he moves and he opens a radio business.

06:10
However, he closely palaces German follows German us and clearly he sees the rise of of the Nazi movement he sees the advice of anti Semitism.

06:23
In in Germany. And of course, he also then experiences the war.

06:29
In as us, and in 1940 the work comes to France. And he, like many

06:36
Other people in France are starting to flee from the advancing Germans and indeed they make it out of thousands and the end up in Bordeaux.

06:48
Where they hope to get about two Breton, however, they have to let they get there and they learn that the armistice was signed the day before. So there is virtually no chance to get out of France, and more. What is worse,

07:05
Bordeaux, like all the coastal areas in the western north of France are under direct German occupation and Vichy France. The unoccupied Pirate Party kind of a collaborative state that works together with the German under martial Patel

07:23
Is not where they are.

07:26
And so they decide to leave Bordeaux, and a venture to lose, which is inside issue.
But they have to quickly realize that she is issuing anti Jewish legislation on its own behalf on the Germans are not yet organized enough to

Put pressure on them. The French do that quite on their own accord, though the model this anti Jewish legislation very much afternoon that race laws.

There's one key difference, however, in French anti Jewish legislation, and that is that is first and foremost targets foreign Jews and foreigners more broadly understood

The very conservative

You know the she government under martial the tongue.

It takes enormous issue with the more liberal immigration policies of the French Third Republic.

And they want to reverse that. In particular, so it is anti Semitic, no doubt, but it targets, first and foremost, foreign Jews, and it is decided what is a foreigner and not necessarily on the basis of papers, but rather on the basis of when this person came

And for the lawyers who came much earlier already in 1926 they're starting to emerge a loophole by which they can get out of the camp. So in lead in November 1940 they are rounded up like many other Jews.

They are brought to this camp came down, they realize the very, very squalid conditions, their campaign existed before it was to house refugees from the Spanish Civil War.

But

It was designed for fewer people. And nowadays the campus vastly overcrowded
But also realizing that the camp Commandant's capital captain to saw is not really a protagonist is not really interested in the internment of the Jews, and he is confronted with way too many people and he can accommodate.

So Elias Louis manages to get papers oneself to get out and visit the perfect to have this power Providence in mostly.

He needs a very old acquaintance and person. He knows from us and that is chameleons to now is kind of second in command of the perfect to have a demo, which is do the province that can add them over here, located in.

And chameleons immediately make sure that his friend is accommodated. And he gets papers to be at the lowest out of this camp. So far so good. Comedians, by the way, what's rightfully acknowledged as a righteous among the Gentiles by yeah push him after the word, but the mark of a thing is that Louis are out now.

That's great, but instead of just thinking about their own well being. They immediately start to think about others. How do we get others out of the camp to and Camille, the answer is incredibly helpful.

invoices this goal, even if it is putting his own career at West and so as captain to solve.

And their biggest problem is that they really have way too many people in camp, they cannot house them, they cannot feed them and they cannot guard them.

So any thing that takes people off of their hands is a good thing and they do not agree with the Vichy internment of Jews. So they find this loophole that earlier rivals.
Jews who have been here longer.

Can leave the camp as long as they can provide evidence that they can support themselves and are not going to be a burden on the French state so immediately on aliens law and community and start working to get people out to eat these conditions or ever it also becomes clear that many people are too poor have already lost a whole lot of their possessions.

In the roundups

Because they're displaced by the war because they have their very poor. To begin with, so

Most of them will not able to meet this qualification of they have to be able to support themselves and then alliance Louis comes up with a pretty interesting kind of a Ponzi scheme, if you will, and he says that a family should pay that money.

Or should should provide that money but not get it back after the release, but rather keep the money in the system so that the next family can be released and this family will then give the money to always again, which helps them to release the next

Group and the interesting thing is that, so this is this kind of one amount of money that secures that every family can document that they're on their own. And they even go to some length in saying that

My the chain exchange the bills and local businesses to make sure that it's not always the same kind of bills that they're pulling up to

Make sure that the next family can be

So, more and more people can get out of the camp. But now the question is, how can they live.
Without official papers and how can they make sure that the next roundups not going to get them so lowly starts to work with the Catholic medieval library that has Managers to forge papers for them. And why is a Catholic medieval library have such knowledge. Well the idea is very simple. Many of the Medieval documents that we have are forgeries. That's actually very normal. Documents get lost all the time. So in order to make claims of lands, for example, centuries later documents were drafted up in part, these documents were just showing what was there, but lost in other parts of Christians playing forged But so in order to understand medieval documents you kind of have to understand forgeries. So this Catholic library had a knack for that and the prickly developed a knack for forging themselves. So with the help of this Catholic library. They are beginning to be able to get false papers. Before people and here to Lies Louis is an important agent in this and Camille announced is incredibly helpful. And after the word this rescue mission was was recognized here. For example, this is a letter signed by The service of coordination of all Jewish works social works in in French. This kind of an umbrella organization in France umbrella organization for Jewish organizations in France, and here
It documents what they did.

