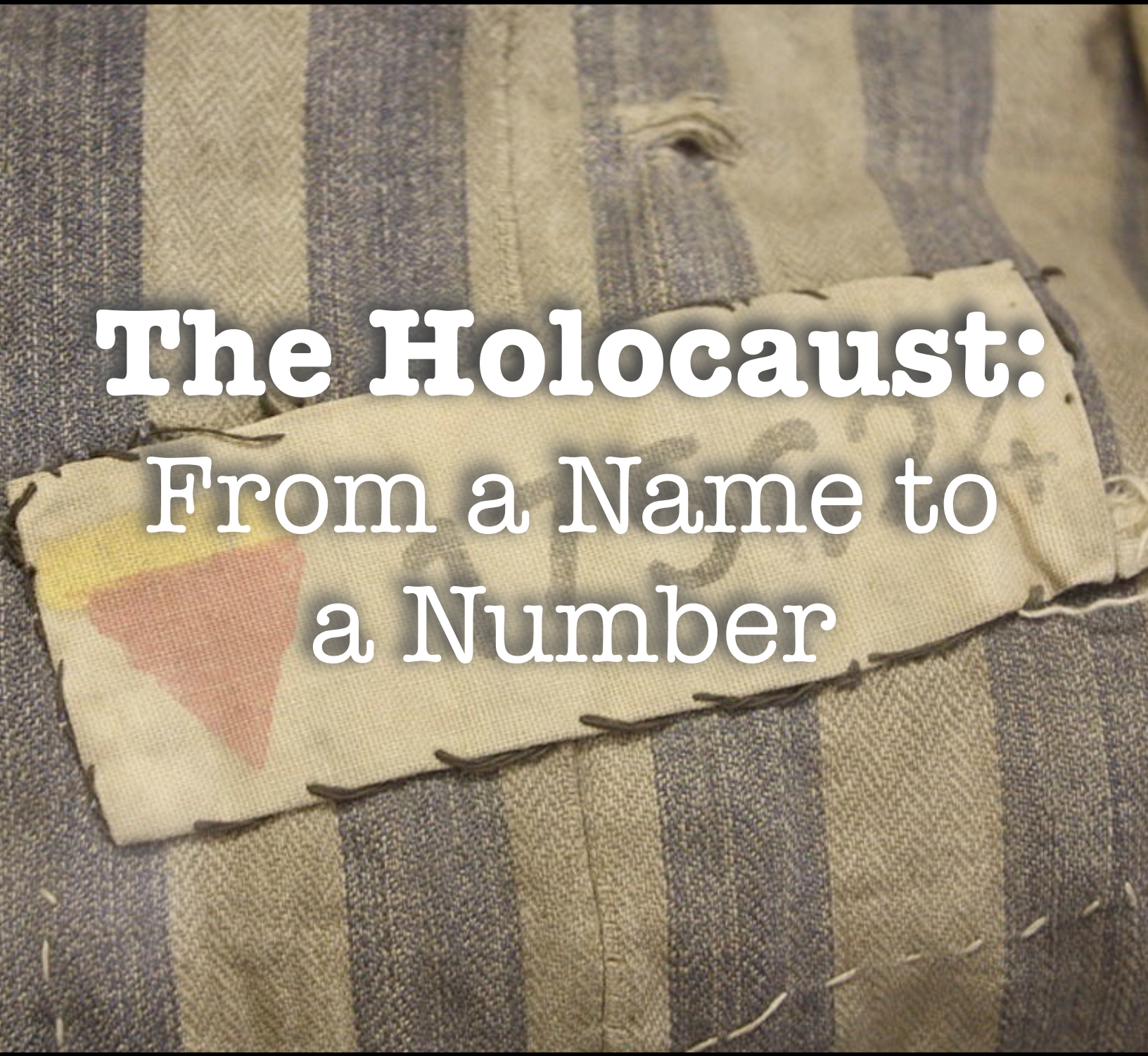




Teacher Curriculum Packet

Grades 6th - 8th



The Holocaust: From a Name to a Number

Presented by the
Eisenhower Foundation

The Holocaust

From a Name to a Number



INTRODUCTION

As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe, the Germans and their collaborators persecuted and murdered millions of other people deemed "inferior" and a threat to the German racial community. In this program, students will learn about the holocaust through the eyes of those persecuted.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will gain knowledge of the characteristics and value of primary sources and secondary sources.
- Students will become familiar with the stories of holocaust prisoners.
- Students will gain knowledge of identification systems used in Nazi camps.

TARGET AUDIENCE Grades 6-10

TIME REQUIRED 1 Hour

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thank you to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the many other organizations for collecting and sharing Holocaust victim stories.

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NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS

All lesson plans meet numerous national Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects, as well as National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.

Common Core St Standards		6th - 8th
Standard	RI - Reading Informative Text	2,3,4,7
	W - Writing	8,9
	SL - Speaking and Listening	1,2,4
	RH - History/Social Studies	2,4,7,9
Natl. Curriculum Standards for Social Studies		
Themes	2: Time, Continuity, and Change	Early Grades
	4: Individual Development and Identity	Middle Grades
	5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions	Middle Grades
	9: Global Connections	Middle Grades

Lesson Plan

1. Prepare for this lesson by pre-printing the following pages for student use:
 - 5-8: One copy per student (make double-sided copies of 5-6, and 7-8. There are laminated copies of 5-6 as the students do not need to take these). They do write on and take 7-8 with them.
 - 10-41: One copy per student
 - 42-46: Copy if more needed (There should be 30 sets already made).
 - Order or make Holocaust ID numbers from **Holocaust ID List** (page 9):
2. Assign each student an ID number to hold or wear as they participate in the program.
3. Introduce the lesson to students. See the **Facilitator Remarks** (page 4) for guidance.
4. Hand out copies of **Primary Sources: Preserving the Past** (page 5) to introduce terms and the type of information students will be dealing with. Call on students by the numbers to orally read this page with students. Have copies of **Primary Source Images** (pages 42-46) available for students to examine.
5. Hand out copies of the **Background Briefing** (pages 6-7). Still calling on students by the numbers, read through these pages with students to teach about basic Holocaust background and identification systems in Nazi concentration camps, targeting in on the tattoos in Auschwitz.
6. Present students with the **Holocaust ID Card** (pages 10-41) that corresponds with the individual with their ID number. Direct them to read through it silently.
7. Direct students to use the information from their ID Card to complete **From a Number to a Name** (page 8).
8. Divide students into groups of three and direct them to do the following:
 - * Present their survivor to others in their group.
 - * Discuss their ideas and thoughts on page 8 questions.
9. Mix the students into different groups of three and repeat step eight.
10. Lead a class discussion of **From A Number to A Name**.
11. Concluding remarks. See the **Facilitator Remarks** (page 4) for guidance.

Facilitator Remarks

INTRODUCTION

The topic we are about to cover for the next hour is a solemn one that will put us all in a serious state of mind. “Why be such a downer?” you may ask. Well, we must learn about the Holocaust because it is really about human treatment, and that is not in the past. It is constantly in the present for each of us.

Bullying is a hot topic that you all hear lots about in your schools today, and that is very applicable to the Holocaust. Why do you think it is applicable to the Holocaust? The Holocaust was totally unchecked bullying. It started with name calling (“Stinking Jew” was used on government issued posters), and escalated to the murder of millions.

For bullies to gain and keep their power, there must be conspirators. Conspirators are not only those who join in to help the bully, but those who witness what is happening yet stay silent and show indifference. The Holocaust succeeded in torturing and killing around nine million individuals because of crimes of indifference, and because of conspiracies of silence.

