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**403 Seventh Avenue North**
**Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312**

# "Living On" Tennessee Holocaust Commission Interviews

# 2003

*Processed by*:

Gwynn Thayer
Archival Technical Services
Accession Number: 2008-047
Date Completed: September 23, 2008
Location: II-B-4-5v

# INTRODUCTION

The *Living On: Portraits of Tennessee Survivors and Liberators* collection, a project started by the Tennessee Holocaust Commission in 2003, includes the video interviews (and several audio interviews) of Tennesseans who were witnesses, liberators, or survivors of the Holocaust during World War II. The video interviews are available on Digi-Beta tapes, while the audio interviews are on mini-disc. The video interview tapes were originally used for the production of an original documentary created by Will Pedigo of Nashville Public Television, and donated by Pedigo to TSLA in 2008. Approximately sixty men and women were interviewed during the *Living On* project, which was originally presented to the public as a museum exhibit (curated by Susan Knowles) beginning in April 2005. Journalist Dawn Weiss Smith conducted most of the interviews, although Susan Knowles also contributed to a few audio-only interviews. The exhibit included original photographs taken by Rob Heller of the University of Tennessee, but these images were not a part of the donation to TSLA. Brief biographies of survivors and liberators were also included in the original exhibit, and this information has been retained by TSLA.

# AGENCY HISTORY

The Tennessee Holocaust Commission was founded in 1984 by Governor Lamar Alexander. One of the first projects of the commission was to create a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, located on the grounds of the state capitol. The commission has been directed to pursue public programs and other initiatives to educate Tennesseans about the Holocaust. The *Living On: Portraits of Tennessee Survivors and Liberators* exhibit was initiated in 2003, and began touring the public as a museum exhibition in April 2005. An original documentary film and extensive website were also created in conjunction with this exhibit.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The *Living On: Portraits of Tennessee Survivors and Liberators* traveling exhibit was organized by the Tennessee Holocaust Commission in 2005. Curated by Susan Knowles, the exhibit included short biographies of more than sixty survivors, liberators, and witnesses to the Holocaust as well as original photographs of these individuals taken by Robert Heller. While the original photographs were not a part of the donation to TSLA, all of the video interviews (and several audio interviews) were donated. There are no transcriptions available for these interviews as of September 2008, despite what is indicated on the *Living On* website.

The interview tapes had previously been stored at the Nashville Public Television facility. The donor of the tapes, Will Pedigo, did not keep a precise list of which interviews were on which tape, as his original purpose was to obtain footage for a documentary. As a result, it is slightly unclear as to which individual is on each tape, but the container list below is TSLA's best attempt to recreate the list. TSLA does not have equipment to view Digi-Beta tapes as of September 2008, so the items will be digitized sometime in the future so that researchers can access them. The audio tapes are on mini-disc and have been transferred to CD.

In order to assist the researcher, introductory pages for the project and biographical data for each interviewee taken from the *Living* On website have been included with this finding aid. Available in the master accession folder (see staff for access) are a list of caption headings for artifacts originally pictured on the website; a list of "time stamps" for the video clips that were used on the website; incomplete transcriptions for the audio interviews (for working purposes only, and should only be used as general guides and not to obtain direct quotes); and a document with some additional family information about one of the subjects in the exhibit, Frances Cutler.

The *Living On* project is one of the best ways to obtain detailed information about Tennesseans who were victims of the Holocaust or affected in some other significant way by this part of World War II. Many of the interviewees were quite elderly, and the process of being interviewed was deeply emotional and significant. Some individuals are recounting events that they had not openly discussed for years, whereas others had already been quite open and proactive about sharing their stories. The literature on Holocaust studies (and oral histories on its victims and liberators) is vast, and any scholar who embarks on a research project on this topic should become familiar with the many works that are available on the subject.

There are a number of items owned by TSLA that should be consulted if researchers are interested in learning more about several of the individuals featured. The *Living On* exhibit was turned into a book, which is available at TSLA (see bibliography below). A number of interviewees had previously donated items to TSLA (unrelated to their involvement in this project), including Jimmy Gentry, who wrote a memoir with Paul Clements called *An American Life*. Harry Snodgrass donated several graphic photographs of the Holocaust. Most, if not all, of the artifacts shown on the website are privately owned, and are not available for researchers.

In sum, this project captures the stories of Tennesseans who were survivors, liberators, or witnesses to the Holocaust; many of the individuals interviewed are now deceased, and for most involved, this is the only record of this transformative experience.

# CONTAINER LIST

**Please note: if a name is not in boldface, there is no release slip. The donor provided TSLA with a list of individuals that are on each tape, but this list may contain some minor errors and inconsistencies. Consequently, the researcher is advised to exercise caution when relying on the list below. The information in brackets to the right of the names was taken from what the donor wrote on the tape itself during the time of production.**

1. **Wallace Carden** {Tape 1 TC 1 Living on Liberator: Knoxville}

2. **Nessie Marks & Sonya Dubois & Wallace Carden** {Tape 2 TC 2 Knox. Carden/Lith. Survivor}

3. **Nessie Marks & Matilda Goodfriend** {Tape 3 tc 3 Lith. Survivor Nessie Marks}

4. **James Dorris & Matilda Goodfriend** {tape 4 Du B 4 TC 4 hr. Matilda Goodfriend Chattanooga Liberator/Tape #4/Dub #4 TC: 4:00:00:00 – 5:00:00:00 Knoxville – Matilda Goodfriend Survivor (Hungary) Chattanooga – Liberator Joseph and Dawn in Knoxville LIVING ON}

5. **Leonard Chill & William Klein** {Tape 5 TC 5}

6. **William Klein** {TAPE 6 TC 6 Mr. Klein Chatt. survivor Poland}

7. **Menachem Limor & Olivia Newman** {TAPE 7 TC 7 M. Limor Nash. Survivor Olivia hidden child part 1}

8. **Olivia Newman & Bob Eisenstein** {TAPE 8 TC 8 hidden child Liberator Nashville}

9. **Gertrude Schlanger & Arthur Pais** {TAPE 9 TC 9 Nash. JCC 1. end ? Lib. ? 2. Lidh. Survivor 2. Czech survivor}

10. **Gertrude Schlanger** & **Henry Wolkoff** {TC 10 DUB 10 Ms. conv. Felicia/Rob/Dawn Henry Wolkoff int./TC 10 TAPE 10 Living On Ms. Schlanger conv. w/Felicia/Rob/Dawn Henry Wolkoff

11. **Sally Wolkoff** {Living ON TAPE 11 Dub 11 TC 11 Sally Wolkoff + photographs w/Henry./Living ON TC 11 Tape/Dub 11 Nashville JCC Sally Wolkoff & photos w/Henry}

12. **Bob Mamlin & Jimmy Gentry** {TAPE 12 TC 12 2 liberators Nashville Congregation Micah - Gentry}

13. **Jimmy Gentry** {Tape 13 TC 13 Liberator – Gentry… 30 min. length}

14. **Hannah Hamburger** {Tape 14 TC 14 Nashville refugee…}

15. **Robert Ray, Jr.** {TAPE 15 TC 15 Nashville Liberator Nordhausen 26:00 min.}

16. **Henrietta Diament & Erika Sigel** {TAPE 16 TC 16 2 survivors Memphis}

17. **Erika Sigel & Ruth Diamond** {Tape 17 tc 17 3 survivors Memphis}

18. **Roman Mitelman & Leonid Saharavici** {Tape 18 TC 18 Memphis Leonid}

19. **Leonid Saharavici & Fridericka Saharavici and Max Notowitz** {TAPE 19 TC 19 Leonid cont… Leonid wife another survivor}

20. **Ella Silber & Max Notowitz** {Tape 20 tc 20}

21. **Alexander Savranski & Mark Blank** {Tape 21 Plough Towers TC 21 2 Ukrainian survivors.}

22. **Yakov Kreymerman & Raisa Kreymerman & Mark Blank** {Tape 22 TC 22 Plough Towers Ukrainians 2 survivors husband & wife survivors}

23. **Olga Borochina** {Tape 23 tc 23 Plough Towers Survivor Ukraine Olga}

24. **Dawn Weiss Smith and Joseph Smith** {Living on tape 24 TC 4 Plough Towers Dawn Intv. Baron Hirsch setup/Living On Tape 24 TC 4 Plough Towers Dawn Intv. Rob Setup Baron Hirsch}

25. **Freda Weinreich** {Tape 25 TC 5 Freda Weinreich Polish survivor Baron Hirsch}

26. **Sam Weinreich** {Tape 26 TC 6 Sam Weinreich Baron Hirsch}

27. **Sam Weinreich & Paula Kelman & Zena Gontownik** {Tape 27 tc 7 Polish survivor Baron Hirsch 8/08/03}

28. **Zena Gontowitz** {Tape 28 TC 8 Zina Gontowitz Poppy Joseph scans 6/08/03}

29. **Joseph Exelbierd & Jack Cohen** {Tape 29 TC 9 “Poppy” + Greek survivor

30. **Reva Oks & Clark Blatteis (Blatteis signed a limited release – for non-profit use only)** {Tape 30 tc 0 1. survivor Baron Hirsch 2. St. Louis Survivor}

31. **Hedy Lustig** {tape 31 tc 1 Hedy Lustig Nashville JCC 11/13/03}

32. **Hedy Lustig & Ralph Schulz & Frida Landau** {tape 32 tc 2 Hedy – last bit survivor Schulz – liberator}

33. **Ralph Schulz & Herman Lowenstein** {tape 33 tc 3 Schulz liberator first (?) of survivor

34. **Herman Lowenstein** & **Elizabeth Limor** {tape 34 tc 4 survivor in Elizabeth Limor}

35. **Harry Snodgrass** & **Elizabeth Limor** {Living on TC 5 TAPE 35 Limor/Snodgrass/Living ON Tape 35 TC 5 Limor Snodgrass}

36. **Eric and Eva Rosenfeld** {TAPE 36 tc 6 Eva Rosenfeld Eric Rosenfeld}

37. **Harry Snodgrass & Hans Strupp & Eva Ruth Rosenfeld** {Living on Tape 37 TC 7 Harry Snodgrass 2 Hans Strupp Eva Rosenfeld/Living on Tape 37 TC 7 Harry Snodgrass Hans Strupp Eva Rosenfeld}

38. **Herman Lowenstein & Fred Westfield & James Garner** {tape 38 tc 8 Lowenstein – Garner last 15 min. Assisted living}

39. **James Garner & Jack Fried** {Tape 39 tc 9 2nd Jack Fried & 1st – last of Mr. Garner}

40. **Jack Fried & Willie Hall** {tape 40 tc O - Jack Fried - Mr. (?) Smily}

41. **Ray Sandvig** {tape 41 tc 1 Living on Ray Sandvig Nurenburg}

42. & 43. **Marianne Holder, Rose Marten**, **Herta Adler**, **Ida and Jacob Kilstein**, **Paul and Solomon Stein**, Nina Katz, Fredricka Halki {42: Living On 42 Baron Hirsch Group of Survivors tc 2 hr. & 43: LO Tape 43 Baron Hirsch}

**NOTE:**
**The following individuals may be on one of tapes listed above, as they signed a release, but it is not clear as to when they are interviewed.**

**Additional names:**

Henry Grien
Sofia Zamuel
Yelena Ginolina (may be a translator)
Mira Kimmelman

Audio only:  (release forms were not available as of September 23, 2008)

1. Rachel Chojnacki
2. Trudy Dreyer
3. Julian Hosnedl
4. Lea Naft/Sara Seidner
5. Jack Seidner
6. Simon Waksberg
7. Dee Wolfe

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gentry, Jimmy (edited by Paul Clements and coordinated by Gale Payne). An American Life. Franklin, TN: Pleasantview Press, circa 2002.

http://www.tennesseeholocaustcommission.org/livingon/

Living On: Portraits of Tennessee Survivors and Liberators by The Tennessee Holocaust Commission and Rob Heller, Photographer. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008.

Living On: Tennesseans Remembering the Holocaust. Produced and Edited by Will Pedigo. Nashville: Nashville Public Television, Inc., 2005.

# Welcome

**Click here to learn how to use this Website as a teaching tool.**

*Living On* was first developed as a museum exhibition. Today it is both a traveling exhibition and an original documentary film. The raw materials that helped create both are available to you on this web site.

In the Living On exhibition you will see faces of Tennesseans who are both survivors of and witnesses to the Holocaust. The exhibition exists because each of these courageous individuals was willing to revisit painful memories, telling his or her story in hopes that history might never repeat itself.

Sixty years ago, during the last days of World War II, American, British, and Soviet troops stumbled upon thousands of concentration camps in German-occupied Europe. The soldiers, surrounded by starvation, disease, and death, were stunned by what they found: tens of thousands of people were being held against their will by Nazis (members of the National Socialist German Workers' Party), who had gained control of the German government in 1933, and their European collaborators. While some survivors of Nazi persecution went into hiding or managed to flee, the vast majority of those targeted by the Nazis were confined in concentration camps, forced into slave labor, and worked nearly to death. The survivors in the camps saw the soldiers who found them as liberators; the liberators fought to open the camps and stayed long enough to start massive feeding and first aid programs. Some remained in Europe after liberation to help bring Nazi perpetrators to justice. At long last, the deliberate and systematic effort to kill all the Jews of Europe and other minorities targeted for discrimination had come to an end.

Through these accounts of Holocaust survivors and liberators, we become witnesses to an important and frightening period—a time when government leaders persecuted and sought to kill ordinary citizens because of who they were. Their history is a part of our collective memory; their strength and resiliency inspire us all.

The photographs in this exhibition were taken by Robert Heller, Associate Professor, College of Communication and Information, The University of Tennessee. Journalist Dawn Weiss Smith conducted, recorded, and transcribed the interviews. Documentary filmmaker Will Pedigo of Nashville Public Television, who accompanied Heller and Smith as they traveled across

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Biographies with Video Interview

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Complete List

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the state, produced *Living On: Tennesseans Remembering the Holocaust*.

*Living On* is a project of the Tennessee Holocaust Commission, which is funded by an annual appropriation from the Tennessee State Legislature and by private donations. Assistance in the development of this documentary project was provided, as well, by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. The traveling exhibition was curated by Susan W. Knowles. Please visit our website, www.tennesseeholocaustcommission.org, for more information on this and other public outreach programs.

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Patty Marks, Nashville
David Patterson, Memphis
Leonid Saharovici, Memphis
Gilya G. Schmidt, Knoxville
E. Thomas Wood, Nashville

# Glossary

## Aktion

Aktion is a German word for any kind of special action against actual or possible enemies of the Nazis. While the word seems neutral, it was a substitute term for arrest, torture, robbery, or murder.

## Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism means a specific hatred of Jews.

## Concentration camp

The Germans established thousands of concentration camps, or detention facilities, during World War II to imprison and eliminate "enemies of the state." Some were transit camps, others were slave labor camps, and still others were extermination camps (killing centers) where people were gassed on arrival. Prisoner-of-war camps were created for captured Allied soldiers; some, like the secret camp at Berga on the Elster River, were, in fact, brutal slave labor sites.

## Death march

In the winter of 1944-45, when the Nazis knew that the war was lost, concentration camp inmates from German-occupied Poland were forced to march west into Germany. The Nazis wanted no eyewitnesses remaining when the camps were overtaken by Allied forces. In some cases these death marches covered hundreds of miles.

## Displaced person

At the end of the war there were seven to nine million people living in countries not their own. Many Jewish survivors, known as displaced persons, did not have homes, families, or communities to return to. With nowhere to go, they were forced to live in temporary camps until they could legally immigrate to countries in the West or to Israel.

## Ghetto

Ghettos were sections of towns or cities set aside for Jews to live in. Often, barbed-wire fences patrolled by soldiers encircled them. Ghettos were extremely overcrowded and unsanitary. Many residents died from disease and starvation.

## Kindertransport

Kindertransport, or "Children's Transport," was an act of mercy carried out by Great Britain in 1939. Ten thousand Jewish children were transported

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

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from their homes to foster families and hostels in Britain. The majority of these children never saw their parents again.

## Kristallnacht

The first large-scale attack by Nazis on Jews in Germany and Austria took place on November 9 and 10, 1938, and became known as Kristallnacht ("Crystal Night," or the "Night of Broken Glass"). Named for the carpet of glass shards from thousands of shattered windows, Kristallnacht is considered to be the beginning of the Holocaust in Europe.

## Transport

The word transport was used by the Nazis to describe deportation. People were sent "on transports" and many people died "in transport" because of extreme conditions.

## Underground resistance

Secret underground resistance groups carried out many activities that had been forbidden by the Nazis. These efforts had special importance in the desperate day-to-day life of the ghettos, where the smuggling of food and medicine helped people stay alive. Every ghetto supported acts of cultural resistance, including classes for children and adults, newspapers, art exhibits, plays, and concerts, allowing Jews to minimize Nazi dehumanization. Other secret groups brought young men and women out of ghettos into armed resistance units. Even in the death camps resistance activities flourished.

## Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

In April 1943 the Warsaw ghetto received word that an Aktion was imminent. The Germans had planned to liquidate the ghetto in three days, but Jewish resistance fighters held out for more than four weeks. Even though the insurgents knew they were bound to lose, they chose to die fighting, inflicting casualties on the enemy and bringing honor to the Jewish people with their courage.

# Educational Resources

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

This site offers one of the most extensive collections of materials on the Holocaust, including photographs, documents, films and videos, as well as the oral histories of hundreds of Holocaust survivors.

Simon Wiesenthal Center

Simon Wiesenthal, a Holocaust survivor and a famous Nazi war criminal hunter, founded this center to promote Holocaust remembrance and to defend human rights.

Yad Vashem

The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority
Yad Vashem, established in 1953, is Israel national's Holocaust memorial. Through its archives, library, school and museums, Yad Vashem commemorates the six million victims of the Holocaust.

The Nizkor Project

The Nizkor Project is dedicated to the history of the Holocaust and the discussion of the Holocaust denial.

Cybrary of the Holocaust

In addition to an extensive online bookstore, this site contains numerous online resources regarding the Holocaust.

Tennessee Holocaust Commission, Inc., (THC)

The Tennessee Holocaust Commission, Inc., (THC) is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to furthering the cause of Holocaust education and remembrance.

**PBS programs & companion websites on Holocaust related topics:**

Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State

A chronological exploration of one of the largest mass murder sites in history. Using maps, timelines and plans, this site shows the evolution of the extermination camp and the implementation of Hitler's "final solution."

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

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### NOVA: Holocaust on Trial

The companion site to the NOVA film uses a celebrated trial as a springboard to examine and successfully challenge the notion of Holocaust denial.

### American Experience: America and the Holocaust

Explores the complex social and political factors that led the American government to turn its back on the plight of the Jews at the onset of the Holocaust.

### Berga: Soldiers of Another War

The story of American G.I.'s who, suspected of being Jews, worked as slave laborers in Berga am Elster, a satellite concentration camp of Buchenwald, the notorious Nazi death camp.

# Exhibiton Venues

**Traveling Exhibition Schedule for**

## 2005

| | |
|---|---|
| February 24-April 24 | Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville |
| August 1-September 22 | University of Tennessee at Chattanooga |
| September 29 - January 1, 2006 | Customs House Museum and Cultural Center, Clarksville |

## 2006

| | |
|---|---|
| January 30-March 31 | Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green |
| April 9-May 21 | National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis |
| August 13-October 15 | East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville |
| November 1-December 15 | Lambuth University, Jackson |

## 2007

| | |
|---|---|
| January 25-April 29 | Renaissance Center, Dickson |
| May 24-August 26 | Open |
| September 27-December 30 | Open |
| August-December 2007 | ETSU |

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

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## 2008

March-May 2008 The Cookeville History Museum

site credits | WWW.TENNESSEEHOLOCAUSTCOMMISSION.ORG

# Purchase the Documentary

## Living On: Tennesseans Remembering the Holocaust

This original documentary from Nashville Public Television (NPT) follows the Tennessee Holocaust Commission (THC) in its efforts to interview and photograph all survivors and liberators of the Holocaust currently living in Tennessee. The one-hour documentary by NPT Producer Will Pedigo presents the powerful testimony of Tennessee's survivors and liberators as they remember the tragedy, loss and shock of the Holocaust.

Many of the featured Holocaust liberators are native Tennesseans who had experienced little outside their rural homes before confronting the beaches of Normandy and the death camps in Dachau. Holocaust survivors, who came to the state to find a new home, rebuilt their lives entirely. This documentary preserves an important part of history by capturing the first hand experiences of these incredible individuals while celebrating their lives today.

Visit the NPT online order form to purchase a DVD copy of this program for $24.95 plus shipping and handling. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

Order the DVD

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Survivors

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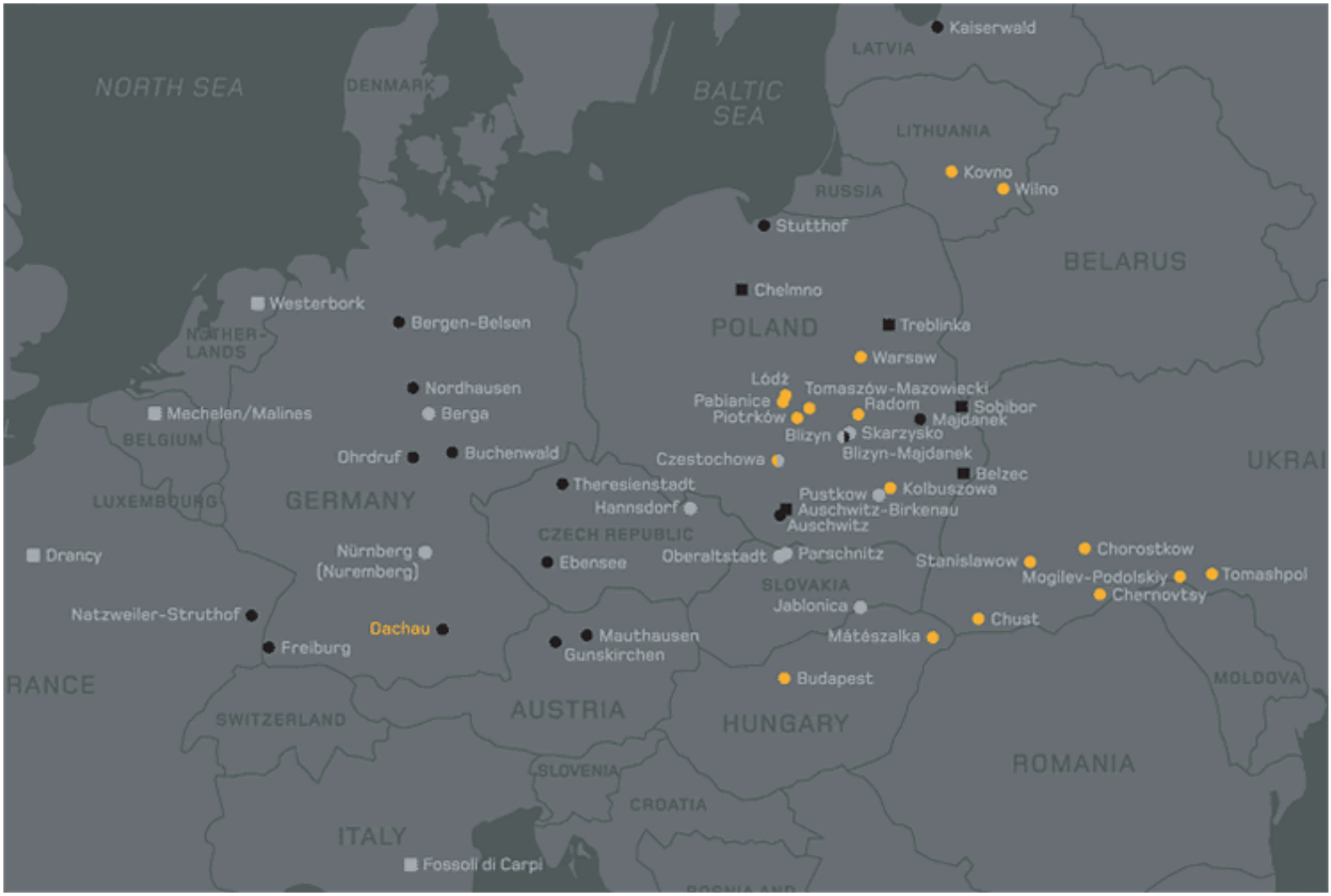
# LIVING ON | TENNESSEE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND LIBERATORS






Amy Donaldson, map designer

This map, created to illustrate LivingOn testimonies, includes only a small number of the ghettos, camps, and extermination centers that existed in Nazi-occupied Europe during WWII.