At can argue to free these 1500 people Jews and non Jews.

And that they manage to hide Jews with faults papers and even managed to get about 100 people to get out via Spain to to Africa.

And later they they joined the resistance. I'm going to talk about this in a minute. So this is an amazing story. Just, just imagine this is a 1500 people who have they

Continue to be in this camp would have likely been deported to German extermination camps in the east.

And many of them would inevitably have perished. These people were saying because of of

Islamism Camille's and ingenuity and resilience to to find ways to somehow get these people out

So this is remarkable.

But it's also story of resistance. So it becomes clear that the situation gets worse, especially after the Germans actually occupied the southern part of France.

Be she continues to exist, but now German troops are present in the south of France. And that's simply the response to American lands in northern Africa.

In the continually problematic.
Position of the African core German troops in Africa. So southern France is now occupied the swarming with Germans can add is even temporarily closed and the remaining inhabitants of center other camps, from which they are, for the most part, deported towards the east.

So the lowest realized that this scheme is not working anymore. And they want to lay low, they go outside of Canada Healy region.

And Max and Louie under the False names of high bar start to join the resistance and the images that you see here, these are resistance, a group of resistance fighters.

McKee, if you will, who operated in the south of France in all of these documents, by the way, are at the Arizona Jewish Historical Society. So you can even see them there, it's a it's a remarkable story.

But in the beginning, the was French Resistance cannot do a whole lot

They are mostly intelligence gathering. They have few weapons, the maker rate than on a garment factory to get some kind of uniforms. But for the most part they're lucky if they survive the increasingly close

surveillance by the Gestapo class Bobby and Leon's is of course the butcher of Leon's

Infamous German staff officer.

But also the French release the machine.

Kind of military in Terminal two units are

After them. So this is very, very difficult for the resistance to operate and all in a few that weapons armed resistance is not possible, but they're there. They survive. They make
Small rates they get intelligence and but this situation changes dramatically in 1944 when first the Allied invasion in Normandy happens in June, but then later the Invasion of southern France.

By the Americans. And now, things change because also militarily this resistance operating in the south of France becomes a completely new role. Because the Allies realize that landing in the south of France is probably going to be successful that terms are not going to be able to put up a whole lot of resistance. But wouldn't it be good if the Germans could be trapped in southern France if their communications could be hindered if they are Withdrawal from southern France and their ability to defend the coast could be hampered by the resistance into that and they fly in Us Captain about Aaron bank. Who connects to this group about the lowest and He comes with a lot of equipment. He comes with a radio, which is amazing that direct form of communication with American forces. And it comes with a whole lot of experience and training and each friends this kind of ragtag group of resistance fighters few of whom have any kind of military training. And so all of a sudden, kind of a fighting force emerges from this and the law is a part of them.
In their day of action comes in the Battle of ATLAS

And here the as the Germans are retreating through the own River Valley.

The resistance is particularly important in unless we are the lowest are to harass them on the way out. So the Germans very quickly decide that defending the coast is pointless. They are also very confused few communications, the resistance had clear

The way for the allies to come pretty well.

And given, particularly the state of the learning Normandy, where the arms are starting to break out of Normandy, it's clear for German troops and in the South, that

They have to get out ASAP, or they will be trapped somewhere in the middle where the American forces from the south and the Allied forces.

From normally will meet up somewhere. So getting out as the name of the game and to certain extent, that means the one River Valley. This is the biggest

And most important thorough right and everything, left and right needs to be protected so that this valley stays open and less precisely that.

So this small group of resistance fighters train now by Captain banks, by the way, I should mention he later founded the Green Berets which is mangoes, and a half by the career.

But trained by our own bank, they are not such a ragtag group anymore and Frank Lloyd has even been promoted.

To a second lieutenant.
And indeed, they find themselves, all of a sudden confronted with a column of German troops advancing to others.