Who do bullies usually pick on? I’ll give you an example. In the wild, the lion will attack the sick and young prey that are more vulnerable because they can’t keep up with their herd. So, it is not surprising that the first group targeted for killing in the Holocaust were the Jewish disabled. The Nazi bully first went after the most vulnerable people, those who had the least ability to defend themselves. Each Holocaust victim ceased to be an individual human with feelings and a story, but was instead reduced to a number. A number like the one you were given.

So, we are going to spend some time with this solemn topic because it is our responsibility to give voice to the voiceless – be they the disabled, the poor, the elderly, the child, the minority, the “uncool” – to the most vulnerable. We are going to give a name and identity back to these numbers.

CONCLUSION

Before you leave, I want to talk about one more survivor story. MARTIN NIEMÖLLER was a Protestant pastor in Germany who was a supporter of the Nazi party until Hitler began making laws to govern the churches as well as the state. He spoke out against this and, as a consequence, he spent seven years in a concentration camp. After the war, he gave many lectures about what had happened in Europe, offering different versions of this famous quote that I want to leave with you:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out--Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out--Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out--Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me--and there was no one left to speak for me.

Remember, indifference and inaction always means being on the same side as the bully, never on the side of the victim. Let there be no mistake about it – indifference in the face of evil is a form of collaboration with evil.

As you leave today, remember the person behind the number on your arm. The survivors of the Holocaust are true heroes of humanity. They witnessed and endured the worst of inhumanity, but somehow found courage to go on. And so we honor them by remembering that each person has a name and an identity.

Primary Sources: Preserving the Past

A WINDOW TO THE PAST

Click on the links and images for additional information.

What is a **primary source**? It is any direct evidence produced during a specific period under study. They vary widely from objects like artifacts, photographs, diaries, maps, movies, songs, and eyewitness accounts. The key is that they were created during the time period being studied.



Researchers and museums call most of these old items “primary sources.” The Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum, and Boyhood Home are full of them! Today’s lesson will be using the real stories of Holocaust victims and survivors. Part of each person’s story is an interview with the survivor, making it a **primary source**. That person was there and is telling us about their experience.



However, a portion of each person’s story is a biography written by others who obtained the information from the interviews, oral histories, and written memoirs of Holocaust survivors. This makes that portion a **secondary source**.



A **secondary source** is a retelling or interpretation of the past. History text books are typically secondary sources because the authors were not present at the time in history they are writing about, but are interpreting what they have learned about the event.

LEARNER COMPREHENSION CHECK

What is the key to determine if information or items are primary or secondary?

EISENHOWER PRESERVES THE PAST

Dwight D. Eisenhower was the Supreme Allied Commander of the forces in Europe during World War II. The Nazi forces, led by Adolf Hitler, had virtually kept the concentration camps a secret to the outside world. There were rumors, but no one could believe such atrocities were real. So, it was by accident that an American Army division discovered Ohrdruf concentration camp on April 5, 1945. There they found starved, frail bodies of thousands of prisoners who had managed to survive, as well as the corpses of those who did not.

Allied generals George Patton, Omar Bradley, and Dwight D. Eisenhower arrived in Ohrdruf on April 12, 1945. They found thousands of naked, emaciated bodies in shallow graves. Eisenhower viewed a shed piled to the ceiling with bodies, various torture devices, and a butcher’s block for smashing gold fillings from the mouths of the dead. Patton became physically ill and could not continue. Eisenhower turned white at the scenes, but insisted on seeing the entire camp. Eisenhower later wrote to U.S. Army Chief of Staff George Marshall that he had to see every nook and cranny “in order to be in a position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to propagandize.”



Eisenhower knew the importance of primary sources to document history, and his outrage turned to resolve to tell the world about the camps. He brought in members of Congress, prominent journalists, and other American units to witness and document the camp.

Cable from DDE to Marshall concerning Nazi horrors. 4/19/45

DDE views the charred bodies of prisoners at Ohrdruf. 4/12/45



Background Briefing

THE HOLOCAUST

Under the control of Adolf Hitler, the Nazi regime gained power in Germany in January, 1933. Hitler believed that the Aryan race of Germans were a superior and pure race, while the Jews were inferior and a threat that needed to be eliminated. While Jews were their main target, the Nazis attacked other groups as well, such as the Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), disabled persons, Poles, Jehovah Witnesses, homosexuals, Communists, Soviet POWs, and blacks.

The Nazi regime established concentration camps in order to use these “inferior” humans for forced labor and/or to kill them. This systematic, government-led persecution and extermination of approximately nine million people from 1933 to 1945 is referred to as the Holocaust.

The scope of the history of the Holocaust is extensive and horrific. This lesson will focus on the dehumanization of the millions of individuals who were prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. The millions whose name was replaced with a number. This lesson will also remind you that behind every number, there was a story and a name not to be forgotten.

The dehumanization process began immediately upon arrival at the concentration camps. Prisoners had their clothing taken away, their hair shaved, and they were usually given a striped uniform. Men were given a shirt and trousers, and women were supplied with a smock type dress.

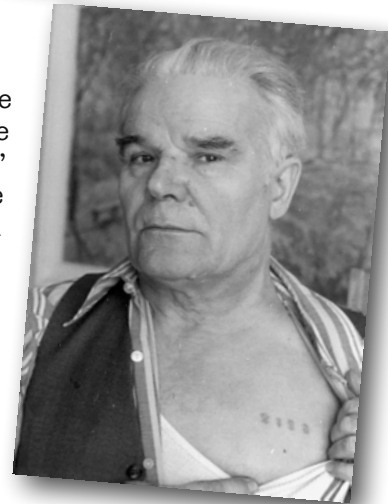
Prisoners lost any signs of individualism. Next to be taken away were their names. Identification was done mostly with a number marked on clothing, and later, tattooed on the skin of prisoners. More specialized emblems were also used to mark the prisoner’s “crime” on armbands and uniforms.

“You were not anymore a human being, you were a number and believe me that number will never leave my mind. A24977: That’s what I was.”

-Bella Miller

THE NUMBERS

At many of the camps, the identification numbers were sewn on the prisoners’ uniforms. However, because the clothes were removed from the corpses, keeping track became difficult as the numbers of prisoners and death toll rose. This led to the use of tattoos at Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps, beginning in 1941.



The tattooing was performed during prisoner registration. Prisoners deemed unworthy of keeping for forced labor were not registered. They were sent directly to the gas chambers and were never even issued numbers. As stated by Auschwitz survivor and tattooist, Lou Sokolow, “A guy who got a number was lucky. Why? Because he didn’t go straight away to the crematoria.”

At first a metal stamp with numbers made up of needles was used, allowing the whole serial number to be applied with one blow onto the prisoner’s upper left chest. Ink was then rubbed into the fresh wound. Authorities soon changed to single-needle device that tattooed the number digits onto the left forearm.



“When the cars finally opened, the SS received us with blows and blood dogs—we were on target. At this moment we ceased to be human. We were just numbers. Everything we had was taken away from us. Everyone, even the women and children were shorn hair, everyone, including my two little girls, numbers were tattooed.”

- Julius Hodosi

THE BADGES

While identification of inmates was performed mostly with numbers, more specialized identification was done with emblems and badges. A few of these were added into the tattoo, but they were most commonly used alongside the cloth numbers sewn onto prisoner uniforms or armbands.

For example, some Jews had a triangle added to their number tattoo, while Gypsies had the letter “Z” added because a Gypsy family camp was known as a “Zigeunerlager” in German. Some inmates had an “A” or “B” added to indicate they were part of a particular series of prisoners.