● Concentration Camps ■ Extermination Camps ■ Slave Labor Camps ■ Transit Camps ● Ghettos

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# Herta Adler

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1915 Diez, Germany**

**Refugee: Portugal; United States**

"'There are some people who say that Jews are human beings. Wrong. A Jew is a human like a flea is an animal!'" Herta Adler remembers words like this from Nazi radio propaganda. "All the Nazi speeches encouraged people to look down upon the Jew and dehumanize him. People any time can be manipulated to hate and kill out of fear - fear that makes them not stand up against it - fear for any reason. It has to stop."

Because her father had served in the German military during World War I, Herta had permission to stay in public schools longer than other Jewish children. "It was lucky, I suppose, but just before I could graduate, I was asked to leave." At the next school, she says, "No one would talk to me because I was Jewish and they forced me to attend on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath."

Herta was twenty-four on November 9, 1938, when Kristallnacht erupted. "One of my neighbors knocked frantically at our door yelling that the

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

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synagogue was burning. My heart began to bleed." She remembers that the Nazis closed a large orphanage for Jewish boys and "transported them to places unknown." The school's directors died in concentration camps.

Because Herta's brother did business in Portugal, where the government granted residency to family members, Herta and her parents were able to go there from Germany. From Portugal she went to the United States: "Since Portugal was more lenient with refugees, it was easy to get documents to go to America."

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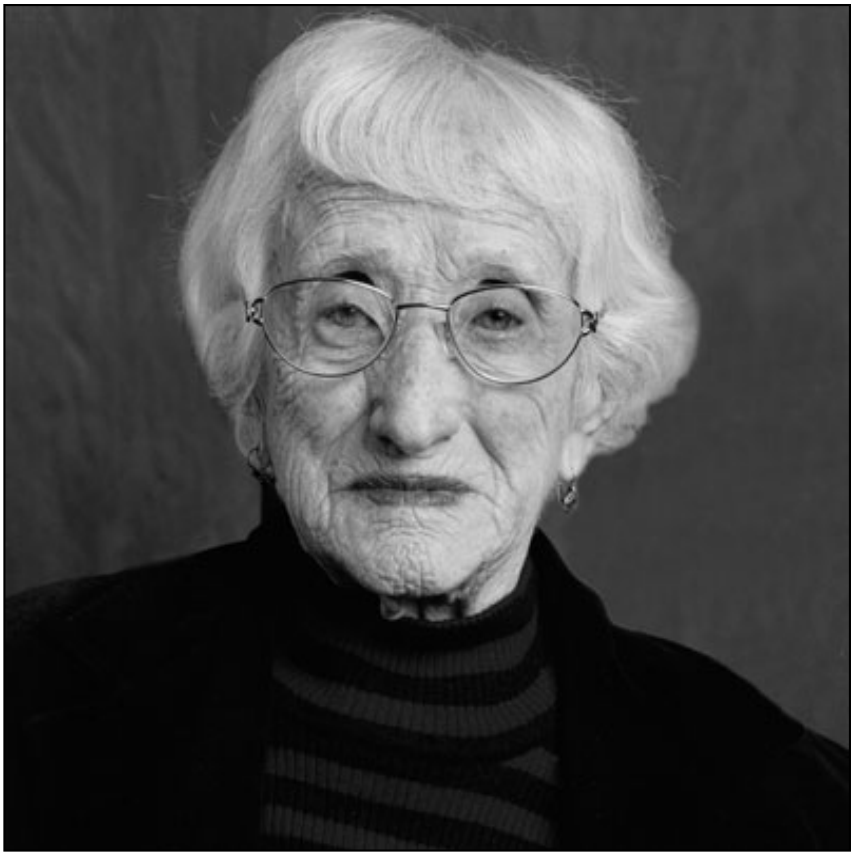


# Ethel Berger

**Chattanooga, Tennessee**

**Born: 1902 Stanislawow, Poland (Now Ivano-Frankivs'k, Ukraine)**

**Survivor: Stanislawow ghetto**

"We would walk for days and nights without food or water. We begged for help," recalls Ethel Berger, sadly. "I saw my friend, my best friend, and she wouldn't let us in the door. She...shut it in our faces."

In 1941 Ethel, her husband Herman, and their only son Meyer had been forced into the Stanislawow ghetto near their home. Ethel worked for German soldiers in a communal kitchen. "Nourishment was extremely poor; we were all very ill," she says. Occasionally she smuggled bread to her father, which could have cost her life.

Common to ghetto life were frequent roundups, called "aktions," in which Jews were randomly taken from their homes and killed. During one of these killing sprees, Ethel's father closed the front door to shield his wife. He was arrested and shot. Her mother, sent to a concentration camp, was gassed on arrival.

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

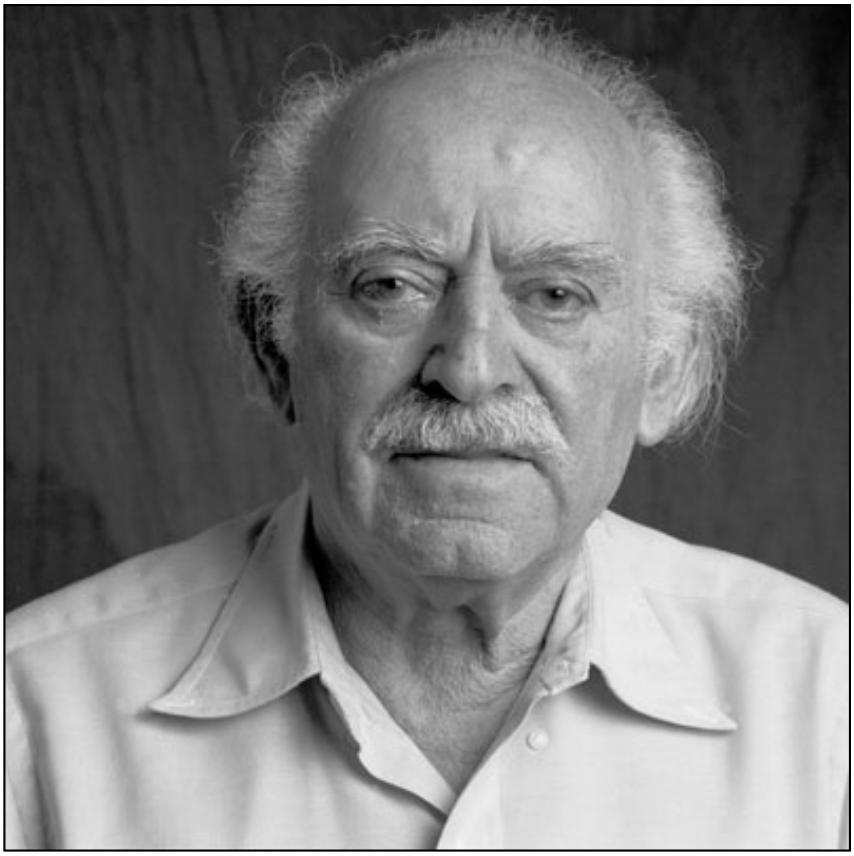
## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

Ethel often thinks of her son Meyer. He was thirteen years old, "wonderful and creative, strong and kind," she recalls. He hid during the day while his parents worked. "He wrote stories and recorded what was going on in the ghetto. He was a smart boy," she says. In 1943 Ethel and Herman smuggled their son out to live with a Christian family, planning to retrieve him when it was safe. "The Nazis caught him before we could reunite. They murdered him," she says. Ethel and Herman left on foot, arriving in Soviet territory nearly two years later. World news told of Jewish liberation, but freedom was bittersweet. With Meyer tucked safely in their hearts, they began a new life in the aftermath of war with the birth of their daughter, Felicia.

site credits | WWW.TENNESSEEHOLOCAUSTCOMMISSION.ORG



# Mark Blank

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1930 Vinnitsa, Ukraine**

**Survivor: Mogilev-Podolskiy ghetto**

"What I could never understand was [that] we had heard such awful things about the Germans and yet when they came to town, they were so generously welcomed by the Russians. How could that be?" says Mark Blank, who grew up in Ukraine, which was then part of the Soviet Union.

When the Germans invaded in 1941, Mark's family tried to flee, traveling east via horse and buggy. His mother, suffering from tuberculosis, became gravely ill. They came back to put her in the hospital; she died soon after their return. The family home had been pilfered and turned into a cafeteria. Mark remembers, "We had everything gone. Some of our things were returned, but most were stolen."

They moved in with neighbors. Mark's father, an infectious disease doctor, was given a special armband to wear. It allowed him to move about freely and to treat non-Jews. Mark recalls, "He was a great man and saved many lives. He treated everybody the same, without prejudice." Mark continues,

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

"The Germans believed in humiliation. I remember they grabbed my grandfather by the beard and dragged him. When my father ran out to rescue him, the police began beating my father. This is not for a child to see."

About a month after the invasion, the Podolskiy ghetto was organized. A gate was built in the middle of the street. Mark says, "We had no right to leave. We had no rights period." They remained virtually imprisoned until the Russians re-occupied the city, liberating the Jews, in March 1944.

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## Clark Blatteis

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1932 Berlin, Germany**

**Refugee: Passenger on the St. Louis; Belgium; Morocco; United States**

"We were turned away and began sailing back and forth in the Miami harbor," recalls Clark Blatteis of his voyage on the ill-fated ocean liner St. Louis. "The US Coast Guard wouldn't allow us to beach and eventually the ship returned to Germany."

Seven-year-old Clark and his parents were among the 937 refugees who sailed to Cuba in May 1939 to escape Nazi persecution. Following Kristallnacht, Clark's father had been arrested and taken to a concentration camp. His mother applied for permits to leave the country. Clark recalls, "My father was released from the camp to join us as we sailed out of Hamburg."

"The trip from Germany to Cuba lasted about two weeks," Clark says. When the St. Louis reached Havana on May 27, only twenty-eight of the Jewish refugees were allowed entry. The documents for all of the others, purchased from a corrupt consular official, were invalid.

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

The passengers stayed on the ship for five days. Then the St. Louis sailed slowly toward Miami. Telegrams to the White House and the United States State Department proved futile. The ship turned back. Belgium accepted 241 passengers, Clark and his parents among them. When the Germans invaded, they were trapped again, recalls Clark: "We ran and hid in our cellar and heard bombs going off overhead. After the destruction, we were arrested for being German nationals." Upon release, they traveled through France to Spain and boarded a boat for Morocco. After eight years in Casablanca, they finally made it to the United States.

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# Olga Borochina

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1927 Mogilev-Podolskiy, Ukraine**

**Survivor: Mogilev-Podolskiy ghetto**

"In 1941, when Germany invaded, my mother, sister, and I were headed to Moscow. When we reached the train station, we were not allowed to board." Within a week, recalls Olga Borochina, "everything changed. We had to wear stars of David patches on our clothing, post signs in front of our houses; we lost our jobs. We couldn't walk our own sidewalks or visit the grocery stores. Not even our Christian neighbors would talk to us anymore."

The rabbis prepared a welcome: "They brought the Germans bread and salt hoping they would be spared violence, but the Germans responded by shaving their beards and making them eat dirt." All of this came as a shock to Olga, who had experienced little anti-Semitism growing up in Ukraine. Olga's father, a physician in the Soviet army, was away on duty when their town was occupied.

The Germans created a ghetto by walling off a third of the city, forcing Jews to live in farm buildings. Olga says, "I lived there with my mother, sister,

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

and grandparents in an open barn with goats. We had no walls and the snow would pile up inside. We burned anything we could find." They lived there for three years. Her grandparents died from the cold. Olga recalls, "One day my sister and I heard that a mobile extermination squad was headed in our direction. We dug a hole and hid in it. We were there for three days." They were still in the hole when liberation came.

Today, Olga says, "It is hard for others to believe what we experienced. People do need to know. If nothing else, it might help them understand they can overcome anything."

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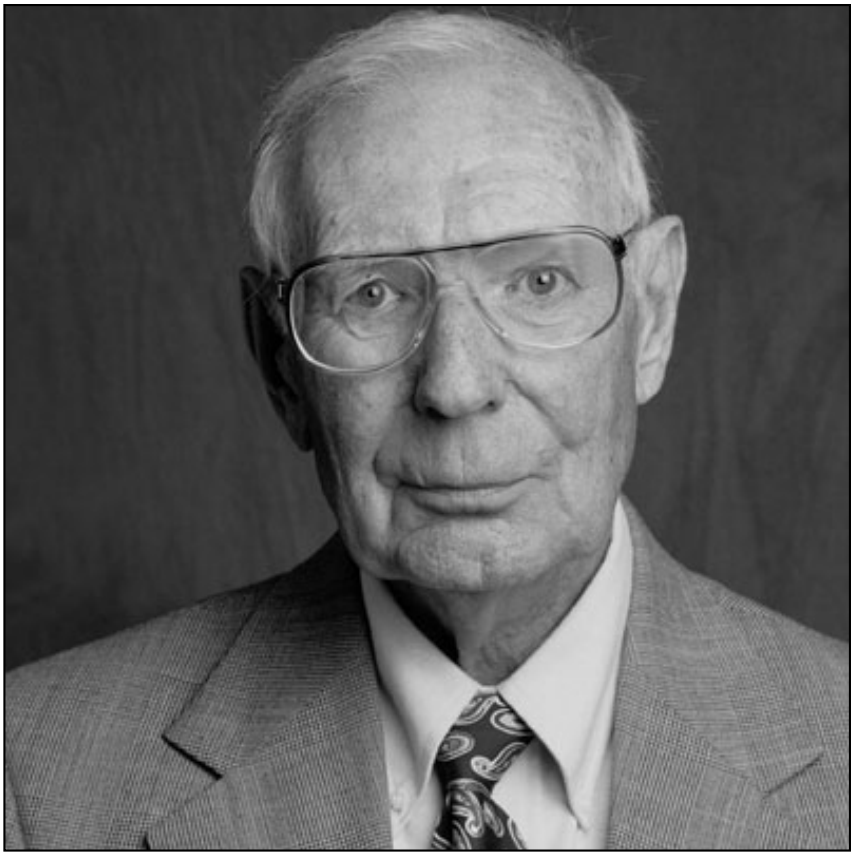

# Wallace F. Carden

**Clinton, Tennessee**

**Born: 1924 Briceville, Tennessee**

**Survivor: Berga Slave Labor Camp**

"I was hauling rock from one side to another. I looked up across the barbed wire and saw twenty-seven deer running by," recounts Wallace Carden. "I thought to myself, 'That's what freedom looks like.'"

Wallace was among the 350 American soldiers captured by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge and sent from Bad Orb prisoner-of-war camp to Berga slave labor camp because they "looked" Jewish. For sixty-nine days they were tortured, starved, and ordered to dig tunnels through solid rock for an underground fuel depot.

Daily they got an "old slice of bread and a cup of watery soup." Wallace still has a pocketknife slipped to him by a sympathetic German. "When six of us had to break up the same tiny loaf of bread," he says, "someone always wound up cheated. Maybe he thought it was the only way he could help."

When the Nazis evacuated Berga, the prisoners were forced to march. "We

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

walked for fifteen hours a day," Wallace remembers. "Some of us could barely stand. People just watched us as we moved through the towns. Some cried. Some just looked at us. It was as if they didn't know what to do." When the guards found a barn, he recalls, "we dropped right where we were standing and fell asleep." One morning, the Nazis were gone. "I ran outside the barn and looked up the road," he continues. "I saw American tanks coming and I began to run towards them. I kept falling down, I could barely make it but I got to our boys." Wallace had lost one hundred pounds in two months of captivity. Seventy of his fellow soldiers had died.

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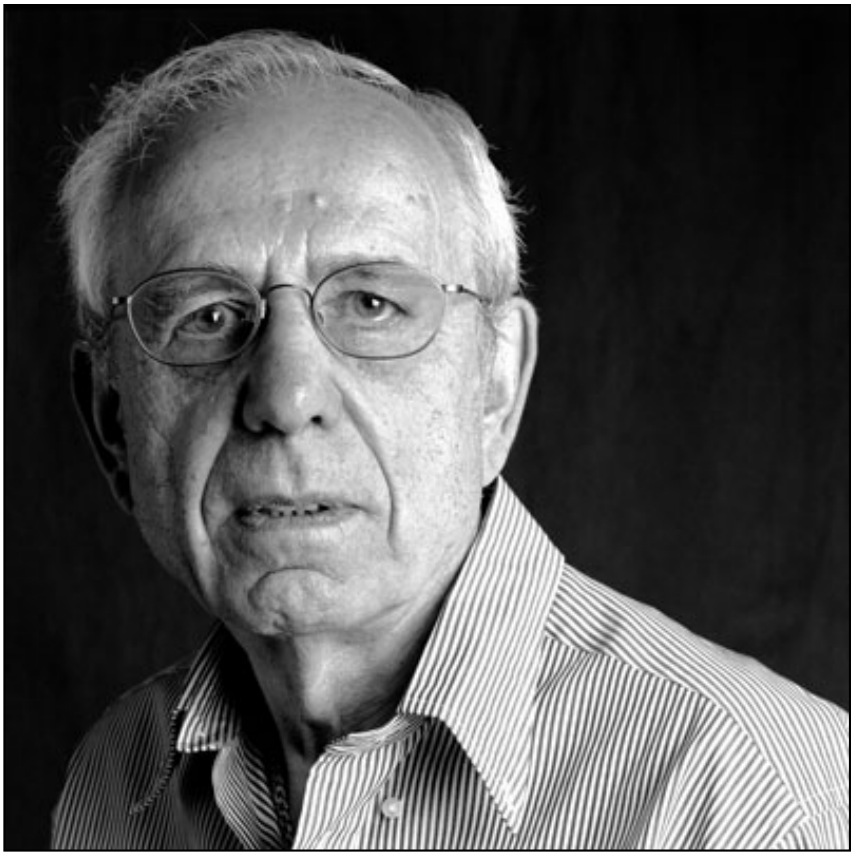

# Leonard Chill

**Chattanooga, Tennessee**

**Born: 1932 Wilno, Poland (Now Vilnius, Lithuania)**

**Survivor: Wilno and Warsaw ghettos**

"I lost the ability to be too emotional," says Leonard Chill. "To this day I believe if you are too sensitive, you couldn't live with yourselves for the horrible experiences of war." In 1941 Leonard was nine years old. He and his father remained in Poland while his mother fled from France to Portugal to Canada.

Leonard and his father were forced into the Wilno ghetto. "There was tremendous overcrowding - four or five families to a room," he remembers. They escaped to Warsaw. "We changed our identities and took new names. I looked Polish so it was easier for me to pass. I was never in true hiding; I just hid my identity," says Leonard.

When the Germans began liquidating the area, Leonard recalls, "we knew we had to escape." His father, working on a road gang, detached himself from the group and fled on foot. Leonard, relying on his Polish appearance, walked away from the ghetto unnoticed. Father and son were briefly

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

reunited before his father was captured and sent to the infamous Pawiak prison in Warsaw.

Leonard sold fruit and vegetables door to door. He remembers, "One of my customers knew I was alone and invited me to live with her. I never knew if she realized that I was Jewish." Six months later, his father was caught trying to escape and shot immediately. "I was ten and completely alone," he says.

A man with whom Leonard's father had entrusted him found Leonard after liberation. Not long after, he was reunited with his mother. She was joyful and tearful, but he remained stoic, fearing tears would bring too much at once.

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## Rachel Gliksman Chojnacki

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1926 Belchatow, Poland**

**Survivor: Lodz ghetto; Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp; Halbstadt Forced Labor Camp; Salzheim and Freisig Displaced Persons Camps**

"I could speak German and I could work, my eyes were good," states Rachel Chojnacki, "I made little tiny parts for the ammunition, we had to make 7,000 per day to make the quota." Rachel was nervous when munitions factory supervisors came by, and credits her eye for perfection with saving her life.

She recalls the most horrifying day ofher life, when German and Polish soldiers came to take her father and older brothers away. Her mother instructed her to run after them, taking a backpack with a few belongings. As Rachel returned, she heard a shot. The next thing she saw was her mother dying in the street.

Rachel and one brother and sister were taken to the Lodz ghetto in 1942, where they were squeezed into a two-room apartment with 10–12 others.

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

Everyone worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. at different factories. After about a year, both her siblings disappeared. In September 1944, "the people from our factory were taken together to the station," says Rachel. They were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau for 3 months, then forwarded to Halbstadt, a forced labor camp in Czechoslovakia, to assemble munitions.

After liberation by Russian soldiers in the Spring of 1945, nineteen-year-old Rachel Gliksman made her way to the American zone in Germany. She found her childhood boyfriend and married him.