And now their task is to defend Ls and they build up three machine and positions was about as much as they have. And as the allies are the Germans are advancing. Most of the time, by the way, these are some Germans, but also a whole lot of Russian troops who actually were prisoners of war by the Germans, the Germans give arms to fight for their cause.

And the so that their choice was either die in these prisoner of war camps that the Germans set up and have horrible conditions or Fight for the Germans and because they were so trustworthy. They were in the West rather than because they were not trustworthy into the Germans are the real intention of fighting the Germans. That's why they were mostly in the West rises in the east. So Right, the German force attacking as large, but it is not particularly well equipped well trained or resourceful group. But what is important is that the group.

The lowest managers to hold off the Germans and inflict casualties.

And you're the three machine and positions on

And here is the group again even much information so they do get some training.

But though they hold Ls though. They managed to beat back the Germans.

The Germans to inflict SOME CASUALTIES two and one casualty is Max law, you know, his brother who dies in this in this in this battle.
For the Germans right there isn't that much in it, it would be good to have Alice because then right the flank would be clear for the evacuation of German forces to the valley, but if it is not to be had, as long as they can make sure that the wound is is good.

They are not too concerned and they treat retreat for the city of our server. This is very important because they had declared

To with the resistance and any kind of last may have may well have triggered reprisals by the Germans. So, the city was spirit that faith because the resistance.

Hello held out

Um, but, you know, the two sons see combat max even dies. But Elias Louis is also part of this resistance and this other left here, for example, is a letter by the commander of the resistors in the

In southern France who says that alliance law. He kept the secret of the resistance. He helped to supply whenever he could with food, clothes.

And things like that. So this was, again, the family business where the family allies, Louis, but also the women in the family helped with the resistance.

In here, this is just an excerpt from this document.

The lessons.

Says that disinterested of his own.
Of his own well-being. He guards the secret of the existence of the group and supplies the group. So, and friendly also is distinguished he rises to the rank of a second lieutenant and gets the quality Gail, which is an important decoration of the French aren't.

So in this, by the way, is a newspaper article of the Jewish newspaper that

Has a

Column move on the dead and the living and this column is dedicated to max law who dies in this battle. So there's clearly some recognition for the military efforts of this group and the law is at the center of this group.

But what happens then at the liberation of France and in 1944

One big problem is, of course, that

Noise or not French citizens for their military service friends for his military service friendly can get French citizenship, but Aaliyah slowly. Despite his efforts of saving 1500 people is not so lucky. And this is a letter.

Showing the denial of French citizenship and the

Letter says here because you're not sufficiently simulated

You know all the zones, I assume. Assume that not in Sufism
On the reason of your insufficient assimilation. Right. You're not French enough. Remember that you lost a son and comment for France or matter that you saved, all these people no matter that you've been in the country since 1926 no manner that you

Helped supply the resistance. You are not French enough and therefore, this is not, are they cannot become French citizens and as a result they decide to leave.

And leave and do the they do some very fortunate circumstances they can get to the United States first to New York and later to

To Phoenix were alive slowly with the help of a loan from the free tuition on

Society can start a business, a radio business.

And what is more is is activities go even further, together with others. The law is helped found Beth Hebrew this the synagogue, even with the help of some Jews who are already in Phoenix, many of whom had come earlier in the 1920s, but also Rabbi Cohn, who was the rabbi of a reform synagogue.

Who had kind of retired. It was grave health concerns that he was facing

But he overcame those and kind of in retirement. He really helped the new synagogue come to be in Phoenix, and that is him at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Hebrew. So, and here is not as evil.

As it was founded it still looks very much the same today things, particularly to Mike Levine, who literally bought and safe, the building, otherwise it would have been torn down.

But what is important is so here's the story of of this Jewish congregation Jewish life in Phoenix changes dramatically.
There's a whole lot of people who come to Phoenix. Phoenix explodes. The war economy had brought some kind of important technology in airfields to the valley, but it's also that, you know, air conditioning and aviation are things that make life in the desert possible and that make sure that Phoenix is not this kind of remote corner of the country anymore. But as well connected to other areas, particularly in Southwest so Phoenix, all of a sudden becomes a fast growing city. This brings a lot of people to the valley among them, Jews, together with those who are already here. Somewhere some survivors, like the Louise and a lot of newcomers from all over the country, there is enough now potential for another Jewish synagogue. And kind of Beth Hebrew is is born. Out of this. So this is part of a kind of a revival of Jewish life in America. Synagogue attendances up a whole lot throughout the United States. Jewish education is much more pronounced. Now, so one can make the argument that this is part of a kind of revival of Jewish life. Also, in response to the horrors of the Holocaust.
It's the synagogue does not remain single forever. So after about 20 years on mid 1970s the synagogue community around with Hebrew is more and more moving out.