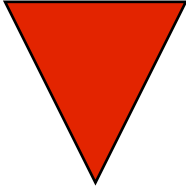
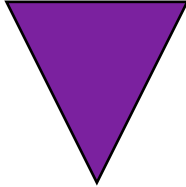
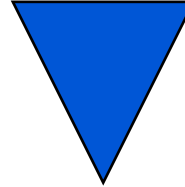
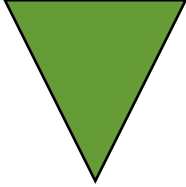
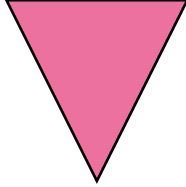
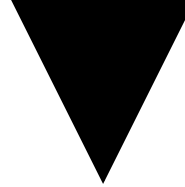
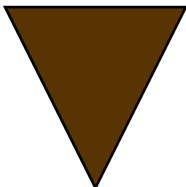
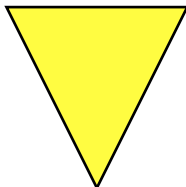




Camp badges were used by the Nazis to identify the reason the prisoners had been put in a concentration camp. The color and shape of the badges had specific meaning to help guards identify inmates at a glance - dehumanizing them further from a specific number to just a “type” of person. These cloth badges were sewn on an armband or on the jackets and trousers of the prisoners.

The coding system of badges varied some between camps, but all used inverted colored triangles. Triangles were layered if the prisoner fit into more than one category. In addition to this color-coding, some groups had to put letter insignia on their triangles to denote country of origin. Also, repeat offenders would receive bars over the original badge.

LEARNER COMPREHENSION CHECK

Using the chart to the right, decipher what each badge below signifies.



		
Political Enemy	Jehovah's Witness	Foreign Immigrants
		
Criminals	Homosexuals	Asocials
		
Roma (Gypsies)	Jewish	Group Being Punished
		
Escape Suspect	Repeat Offender of Corresponding Category	
LETTER CODE: B = Belgium F = France H = Holland P = Poland S = Spain T = Czechoslovakia U = Hungary SU = Soviet Prisoner of War EH = Correctional Prisoner		



1936 German illustration of Nazi camp ID-emblems.



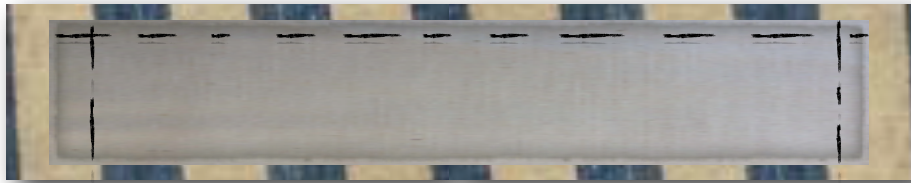
“It really didn't make a difference whether you were woman or animal or man or whatever. You basically were a number. You were not a person. You didn't have a name. It didn't make a difference.”

-Lucille Eichengreen

From A Number to A Name

STUDENT'S NAME:

1. After reading a survivor ID page, give the survivor his/her name back by writing it in this label.

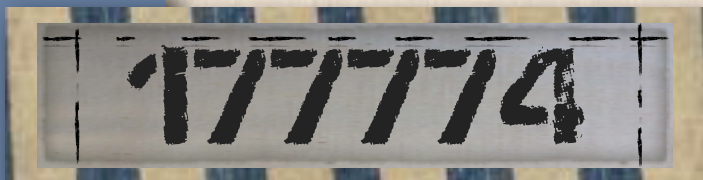


2. Pull out one fact obtained from primary source information on your survivor ID page.
3. Pull out one fact obtained from secondary source information on your survivor ID page.
4. What question would you like to ask this survivor?
5. What is the most interesting thing you learned about this survivor?
6. List five words to describe this person:
 - *
 - *
 - *
 - *
 - *
7. Why do you think the Nazis registered inmates by numbers rather than names?
8. What do bullying and the Holocaust have in common?

Holocaust ID Card List for the facilitator

Prepared for:

Known Number	Survivor Name	Known Number	Survivor Name
5429	Nechama Shneorson	B-7394	Alberto Israel
6199	Edward Adler	B13174	Steven Fenves
39934	Kitty Hart-Moxon	Z-2801	Julia Bäcker Lentini
65316	Miso Vogel		
71502	Judith Jaegermann		
87645	Istvan Katona		
123538	Dorianne Kurz		
135913	Sam Pivnik		
139755	Philip Gans		
139829	Max Garcia		
140603	Sam Rosenzweig		
145382	William Lowenberg		
154356	Hershl Sperling		
157103	Freddie Knoller	Fictional Number	Survivor Name
171952	Severin Fayerman	1716	Cecilie Klein-Pollack
176520	Paul Argiewicz	4701	David Bergman
177774	Ernest Koenig	168904	Chaim Engel
A-6374	Gloria Lyon	157622	Abraham Bomba
A-7063	Eva Mozes Kor	125426	Blanka Rothchild
A-9603	Dora Apsan Sorell	A10572	Alice Lok
A15959	Ester Bershtel	B-11291	Abraham Malnik
A-18651	Israel Arbeiter	141129	Bella Jakubowicz Tovey
A26188	Henia Bryer	67834	Abraham Lewent



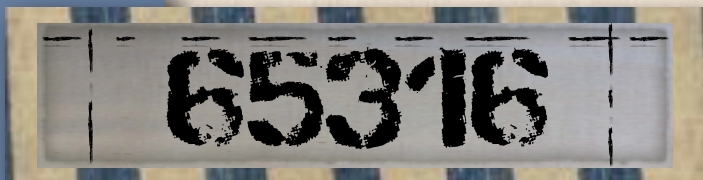
Ernest Koenig

Ernest was born May 19, 1917 in Vienna, Austria but spent most of his childhood in Miroslav, Czechoslovakia. He attended college in Paris and then joined a Czech unit of the French Army to fight against the Nazis. When the German forces conquered France in 1940, Ernest was incarcerated and sent to his first of six concentration camps. Miraculously, he was able to escape a death march by hiding in a storage barrack until he was liberated by the Russians in January 1945.

After the war, Ernest was able to be reunited with his brother and sweetheart, Elizabeth, in England. He married her in 1947 and they immigrated to the United States in 1948.

"We were put into rooms which were full of rotten straw. It was rotting. It was wet and rotting, and there we were waiting, and, of course, uh, being very much concerned and preoccupied what's going to happen. It was a morbid situation already, you know, under the rotten straw and with children and, uh, old people and the complete, uh, the complete helplessness and the complete lack of, uh, of...we didn't know what's going to happen, to happen to us, but we knew, of course, we are now in the clutches of the German, and at night we heard sometimes shooting from other parts of the camp. We didn't know what it means. I remember I, I went to one of the barbed wires and saw, and tried to see whether I can get...can get out but it was out of question, and then after three or four days there, uh, we were ordered to go down...down...we, we, we were, we were upstairs, I remember. We had to go downstairs, you know, to the, to the platform and on the platform there was already the SS and with, with their customary politeness, shouting and beating and, and, uh, sending us into the...into the railroad cars."

"In Laurahutte--whatever the, the Polish name, I don't know--work was very, very, very difficult. I remember we were assigned together--I was assigned--to dis...we were dismantling one of the old blast furnaces, and we were carrying heavy pieces of wood which had been in this blast furnace, furnace, in this, in the instal...the installation of this blast furnace. And, you, know that was so heavy that, uh, perhaps eight men...we had iron, iron sticks or bars, and we had, we, eight men had to carry this. But some of them, were very, of us, were very weak from the beginning, and if one couple--there were perhaps four couples--if one couple releases, or didn't, didn't carry enough, the others couldn't, and the whole thing fell down, and injured people. It was heavy...and, and when we couldn't, when we couldn't lift it we were beaten. And one of the things from the concentration camps which I have never understood: sometimes people have been beaten with iron bars, and you would think they have been injured, sometimes they were injured, sometimes they were killed, but sometimes, I don't know, it fell in a way where nothing happened. So we were badly beaten, and we were beaten to lift this thing, and we couldn't lift it and people were laying on the floor, uh, and couldn't walk any more. Uh, that was the first month in Laurahutte."