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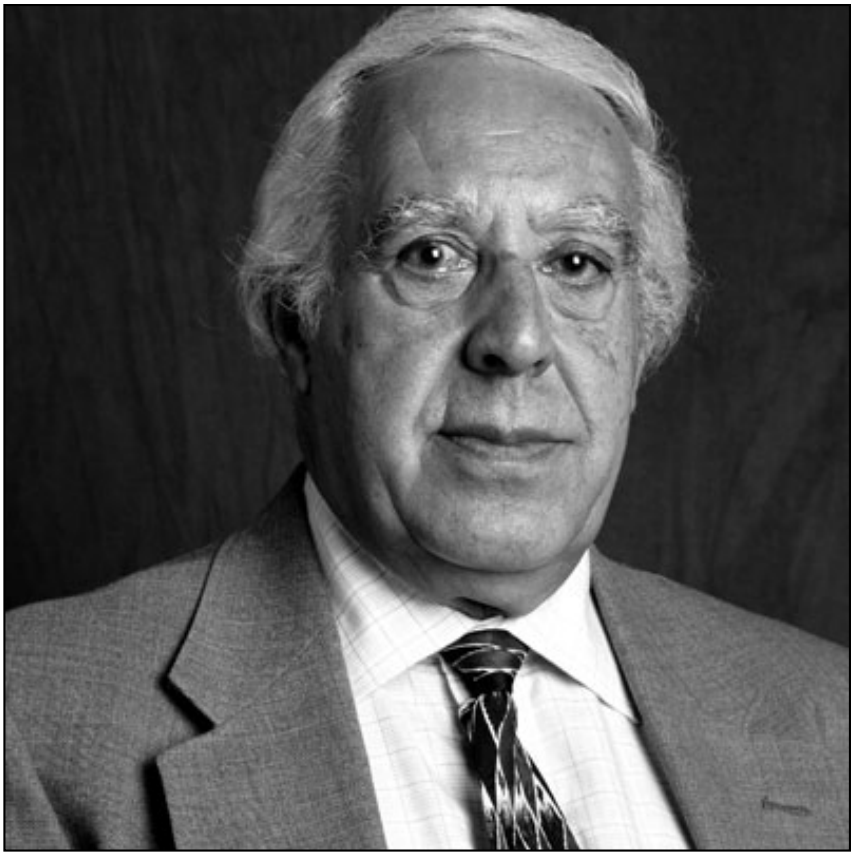

# Jack Cohen

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1932 Chalkis, Greece**

**Survivor: Greece**

"On one hand, you cannot hold a grudge for the rest of your life; on the other hand, you cannot forget," admits Jack Cohen, who lived with his parents, brother, and grandmother in occupied Greece during World War II. He recalls," I don't remember any anti-Semitism before the war started. We lived a very quiet, religious life."

In 1941, following the invasion of Greece by Germany and its allies, Jack's village was in the Italian-occupied zone. His family kept a low profile. His father kept them well informed, Jack recalls: "He spoke seven languages so he could translate radio news broadcasts and let us know what was going on."

In 1943 the Germans began arresting Greek Jews. Jack remembers, "Father contacted the underground resistance movement. They led us into the mountains during the night to safety." The Greek Orthodox Archbishop instructed monasteries and convents to shelter any Jews who sought help.

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

Jack's family hid in a monastery for nearly two years. When the Germans closed in, the family fled to a village in the forest. "My grandmother was captured there and we don't know what happened to her." He adds, "Townspeople reported that she was Jewish."

When the Germans pulled out, the family returned: his father to his ruined business, Jack to three years of missed schooling. Their home had been occupied by strangers. Jack says, "Nothing felt the same again. I was quite bitter for a long time, especially about my grandmother. Eventually you just get on with the rest of your life but you cannot imagine the loss-the pain. You just have to teach people about what happened. It is all you can do."

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## Frances Cutler

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1938 Paris, France**

**Hidden Child: France**

"I remember most being jealous and resentful that I was not part of a family," says Frances Cutler. Growing up in various foster homes, she was often seated away from the host family's birth children, never sharing in the joys of dinner table laughter, toys, and treats. She longed for familiarity and security-and mostly for the mother she barely remembered.

Frances has had two religions, five names, seven homes, and eight families-all tools for survival for a hidden child during the Holocaust. The children (and their hosts) lived in constant danger. Many never saw their birth families again.

Frances's parents, Cyla and Shlomo, immigrated to France from Ciechanow, Poland, in 1936. Frances was born in Paris amid the turmoil of the German invasion. Worried that she could not protect her daughter, Cyla brought three-year-old "Fanny" to a Catholic children's home, where she could visit her weekly. Cyla was deported to Auschwitz in 1942, where she died,

## Artifacts

## Biographies by Category

pregnant with Frances's only sibling. After that, Frances was taken to a Catholic farm to prevent her deportation. Shlomo joined the French Resistance and died from combat wounds in 1946.

In 1948 Frances came to live with her aunt and uncle in America. Even though she became an American citizen in 1953, her Polish roots and French upbringing made it difficult for her to feel at home anywhere. A trip to France in 1978 began the process of healing, although, she says, "it took a long time and a lot of work for me to let it go. "She recently published a book in collaboration with other hidden children.

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Henrietta Diament

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1918 Lódz, Poland**

**Survivor: Warsaw and Radom ghettos; Majdanek, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camps**

"I do not have words to express the despair and horror of those years in the ghetto, but I remember so well how wonderful it was to be there at the uprising of the Jewish people," recalls Henrietta Diament. "We finally came to life."

During the Warsaw Uprising in the spring of 1943, residents of the Warsaw ghetto resisted its liquidation for four months. Young Jewish men and women, poorly armed and facing a German force three times as large, made a desperate and valiant attempt to fight back.

When the Germans ordered Henrietta's parents into the Lódz ghetto, they sent their children to Warsaw to live with relatives. Henrietta's fiancé left his family to join her. They were married soon after, then forced into the Warsaw ghetto along with Henrietta's brother. Their father died of starvation in the Lódz ghetto; their mother perished in Auschwitz in 1944. Henrietta

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

states, "What I remember most about living in the Warsaw ghetto was seeing children dead in the streets. I also remember being hungry. I was hungry all the time for years." But she never lost faith: "If I lost hope, I lost everything."

She and her husband were deported to Majdanek concentration camp and separated. She recalls going to Radom ghetto and says, "then I was sent to Auschwitz, where I lived for over a month. One day we were stripped of our clothing and walked through the streets." In November 1944 the camp was evacuated. "We marched all the way from Poland to Bergen- Belsen," she says. "My group was young and most of us made it." Liberation came in April 1945. Three weeks after Henrietta reunited with her sister in Belgium, her husband, Stéfan, showed up at her door.

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Ruth Diamond

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1926 Bialystok, Poland**

**Survivor: Blizyn-Majdanek Concentration Camp**

"It is too painful, too impossible to imagine what could be done to people... the torture, the humiliation, the starvation. It is just too much to imagine," says Ruth Diamond, who has never spoken about her Holocaust experiences before.

Ruth and her sister Helen were the only survivors of their family of six. The rest perished at Blizyn, a forced labor camp near Majdanek concentration camp. She says, "I lost my family that day. I lost them for nothing. It was Helen who kept me alive. Helen and I survived together. Helen was my sister...my best friend. "Of her time in the camp Ruth remembers, "I was working and that meant a bit more soup. I was with Helen, and we made airplane parts. It was okay. I had Helen." Their focus was survival, she says. "We didn't pray like some others did. I had nothing in the way of prayer. I just took it day by day."

As the war ended, Ruth and Helen were transported to two other camps,

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

finally arriving at Bergen-Belsen, where they were liberated by British troops. Ruth says, "We couldn't believe it. I knew it was real when they opened the gates and we could walk through. We could finally eat again."

Two years later, Ruth recounts, "I met Karl, got married, and moved to Memphis to be near his family. I never even told him what happened to me and Helen. It was just too painful to speak of. He was also a survivor; he understood."

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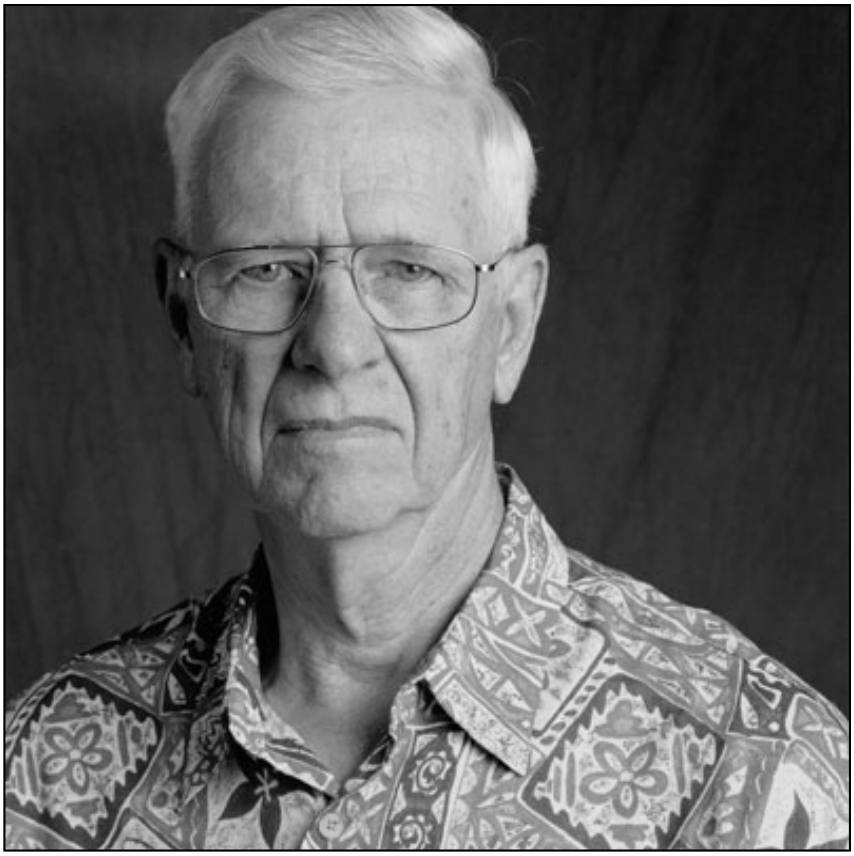

# James F. Dorris, Jr.

**Chattanooga, Tennessee**

**Born: 1924 Chattanooga, Tennessee**

**Liberator: Dachau Concentration Camp**

"We could see boxcars lined up with thousands of dead bodies. They just died right where they were stacked. We could smell the crematorium and knew the Germans were burning bodies. We began to realize what we were getting into. I saw inmates walking around and just staring at me. They were obviously confused and very weak. I had never seen what despair really looked like until that day."

On April 29, 1945, James Dorris and his army unit were sent to Dachau to investigate a "camp that might be there. "Upon the troops' arrival, he recalls, "insanity was everywhere. As I met their blank stares and saw their starved bodies...it was more than I could take. I said to myself that this is what hell was like."

He was ordered to guard a fence separating the inmates from a moat until medical personnel and food could arrive. A fight broke out among the prisoners. Several were beating a man over something he picked up off the

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

ground. Within a minute the beaten inmate called him over and gave him a rusty can holding a water-stained cigarette butt. "It was all he had in the world and he gave it to me as a thank-you gesture...he had been saving it. My eyes filled up with tears."

James did not speak about his twenty-four hours in Dachau for many years. Today he is fueled by the need to educate others about injustice toward humanity for "no reason, no reason at all."

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# Sonja DuBois

**Knoxville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1940 Rotterdam, The Netherlands**

**Hidden Child: The Netherlands**

"I never really felt connected to my foster parents. I don't remember feeling a part of their family," remembers Sonja Dubois. "I'm not sure why but I guess I just suspected something wasn't right."

Thousands of Jewish children were turned over to relative strangers by desperate parents in the hope that the children's lives would be spared. Many assumed new identities and never saw their parents again.

Clara Van Thyn was barely two years old when her Jewish parents boarded a train in Holland and left without her in 1942. It was a sacrifice that saved her life. Clara had been given to a friend to protect her from Nazi persecution, and became a hidden child. Clara's parents were murdered in Auschwitz that same year.

A non-Jewish couple, unable to have children of their own, took Clara. Her name was changed to Sonja and she lived as their child until the age of

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

twelve. "When the family immigrated to the United States and I had to sign my passport, they told me what happened." She was forbidden to discuss it, but Sonja refused to let it go. "I began reading a lot about the Holocaust... My parents died when they were only twenty-nine years old. They let me go to rescue me."

"I did resent [that] I was adopted. I resented a lot of things, but now I don't," Sonja says. "My parents didn't stand a chance at that time and they knew it. They did the bravest thing on Earth."

Search

Keyword search all categories

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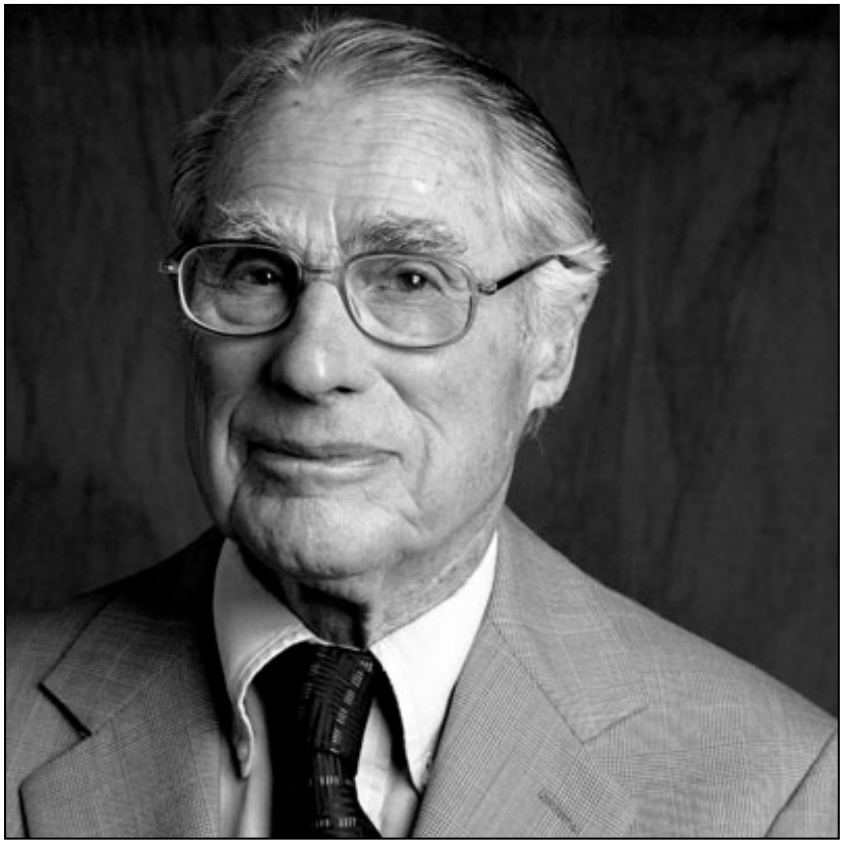

# Robert Eisenstein

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1917 Clinton, Iowa**

**Witness: Dachau Concentration Camp**

"We rode the jeep toward the barracks," Robert Eisenstein recalls. "People were still there. They looked at us. We looked at them. Hollow."

Bob shipped out in April 1943 as an officer in the American Army. He was Jewish but, like the majority of American soldiers, he was completely unprepared for what he saw two years later at Dachau. "We got some vague information from periodicals, but nothing official. We never heard any rumors-nothing about what was really going on in Europe."

In May 1945, while headquartered at Fürstenfeldbruck airfield, Bob drove into Dachau accompanied by another soldier who spoke Yiddish. They were able to communicate with some inmates.

Bob says, "I can remember it clearly. All the houses in the town of Dachau had basements filled with different things. Some rooms had shoes, one had clothing, one had hair, and one had gold fillings." He remembers the cages in which guards kept vicious dogs that could be unleashed on inmates

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

standing in line for food. He noticed that the German officers' quarters were neatly furnished. "I became sick, momentarily sick. How people could live so comfortably after doing these kinds of things to others...it was all just too much."

Although Bob was in Dachau only four hours, the images from that visit are still vivid today. He says, "I became most affected by what I had seen" after returning home to Nashville. He realized that had it not been for an accident of geography, he and his family could have been among the Holocaust's victims.

Keyword search all categories

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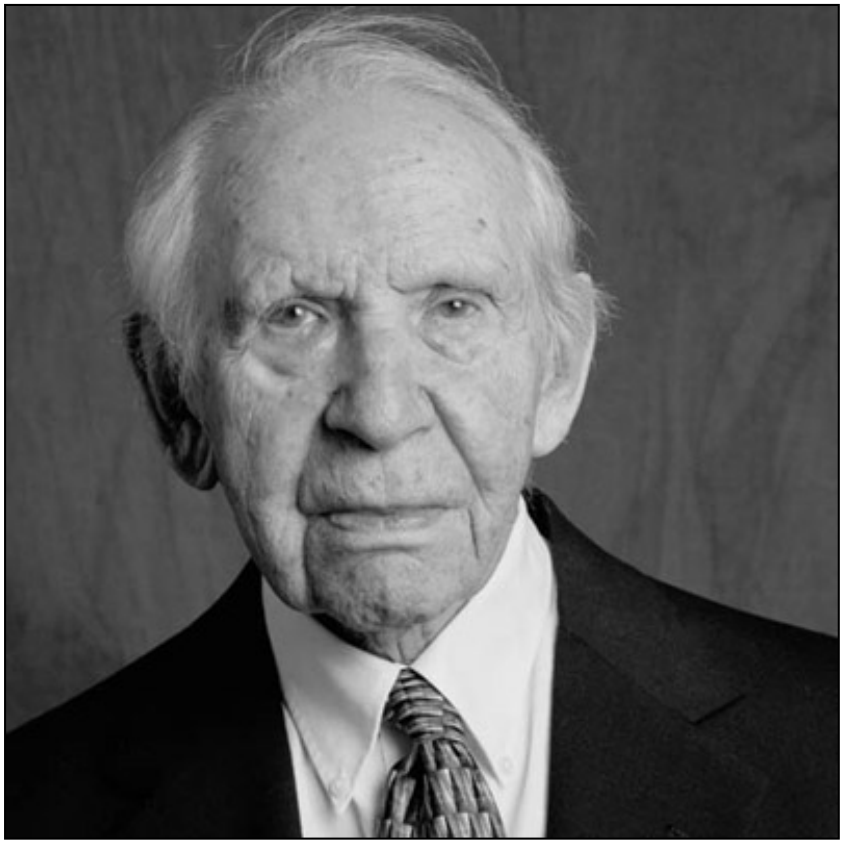

# Joseph Exelbierd

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1911 Tarnopol, Poland (Ukraine)**

**Refugee: Windsheim Displaced Persons Camp; United States**

Joseph remembers feeling disbelief and fear on September1, 1939: "Poland was overrun by Germans from the west and Russians from the east. The borders were sealed and there was no escape." A math and physics teacher, he was able to trade tutoring for food and shelter at first. But, in June 1941, Tarnopol was taken over by Russian soldiers and, he says, "the Jews were either murdered or forced into ghettos." He and his wife passed for non-Jews. They were put to work clearing land for train tracks, and then transported to Kazhakhstan in the Soviet Union. "Rachel and I were always together and that helped us survive," he states, "we suffered in leaving our families behind; we were cut off from everything and everybody."

In the spring of 1945, when Europe was liberated, an exodus of survivors traveled back into Germany and Poland. Joseph and Rachel Exelbierd came to Windsheim displaced persons camp in Germany. In April 1947, Joseph was put in charge of the camp, becoming the first Jewish camp administrator in U.S. occupied Bavaria. "We did our best to make this place

## Artifacts

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

a turning point—to create a process of healing. It was the only way to survive the pain."

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# Henry Fribourg

**Knoxville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1929 Paris, France**

**Refugee: Algeria; Cuba; United States**

Henry Fribourg remembers "continuous streams of people walking on the highways to get away from German troops. People carried suitcases, bundles of clothing, knapsacks, babies; pushed wheelbarrows laden with grandmas or possessions; rode carts heaped high with household goods. Most were afraid of the German aerial bombardments they could hear from time to time."

Henry's father was drafted into the French army in 1940. Henry and his mother and sister were at their summer home in Fontainebleau. Friends gave his pregnant mother a car. He says, "She hired a driver. We set out cross-country for Pau, a town near the border with Spain." Henry recalls walking alone one afternoon in search of an auto mechanic, but he attracted the attention of a German Messerschmitt pilot: "I was the only person in view, so I know I had his undivided attention as he strafed me with his machine guns. "Henry threw himself in a ditch, but the pilot kept trying. "He

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

missed me the first time, came around for a second pass and then a third. I must have really been a threat! An eleven-year-old solitary boy on a narrow rural road."

By August 1940 France had fallen to the Nazis, and Henry's father was allowed to come home. When Henry was expelled from school solely because he was Jewish, they moved to Algeria, then waited almost four years in Cuba to enter the United States, finally arriving in Miami in April 1945. Henry finished high school in Brooklyn, New York. In 2004 he published his memoir, I Gave You Life Twice: A Story of Survival, Dreams, Betrayals and Accomplishments.

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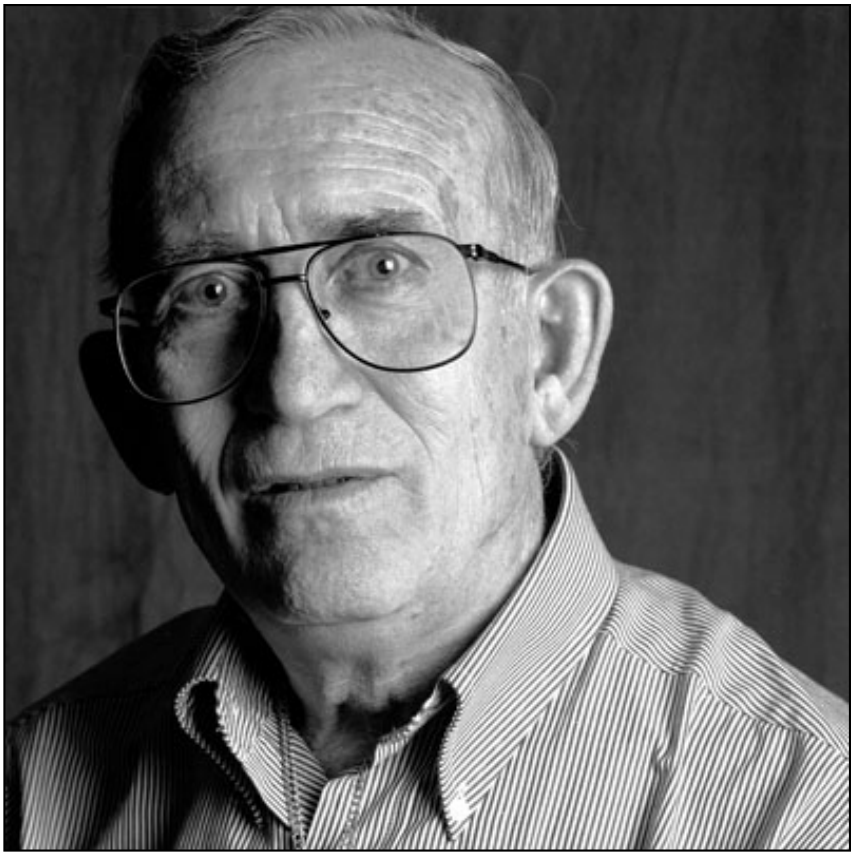

# Jack Fried

**Manchester, Tennessee**

**Born: 1938 Chorostkow, Poland (Now Khorostkov, Ukraine)**

**Survivor: Chorostkow ghetto, Jablonica Forced Labor Camp**

"My grandfather was hiding in an underground bunker during an air raid," remembers Jack Fried. "The guards found him there and shot him right where he was sitting. My father, uncle, and I went to look for him and found my grandfather dead, still holding his sister in his arms...this is something you just don't forget."