As many other Phoenicians, people are moving out of the inner cities to the suburban directors, the end up in most of them end up in most of the congregants end up in in Glendale. This is a very common story.

Many people across the valley who move out into the suburbs. But that also opens up opportunities for other groups to use

With Hebrew and a Mexican American Pentecostal movement, the central dinner cause the Center of miracles moves into this building and first is probably doesn't seem very remarkable. But what is remarkable is that Phoenix then as a very, very segregated city it's heavily divided into a kind of a Caucasian north and mostly Latino south and

Beth Hebrew is kind of located more or less the boundary, but clearly in the northern part

And occupying this building, being able to to to buy this building is a sign that this race line is more porous than it was before.

And so, in this sense, right, the story of this church is actually quite remarkable. They also, by the way, very conscious of the previous owners.

The pastor voy de la casa does very little actually to the building. He doesn't even kind of cover up the big star of David and his his concern is, he wants to tell the story of the building and pay homage to its builders and

You know, the first congregation in the built
Rescue, Resilience, and Renewal. The Story of Beth Hebrew, Phoenix - transcript

34:34
But also the the church is not forever.

34:39
Wider like I said moves to California. Many of the inhabitants, by the way, also move out to the suburbs.

34:48
And the building then is up for sale again in the 1980s and the black theater troupe an African American theater troupe moves it

34:59
And this is also a remarkable story because the black theater troupe was founded by Helen K Mason was a city of feelings proximity creation.

35:09
Deputy Manager and she started that true in a time of heightened racial division in the United States in the 1970s. And this was a kind of response to that to bring African American stories to broader audiences.

35:33
In a city, such as Phoenix. That is only striving to overcome. It's very, very deep racial divides

35:42
And so now the black theater troupe. The this African American theater is in this building and there in this building for for quite some time and they of course change it into a black box theater, but due to

35:57
The, the actual changes that they make to the building are fairly minimal so that Michael Vivian could literally scratch off the black paint and outcomes, more or less the synagogue again.

36:13
However, when the black theater troupe moved out and they they moved to a new building that they still occupy today. It's a wonderful facility.

36:22
The building for a while, stood empty, and this has a lot to do with the kind of decline of

36:33
urban city center is in Phoenix, too, but better people had some kind of street credit, if you will, because it was neither torn down.
And it became kind of a haven for street artists and as you can see, there's a whole lot of graffiti on it and Michael, even though he removed that he documented.

This graffiti. So this part of the buildings history can be explored as well. And then very dangerous after this kind of decline of the inner cities very rapidly after the recession of 2008 2009 the housing market.

Picked up again very quickly in Phoenix became this very, very fast changing

Quickly developing city where a seemingly, you know, new building comes up every, every other month

And indeed the entire neighborhood changes dramatically is full of these kind of five, six storey

Apartment buildings, nice. It's a, it's a really nice neighborhood, but it's almost unrecognizable to what it was before. And it's at this moment that Michael Levine bought the building and and held on to it so that it can be preserved and that's what he did so.

This is what it looks like today. You can see the synagogue here but you can also, by the way, see the new construction right next to it. So the neighborhood is changing dramatically. So what is important about this is

By we've gotten through kind of a bit of a chore here on the building is important to me because it encapsulates so many stories, right, there's the story of the

Rescue of 1500 people by the lawyers who literally helped found Beth Hebrew.

This is a remarkable story of courage of resilience of
Forging connections to come you lance and others to make this happen. It's also a story of resistance right they fight in French Resistance even decorated max law he loses his life.

But then write this story becomes the Phoenicians story when Louise end up here, and together with a whole lot of others newcomers.

And and people who are already here for a longer period of time. They helped found this congregation. It is part of the renewal of Jewish life after World War Two.

In builds the city's first orthodox synagogue.

But the story is doesn't end there. It's also right the, the central intercourse with this.

Pentecostal.

Mexican American church that crosses the racial divide of the city. I think that's a remarkable story. And so clearly is the story of the black theater troupe that occupied this building.

So this is a story. There's so many stories that I think are important to investigate. It's a story about the Holocaust story about rescue. It's a story about resistance, but it is also deeply a fictitious story that speaks to the identity of

Who we are here in in Phoenix. So thank you very much for listening to me and I hope you found this interesting and bye bye