Miso Vogel

Miso, born in 1923, was the eldest of five children. He came from a religious family in a small village in Slovakia, where his father was a cattle dealer. When Miso was six years old, his family moved to Topol'cany, where the children could attend a Jewish school. Antisemitism was prevalent in Topol'cany. When Miso played soccer, it was always the Jews versus the Catholics.

In 1939, Slovak fascists took over Topol'cany. In 1942, Miso was deported to the Slovak-run Novaky concentration camp and then to Auschwitz. All of his family members were killed there.

He was forced to labor in the Buna works and then in the Birkenau "Kanada" detachment, unloading incoming trains. Miso was deported to two more camps.

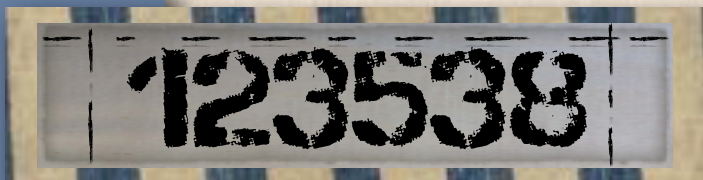
During a death march from Landsberg labor camp, he escaped to the woods just as the U.S. Army entered the area in April 1945.

In 1946, he immigrated to America.



"My sister and brother were deported, then it was my turn. We sang the Czechoslovak national anthem and our Jewish anthem, "Hatikva," on the way to our unknown destination. At Auschwitz I sorted baggage contents of newly arrived Jews who were marched to the gas chambers. All my family was gassed at Auschwitz except for my father, who was assigned to slave labor. I visited him every night after roll call. After my father fell ill, he told me, 'Try to survive and carry on the family name.' The next day he was gassed."

"So they marched us through the gate with whips and beatings and dogs jumping on us. We came to a huge brick building. They shoved us...shoved us into the huge brick building, and there were prisoners and SS telling us what to do next. It was tables, long tables. The first area, where we had to undress, strip our clothing. There were hooks behind us. You put the clothing through a piece of wire, hang the clothing up, take our shoes off, put the shoes on the floor. Next table were the barbers, the camp barbers, where they shaved our head, they cut our hair, shaved the entire body. They said it's for hygiene. Then we moved to another table where the tattooing was done. So, the tattoo was done on the left forearm. There was one person who would rub the...a little piece of dirty alcohol on your arm, and the other one had the...had the needle with the inkwell, and he would do the numbering. So my number is 65316. That means there were 65,315 people numbered before me, tattooed before me. After the tattoo...tattooing was done, they put us where they gave us the clothing, but not what we came with. They gave us, issued us a striped brown cap, a jacket, striped jacket, a pair of striped trousers, a pair of wooden clogs, and a shirt. No socks or underwear. Then the last area, when they gave us the uniform, they gave us two strips of cloth. The cloth, I would say, was about six inches long, maybe inch-and-a-half wide. And it [was] star...starred with the Star of David, corresponding with the number on your left forearm, sewn on your left breast and on the right pant leg. And then the last item, which was the most important item that we received, was a round bowl. And this bowl was the lifeblood of your being. First of all, without it you couldn't get the meager rations that we got. And second, the bathroom facilities were almost non-existent."



Dorianne Kurz

Dorianne Kurz was born in Vienna, Austria in March of 1936. Jews in Austria enjoyed relative freedom and equality. For that reason, Doriane's Polish-born parents settled in Vienna, where her father ran a thriving branch of the family's multinational optical frames business until Austria was taken over by the Nazis in 1938.

Doriane's Jewish family fled to Amsterdam in 1940, a year that also saw the German occupation of the Netherlands. Her father perished after deportation to Auschwitz. After their mother was seized, Doriane and her brother hid with gentiles. The three were reunited at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, and were then deported to Westerbork.

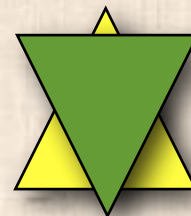
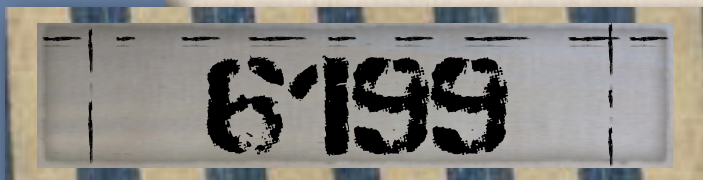
In June 1945 Doriane and her family were evacuated from the camp on cattle trains and then freed by Soviet troops. Sadly, her mother died from an illness shortly after their liberation. A year later, Doriane and her brother immigrated to the United States.



"In 1940 we moved to Amsterdam, but the city soon fell under German occupation. With my father already in Auschwitz, my mother, brother Freddie and I ended up in Bergen-Belsen in 1944. Freddie and I would remain in the barracks when the adults were marched to work. We started the day by watching the carts, drawn by inmates, that came every morning to collect the dead bodies. The rest of the day we spent speaking about food, slicing our bread rations so they could last longer, and picking the lice out of our hair."

"There were wagons...open wagons like, like carts, like the back of a horse and cart, open wagons, that were dragged along without horses. There were people pulling them. And they had corpses in them. And the corpses were lying in all directions and heaped on top of each other and there were many people who died every night and they didn't make it out to Appell but they were accounted for by being bodies and so after the grownups were marched out the...there was a squadron of people that pulled this wagon around and came into the barracks and took the corpses, and then they would, two of them would take the corpse, one at the feet and one at the hands and they would toss them up to the top of the heap and that happened every day. I still have trouble with that."

"Most of our time during the day, Freddie's and mine, was spent talking about food because there was not very much to eat and we were hungry much of the time, almost all the time. ...the rations were three-quarters of a liter of watery soup made from a variety of turnip, cooked in water. It was very watery. And three and a half centimeters of bread a day and...and there was some kind of an ersatz coffee... And we all had cups and things that...you had to have your own, and they were also hidden in your bed. Everything was hidden in your bed, your clothes were hidden in your bed, and your...and your eating utensils and whatever you owned had to be in bed including some kind of...a night pot so...people had dysentery and you couldn't run out at night and go to those facilities so you had to have something, and all that was in the bed and the bed was shared with two people and in our case...I guess my brother being a boy, my mother shared her bunk with him and since I was a girl I shared it with another woman."



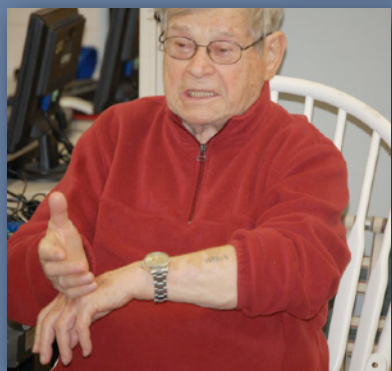
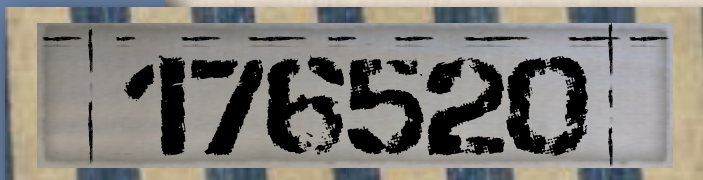
Edward Adler

Edward was born in 1910 to a Jewish family in Hamburg, Germany. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws prohibited marriage or sexual relations between German non-Jews and Jews. Edward was then in his mid-twenties and was arrested for dating a non-Jewish woman. Classified as a habitual offender, he was later deported to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, near Berlin.