In the ghetto, five-year-old Jack Fried worked twelve hours a day with his mother and sister providing food for inmates and German guards. He knew that "taking food was punishable by death." His father, once a prominent businessman, labored at grave digging and road paving. He recalls, "It was very hard work and many did not survive it."

The family was transported to Jablonica, an agricultural camp in German-occupied Ukraine. His father and sister harvested food for German soldiers; Jack and his mother worked in the kitchen. "He didn't sit around and let things happen to us," Jack says of his father. "He fought and he saved us.

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

My father escaped with my sister and returned home to unearth buried money he had hidden there." He bribed a German guard to smuggle Jack and his mother out, and paid a Polish farmer to hide them all in his hayloft.

Six months later, as the Russian Army pushed German troops west, Jack and his family traveled under their protection to Romania, then made their way through Bulgaria and Turkey into Palestine. Jack relates, "In Judaism we have a saying. It is B'shert. It means 'meant to be' and I believe much of our time after the camp was just that."

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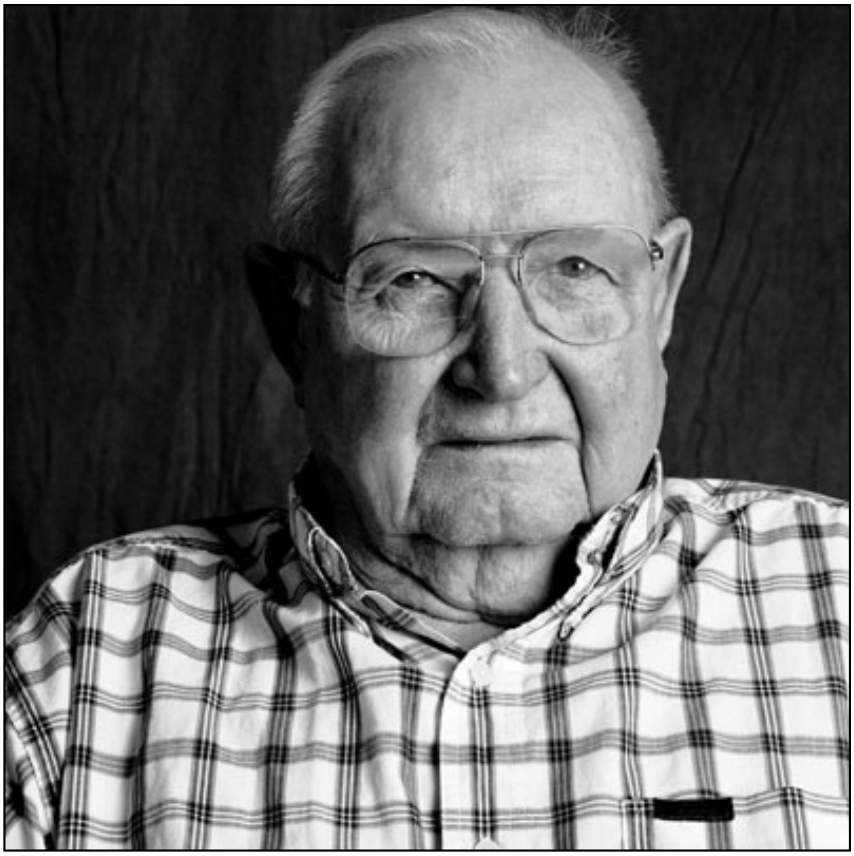

# James Garner

**Murfreesboro, Tennessee**

**Born: 1917 Manchester, Tennessee**

**Liberator: Dachau Concentration Camp**

"I had no idea what was happening to the Jews. I knew there was a war, I knew about Hitler, but I really wasn't prepared for what I saw." Moving into Dachau in April 1945, American soldier James Garner saw bodies being put into crematoriums and burned: "The Nazis were just shoveling them in and setting them on fire." He recalls that some were even still alive. "Most of my troops broke down."

The end of World War II was a confusing, emotional time. American and British troops entering Germany met little resistance, and they came upon the concentration camps often by accident. "Inhumanity, torture, starvation...it was everywhere. These were starving, crazed people," Garner says. Some fed the inmates, but he refused. "They were in such terrible shape. I didn't know what to do but somehow I knew I shouldn't feed them." Many who were given food by their liberators died; their stomachs, shrunken from starvation, ruptured.

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

"War brings terrible things to us all, but this was different. We came in so patriotic, so willing to fight. Then you see innocent people...abused and tortured-not for war crimes, for their religion...for their religion. Can you believe that? You wonder why you got there so late and who was responsible. You wonder if you did anything at all to help."

As James bows his head in tears, his wife Geraldine holds his hands and shakes her head. She tells him he did all he could have done.

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# Jimmy Gentry

**Franklin, Tennessee**

**Born: 1925 Franklin, Tennessee**

**Liberator: Dachau Concentration Camp**

"Off in the distance I saw boxcars lined up with hundreds of dead bodies inside. They looked starved and tortured," remembers Jimmy Gentry. "I asked another soldier, 'Who are these people?' He said, 'They are Jews.'"

American infantryman Jimmy Gentry had seen combat at the Battle of the Bulge, but it paled in comparison to what he saw that day. "No one told us what we would find. No one explained what our mission was. We saw a wall and that was the entrance to a prison camp like I have never seen." The camp was Dachau.

They were told, "Get the guards and get out." Jimmy recalls his horror, "I couldn't move, and though I knew what I had to do, I was numb at the same time." He knew that soldiers died in war, "but non-soldiers? Just people? Religious people? I can't understand it. Not then, not now."

When Jimmy returned home, he was determined never to speak about it

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

again: "I kept thinking if I didn't talk about it, it would go away." But it didn't, and in 1985 Jimmy met a Nashville survivor who convinced him to share his experiences with others. "Talking about it so many years later made such an impact on me," says Jimmy, who wrote a book called An American Life in 2002. "It was all too much. I was a young boy, a simple foot soldier moving from one day to the next. I just wanted to get away from that place, away from smelling death."

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# Zina Gontownik

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1916 Lybeshuk, Poland (Now Lybiskiai, Lithuania)**

**Survivor: Wilno ghetto; Kaiserwald, Stutthof, and Mühldorf-Dachau Concentration Camps**

"One day in the ghetto, the Nazis announced that all children were to be examined by German doctors," remembers Zina Gontownik. "I dressed my baby girl, Chaya, in her best clothes and hat. They wouldn't let us go with the children so I let my baby go, praying for a good medical report. It was the next day before we learned that the Nazis had thrown the children from trucks into ditches and set fire to them. Their screams were drowned out by music the Nazis played."

In the summer of 1943 Zina and her husband were separated. He was taken to a work camp near the front line with Russia. She and her sister were transported to Kaiserwald, in Latvia; to Stutthof, in Poland; and finally to Mühldorf, a subcamp of Dachau, in Germany.

Zina's husband and twenty-two other Jewish inmates escaped the Germans. He was captured by an advance guard from Russian Army intelligence,

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

which was investigating and monitoring Nazi troop movements. He fought with them for the remainder of the war.

Zina and her sister, liberated by the American Army in April 1945, were transported to Feldafing, a displaced persons' camp in Germany. There a Jewish chaplain assisted them in getting in touch with family in Memphis, Tennessee. Through letters she learned that her husband and brother had survived. They were reunited two years later.

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Matilda Steinberg Goodfriend

**Athens, Tennessee**

**Born: 1925 Teresva, Czechoslovakia (Now Ukraine)**

**Survivor: Mátészalka ghetto; Geislingen Munitions Factory; Auschwitz, Natzweiler-Struthof, and Dachau Concentration Camps**

"I was there long enough. Long enough to see the misery and lose my parents and my brothers." After Germany invaded Hungary in 1944, Matilda Goodfriend and her family were taken to the Mátészalka ghetto for a few weeks and then to Auschwitz.

Transported again for work at an ammunition factory in Geislingen, Germany, Matilda stayed bound to her two sisters. "We took care of each other. With scraps of food or just faith, we held on to each other. We did it everyday. We survived the war together," she says.

One night as Allied troops closed in, the factory was bombed. Germany was losing the war and closing the camps, which pushed thousands of inmates into already impossible living conditions. On a train to Dachau, Matilda heard a voice pierce the darkness: "The Americans are coming." Tearfully she recalls, "The Americans were coming." Out of fear, the guards abandoned

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

the train. Matilda remembers the chaos as prisoners delirious from starvation raided the food car.

After liberation, the sisters returned to Hungary. "But we came home to no one and nothing," according to Matilda. The family home stood empty, furnishings pilfered. No one else returned. They left their homeland and never went back.

Speaking often about the horrors of the Holocaust, Matilda says, "I pray that the children will hear me when I speak to them. That they will know and really hear me, so this never happens again. I pray that for them...I pray that for all of us."

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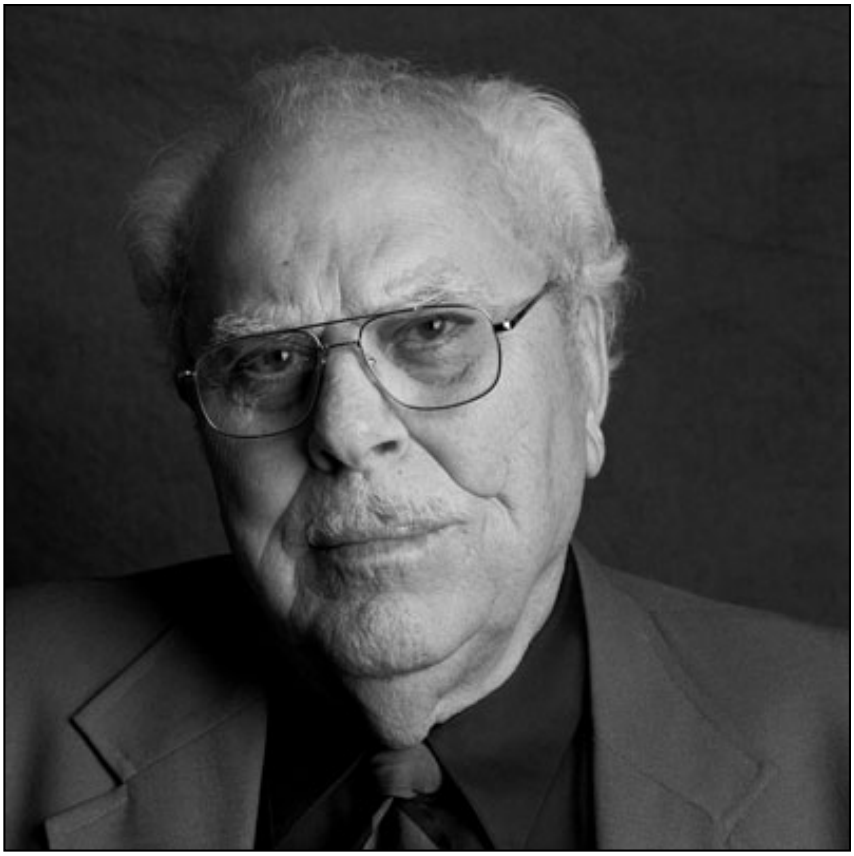

## Willie Hall

**Old Hickory, Tennessee**

**Born: 1923 Livingston, Tennessee**

**Liberator: Nordhausen Concentration Camp**

Just six days after his twentieth birthday, Willie Hall shipped out with the United States Army Signal Corps, bound for Europe. "We got word that there were some awful camps at Buchenwald and Nordhausen but no one really suspected the death and torture of millions of Jews. How can anyone imagine that?"

His first memory upon arrival was seeing "sheds, several old sheds full of straw, dirt, and people... thousands of people, just skin and bones, stacked up in these old sheds." Willie remembers the condition of the inmates: "They were abused, tortured, starved... and the suffering...so much damn suffering."

When Nazi camp guards surrendered or were captured, American troops began asking inmates what they would like to do with them. "One said they wanted to make them crawl over the dead bodies that lay everywhere," he says, "so we did, we made every Nazi crawl on their hands and knees over

Artifacts

Multimedia

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

the dead inmates."

Shortly afterward, Willie's unit shipped out of Nordhausen and headed for Buchenwald; "but I couldn't go. I refused to go," he recalls.

Willie returned to the United States in 1945 but didn't talk about the war or what he saw that day for over thirty years. "I couldn't even think about it. I had horrible nightmares...nightmares for a very long time."

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## Hanna Hamburger

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1922 Eppingen, Germany**

**Refugee: United States**

"There were good people then, too. Not everyone believed what the Nazis told them," says Hanna Hamburger. "The nun at my school refused to allow me to be ridiculed. She protected me a lot."

Raised in Germany, Hanna Hamburger escaped Nazism at the age of sixteen. She and her family managed to leave just weeks before Kristallnacht. She recalls the fear and intimidation and the quiet exchanges between her parents. During the Boycott of 1933, Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, urged Germans to boycott Jewish-owned businesses. The boycott bankrupted Hanna's father. Anti-Semitism was rampant. At Hannah's fifteenth birthday party, no one came. "I can still see myself all dressed up waiting for my guests," she recalls. But she also remembers the Nazi physician who tenderly cared for her grandmother, the nun who protected her from anti-Semitism in school, and the German soldiers who urged her father to leave.

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Hanna's father wrote to America and asked for a visa. His timing was good. When they arrived in New York in 1938, her distinguished father became a dishwasher, her mother a maid. Today she admits, "I feel guilty for surviving when so many didn't. There was so much loss and so much torture."

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

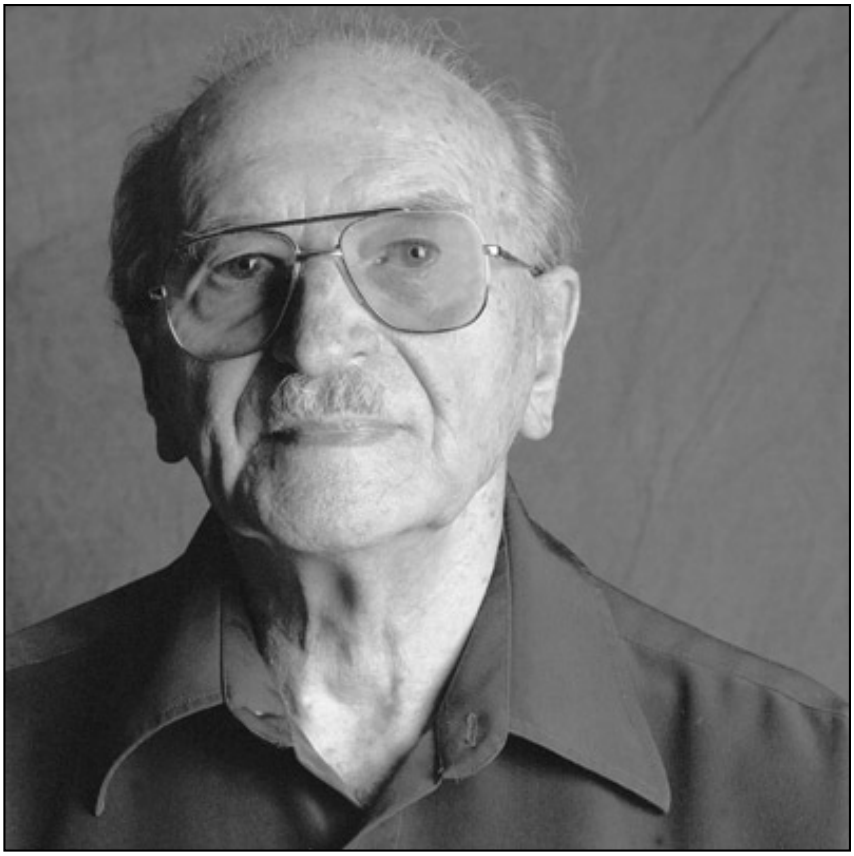
Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit



# Julian Joseph Hosnedl

**Clarksville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1920 Prague, Czechoslovakia**

**Survivor: Klagenfurt Prison; Dachau Concentration Camp**

Survivor Julian Hosnedl shares an unusual perspective on the Holocaust: "We were all Czechs and we didn't like Germans because they were occupying our country and killing our people... they even named our country Protektorat Bohemia and Moravia. Hitler had a very secret plan that they would move all Czechs to Patagonia in South America... that was the reason we started working against Nazis."

Julian was an employee of Royal Dutch Shell when Germany invaded Czechoslovakia in 1939. When his boss, Mr. Sharp, disappeared, he realized something was happening to the Jews. Then the Germans began drafting young men into forced labor. They sent Julian to Klagenfurt, Austria, to stockpile warehoused food. He and five disgruntled co-workers began sending word of military activities to the Allies, leaving notes in a "dead box" near the border to Italy. In April 1944, they were put into a Gestapo prison with Jehovah's witnesses and Austrian and Yugoslavian partisans.

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

Six months later, weak from hunger, Julian was taken to Dachau. Before he was deloused and interviewed, he watched 40,000 prisoners leave for work through the "Arbeit Macht Frei" gate. When asked his profession, Julian blurted out "cook" in hopes of finding his way to a kitchen. He was sent to cook at a remote ski lodge holding political prisoners. At war's end, he and others were able to aid a group of nearly starved, Hungarian Jewish women who had walked through the mountains from Ravensbrück concentration camp.

Julian returned to Prague. In 1968, when Russian tanks rolled into Prague, he fled Czechoslovakia for Canada.

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# Fred Jarvis

**Bristol, Tennessee**

**Born: 1935 Freiburg, Germany**

**Hidden Child, Survivor: Gurs And Rivesaltes Concentration Camps**

Fred Jarvis recalls being smuggled out of a French concentration camp in 1942 when he was seven years old, "My mother's courage saved my life. The fear of losing me to murder surpassed her fear of surrendering me to a total stranger."

His earliest memory is of the Gestapo coming to his home in 1940 and telling them to pack. Fred and his parents (his older brother had been on the last Kindertransport to England) and several hundred other Jews were shipped on cattle cars to Gurs, a French concentration camp near the Pyrenees, then transferred a year later to nearby Rivesaltes. With the help of a cousin, they escaped, driving toward Switzerland to find the border closed.

As deportations to Auschwitz began, the OSE (Society for the Rescue of Jewish Children) surreptitiously collected the small children. Fred was given a new identity and taken to a farm. "Madame Burra was very good to me,"

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

Fred recalls, "She took me in as her supposed nephew at the risk of her own life." In school he had to speak French. "We had to learn very rapidly, without making the slightest mistake. Mistakes were fatal," he says.

At war's end, his brother Joseph located him through the Red Cross and found that their parents had perished at Auschwitz. An aunt in New York City sponsored Fred's immigration to America. He quips, "I spoke only French, lived in a household that spoke mainly German, and went to a school that spoke only English. I had a lot of adjusting to do."

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# Nina Katz

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1924 Sosnowiec, Poland**

**Survivor: Hannsdorf Forced Labor Camp, Oberaltstadt Slave Labor Camp**

"We had our own world in Poland but we weren't stupid. We knew who the Germans were. Their policies were not a shock. You learn to accept what you cannot understand. You ask why but there are no answers. I made it my mission to tell the world what happened to us and I haven't stopped yet. I keep that memory alive," says Nina Katz, who was fifteen when the Nazis invaded her country.

Growing up in Poland, Nina was used to anti-Semitism. She was not surprised by the German invasion or the subsequent persecution.

In 1939 Nina's parents, grandfather, and younger sister were taken to Auschwitz concentration camp. She says, "Because I was strong and tall and appeared able to handle hard work," she was sent to Hannsdorf in Czechoslovakia to work in a textile mill, then to Oberaltstadt, where there was a linen factory. She filled large spools of yarn on an assembly line. "I

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

was tall and I could reach the machines so they kept me there." Nina recalls, "The older inmates who had been there the longest were mostly just confused. They kept asking the new arrivals what they had heard outside before coming in. Had they committed a crime? Had they done something wrong? Why were they there?"

Nina was among eight hundred survivors out of three thousand at Oberaltstadt. Her family gone, she married her childhood sweetheart and moved to Israel. In 1949 they came to the United States. To her horror, she says, "I arrived at the peak of segregation in America and the familiarity was more than I could bear. I became immediately involved in equal rights among all people."

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# Paula Kelman

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1927 Czestochowa, Poland**

**Survivor: Czestochowa ghetto; Hasag Munitions Factory / Czestochowa Slave Labor Camp**

"I was twelve when my sister cut my long pigtails and applied rouge to my lips. I instantly became eighteen when the Nazis asked my age. It saved my life," says Paula Kelman.

When her parents and three of her siblings were sent to death camps, Paula remained in the Czestochowa ghetto with her sister and brother. She worked clearing out the homes of Jews who had been evacuated to camps and other ghettos and bringing everything to the Nazis. Desperately hungry, she recalls how she wrapped herself in the sheets and linens: "I was able to take bedding and sell it outside the ghetto to buy bread." When she and another girl got caught, she remembers, "the policeman was Jewish and he shot a pistol in the air to pretend he had killed us, but at night he let us go." Another memory is of standing in the snow barefoot to watch Nazi guards shoot twenty boys as punishment for an alleged assault on an SS soldier.

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

By 1942 Paula was making bullet casings at a HASAG munitions factory twelve hours a day. "If we didn't meet the quota, we were taken to the back and beaten," she recounts. "When we looked at each other in the shower some of our bodies looked like road maps from the scarring."

At liberation, she says, "I remember seeing the Russians come in but nobody moved. We were so terrified that this wasn't real. When we realized we were safe, we immediately went home to find family. "Their former neighbors turned on them, so Paula and her sister sought refuge at the Bergen-Belsen camp for displaced persons.

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Ida Frank Kilstein

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1922 Oswieciem (Auschwitz), Poland**

**Survivor: Chzanow ghetto; Neusaltz Labor Camp; Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp**

Ida Frank Kilstein grew up with four siblings in the Polish town of Oswieciem, which would later become notorious as Auschwitz: the Nazi slave labor camp and mass killing site established in May of 1940. After the Nazis invaded Poland, the Frank family was forced into a ghetto in a nearby town. They were gradually dispersed. Ida was put to work in factories and moved from place to place. A final march away from the advancing Allied forces took her far into the heart of Germany, to Bergen-Belsen, where she and other prisoners were liberated in April 1945. Ida and one brother were all who survived of her family.

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Jacob Kilstein

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1915 Piotrków, Poland**

**Survivor: Piotrków Ghetto; Blizyn Slave Labor Camp; Auschwitz And Dachau Concentration Camps**

"We would have to handle glass so hot, the skin on your hands would burn off the bones, and your back would break from the weight of what you were carrying." After the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939,Jacob Kilstein was forced to work in a glass factory and live in a ghetto. The heavy labor weakened him. He was sent to Blizyn slave labor camp, where he was denied medical care and ordered back to work. He soon fell and broke his spine.

Put on a train for Auschwitz, Jacob somehow learned that his brother was on the same train. "On the train I tried desperately to find him. I looked every minute of that trip for him but never saw him until we arrived in Auschwitz. There were thousands of people around, but I found him. And then I lost him. And that was it."

By the time of liberation in April 1945, Jacob had been moved to Dachau concentration camp. Freedom was bittersweet: "I don't think about that day

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

like the others do. It is a painful reminder for me that no one was really free. Not when you have lost your family, your life, and all that you knew."

Still a hostage to such memories, Jacob is relieved by this quest for understanding what happened to the Jews. "It just tears at my heart that for many years, when we were willing to share, begging to talk, no one cared. I suppose I am glad they hear us now. But many died not having been heard. They deserved this time to speak-more than anyone else."

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## Mira Ryczke Kimmelman

**Oak Ridge, Tennessee**

**Born: 1923 Danzig (Gdansk), Poland**

**Survivor: Warsaw and Tomazow-Mazowiecki ghettoes; Blizyn-Majdanek, Auschwitz, Nordhausen and Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camps**

"We boarded open coal cars, unable to leave, unable to move...for three weeks. We ate snow... there was no food. 50% of us died in transport," says Mira Kimmelman, who survived a death march out of Auschwitz in the bitter winter of 1945. Under armed guard she and other women walked for two days and two nights in sub-zero temperatures.

Mira doesn't know how she lost her family, but she knows why. When the Germans invaded Poland, she and eighteen members of her family were separated from their non-Jewish neighbors and forced to live in ghettos, where they suffered from hunger, extreme cold, and typhus. The Jewish administration of the ghettos opened secret schools. "To be caught with a pen or paper would mean instant death, so we taught privately through song and poetry. I was a student and then a teacher," recalls Mira.

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

In 1942 the Germans liquidated their ghetto and spoke of opportunities for work in the east. Mira says, "We believed it. Work meant security and food. We were hopeful...and we didn't have a choice. My mother and I were marched out of the ghetto toward the railroad station. An SS officer ordered me to step out."

Mira was sent to Blizyn, a concentration camp attached to Majdanek in Poland, and then to Auschwitz. She is haunted by a final memory of seeing her brother, who died at seventeen, at the gates of Auschwitz.

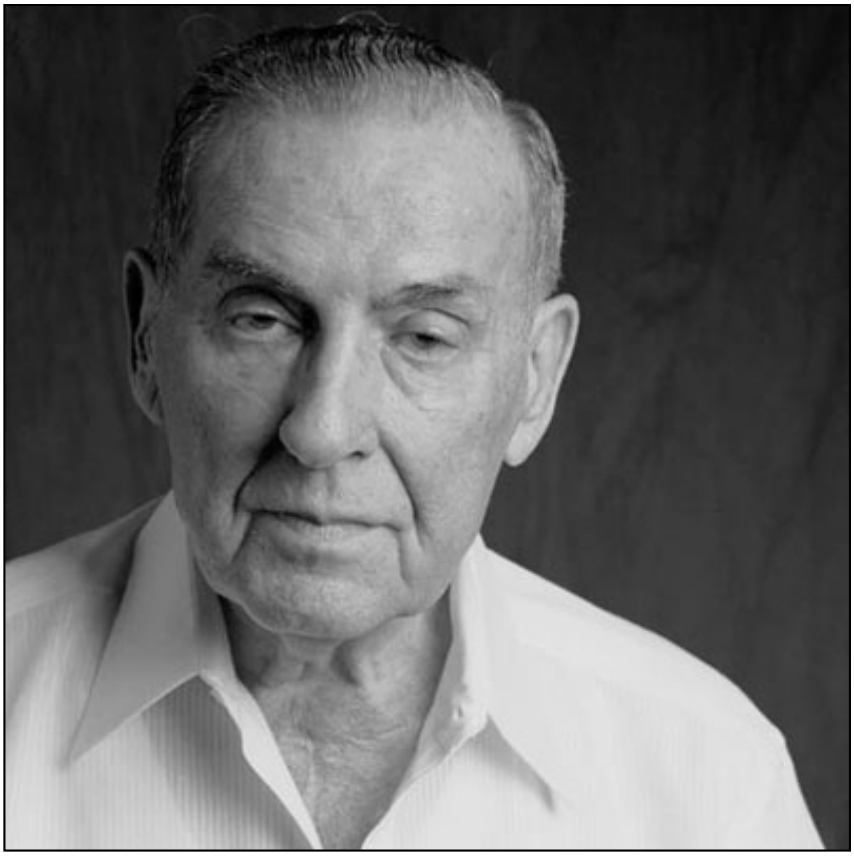
Mira's journey ended at Bergen-Belsen. With no work or food or water, the women drank urine to survive. In mid-April 1945 the camp was liberated by the British Army. Mira is the author of Echoes From the Holocaust: A Memoir (1997) and Life beyond the Holocaust: Memories & Realities (2005). She says she finds herhealing in "writing and telling my story."

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit



# William Klein

**Chattanooga, Tennessee**

**Born: 1924 Ungvar, Czechoslovakia (Now Ukraine)**

**Survivor: Auschwitz and Mühldorf-Dachau Concentration Camps**

"It was so fast. They came in and all of a sudden everything changed," says William Klein, recalling the March 1944 arrival of German soldiers in his Carpathian mountain town. Nineteen-year-old William, a competitive soccer player, lost his job. His Orthodox parents lost their home. Most of the town's Jews were moved into a brick factory to await transport to Auschwitz concentration camp.

At Auschwitz, William was approached by a kapo (labor foreman) who asked, "Do you want to live?" He replied, "Of course!" "Then volunteer to get out of here," the man said. William joined a forced labor battalion, bringing his twelve-year-old brother Sol along.

Assigned to ransack the abandoned Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, William says, "I was lucky. I went from house to house in a clean-up crew searching for valuables to be shipped back to Germany. When the SS wasn't looking we often helped ourselves to things we found. One day I discovered twenty gold

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

coins. I traded one for two loaves of bread."

In January 1945, after a forced march to Dachau, William and Sol went to work at Mühldorf underground aircraft factory. When Allied troops advanced, prisoners were loaded onto railway cars. The train was bombed. The brothers escaped and hid in a ditch, then walked into a farmyard. "The farmer was a good man. He gave us food and clothes and told us that the German Army had left and the Americans were coming. "William remembers, "A captain in the American Army liberated us."

Back home, William located his sisters through the local police station. He traded a leather coat for their freedom.

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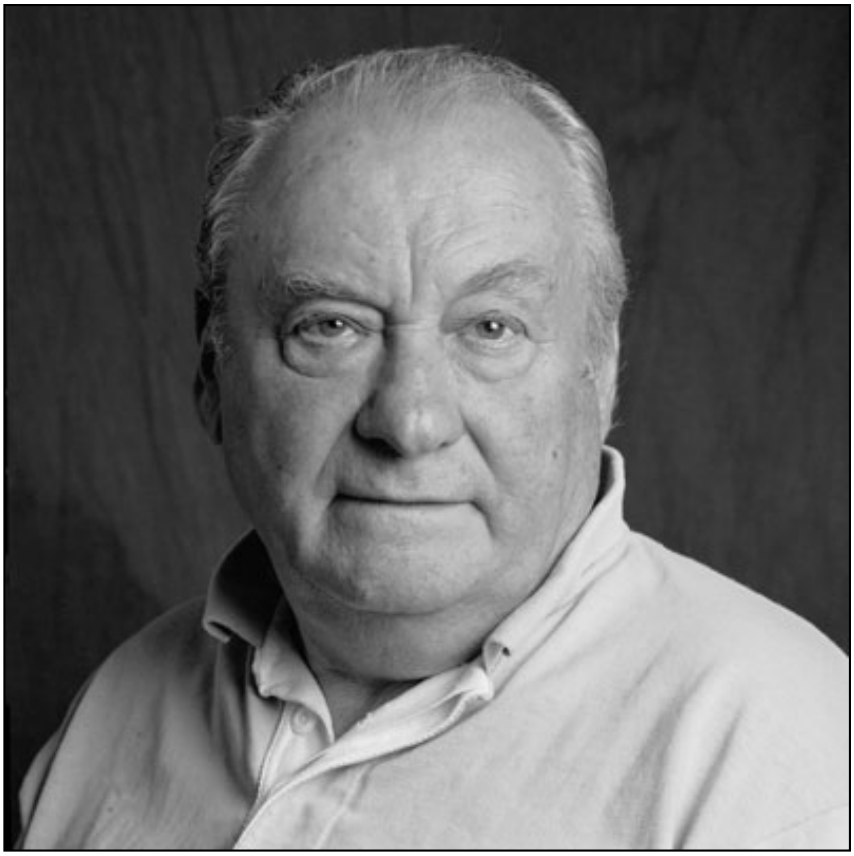

# Yakov Kreymerman

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1933 Mogilev-Podolskiy, Ukraine**

**Survivor: Chernovtsy ghetto**

"Nothing was ever the same without our parents. I never want anyone to experience what we experienced. To want peace in the world is not naive. It is what we all want and we would know more than most what that means," states Yakov Kreymerman, who grew up in Ukraine.

Yakov was eight when German troops invaded his town. He had already lost his mother, and he understood little of what was happening. His father was sent away to the Soviet Army. His sister enlisted as an army nurse. Yakov and his younger brother went to Chernovtsy ghetto with their grandmother. It was bleak and frightening. He recalls, "For whatever reason, we were kicked out of my grandmother's house in the ghetto, and we had to live in a barn. What I remember about the ghetto is the hunger and cold. We survived on rotten vegetables."

"It was all so baffling. Germany attacked Russia and all of the sudden Jews were the enemies. To our own! Russians everywhere turned against us. Like

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

we were instant animals to loathe." Yakov learned the words "dirty Jew": "My neighbors and teachers called me that all the time."

In 1944 they heard liberation was imminent. "A lot of people were killed on the last day because as the German soldiers moved out, they shot everyone they came upon in the ghetto." Many who had lived through the horrors of ghetto life died on the eve of freedom. Returning home, Yakov and his brother and sister found their house completely looted.

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# Frida Landau

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1925 Pavlovice, Czechoslovakia (Now Czech Republic)**

**Survivor: Auschwitz and Theresienstadt Concentration Camps**

"We were afraid every minute for our lives, and every day we had grass or even a sip of water, we were grateful. I guess we thought that was better than dying...I suppose it was," says Frida Landau. She and her sister ate grass in an attempt to survive the ten-day train journey to Theresienstadt concentration camp.

By then it was 1945. They had managed to live through nine months of imprisonment in Block 16 at Auschwitz, where they had lost their parents along with their sister and her daughters. "It was during separation," she recalls. "We walked left to the showers and they went to the right...they died never really knowing what was happening to any of us."

Concentration camp guards routinely separated family groups according to age and fitness to work. Teenagers and young adults were spared, while parents and younger siblings were often sent to their deaths.

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

At Auschwitz they slept four to a bunk. Frida remembers praying a lot and talking to others. "The Polish inmates had been there for about a year and would tell us many details," she says. "I could hear them but I just couldn't believe what they were saying. I knew but then I really didn't know anything."

Frida calls the day they were liberated in Theresienstadt a birthday. "[May8,] 1945 was the birth of my freedom," she exclaims. It was a day she wasn't sure she would ever experience.

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# Elizabeth Limor

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1922 Lódz, Poland**

**Survivor: Hasag Munitions Factory / Skarzysko Slave Labor Camp; Hasag Munitions Factory / Czestochowa Slave Labor Camp**

"ARBEIT MACHT FREI" (Work Makes You Free) were the words wrought in iron on the heavy gates of the camp that imprisoned nineteen-year-old Elizabeth Limor.

Elizabeth worked twelve-hour days packing bullet casings on an assembly line in the HASAG ammunition factory in Skarzysko. At night she returned to grim, wooden barracks. She remembers, "The place was infested with lice and bed bugs. You could feel them crawling all over you." Once she and a group of other women were falsely accused of stealing a coat. Elizabeth was beaten with a rubber hose until she passed out. She wouldn't beg for mercy: "I promised myself I would never let the Germans hear me cry." But the women "cried together and tried to help each other. There was a lot of togetherness."

By January 1945, Elizabeth was at another HASAG factory in Czestochowa.

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

Hearing that the Russian Army was coming to liberate them, Elizabeth and a group of friends, among them her future husband Irvin, opened "the tremendous iron gate." She relates, "We just walked out onto the street-we liberated ourselves." She was sent for medical care to Bergen-Belsen, a former concentration camp turned into a post-war displaced persons' camp.

From Germany, Elizabeth, her husband Irvin, and their baby son immigrated to Israel. Years later, after locating her brother in Tennessee, the Limors and their two sons came to join him. Elizabeth dictated her book, Memoirs: Before, During, and After, for her grandchildren. "When I finally wrote it all down, it freed my soul."

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# Menachem Limor

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1930 Czestochowa, Poland**

**Survivor: Czestochowa ghetto; Hasag Munitions Factory / Czestochowa Slave Labor Camp; Buchenwald Concentration Camp**

"Hundreds of people were crammed into these cattle cars. No food or water...we could barely sit. We melted snow to drink," recalls Menachem Limor, who was on the train for five days on his way to Buchenwald.

Snow offered survival. Menachem ate it and drank it and piled it up to stand on so he would appear taller to the Nazis who wanted to get rid of children too young for slave labor. Menachem says of his childhood in Poland, "We were so close. I remember being very happy." After the Germans invaded and shot his father, he says, "everything changed to the worst... the worst it would ever be."

His family moved into the ghetto in 1942. When his mother and one brother were taken to the Treblinka death camp, but Menachem, small enough to hide in a hole in the attic, stayed behind with his brother Irvin. At a HASAG work camp, Menachem says they met a "very religious man. He tried to

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

teach the children whatever he knew. He taught us how to stay alive."

Two years later, on the way to Buchenwald, Menachem kept one piece of bread in his pocket for the trip. "Each night, I would eat one bite." On April 11, 1945, Buchenwald inmates climbed onto barracks rooftops to watch American tanks pull in. "They were coming from both sides. It was amazing." After liberation, Menachem was reunited with his brother Irvin. They have no family photographs. He still struggles to picture his mother: "I can't see her face in my mind. For me this is the most painful of all."

# Esther Loeb

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1924 Bydgoszcz, Poland**

**Survivor: Siberian Forced Labor Camp**

"Survivors were reborn through freedom. We have a commitment and promise to fulfill. If we stop remembering, then six million Jews will have died in vain," states Esther Loeb, whose family escaped to Russia from German-occupied Poland, only to be sent to Siberia.

Esther grew up near Danzig, where residents were bitterly split between German and Polish national identities. As she tells it, "They were always fighting each other, but they blamed the Jews for the civil unrest."

In 1939, following the Nazi invasion, Esther and her family fled east. At the Soviet border, small boats carried refugees across the river. Esther's family boarded, but her mother was pulled back. Esther continues, "My father begged to switch with her. He kept shouting to let him get off and let her go instead, but the boat pulled out leaving her behind." In Ukraine, they were robbed and had to go door to door begging for shelter. "Then," Esther recalls, "out of nowhere, my mother found us. Her legs were swollen from

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

walking for miles in sub-zero temperatures." They lived in a barn for two weeks before the Russian Army found them and dispatched them to Siberia. Esther's father suddenly fell ill and died. Her pregnant mother gave birth to a boy who died of starvation before his first birthday.

In 1942 Polish civilian prisoners of war were granted permission to move freely within the Soviet Union. Esther and her sister sold stolen potatoes for train fare and took their mother to central Asia, where they found farm and factory work. At war's end, they returned to Poland, found no living family members, then left to create new lives in the West.

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# Herman Loewenstein

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1927 Hameln, Germany**

**Refugee: Kindertransport; United States; U.S. Army Intelligence (Germany)**

"The SA (Nazi Storm Troopers) came to our house and shot out the lights, threw milk cans through our windows...we were terrified," recalls Herman Loewenstein. "All of a sudden we were no longer acceptable citizens."

It was known asKristallnacht, the "Night of Broken Glass," and Herman remembers the nightmare well. On November 9 and 10, 1938, outbursts of violence, spearheaded by Nazi Special Police, occurred in German and Austrian towns and cities. Synagogues were ravaged and burned, Jewish-owned businesses were looted and their windows shattered, and Jewish men were beaten and arrested. 30,000 Jewish men were sent to detention camps.

Afterward, eleven-year-old Herman was not allowed to associate with his childhood friends. When Jewish children were forbidden to go to school in his hometown of Hessich-Oldendorf, Herman was sent to live with an uncle. In

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

1939 Herman left Germany through the Kindertransport program, an extraordinary rescue operation that transported 10,000 Jewish children to safe houses and foster families in Great Britain. He remembers, "I was sent to North Hampton. I can still hear the planes flying overhead." Herman was one of the fortunate ones; his parents came to retrieve him. They made their way to Montreal, to New York, and finally to Nashville.

At the end of the war, Herman remembers his father receiving requests for letters stating that certain officials in his hometown had never been Nazis. Those who once had turned him away now needed him. "Ironic, isn't it?" Herman muses. "They needed him now."

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# Hedy Lustig

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1930 Höchst im Odenwald, Germany**

**Refugee: United States**

"We were preparing to leave Germany," remembers Hedy Lustig." We had papers to come to the United States. Then all of the sudden, we heard that the Nazis were planning to come in and rid the town of all the Jews. We couldn't imagine such a thing."

On November 9, 1938, when Hedy was nine years old, thousands of Jewish synagogues, businesses, and homes were damaged or destroyed. That night became known as Kristallnacht, or the "Night of Broken Glass," for the shattered store windows carpeting German streets. Hedy and her family ran. "We stayed in the woods for several days," she remembers. "In November it was very cold and we were so hungry." Quietly, they returned to their home. Almost immediately, she says,"[the Nazis] arrived and took my father away. They beat him terribly, right in front of us, and they strangled to death the man who lived upstairs. It was at our dining room table. We were only children...to see such things!"

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

Hedy recalls, "My mother went to my uncle's house to seek refuge there. The Nazis knew everything, they knew where every Jew was, knew their families, and could almost always find them. They sent my mother a telegram demanding she come home to clean up their mess from the night they ransacked our home and took our father away."

Her brave mother went to the mayor, she says: "For whatever reason-we may never really know-he told her my father was in Buchenwald and, hearing that he fought in World War I, arranged for him to come home." In early 1939 Hedy's reunited family came to America.

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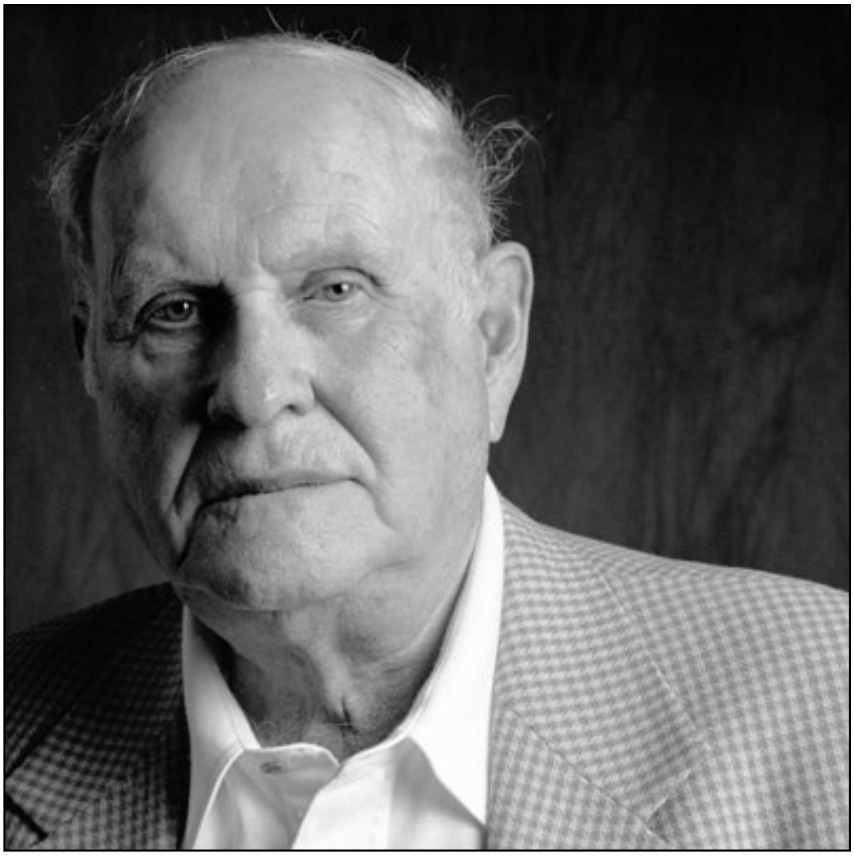

# Robert Mamlin

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1924 Brooklyn, New York**

**Liberator: Dachau Concentration Camp**

"I saw the look in their eyes as we arrived...those who had survived every hideous torture known to man. Their tears of joy and jubilation had finally been validated." Other memories haunt Robert Mamlin still. "Crematoriums... the smell of dead bodies. Half-buried women holding babies, their pitiful rags cast aside. They thought they were going to the showers and someone would launder their clothes...but they were gassed. They were just mothers holding their children in the showers. They had no idea."

Robert and his unit came into Dachau with other American troops serving under General George Patton in April 1945. Because he could speak Yiddish and some German, he was able to communicate with the inmates. Many told of the desperate final days at Dachau when the guards panicked and lost control as they learned that the Americans were advancing.

He remembers a young boy of fourteen who had lost his entire family. "By his brains and wit, he survived. He said he couldn't visualize that a Jewish

## Artifacts

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

soldier could actually enter the camps to help free Jewish inmates." The concept was equally overwhelming to Robert, whose military mission was also a personal one. He felt chosen, he says. "It gave me great satisfaction to be there as Jews were liberated."

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## Nessy Marks

**Knoxville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1924 Pöszeiten, Lithuania**

**Survivor: Kovno ghetto**

"My five friends and I made a commitment to each other in the ghetto," says Nessy Marks: "Whoever survives must teach and tell the others. I am the only survivor, and I have kept my promise."