Edward was forced to perform hard labor in construction projects. Having married shortly before his imprisonment, his wife made arrangements for their emigration from Germany. Edward was released from custody in September 1938 and left Germany. He stayed with relatives in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and later immigrated to the United States.

“One particular incident I recall like it was yesterday. An old gentleman with the name of Solomon, I’ll never forget. He must have been well in his seventies, he simply couldn’t run. He couldn’t run, he had to walk. He couldn’t run and he collapsed, and he laid in the road, and one of the Storm Troopers, a tall, young fellow, very slender, very tall, stepped on his throat. This is true. Unbelievable, but true, ‘til the man was dead. We had to pick up his body and throw him to the side of the road, and we continued on into the camp, where we was assembled in a courtyard, and a strange incident happened at that time. We faced a barrack, a door on the right, a door on the left. People went in the left door, came out the right door, entirely different people. Their hair was shaven off, they had a prisoner’s uniform on, a very wide, striped uniform. My number was 6199.”

“We worked ten hours a day, if I remember correctly. We slept on straw, on straw bags. It was a, uh, jute sack filled with straw. I guess that’s common, uh, you know, under certain circumstances, many people sleep that way, and we worked ten hours a day, on a field that was approximately, I would say, a square kilometer, somewhere around that area. One area of this field was quite high, the other area was quite low. The area had to be leveled, and what was done was they had tracks running from one end to the other. On those tracks were mining cars. Now in this country, a mining car is square. Over there a mining car is a triangular shape. Steel mining cars, and each train had about ten of these mining cars on it. On each one of those mining cars a Storm Trooper was standing with a whip, and we had to run from one end of this field to the other, shovel the mining car full of dirt, and returned it to empty it out on the lower end. If anyone would have told me at that time that I can run 40 kilometers a day, I’d say you’re crazy. But I did. Day after day after day.”



Paul Argiewicz

In 1941, when Paul was just 11 years old, he was arrested by SS officers for stealing bread for his family starving in a Jewish ghetto in Poland. He survived almost five years in a number of Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz and Buchenwald.

Auschwitz was the first camp Paul endured. When he arrived, Paul escaped being sent straight to the gas chamber when the person standing in line behind him kicked him and whispered, "Say to him that you are 18."

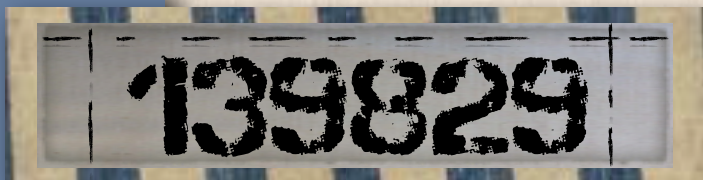
On April 11, 1945, Paul was liberated from Buchenwald, where the famous photograph below was taken (Paul is circled). He was 14 years old.



He immigrated to the United States in 1950 and served in the US Air Force during the Korean War.

"Every day the guy, I used to come to him in his little cubbyhole he had. He had a few electricians with him working. He used to be the foreman and I used to be his go-fer.... So after a month working with him he comes to me says, 'Pauliken, stop with your lies. Tell me the truth. You are not an electrician, are you?' And I looked in his eyes, with tears in my eyes, I remember that, and I said, 'No.' That saved my life. And he hesitated for a second.... He closed his eyes....When he opened his eyes he says to me 'Paul, Pauliken,' he said, you know – Little Paul, he said, 'I will save you. Whatever I can, I will do but I want you to keep your mouth shut. Whatever people ask you, 'I don't know', – and they won't ask you for anything.'...So all of a sudden he opens this little box. He gives me a sandwich. I never had a sandwich like this even when I was a kid. Because I come from a very poor family. So he gives me a sandwich. I ate the sandwich. He says, 'Don't ever say nothing.' A week later he came to work...with tears and crying and everything. I don't remember his last name. I said, 'Hans, mit zu Ruhe?' And all of the sudden he breaks down. He says, 'I lost my mother, I lost my wife, and I lost my children in Dresden.' In the bombing. He said, 'I have nothing. What did that animal do to us.' He didn't say the word Hitler. He says, 'Was has das,' no, he said 'Welche art schweine mach' to us, what kind of swine, what he did to us. And I didn't say a word to him. He became so close to me."

"I was his – and when the SS men came he said, 'Oh this kid? He is essential. He is such an important person. He knows everything.' And he by teaching me how to wire things and how to do things, and he says, 'Certain things I used to do backwards on purpose so they would have to call you to find if there's any troubles on the line because you know about it.' And he says, 'You've got to be so important that they will not kill you.' ...the bombing used to come, and you could hear the siren. Everybody went for the shelters. They wouldn't let prisoners from concentration camp people in the shelters but they let me in. I had the special ribbon on my thing. I had a special instrument to save those instruments for testing. I used to carry them. He said, 'You grab those and run with them. They gonna have to let you in because these instruments are more important than you.' And that's how I saved my life. And a lot of guys got killed."



Max Garcia

Max was born in Amsterdam, Holland in 1924. Growing up, his family was poor and he shared a bedroom with his sister, Sienie. Sienie was the first member of the family to be picked up by the Nazis during a street raid. She was sent to the Auschwitz gas chamber December 10, 1942, just days after her 16th birthday.

Max avoided being caught by the Nazis until the follow year in 1943. He was first sent to Westerbork, then to Auschwitz where he befriended Lex von Weden, the camp's orchestra conductor and a "prominent member." Through their friendship, Max was given the good job of sorting through packages that arrived for the camp's non-Jewish prisoners. Many times, these packages contained food and other things that helped Max stay alive.

On Sunday, January 18, 1945, Max was marched out of Auschwitz on the last transport. He endured open train boxcars and death marches until he was finally liberated on May 6, 1945 from Ebensee. He weighed 80 pounds.

After the war, in 1948, Max immigrated to the United States where he served in the Army and started an architecture firm.

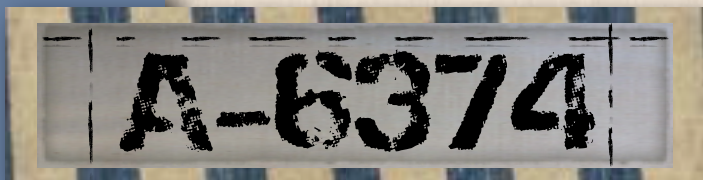
"...and the day came when we were loaded on the cattle, that's not a cattle car, it's basically a closed freight wagon with a sliding door on either side on the long side of the car. We were loaded in there. Inside we found some straw on the floor and in the middle there was a drum...that was your toilet, that's where you did all your action. I think we had been given a package of food and that was it. And they locked the doors and that was a whole load of cars one after another. I think the car that I was in there were about thirty plus people in there, all ages....At no time during that entire trip were the doors open for fresh air nor was any water given or any additional food...."

"Then we get to Auschwitz which we did not know where that was or where we were. And then you arrive in the middle of the night and you sit there for several hours....And all of sudden the doors are open and the SS is out there with dogs barking away screaming, '...Get out! Get Out! Quickly! Hurry Up! Hurry up leave your luggage behind!'...And the women are separated from the men....and you don't know all these things at that time because it's total confusion...."

"...and you come to this SS man and he looks at you and asks you how old you are. 'I'm nineteen,'...'OK, go ahead over there.' If you're younger you go over to that side or if you are older, in a certain bracket, go over there. We don't know what this separation means at the time. Then a truck comes and takes us away. The others are marched to the gas chamber....And then you come to a place and you're told to take off all your clothes and the only two things that you are allowed to keep are your shoes and your belt. If you have a watch on it's taken away from you. If you have rings on they are taken away from you. And then you sit down and you're filling out a registration card: your name, your birth date, your birth place, and family name etc. and what your profession is. Then they give you a number, on the card they put a number and then that number is tattooed on your left forearm."