Lithuanian survivor Nessy Marks, her parents, and her four brothers were relocated to the Kovno ghetto after Nazis occupied their town in October 1938. What she remembers the most is betrayal by others: "Lithuanian Jews may have had a chance, but the locals-police, neighbors, it didn't matter-if you were Jewish, you were reported."

"It was also a loss of our humanity," recalls Nessy. "We walked in fear, wore stars on our clothes to identify us as though we were criminals...our heads were so confused. You knew you were not dead but you were literally not really alive." She thinks about the children in the ghetto: "They would come in and murder the children for one stupid, made-up reason or another. Every day you lived in fear."

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Nessy's parents decided the only way to make sure she would survive was to place her in hiding. "I was slipped away and was hidden with a Catholic family for a few months. Rumors came to me that my parents were murdered and I wanted to return to the ghetto but my foster family wouldn't let me."

Nessy answered an employment ad seeking domestic help. Fluent in German, she took the position, but was warned by someone who guessed she was Jewish that bounty hunters were after her and would turn her in to the Nazis. Within days, she was offered safe transport to a farm in northern Germany, where she remained until liberation in 1945.

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

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# Rose Marton

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1927 Chust, Czechoslovakia (Now Ukraine)**

**Survivor: Chust ghetto, Auschwitz Concentration Camp**

"After we were liquidated from the Chust ghetto, we were taken to Auschwitz," recalls Rose Marton. "The train was unbearable-no light, no water, no place to use the bathroom. We were like animals-that's why they called them cattle cars, I suppose."

Thirteen-year-old Rose saw her family for the last time. "I was crying and clinging to my mother, who tried to hold on to all three of the children," she recounts. "They ripped me from her, hit me over the head to make me move, and I let go of her."

Auschwitz was "hell on Earth," she says. "We were about five to a bunk. If anyone wanted to turn over, everyone had to turn over in order to move. In the middle of the night we had to stand outside for hours in the freezing cold, with no shoes on, so we could be counted. If anyone flinched, it meant a bullet to their head."

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

The SS called for seventy "beautiful girls for private secretarial work," she recalls, who were required to have "soft and clean hands." Fortunately, she says, "I had a rash on my hands and decided not to volunteer. I later heard that those women were used in a way that is shameful and then we never saw them again. It is strange to think my infected hands saved my life."

Rose worked in an airplane factory near Hamburg, Germany, with four hundred other female inmates. Learning that the Russian Army was near, she and others left on foot. Scared and starving, they walked west for two days. "When we saw the Americans, we came out of hiding and felt safe for the first time in a very long time."

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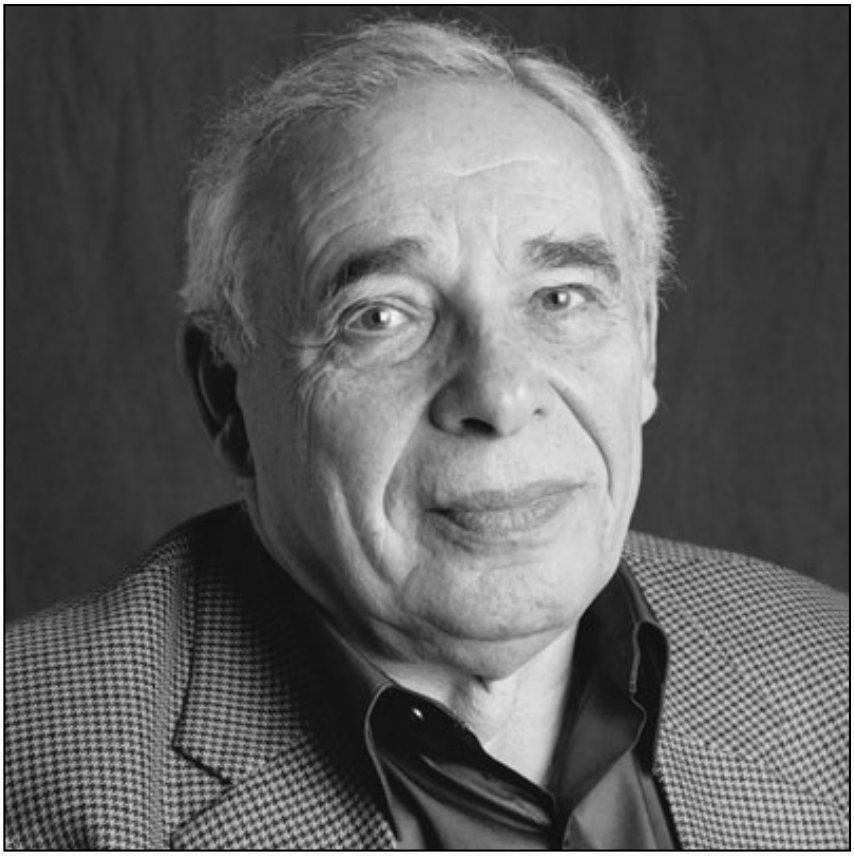

## George Messing

**Knoxville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1933 Budapest, Hungary**

**Survivor; Hidden Child: Hungary**

"We realized this was not good and understood that we were being collected for worse things. As they marched us away single file, my brother and I slipped out of line and escaped," recalls George Messing.

When George was ten, his father was taken away by Hungarian authorities and forced to work at a military uniform factory. George's mother moved her young sons out of the city and found a job.

When Germany invaded Hungary the following March, George's father bribed a guard and got away. "He came to us and took my brother and me to a children's safe house that had a Swiss flag outside. We thought it neutral territory and we would be out of danger there. My mother went into hiding in a small town called Kiraly with her cousin. She gave us her address should we need it." A week later his father was taken to Mauthausen concentration camp.

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

When ten-year-old George and his eight-year-old brother slipped away from the children's home, they went to their father's former place of business. Hungarian soldiers saw them there. "They admired our escape. They said how smart we were and spared us." They took them to another children's home. "Several months later, the Nazis raided this shelter, too. We escaped again," says George. They searched for their mother. A sympathetic Hungarian soldier located her in the Budapest ghetto and brought her out.

They managed to rent an apartment where no one knew they were Jewish. "We lived on that fifth floor until it was over," George recalls. A year later, his father returned. He had walked two hundred miles. They left for Paris and never looked back.

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## Helene Messing

**Knoxville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1934 Paris, France**

**Hidden Child: France**

"We stayed at that farm until 1942," Helene Messing recalls. "Most of us were together. The younger siblings were at a home for infants and my older brother was at a teen shelter. We could visit twice a year, which was nice. "They never talked about the fact that they were Jewish." No one could know."

Helene was five years old when she and her five brothers and sisters boarded a train to a secret destination. Their parents stayed in Paris, hoping the French government's relocation plan would keep their children safe. When Helene was eight, her parents, who missed the children desperately, sent for them to return to Paris. Soon after, on his way home from work, her father was arrested for being out past curfew. He died at Auschwitz concentration camp. Helene recalls, "After losing the children for so long, then learning my father had been killed, my mother had a nervous breakdown. She was taken to a psychiatric hospital. Our mother didn't

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

recognize us anymore, she couldn't care for us; really, we were on our own. The younger ones don't even remember her."

The children returned to the French countryside and remained hidden until 1946. To avoid suspicion, they attended church every Sunday. Helene wrote to relatives asking for money to buy a Catholic rosary and communion book. She says, "My uncle read that and right away contacted a Jewish agency. They arranged for us to move to a shelter run by Orthodox Jews." Helene met her future husband at a Jewish home for teens; "He spoke a little German, I spoke a little Yiddish, and we made it work."

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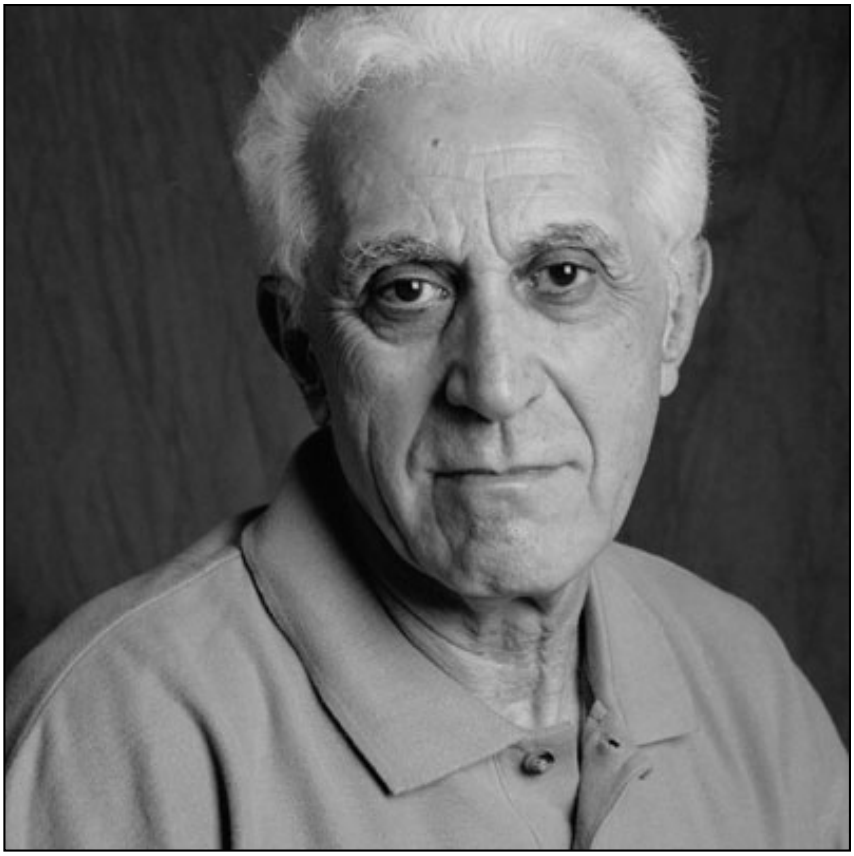

# Roman Mitelman

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1935 Minsk, Belarus**

**Refugee: United States**

"I look at my life before in many ways," says Roman Mitelman. "I had about a 98% chance of becoming a victim. If we are vigilant enough, we need to use our experiences to make sure nothing like this happens again. Can we eradicate evil? I don't know, but we can sure work hard enough to try."

At age six, Roman Mitelman began a struggle for survival. After Germany invaded the Soviet Union, his father had one hour to report for Soviet Army duty. He arranged for his pregnant wife and small son to go east. Roman recalls, "I understood that we were escaping the Germans but knew nothing more. No one spoke to the children about it." Minsk was occupied by German soldiers less than five days later.

The train was awful, Roman relates: "I remember the sign on the cattle car read, 'Capacity: 8 horses.' We were not eight horses. We were forty people and we weren't even prisoners then- we were refugees. We had food because we used coupons for bread, but the sanitation was a huge problem.

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

There was no way to wash yourself or get clean water. We were treated like refugees in our own country. Our own country! We lived like strangers."

"My sister died, three weeks after she was born, from an infection," recounts Roman. "We lived on those cargo trains for three months. It was no way to live and it was no place for a child...a baby at that. "By November he and his mother were in the Ukrainian village of Kugali. "Many had never met a Jewish person before. They were kind to us," he recalls.

His father was wounded on the Moscow front. His mother developed typhus. "My father came to take us to a better hospital in Moscow," remembers Roman."[My mother] was very weak and sick, but wanted to see our hometown again. The sight of the devastated city tore her heart out. She died a few weeks later at the age of twenty-nine."

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# Lea Slomovic Naft and Sara Slomovic Seidner

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1927 Kolockawa, Czechoslovakia**

**Survivors: Sekernice ghetto; Stutthof Slave Labor Camp; Auschwitz Concentration Camp**

Lea and her sister Sara Slomovic grew up in a small town in Czechoslovakia's Carpathian mountains. There were only 50–60 families, mostly Christians. Due to their self-sufficiency as a farm family, the Slomovic family kept to themselves during the first years of Nazi domination. In 1941, they were put under house arrest, made to wear yellow stars, and no longer allowed in the streets. Officials ordered every family out for questioning, then released them after 24 hours. They heard rumors about people being taken to ghettos, and one day even saw a line of Jews marching through from another town. The soldiers came for them at the end of 1942, Lea recalls, "they said get your belongings, you have to go."

The two sisters managed to stay together as they were moved from ghetto to labor camp to concentration camp. At one point on a long march, Lea

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

became so sick she couldn't eat. Sara and a friend half-carried her through the snow. Finally liberated by Allied soldiers at Putzk, Lea recalls that Sara somehow found a goose, made soup, and nursed her back to health. Today Sara is no longer able to cook, so it is Lea who prepares the weekly family meal.

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# Olivia Newman

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1938 Vienna, Austria**

**Hidden Child: Germany**

"Now listen, my child, I was always searching for God." Olivia Newman found these parting words in her mother's journal after she died." Maybe she lost her faith? I don't know. She was always looking for some reason... something to explain all of this," says Olivia.

As a small child in Vienna, Olivia remembers kissing her father as he was being taken away. She never saw him again. She and her mother moved secretly to Hamburg, Germany, in 1941. They were no longer Austrian Jews; they were now German gentiles to anyone who asked.

"I don't remember practicing Judaism, but I do remember my mother lighting imaginary candles on Friday nights. She would also speak to her cousin in a different language, one I later learned was Yiddish." One December her mother placed a tiny Christmas tree on the table. The tree had eight candles on it, a symbolic reference to Chanukah.

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

It was not until the age of twenty-six that Olivia discovered that her father was Jewish and that he had perished in a concentration camp. She learned of her family's religious heritage from her mother's journal. Its old German script and cursive Hebrew writing revealed a history from which she had been protected.

"I suspect she left them for me," says Olivia. "I can't imagine what she must have gone through. Her imaginary ceremonies were signs of how much she missed that life. Ironically, without ever knowing it, I came to Judaism, never wanting to belong to anything else."

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Max Notowitz

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1927 Kolbuszowa, Poland**

**Survivor: Kolbuszowa ghetto, Pustkow Slave Labor Camp**

"The Germans posted proclamations that Jews must wear white armbands on their right arms," recalls Max Notowitz. "If you wore an armband, you could work on certain days. I volunteered to work and proved I was a hard worker. It was one of the things that saved me."

Thirteen-year-old Max was alone. His father was murdered at Auschwitz in 1941. His mother and two siblings were killed after their ghetto was liquidated. He recounts, "They were unloaded from the train, undressed, marched off into the trenches, and machine-gunned down." In 1942 Max went to Pustkow, a slave labor camp near Krakow. He says, "Our job was to clear the forest: cut down trees and dig out stumps so the Nazis could build factories." Just as they were about to be transported, probably to the death camp at Belzec, Max learned about a planned escape. "One man asked me to go with them, and I agreed," he relates. They succeeded, hiding in surrounding forests until Russians liberated the area in 1944.

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Only then could Max begin to accept the loss of his entire family. "I was deprived of the gradual change from childhood to teenager to adulthood," he muses. "I didn't exhibit any emotions during the war, but it really came out after liberation when I realized how different my life was from others who had never suffered." Eventually he moved to Warsaw and became secretary/treasurer for the American-German Distribution Committee, a refugee relief agency.

Today, he says, "I have and gain a lot of strength from Judaism. In every way it is who I am."

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Reva Oks

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1917 Goworowo, Poland**

**Survivor: Siberian Forced Labor Camp**

"My father left one Friday morning to get Shabbat candles and didn't come back. He was rounded up with other Jews and locked into a synagogue. They were left there for hours and thought that they would be burned to death when the building was set on fire, but were finally released. I don't know why. There is so much about this that I just can't explain," ponders Reva Oks.

Reva grew up in a small town. In the summer of 1941 Nazi soldiers arrived and called all Jews out of their houses. Reva says, "They lined us up and forced us to stand for hours. My family was kept together on one side of the line." Miraculously, they were let go. They went to Bialystok and hid in a Yeshiva, a former religious school.

Her parents then sent Reva and her sister to Russia to scout for places to live. Reva recalls, "My older sister thought we would never be able to return to Poland and wanted to go back." Before they could return, Russian soldiers dispatched them to Siberia. Her parents and younger sister, living in a "safe"

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

town near the Russian border, were shot and killed by Germans. In Siberia, Reva contracted malaria. She says, "We worked in a coal mine and it was very hard work. There was no food and it was bitter cold in the winter. We were sent into the surrounding forest to cut trees, which was worse."

At war's end, Reva and her sister wanted to return to Poland but found it impossible to do so. She met her future husband in Germany.

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Arthur Pais

**Knoxville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1927 Ukmerge, Lithuania**

**Survivor: Kovno ghetto, Dachau Concentration Camp**

"My sister carried my mother through the death march.[My mother] died one month after liberation...we were very grateful to know that she was buried. What a thing to be grateful for," says Arthur Pais, who was among the ten percent of Lithuanian Jewry to survive the Holocaust.

Pushed into the Kovno ghetto after his town was destroyed, Arthur remembers, "German soldiers came in during a workday and took all the children and older people and shot them." Those who remained were loaded into boxcars. When the train stopped, Arthur's mother and sister were rerouted to Stutthof, a concentration camp in Poland. Arthur says of the last time he saw his mother, "My only memory of that day is of her crying." Arthur, his father, and his brother were sent to Dachau.

After working fifteen-hour shifts for weeks on end and surviving on watery soup and a daily slice of moldy bread, the inmates at Dachau heard rumors about the advance of the American Army. The Germans evacuated the

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

camp, forcing the prisoners into a death march. Arthur's father, too weak to move on, stayed behind.

Starving, exhausted, and ill, Arthur and his brother pressed on toward the Bavarian Alps. When they awoke one May morning, they discovered that the guards had fled. They wandered to the nearest town. A few days later, American troops took them to Munich. It was there that Arthur found his father, just barely alive, and learned that his mother had at least lived long enough to see her home once again.

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Robert Ray, Jr.

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1920 Nashville, Tennessee**

**Liberator: Nordhausen Concentration Camp**

"I will never forget April 11,1945. I don't know that if I hadn't seen it myself, I would believe it... I honestly can't tell you that...it was just so, so horrible. But I can tell you...I may not have stayed very long in Nordhausen, but after what I saw...it was long enough."

Entering Nordhausen, American soldier Robert Ray, Jr. thought it would be just another town. The Nazi guards had fled and the Third Armored Division came upon a cold, dark compound. Electrified fencing surrounded what looked like military barracks. The soldiers used tanks to plow through the center of a wall.

Robert's first sight is one he will never forget: "Skeletons running towards us...crazed. "Not sure what to do, he and the other troops gave up their only rations...and cigarettes. The prisoners didn't smoke them; they ate them, he says. "That's what starvation did to them." Robert didn't write home about the four hours he spent at Nordhausen. In fact, he never spoke about it

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

again, but he says that afternoon at the camp fueled his anger to win the war. Sixty years later, he can still see their faces.

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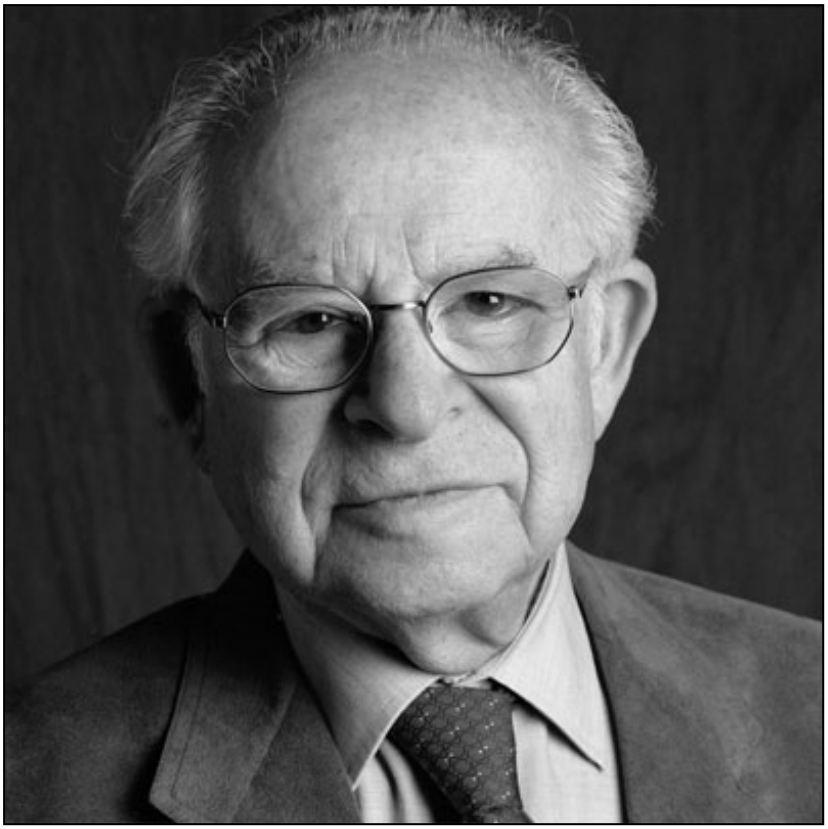

# Eric Rosenfeld

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1925 Seeheim, Germany**

**Refugee: Kindertransport; United States; U.S. Army witness**

"I asked him about my mother and what really happened to her. He told me he was ordered to send her and my uncle to Darmstadt. "At that moment, for German refugee-turned-American soldier Eric Rosenfeld, time stood still. "I carried a pistol; the war was not over. I was in complete control. If I shot him, I would not be held accountable. What he had done to my family, to my childhood... all the pain and suffering I had experienced...it was unforgivable. All because we were Jews."

With emotions churning, Eric drove the mayor of his former hometown back to city hall. "Finally my head cleared and I realized I would not let him make me the animal he was. My heart tells me to take revenge but my head tells me I cannot sink to his level."

In Germany in the late 1930s, Eric had seen schools and synagogues burned to the ground and businesses posting signs that said, "Jews bring us disaster" and "Jews perish." Eric and his mother appealed to the American Consulate for permission to enter the United States. He was assigned the

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

number 22,000, but his mother's number was 33,000; this variance ultimately meant life or death.

Eric left Germany for New York, where he could live with relatives. In 1944 he joined the American Army. "Because I could speak German fluently, I was assigned to the counterintelligence corps and advanced with the 103rd Infantry Division into Germany in April 1945." Eric and other soldiers entered his hometown of Seeheim just before Germany's surrender.

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# Eva Rosenfeld

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1927 Königsberg, Germany (Now Kaliningrad, Russia)**

**Refugee: Fort Ontario, Oswego, New York; United States**

"Both of my uncles and grandparents had made it to the United States and were desperately trying to get us there with no success." When Eva Rosenfeld's father fled to France on a fishing boat looking for a place to relocate his family, he left thirteen-year-old Eva behind. His decision made her both an orphan and a survivor.

In 1936 Eva was prohibited from attending public school, and her parents lost their right to work. They moved to Italy; her brother chose to stay and finish school. Eva recalls, "It was twenty-eight years before I saw him again."