"Then you are taken away to what they call the delousing barracks. You go under a shower and they cut all your hair, wherever you have hair on your body, it's removed....And then you get brushed down with Lysol, over your head and on the arms and your crotch."

"And you're given a pair of pants and a jacket. You are given two pieces of white cloth that will have your number on it already that they've stenciled quickly. They give you a needle and thread and you had to sew that on the left breast and on your right pant side....That was my welcome to Auschwitz."



Gloria Lyon

Gloria was born January 20, 1930 and grew up on a farm in Czechoslovakia with her parents, four brothers and sister. When Gloria was eight years old, Czechoslovakia became part of Hungary and the Nuremberg Laws went into effect.

At first, Gloria's family was exempt from wearing the yellow star because her father, a World War I hero and store owner, was a prominent citizen in their community. This changed eventually and in 1944, the day after Passover ended, Gloria and her family were rounded up and moved to a Jewish ghetto outside of town. Then, after four weeks, they were put in cattle cars bound for Auschwitz.

After enduring seven and a half months in Auschwitz, Gloria was selected for the gas chamber, but, miraculously escaped death. She moved from camp to camp, spending time in seven different camps, until she was liberated in Ravensbruck.

After the war ended, Gloria immigrated to the United States. She later discovered that out of her six family members that were interned, only one died. Her mother, father, two brothers, and sister survived, but it was 17 years before Gloria was reunited with her family.

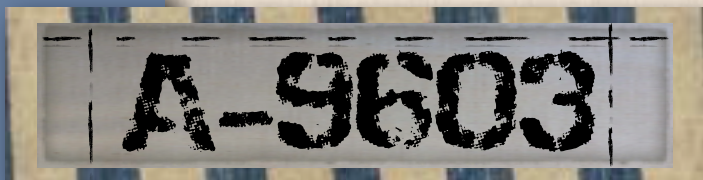
"This was the Hungarian guard....Once in a while he would speak to us in Hungarian just minimally, and I even remember seeing a picture of his grandchild in his wallet; I held it in my hand and so did my mother. And he said he was not in Auschwitz by choice. This was the guard who guarded us."

"And after he saw me there he said to me in Hungarian, 'Te is?' - meaning 'You too?' and I just - I just nodded, acknowledging my fate. And after he saw me there he told all of us on the truck, that, 'You know that we're going to the gas chamber. But, whoever wants to jump off on the way, you go ahead but if you find - if you are found, you are not to give me away for I may be able to save other lives yet. But if you do give me away, both you and I will be killed. And he just closed the canvas drape and he went up front, and he slowly drove off...."

"And so I said, 'Who will come with me?' but nobody responded. You see, they lost their entire families. And the belief was that we were all succumb to this eventually.... But I was very young yet and foolish, took many more chances. And, I just said 'goodbye.' And I jumped off that slow moving truck, and I leaped down the embankment... totally naked because only those people who passed the selection received their clothes back. But those of us who didn't were picked up naked and taken to the gas chambers...."

"I just climbed into this culvert, and about fifteen minutes later the sirens went on, which to me meant that the guards had been alerted...So about fifteen minutes later again, I heard the voices of men speaking in German. I knew that meant that my absence had been discovered-probably when the truck arrived at the gas chamber and there was minus one person that they sounded the alarm."

"But, there I was in the culvert, naked, and I...soon the commotion had died down. I stayed in the culvert that night, the following morning until the following night, about twenty-four hours or so without any food or clothing. And you know, although this was in the middle of the winter, I have no recollection of feeling cold, or having any of the sensations except this great feeling of triumph. I felt as if I had defeated the entire German army."



Dora Apsan Sorell

Dora was born in Sighet, Romania, in the Transylvania region, September 2, 1921. Her father was an insurance agent and her mother stayed at home. Like her seven brothers, Dora received a high school education, something unusual for girls at the time.

After graduating from high school in 1940, life drastically changed for Dora and Jews in Transylvania. Hungary was awarded the area in exchange for allying themselves with Nazi Germany and the Nuremberg Laws went into effect. Dora's father lost his job, requiring her to become the family's chief bread-winner.

Unlike many Axis countries, Hungary did not immediately begin deporting Jews to concentration camps. Then, on March 19, 1944, just days after Passover, Dora and her family were taken to Auschwitz.

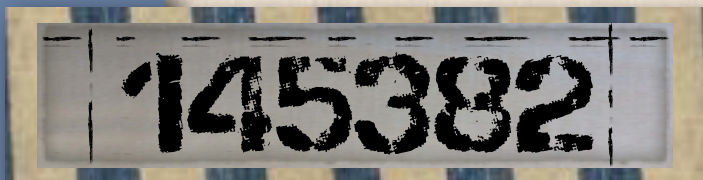
After spending seven months in this death camp, Dora was moved to a second camp, Weisswasser, where she was liberated two days before the end of World War II. She returned to Romania where she was married and went to medical school. She later immigrated to the United States to be closer to her children and grandchildren.

"The camp that they took us to was at that time in Birkenau, Camp A....Everything was gray--the barracks were gray. The barracks were in rows and separated, each row of barracks--or two rows--separated by the other rows by barbed wire and watch towers. All over, they built these huge towers, and huge electrified fences. Hundreds of barracks."

"As we enter Camp A early morning, I hear some music playing. Thousands of women in Camp A all align in front of their barracks for the early roll call....They take us in further, and further and all over, women in front of their barracks until we get to an empty barracks--I think it was number fourteen, or twelve. They take us in, and the barrack was completely empty, it was lined with three-tiered bunk beds, built in...."

"A few hours later, another transport arrives and more girls are divided into the same bunk beds. Following them, another group arrives. You know there were three, four trains arriving to Auschwitz from Hungary. By a couple of days, we were about twelve girls for every level. We had to put our shoes under our head. I don't remember if I had or not a blanket. But for sure there was no mattresses, no pillow, no sheets, no nothing--just a plain plank. This is how we slept, twelve girls. We were just like sardines in a can. If one girl--we always had girls who wanted to change position at night and we just screamed at them, because we all wanted to change position."

"I tell you, one day, early day, in Camp A, early morning--about three-four o'clock--the sirens started sounding, everybody out for roll call. The supervisor for that barrack--the barrack had about six, seven, eight-hundred girls, there were about twenty barracks like this in A Camp and about twenty in B Camp. In early morning, the sirens started to sound, and the whistles and 'Everybody out, out, out.' We needed to go somewhere and couldn't. Everybody had to go out and align for roll call. It was very cold. It's four o'clock in the morning. We had to--five in a row, and wait until the SS people made their rounds from one camp to another, from one barrack to the other. When the supervisor would say that this many girls were all here. Those roll calls could last for hours, for hours, whether rain, shine, snow. People sometimes couldn't hold it, they had to relieve themselves, others fainted."



William Lowenberg

William was born on August 14, 1926 in Ochtrup, Germany, a small town about 10 miles from the border of Holland. In 1936, three years after Adolph Hitler came to power, the Lowenbergs left for Holland. Sadly, they could not escape the Nazis who occupied Holland in 1940, and enforced their anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws.

In 1942, William and his father, mother, and sister were sent to Westerbork, a camp in Holland. Then, after a few months, he alone was transferred to Auschwitz. From there, he was sent to Warsaw Ghetto as a slave laborer to clean up after the uprising, then Dachau, before being liberated in Kaufering on April 30, 1945.

After World War II ended, he immigrated to the United States and served in the Army during the Korean War.