Her mother died in Italy. When Italy allied with Germany, her father lost his business. After being jailed and released, he escaped to France to make arrangements to bring his family out of Nazi- occupied Europe. Eva stayed behind. When her father was captured and died in a concentration camp, she was orphaned at age thirteen.

Eva hid out with friends until she was seventeen, living in various places

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

with "very meager means. No running water or sanitation...lice, rats, and mice," and in "constant terror with German soldiers everywhere. It was never safe."

When the United States accepted 982 refugees from occupied Italy, Eva boarded an army ship with other "guests" of President Franklin Roosevelt. They were the only Jewish refugees allowed to enter the United States during wartime. Eva says, "I hardly ever spoke. I didn't realize it then, but I was totally traumatized by what happened to me. "Eva completed high school, learned English, and graduated from nursing school. "At my graduation in December 1948, I was finally independent."

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# Fridericka Saharovici

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1932 Targul Neamt, Romania**

**Survivor: Romania**

"Every day another city was taken over. Our region, Moldova, was one of the last places where mass amounts of Jews were sent to camps. They just didn't get to us in time. It was always a matter of time," says Fridericka Saharovici, who can remember her parents listening to radio broadcasts beneath the bed clothes. It was a time of secrecy and fear.

Romania, allied with Nazi Germany, entered the war in June 1941. German troops flooded the country, adding muscle to the Romanian Iron Guard and its policy of persecution of the country's Jews. Fridericka's father and seventeen other Jewish community leaders were taken hostage. "They said if anyone left the city, these men would be shot," she recalls. Her mother took her to the schoolhouse. She could see her father through a crack in the wall. "The guards were so cruel. They said he would be shot and killed tonight." By the next morning the men had been sent to a forced labor camp.

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

In April 1944, as Soviet troops fought their way across the border into Romania, the Jews of Targul Neamt were marched away from the front. "We walked for several days. I remember the rabbi who refused a ride on a wagon. He believed that as long as the poor and sick would walk, he would walk." Fridericka says the battle over Moldova was "so fierce we could not return home until late September. Romanians stayed in our homes and helped themselves to whatever they wanted. Everything was looted and destroyed."

Fridericka finished high school after the war ended. She went to university in Bucharest, where she met her husband, Leonid.

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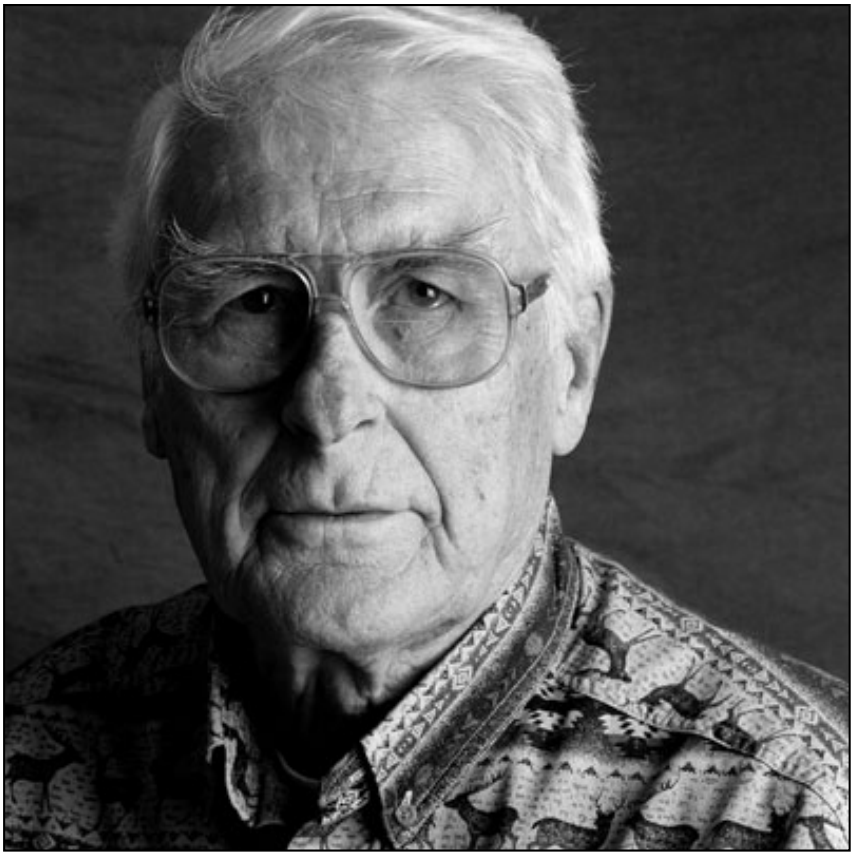

# Raymond Sandvig

**Hermitage, Tennessee**

**Born: 1920 Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

**Witness: Military Liaison, Nuremberg War Crimes Trials**

"I worked up a plan so they could attend and realize this was serious and we weren't just there for revenge or show," says Ray Sandvig, an American Army officer involved in the Nuremberg Trials. He adds that it was "very important to me to let the Germans believe in what we were doing."

The Nuremberg Trials were convened by the Allied powers to sit in judgment on those suspected of crimes against humanity during World War II. When Ray thinks back, he is overwhelmed. "I remember one day just sitting at my desk and tears came running down my cheek," he says. "It was just too much, you know, too much hitting the body all at once. It was part of history, a time for retribution. A very important time for many."

Ray was surprised to see how many German civilians supported the process. Many were quick to denounce Nazism- a protest that could have cost them their lives just months before. He recalls the "doctors' trial" for those who performed medical testing and experimentation on Jewish prisoners. He

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

heard a witness describe how German physicians froze fully conscious live subjects in an experiment to determine the limits the human body could withstand. The victims often died or were permanently disfigured.

Twenty-two "major" German and Austrian war criminals were tried during eleven months of hearings at Nuremberg. Other tribunals throughout Europe would continue the work begun at Nuremberg, and a number of low-level officials were convicted, but many Nazis and Nazi collaborators were never brought to justice.

Keyword search all categories

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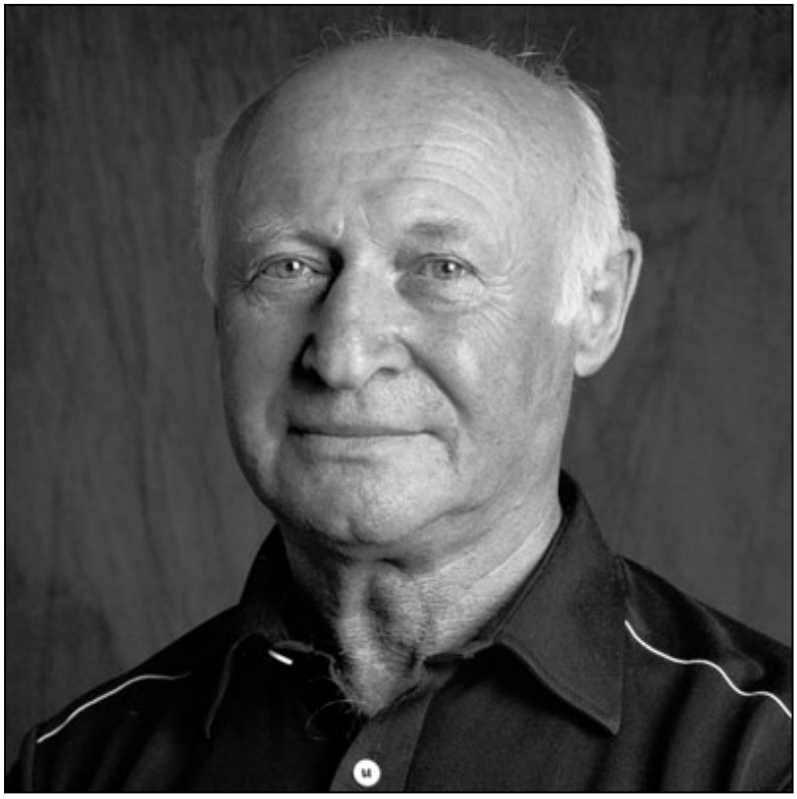

# Alexander Savranskiy

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1930 Tomashpol, Ukraine**

**Survivor: Tomashpol ghetto**

"They hated us, they prepared for our deaths...but why?" Alexander Savranskiy still wonders why the Jewish people were targeted for extermination by the Nazis. "I don't know. I was never really the same. How could a boy be changed so deeply, so permanently? I was."

Alexander's hometown was occupied by German soldiers after Russia was invaded. When his father became sick with a high fever, they learned that prescriptions were forbidden to Jews. "My mother and grandmother tried to help by wrapping him in linens," remembers Alexander, "but since we were not allowed to have medicine or even buy it, we could not save him."

After his father died, his mother moved to nearby Vinnitsa to earn a living for the family. Eleven-year-old Alexander and his grandmother were sent to the Tomashpol ghetto. His cousins were rounded up to go to work; instead they were shot to death, and their bodies fell into a common grave.

When the Soviet Army re-took the town three years later, he recalls, "we heard the shooting first but we never believed the Russians could win. It was strange. Even though they liberated us, they were hateful to us. They rescued us but called us 'dirty Jews' the whole time." At war's end,

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Alexander and his mother stayed in Vinnitsa for several years while he tried to catch up in school. Even now, he says, "you can still see the sadness in the Jewish eyes. When I can't sleep at night now, it is always because of that. I see them still."

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

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## Gertrude Schlanger

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1925 Sobrance, Czechoslovakia(Now Slovakia)**

**Survivor: Auschwitz Concentration Camp**

"Eat whatever they feed you... please... you need it so you will survive," were the parting words of a father to his three daughters, spoken through a fence dividing parents from children. "It was at separation," Gertrude

### Artifacts

### Multimedia

### Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

know that would be the last time you would see each other. You could have said goodbye; instead, you looked at each other... terrified... and then it was over."

Gertrude and her sisters spent the winter of 1945 in Auschwitz hauling potatoes in the bitter cold. As rumors circulated about possible liberation by the Russian Army, Gertrude and twenty- two others decided to try to escape. On a forced march from a camp she can barely recall, she says, "we were put in haystacks to sleep. We hid beneath the hay and when the guard called on us to start walking, we stayed behind in the straw." No one noticed as the women fled the next day. Gertrude and her sisters boarded a train. "We had heard the Russians had come in and I guess we thought we could safely ride a train. No money, no food, barely any clothes... I suppose we just didn't care anymore." No one asked them for train fare.

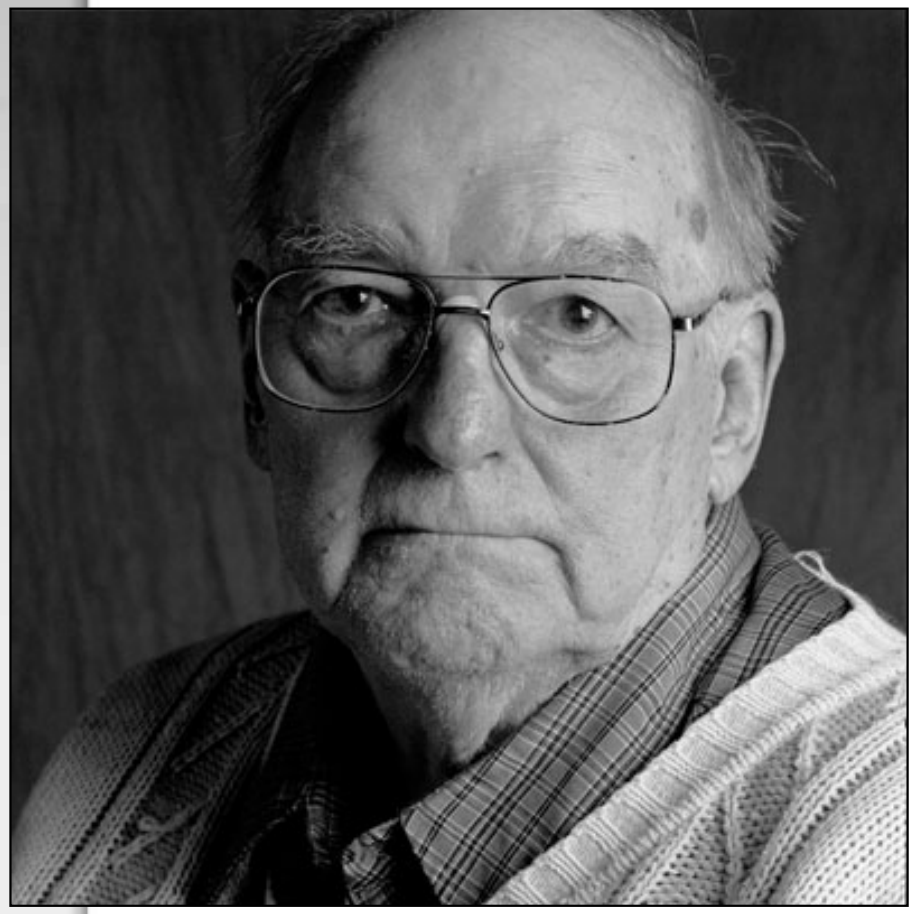
Because they were among the first Jews to return to Czechoslovakia, they were able to retrieve their home and its furnishings from their neighbors. Gertrude muses, "People have told me they think I just tell stories about what happened... they didn't lose their whole family in a line... they have no idea what pain is."

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit



## Ralph Schulz

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1926 Alton, Illinois**

**Witness: Special Services Officer, Nuremberg War Crimes Trials**

"Good Germans are being put to death in gas chambers," read a headline in a Catholic periodical in 1945. Ralph Schulz recalls this news bulletin as the first he had heard of the atrocities against the Jews.

Artifacts

Multimedia

Biographies by Category

Because he could speak German, infantryman Ralph Schulz was sent to Germany in 1945 to assist US Army lawyers with the Nuremberg Trials. "My job overseas was to provide documents and evidence for the trials and particularly those being tried," he says. He spoke to many survivors, and he was present during Hermann Göring's trial.

Göring, a senior Nazi official, had been responsible for giving the order to carry out the Final Solution, the plan for the total destruction of the Jews in Europe. Ralph recalls that Göring was delusional and thought the judge "and everyone there would just snap to attention, follow his orders, and accept his testimony." Ralph says, "He genuinely believed he had served the German people with honor." Although he knows the survivors suffered at hearing Göring's testimony, Ralph says that "there was healing for them, too...at being present as he was brought to justice." He continues, "Göring wasn't right. He was grasping for a rationale. Many were. But, it was a time for justice. "Göring was found guilty on all counts but committed suicide in prison just hours before his scheduled hanging.

"The job was tough emotionally," Ralph remembers. As he returned to the United States in March 1947, he carried the weight of all he had seen and heard at Nuremberg with him.

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

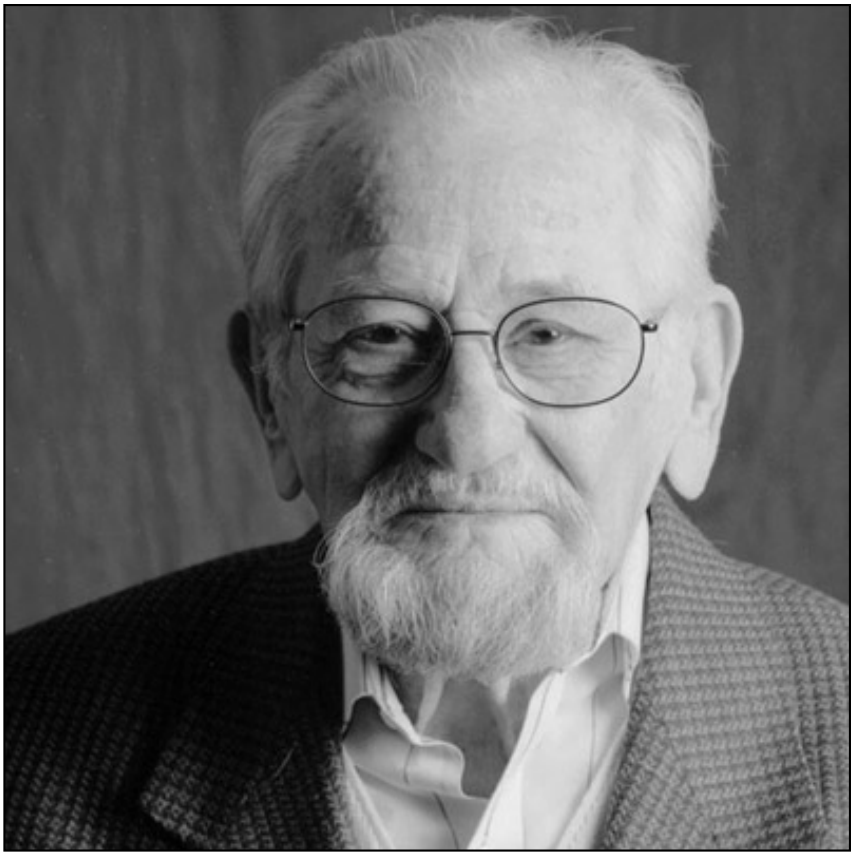
Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit



## Jack Seidner

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1921 Lujan, Romania (Ukraine)**

**Survivor: Transniester Forced Labor Camp**

"I lost a lot of my life for nothing but we made it and we're here," says Jack Seidner. His ordeal began in 1941 and didn't end until he made it to Nashville in 1954.

Jack grew up in the Bukovina region, in formerly Austrian Romania. Lujan, a small farm town, had two synagogues and 100 Jewish families. In 1940, they found themselves caught between Romanian Iron Guard troops and unsympathetic Ukrainian neighbors. He and others were sent to the Transniester, a contested border region, to work on the railroad under German and Ukrainian guard. When they returned, their homes had been emptied. They were held in a sugar factory, then force-marched north into Poland. The elderly rode in buggies. "I put my mother in one and my father in another," Jack recalls, "and the young people had to march in front and we got there in the morning and the only people who disappeared that night were my father and mother and another couple. What happened to them

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

that night I will never know, they must have killed them..."

After three months' march, only 300 were left from an original group of 1,500. Jack worked at hard labor in Poland until the end of 1944, when he was put on a train headed for a concentration camp in Germany. Russian airplanes bombed the train and the prisoners ran into the woods and escaped. At war's end, hoping to immigrate to Palestine, Jack found his way to a Jewish agricultural training facility near Bucharest. It was there he met his future wife Sara Slomovic and her sister Lea.

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## Erika Sigel

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1927 Bardejov, Czechoslovakia (Now Slovakia)**

**Hidden Child: Czechoslovakia**

"As a child I had a best friend who wasn't Jewish," recalls Erika Sigel. "I was like a member of her family until Hitler came into power with all his lies. They shut the door on me and our relationship forever after that."

### Artifacts

### Multimedia

### Biographies by Category

At first Erika's father was granted special permission to stay in Czechoslovakia because he was a grocer and, as she puts it, "the town needed him." One of her brothers found her a live-in job as a housekeeper with a family who was willing to keep her Judaism a secret. Erika took the Jewish star off her clothing so she could buy food at the market." There was one gentile girl who knew I was Jewish but she never gave me away," she says. "I got to feel normal for a few minutes at a time."

Then her mother and her four brothers were sent to Auschwitz. Sorrowfully she says, "I had no contact with them at all before they left." Her father was taken away soon afterward. The family she stayed with treated her decently. German soldiers occupying the town moved into the house where she had been raised. She says of those days, "I pretended not to understand German so the soldiers couldn't figure out I was Jewish. I had to have a poker face. I couldn't laugh or cry or even look their way. I was always on guard."

When the Russian Army liberated the town, Erika volunteered to work in a soup kitchen for those returning from concentration camps. She says, "I worked for free hoping to see some of my family come back." One of her brothers arrived at the kitchen and they went to Belgium to secure a visa for travel to the United States.

Erika laments, "Of my four brothers, three came back. My parents and youngest brother died in Auschwitz. It was a horrible, horrible time but I was grateful to the family that kept me alive." Erika remains in touch with the family who gave her refuge. She sends them a gift of money every year.

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Ella Silber

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1924 Jonava, Lithuania**

**Survivor: Stutthof And Dachau Concentration Camps**

"We had heard some gossip about the Germans but back then," says Ella Silber, "if you didn't see it, you didn't really believe it. I mean who could believe such things?"

In 1940 Ella Silber's hometown in Lithuania was taken over by Russians. A year later, Germans arrived and forced Ella, her mother, and her three brothers into a ghetto. "We had to share a house with another family and wore yellow Stars of David on our clothing. I worked all day long doing hard, manual labor, but I was young. Young enough to withstand it, I suppose."

Three years later, Ella was sent to a concentration camp. She never saw her family again. "They were all killed in the ghetto," she says. "In the last days of the war, we were thrown out of our barracks and forced to begin a death march," she recalls, and when leaving Dachau, "we were given a piece of bread and a tin of soup for the journey."

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

As American troops advanced, thousands of prisoners stumbled south in the freezing cold. German guards shot anyone who could no longer continue. Ella awoke one day to find the guards gone.

At an American-run displaced persons' camp, Ella met the man she would marry and was reunited with her second cousin, who was an American soldier. As she tells it, "He returned looking for relatives and found only me." She continues, "I can't understand why the Holocaust happened, I just know I don't like to talk about it. Make no mistake. I remember everything, but it is very hard to talk about it."

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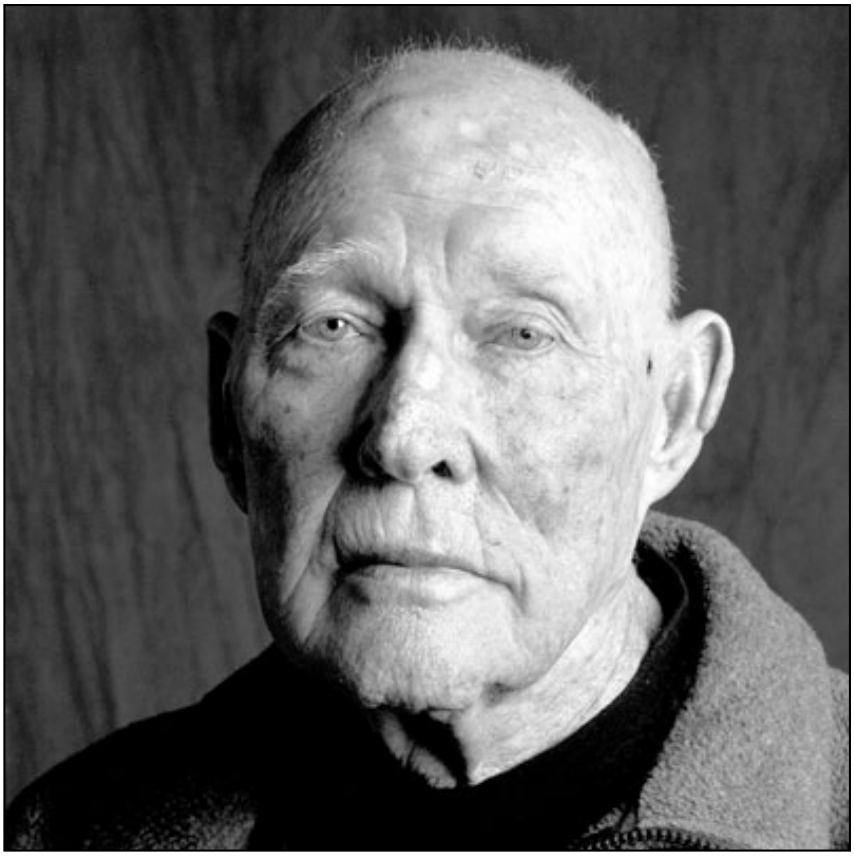

# Harry Snodgrass

**Mt. Juliet, Tennessee**

**Born: 1922 Johnson City, Tennessee**

**Liberator: Buchenwald Concentration Camp**

"Inmates everywhere. Some dead and some alive under the dead...just lying there. I couldn't think. No thoughts came to my head. Only horror. I had never seen anything like this before." As they drove into Buchenwald concentration camp in April 1945, Harry Snodgrass recalls a fellow American soldier saying to him, "There isn't a God in heaven...no God at all."

He toured the camp with a Lithuanian inmate who spoke broken English. Harry's voice trails off as he recalls the memories. "It was in the commander's office. There were lampshades made from the skin of Jews. In the crematorium they used the ashes of the inmates to fertilize the fields- the ashes of dead people. After an hour, it just became too much. I was stunned...just stunned. We don't even treat dogs like this."

Harry and the other soldier retreated and moved on to Berlin as ordered. For Harry, the hour at Buchenwald became six decades of nightmares. He had enlisted in the army at age twenty, and although he knew of the hate the

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

Germans had for the Jews, he was shocked at the atrocities. With pain evident in his eyes, Harry struggles with the complacency of the local townspeople living near the camp: "They saw the trains going in but no one saw them leave. If they say they didn't know what was happening, they were lying."

Today Harry Snodgrass speaks to schools and gatherings about what he saw as a liberator. He stresses the danger of racial and religious divisiveness. "I tell them what I have known all my life...for evil to exist it just takes good people to do nothing."

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# Paula Stein

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1926 Bendzin, Poland**

**Survivor: Bendzin ghetto; Mauthausen Concentration Camp**

"When it became too much at the camp, I would dream. I would dream about Shabbos, about my mother baking challah, my father saying the prayers... I could not have survived without pretending even for a few moments that I was anywhere but here in this hell," recounts survivor Paula Stein.

In September 1939, German soldiers forced Paula's family and other building residents into the backyard. "My father put his prayer shawl under his coat in case he would need to pray," she remembers. The soldiers lined women up on one side and men on the other. "My father and brother were shot right in front of us," says Paula, "I was holding my younger sister at the time. My mother could not move."

They spent the night in her uncle's cellar. The next day her mother insisted on returning to bury the dead. "We carried their bodies ourselves and dug their graves with our hands," says Paula. They were sent to the ghetto. "We

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

were cold and we were hungry but the truth is nothing could hurt us after what we had just seen."

In 1943, her mother, grandmother and sister were put on a train to Auschwitz. Paula's train went to Mauthausen, where girls lived 24 to a room. In March 1945, they were marched out in advance of the Allies. She and another fled and were freed by the Soviet Army on May 5. Paula sought information on relatives at displaced persons' camps. In 1948, at a DP camp in Italy, she met and married Sol. Her aunt helped bring them to Memphis.

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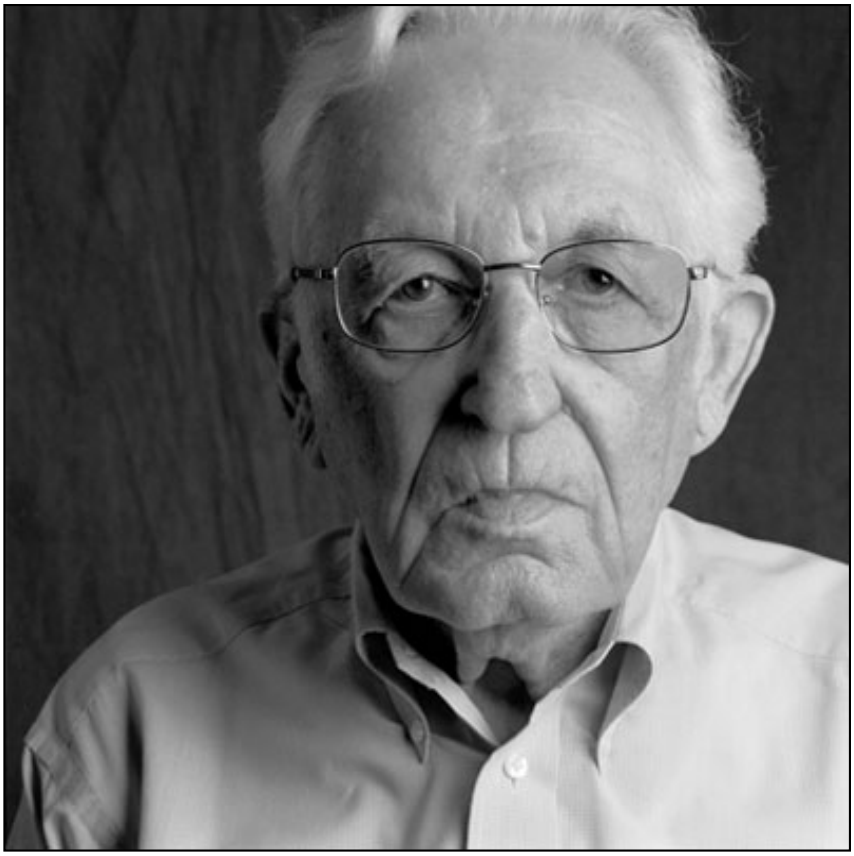

## Sol Stein

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1920 Slobodka, Lithuania**

**Survivor: Kovno Ghetto, Dachau Concentration Camp**

"What I remember most about the Lithuanians was the betrayal," says Sol Stein. "We had a neighbor who we fed and cared for regularly but when the Germans moved in, he turned us in to them. Just like that. We went from feeding and helping him to hiding from him."

After the German invasion in 1941, anti-Semitism spread. Sol's mother fled to Russia, leaving her five children behind. The Germans forced Sol and his four sisters into Kovno ghetto. Digging ditches kept him alive: "I was always used to hard work. I think the hard work of the ghetto kept me moving, kept me clear-headed."

Sol was later transported to Dachau in a railcar crammed with a hundred people. His job at the camp was loading bags of cement. He says, "There was a guard who used to give me a piece of bread. I don't know why. He was kind I guess." Once he was caught praying. "A guard saw us. He knew what we were doing so he took us outside. In the freezing weather he

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

sprayed ice water on us. It was so cold, but we would have done it again."

In 1945, as the American Army advanced, the Germans evacuated. Sol recalls, "They told us they were marching us from Dachau to Switzerland, so we walked. We walked for weeks in the freezing cold. More than half of us died along the way." He describes coming upon a dead horse: "We went crazy, ripping it to pieces and eating it. In less than a few minutes there was nothing left of that horse. "At war's end, Sol weighed around seventy pounds.

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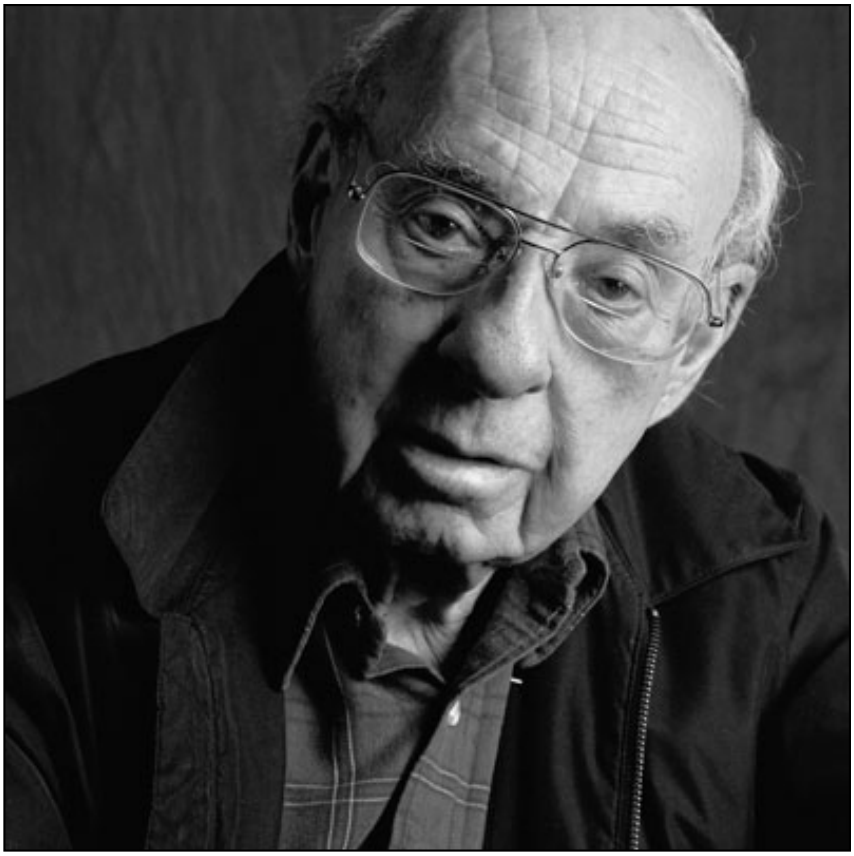

# Hans Strupp

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1921 Frankfurt, Germany**

**Refugee: United States**

"Some got out and some didn't. We were lucky that our family sponsorship arrived in time," recalls Hans Strupp, who counts himself very fortunate to have come to the United States in 1939.

Hans's American uncle completed the affidavit required for immigration to the United States, promising financial support so that Hans and his mother and brother could leave Germany. He remembers every difficult day leading up to their departure. The Nuremberg Laws passed in 1935 legally excluded Jews from German life and became the foundation for further anti-Jewish policies. Every element of life was upended, from public schools to employment, shopping, and entertainment. Some childhood friends no longer came around. Hans recalls, "We were human and then we weren't. It happened so quickly and yet it was probably always there."

Hans and his family left for the United States. Their furniture, photo albums, household goods, and clothing were neatly packed, but they never arrived.

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

"We were Jews. We weren't allowed the luxuries of even our own clothing."

Hans has never forgotten what might have been. "We knew we were lucky. We always knew. No one could anticipate what was to happen. Rumors, even at their worst, never revealed such a nightmare."

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## Raisa Terk (Kreymerman)

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1936 Mogilev, Ukraine**

**Refugee: United States**

Raisa Terk was only a child when her father was called into the Russian army. During the Nazi occupation, she fled with her mother and brother to Magnitogorsk. Her grandparents were pushed into the Mogilev ghetto and later perished at Mogilev/Podolskiy concentration camp. At war's end, her father came home and the family was able to return to Mogilev.

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

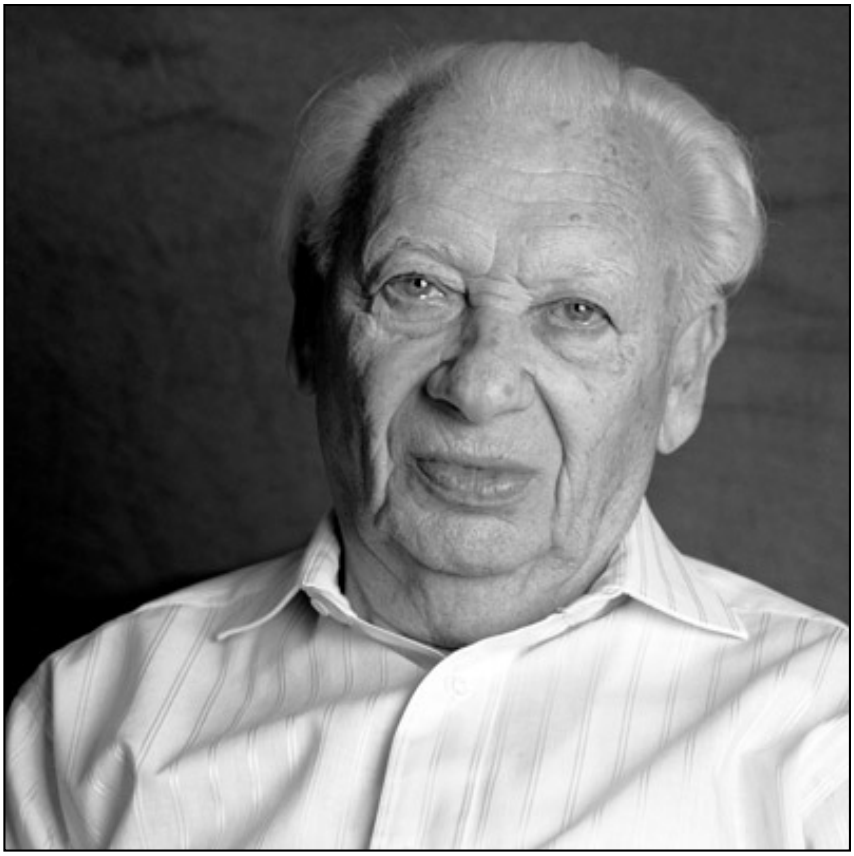
Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit



## Simon Waksberg

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1921 Lodz, Poland**

**Survivor: Lodz ghetto; Poznan and Andrzejewo Forced Labor Camps; Auschwitz and Flossenburg Concentration Camps**

"Do not hate, hate will eat you up. Remember the past but live for the future," says Simon Waksberg, who likes to speak to teenagers.

He was just 16 when Germany invaded Poland. The schools closed, including the Yeshiva he and his two brothers, grandsons of a Hasidic rabbi, attended. Jews were forced into a crowded ghetto. One day soldiers picked up everyone in the street. The imprisoned boy's father asked him to promise to be a good Jew and a good human being.

Forced into hard labor, Simon dug tunnels for a railway near Poznan, then cleared a forest near Andrzejewo. When he returned to the ghetto, his family was gone. He went into hiding, sleeping nights on a grocery table, and sneaking over the fence daily to eat with the factory workers. In 1944, the ghetto was emptied. "It was July,"Simon recalls "the sealed train took three days... we stripped off our clothes to cool down... when the doors

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

were finally opened (at Auschwitz), half the people were dead." Months later, as Allied troops advanced, the weak and starving prisoners were forced on a six-week march into Czechoslovakia and Germany. Out of thousands of marchers, only 150 survived to greet American liberators at Flossenburg Concentration Camp on April 23, 1945.

Simon, whose family had perished, soon married Mina, a Holocaust survivor, and moved into in a confiscated apartment in Regensberg, Germany. They took in Oskar Schindler, his wife Millie, and Czech secretary Marta, and became lasting friends. When Schindler left for Argentina, he offered them passage with Catholic documents, but Simon and Mina resolved to remain Jews.

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## Frieda Weinreich

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1924 Lódz, Poland**

**Survivor: Lódz ghetto, Auschwitz Concentration Camp, Parschnitz Slave Labor Camp**

"The inmates must have known that she was going to the crematorium. But I just held onto my mother as they dragged me away," says Frieda

### Artifacts

### Multimedia

### Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

saved my life. She died in a gas chamber."

Frieda had five brothers and sisters, loving parents, and a home in which she felt safe. Just months after her fifteenth birthday, the security she had known was gone." The war broke out and the Germans came to Lódz and began beating people up," she recalls. "Synagogues were burned down; schools for Jewish children were destroyed."

By December 1939 Frieda and her family were in the Lódz ghetto. "Life in the ghetto was cramped," she says. "We had limited food and no coal to heat our home. We were so cold and many people died from starvation." Her father was among them; he died in 1941.

Frieda and others prayed in secret, knowing that their Jewish faith bound them together. They honored the Sabbath in whatever way they could. "We saved potatoes through the year," she recalls, "so that during Passover we could go without bread and still survive."

In 1944 Frieda and her mother were sent to Auschwitz. It was there that fellow prisoners pulled her out of a line headed to the gas chambers. She survived to work as a bricklayer at Parschnitz, a labor camp in Czechoslovakia. Frieda reflects, "I have no idea how I survived long enough to see the Russian soldiers." They arrived on May 9, 1945.

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

## Sam Weinreich

**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Born: 1919 Lódz, Poland**

**Survivor: Lódz ghetto, Auschwitz and Dachau Concentration Camps**

"For days I only saw what looked like dead people walking. I held tightly to my wooden spoon and bowl...to be caught without it, you could not eat."

At Auschwitz concentration camp, Sam Weinreich labored by day covering

### Artifacts

### Multimedia

### Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

corpses with chlorine disinfectant. By night he sang for Nazi doctors for an extra piece of bread. His song - and maybe the bread - kept him alive. "I would sing a particular song that would always make this one Nazi cry."

Sam remembers his home in Poland and his eight brothers and sisters. He remembers the family-run furniture and antique shops. He remembers the piercing shout of a cyclist going door to door warning that the Germans were coming. "I fled to Warsaw to protest the treatment of the Jewish people, but the city was burning and people were starving. I returned home." When the Nazis seized his shop, Sam's father lost the ability to support his family. Cold and desperately hungry, they went willingly to what they thought would be a better place: the Lódz ghetto. Sam chopped wood all day for an extra bowl of soup. In 1944 he was deported to Auschwitz. He never saw anyone he knew again.

Later sent to Dachau, Sam managed to escape as he exited the train. "We walked through the forest for weeks...we were hungry...we had just about given up." One morning, as they slept, nearly frozen to death, on a bed of leaves, an American soldier found them. "This American soldier said he would take care of us...I never thought I would live to hear that. Ever."

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

# Fred Westfield

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1926 Essen, Germany**

**Refugee: Kindertransport; United States**

"We were taken to England and I didn't see my parents for eight long months." Even after his parents joined him, Fred Westfield says that a sweep of all German/Jewish immigrants in 1940 "sent [his] father to an internment camp. Winston Churchill feared they might be spies." Fred had boarded a train bound for London in 1939 as part of the Kindertransport, a British effort to save Germany's Jewish children from Nazi terror. Thirteen-year-old Fred was placed with a foster family until his parents could safely retrieve him. Weekly letters allowed them to keep in touch.

In 1936, at the first rumblings of civil unrest in Germany, Fred's parents had filed for United States visas. His fifteen-year-old brother had been allowed to emigrate, but Fred, his mother, and his father were trapped by the United States quota system, which granted only a certain number of Jewish refugees entry in a given year. The British, however, were accepting Jewish adults who could financially support themselves and would agree not to seek employment. The Westfields were assigned a number and told to wait their turn.

By the time their US visa number came up, Fred's parents were in England, but his father was being detained along with other German nationals. The US visa secured his release and the family boarded a ship from Liverpool,

## Artifacts

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

England, for New York. They were reunited with Fred's brother in Nashville.

# Dee Wolfe

**Erin, Tennessee**

**Born: 1922 Savannah, Tennessee**

**Witness: Buchenwald Concentration Camp**

Dee Wolfe's military police battalion was ordered to Buchenwald a few days after it was liberated in April 1945. They observed German citizens who were forced to go through the camp. Dee recalls,"It was about two or three miles from the nearby town and the people were made to walk out and observe. Some cried, some didn't have any feelings, anyway they got to see it."

Dee remembers being allowed to walk about freely, "When I went in through the gate I saw on the right a big building... with a smokestack that was probably a couple of hundred feet high... When I looked down to my right I saw corpses laying there stacked up like cordwood." He went into the basement, "I opened the furnace door and found partially burned body parts of people still there." He saw survivors in barracks that looked like chicken houses, "The places where the prisoners were sleeping were about 6 feet long and 15 to 20 inches high, just big enough for the prisoners to get in

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

and sleep. There wasn't cover of any kind or anything else and the only thing they had was that little stall, and that's where they stayed and slept."

Dee found it hard to see humans desperate for food, and not feed them, "but we'd been given orders not to give them anything so we didn't." Their commanders knew from experience that, for dehydrated and starving people, only careful re-acclimation to solid food would prevent the intestines from bursting.

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# Henry Wolkoff and Sally Abramczyk Wolkoff

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Born: 1914 and 1921 Lutomiersk, Poland; Pabianice, Poland**

**Survivors: Pabianice and Lódz Ghettoes; Auschwitz, Mauthausen, and Ebensee Concentration Camps; Pabianice and Lódz Ghettos; Auschwitz, Freiburg, and Mauthausen Concentration Camps**

"She just knows I know and there is comfort in that. We don't have to say anything. We understand the pain. We understand each other," says Henry Wolkoff, who met his wife, Sally, in the Pabianice ghetto.

He continues, "You wanted to talk to other people there. You could learn about what was going on in other places-mostly rumors-and sometimes you made a friend. We would walk together and talk." When the ghetto was closed in 1942 they lost touch. Both were deported to Lódz, and then to Auschwitz.

Sally remembers the last time she saw her family together: "It was in line awaiting separation at Auschwitz. Two of my sisters were sent to the airplane factory and my other sister and I were sent for office work." Her father's instructions were, "Whoever survives must return to Poland to find

## Multimedia

## Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

## Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit

each other."

Henry was sent to Mauthausen concentration camp and taken by cattle car to Ebensee. Sally survived Freiburg and Mauthausen. She whispers, "It is impossible for me to describe what I saw there at the camps. Death everywhere. Bodies, sickness...I just can't explain it." As she confronts the memories, she cries.

At liberation in May 1945, Sally was suffering from starvation and from typhus, a disease caused by lice and crowded, unsanitary living conditions. Henry, too, was sick with typhus. But both made their way back to Poland. When Sally saw Henry again, she says, "I knew he was the man I wanted to marry. I just looked at him and I knew." Henry reaches for her hand. "We don't talk about it. It is very hard for us," he says, bowing his head in memory of family members who did not survive.

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The photographs in this exhibition were taken by Robert Heller, Associate Professor, College of Communication and Information, The University of Tennessee.

Journalist Dawn Weiss Smith conducted, recorded, and transcribed the interviews.

Documentary filmmaker Will Pedigo of Nashville Public Television, who accompanied Heller and Smith as they traveled across the state, produced *Living On: Tennesseans Remembering the Holocaust.*

Interface design and programming for this website was done by J. Seth Johnson, Assistant Professor of Graphic Design, Department of Art, Middle Tennessee State University

*Living On* is a project of the Tennessee Holocaust Commission, which is funded by an annual appropriation from the Tennessee State Legislature and by private donations. Assistance in the development of this documentary project was provided, as well, by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. The traveling exhibition was curated by Susan W. Knowles. Please visit our website, www.tennesseeholocaustcommission.org, for more information on this and other public outreach programs.

Biographies by Category

Survivors

Refugees

Hidden Children

Liberators

U.S. Army Witnesses

Biographies with Video Interview

Biographies with Artifacts

Complete List

Search

Keyword search all categories

Submit