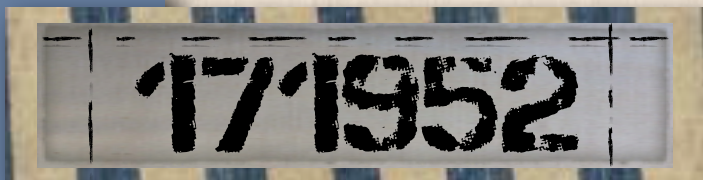
William was the sole survivor from his entire family. It was 30 years before William would ever speak of the horrors he endured during World War II. He is the co-founder of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

"You didn't have a name any longer. You got a number and that was you were registered under; that number not under any names. 145382. I should remember that without looking . . . Only the ones who were kept alive and only Auschwitz had numbers where they tattooed numbers in. In Dachau I had a number, but it wasn't tattooed. It was only done in Auschwitz . . ."

"I was scared to death and hungry. It's hard to explain how we felt because we didn't have time to think. We got up at four in the morning and we had to work. I was mostly on the road gangs doing street repairs and whatever they called it. Not street repairs like here, but moving stones around, moving dirt around. It's hard to explain how you felt, you were so scared. But I always felt, number one, I tried not to be visible too much. I never stood outside of a group of people, I would always stay on the inside. My friend told me that."

"And also I wanted to get through, I wanted to stay alive. And there was a lot of suicides, a lot. I never felt that because I wanted to see my parents again and my sister again . . . It just was this innate feeling that I had to make it. Now, did I say it in so many words then? No, nobody did because the transport that I was on, nobody's alive . . ."

"That was Auschwitz. Now when I got to . . . Birkenau, which is next door, we had no idea in Holland what would happen on this trip. All we were told, we were going to the east to Poland to be kept there during the war and then they would bring us back, that's all that they told us. None of us knew there were gas chambers. We knew there were camps, we had heard of Dachau, but not of gas chambers. But then in Birkenau where we worked, . . . I was on a road gang a week after I got there, and in front of the gas chambers to do some digging in the roads; I don't know, rocks, moving rocks. And my friend who had come in there with me, he tapped me on shoulders, and said, 'look over there!' And I saw my parents and my sister marching by, but they were marching into the gas chambers and I was working in front of the building. And I stopped working, I fainted almost, and I was beaten up, I still have scars on my back. Now then we knew that the gas chambers were working 24 hours a day. It went on for years and years until about the end of '44."



Severin Fayerman

Severin was born in Bedzin, Poland at the end of World War I to a family of blacksmiths. In 1939, when he was 17 years old, the Nazis invaded Poland and the Jews, 70% of the town's population, were sent to ghettos, labor camps, and concentration camps.

The first concentration camp Severin was sent to was Auschwitz where he met a *Kapo*, a German prisoner that supervised the other prisoners, who wanted to learn English. Fortunately, Severin had taken English in high school and became the *Kapo's* teacher. This relationship afforded Severin better food and working conditions.

When the Allies were closing in on Auschwitz, Severin was evacuated and moved to Buchenwald. Then, because he was a skilled blacksmith, he was selected to work at a Siemens Electric Company factory in Berlin that was subsequently destroyed by British air raids. The last camp Severin was sent to was Sachsenhausen.

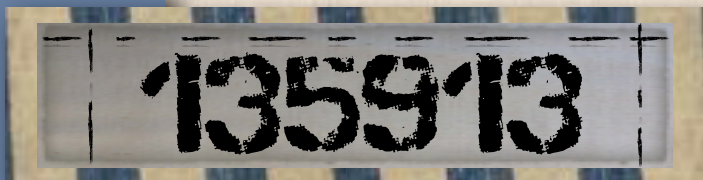
He was liberated in April 1945 by the American Army. Miraculously, his entire family survived the Holocaust.

"...And one beautiful Sunday morning, the family was arrested. My, my father, my mother, all the family that lived together in one house and we're taken to this work labor camp. The family worked together, of course, under the German directions and orders. Cleaned the houses and did manual labor. And when the work was done, there was nothing else for us to do and our commandant told us that, 'Since we are in the labor system, labor camp system, we will remain there for the duration of the war and we will be moved to another camp.' Most unfortunately, we were very close to Auschwitz, one of the most notorious, terrible extermination camp. So the camp, [unintelligible] which I was working, was moved to Auschwitz. And that's how I entered Auschwitz."

"The hard work that I was assigned to upon my arrival was digging trenches since there were a number of crematoriums operating 24 hours a day. As close to six million people were gassed and cremated in Auschwitz. They, the remains, the bones and also ashes, had to be buried and placed someplace and our job was to dig the trenches into which those ashes and remains would be placed."

"Germany was winning a number of battles and was advancing very, so victoriously. It didn't come without any great cost in soldiers. So the German government went into various factories and nearly drained them of any work, workforce which would, could carry arms. Thus, they were not able to fulfill the war orders that were, that were ordered to, to, to per-, to, to make, they received. So they went to the concentration camps looking for qualified craftsmen. And the Siemens Electric Company, the world's largest one...came to Auschwitz looking for tool and die makers. I've learned that trade in my family business and I applied. I was examined, I went through a strict examination, and I was accepted. And this is really why and how I survived Auschwitz. I most probably would not survive if I would had to do this manual hard labor, but I was removed from Auschwitz and taken to a factory. And in the factory, of course, I was treated considerably better."

"Eventually, the war was coming to an end. The Russians were approaching Auschwitz and I was evacuated and taken to another terrible camp called Buchenwald. Again, very hard work, work in quarries, very difficult. Lucky for me, the Siemens Company found me. Apparently they traced me down to Buchenwald and I was transferred to Berlin and I worked in the headquarters of the Siemens Company on the second shift as a tool and die maker."



Sam Pivnik

Sam was born on September 1, 1926 in Bedzin, Poland, near the German border. On August 6, 1943, Sam and his family were deported to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, his father, mother, one sister, and three brothers were sent directly to the gas chambers. Only Sam and his older sister, Handel, entered the camp, but Handel only survived for about 10 days before she too was killed.

At Auschwitz, Sam was forced to work on the train ramps, cleaning the trains after the prisoners were unloaded. Here, he became familiar with infamous Nazi officers Otto Moll and Dr. Josef Mengele, the *Angel of Death*.

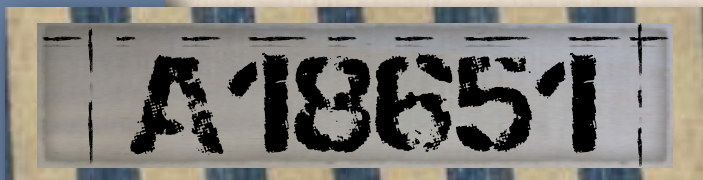
After recovering from typhus, a disease common in the camps, and evacuation from Auschwitz, Sam was eventually assigned to farm labor. Then, on May 3, 1945, along with 7,000 other prisoners, Sam boarded the ship *Cap Arcona*. Little did the prisoners know, the Nazis, wanting to erase evidence of their war crimes, had turned it into a floating bomb. Five minutes after setting sail, the ship was attacked by Royal Air Force bombers, not knowing those aboard were prisoners. Sam was one of less than 500 that survived.

"The earth is soaked with blood here....Here, the waiting, the waiting for high heaven. The waiting....That gate, well, that gate here, once you crossed that gate, ah, that was uh, all roads lead to the gas chambers, not to Rome. Everybody was walking around with his head dropped. Another hour. Another hour. They must be coming to liberate us very soon. Where's the almighty? Why hasn't he got no time for us?"

"...you could see the chimneys. Not even a bird, not even a crow, would fly over here because it smelt to high heaven for singeing meat. The singe of the bodies, it was so stinking, that birds avoided the area. Flying, any bird...."

"[Pointing at the photo, below] That's me! That's me! In the good old days, if I may call that there. Is this Mengele? [pointing at Mengele] Yeah, this is probably Mengele with the leather handschuhe? With the leather, gloves. Directing people....[I was] clearing the trains after they go away. Take everything off the trains. People, alive or dead, and the suitcases. Clearing and washing the floor out. So it doesn't smell from urine. Cleaning the trains. We cleaners had to stand at the side and even preventing anybody from passing us. Although the SS was standing next to us and if they passed, where would they go? There's the gate. We dare not [say anything to the prisoners]. On the train, we sort of whispered, as they whispered to me, 'Say you're older, say you're 16, say you're 16.' If Mengele or any of the SS men asked you how old you are, and if you were below the 16, they wouldn't take you into the camp. You'd just be sent off right to the gas chambers. They said the same thing to me...."





Israel Arbeiter

The middle of five sons, Israel, or 'Izzy,' as he was called, was born in Plock, Poland April 25, 1925. The Germans invaded Poland in 1940 and, within a year, Izzy's family, along with the town's entire Jewish population, was evacuated.

In 1942, after living in a Jewish ghetto and enduring forced slave labor for the Gesapo, Israel was sent to his first of many concentration camps, Auschwitz. Here, he watched the *Angel of Death*, Dr. Josef Mengele, personally separate camp inmates deemed suitable for labor from those sent directly to the gas chamber.

On April 25, 1945, Izzy's 20th birthday, he was liberated while on a death march from Dautmergen camp. He stole a motorcycle and travelled to a refugee camp to find another survivor, Anna Balter, who he had met in 1940 while at Starachowitz. Anna, also a Polish Jew, had smuggled food to Izzy who was suffering from typhus.

He and Anna married and immigrated to the United States in 1949.

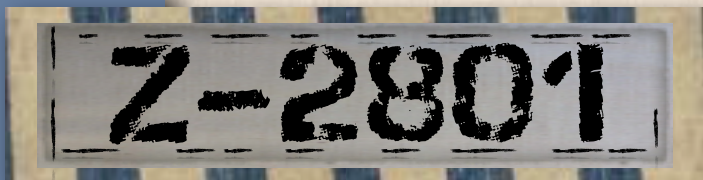


"Over here, this is the, this is the boxcars, that we came in with. And over here, as we came out from the boxcars was the assembling of the people right here and that's where Mengele or one of the other doctors performed the selection. Now when the selection took place over here and the groups were divided, we were just ordered to walk. But we didn't know which direction, which one was going where. My column was ordered to walk right here, this way. As we were walking here, this line, we were guarded on both sides by six men with machine guns and dogs. And we were walking, as you can see, that long walk there, into the unknown. We just kept walking, all the way to the very end and that's where the tragedy begins...."

"When they came, and people at the gas chambers were busy, which was practically on a daily basis. The people sometimes you see were sitting in somewhere called the waiting area until there is room for them in the gas chambers to be able to go in and to be killed....they were sitting and waiting. A waiting room, can you imagine? The waiting room to be taken in to be killed."

"See the, see these bricks? Crematorium three, crematorium four. This was crematorium four. This is where they would bring in, up the bodies. The people that working in the crematorium, were hardened prisoners. They were working in every single day. And they knew what was going in inside. And sometimes they even worked on bodies of they own relatives. But they said the hardest and most difficult thing was when they had to do a transport of children. When they had children walking up, little children up to probably about 10 years old, and when they also nicely, quietly helped them then into the gas chambers, those little things where crying and screaming for their mothers. You know how little children are. And when they closed the doors they were banging, the little kids were banging on the walls, on the door, screaming for their mothers. And Sargent Moll threw in the gas and little by little, little by little the noise inside quiet down and one by one, they laid down there on the cement floor and went to sleep."

"This was, this was the oven, right over here. It was another walk to the bunks, the bunks were [unintelligible] like this, three tiers high. Right about over here was my bunk. Where I was, where I was laying, over here."



Julia Bäcker Lentini

Julia was born April 15, 1926 in Eissern Germany. Being one of fifteen children, she remembers a happy childhood with her large Sinti-Roma (Gypsy) family who traveled throughout Germany. Her father was a talented basket weaver, horse-trader, and woodworker who built traveling family wagons for other Gypsy families.

On March 8, 1943, Julia and her family were taken from their home and put on a train to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. They did not even know about the existence of such camps or what was happening to them.

At the camp, Julia contracted typhoid fever, as did much of her family. Within six months, many of them had died from disease and starvation.

Julia lived and was transferred away from her remaining family in early 1944 to Schlieben concentration camp. There, she was caught stealing food and was given 150 lashes in front of the other prisoners. While she was recovering, the Russian soldiers arrived and liberated the camp.

Soon after, Julia met an American soldier who she married and moved to America with in 1946.

"The children were screaming sleepy and crying and what they were doing, they were putting the numbers on us. They wouldn't put us in any blocks until you had all this number business. So they started with the numbers first. Then, the worst thing was the delousing thing. After that you go into the delousing. You strip; now comes the finale as far as my parents are concerned. I told you how sad and how innocent we were raised. Here's my mother with her big children there - big boys - in the nude. She tried to cover herself and all she could say was, 'Stay together kids. Stay together.'" She had the little ones in front of her. I think it killed her. That was the beginning of the end for her. What little she had. Of course we all had to strip, everyone. It was not just us, everybody did. And then they started to shave you -- the hair, the arms -- and then they spray you, you know the lousing situation. I think it was the worst thing for my mom. It was terrible. My dad, too, it was terrible. I mean if there was anything there that broke whatever they had it was finished right then and there. My dad only lived -- my mother only lived three months after that and my dad died three months after her."

"The rumors went around that they emptied the Jewish sick block -- and we had heard the screaming and the trucks. There was little windows on the top of our barracks that we would peek out of, and us girls . . . would look out and over the wire you could see it. You could see the trucks with all the lighting and the trucks filling up with the fellas coming out with the little legs -- like you see in some of those pictures -- bones sticking out -- and some of them couldn't even make it up on those trucks. The officers would kick and drag them as they begged, 'Oh officer, I'm ready to go to work. I can work.'" But they emptied that whole sick block. And you hear that screamin' going on as the trucks were driving out and going to the crematorium. The next day they were all gone."

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Sam Rosenzweig

Schmuel (Sam) Rosenzweig was born October 18, 1920 in Zawiercie, Poland. His family was a well-respected Jewish family who owned a department store.

On Monday, September 4, 1939, the Germans invaded and annexed the area where Sam lived. Within 24 hours, everything in the town became German. Even street names were changed. They became Hitler Platz and Goering Strasse.

Deportations to Auschwitz concentration camp began in August 1943. Sam asked if he and his brother could go with their parents in another cattle car. The guard said it was already locked and could not be reopened. Sam never saw his parents again.

From January 18 to February 28, 1945, Sam was on a forced death march from Auschwitz to Buchenwald. They had no food and were marched in wooden shoes through the snow. It was a miracle that any survived. Anyone who fell down was shot. Of the 5,000 that began the march, fewer than 500 survived.

Sam was liberated in April, 1945. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1947.



"Don't go, Papa. It's too dangerous. If you will not think of your own safety, think of us. Think of Mama, Rivka, Abraham, and me. The Nazis will come after us if you interfere."

"Sam, you know our Jewish obligation. A Jewish man, no matter what his offense, must be buried according to tradition. I have already sought help from members of the Judenrat, from the 'fixers' who have influence with these German invaders. No one will help. They say that there is nothing they can do. I do not know the man lying outside our village, shot and left to die on the road. But I do know he must be given a decent burial. I am going to the Landrat, the governor, to get a permit to leave Zawiercie's city limits and retrieve the body. I will bury him myself."

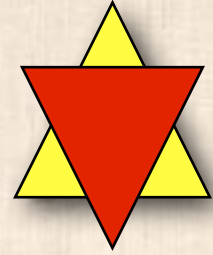
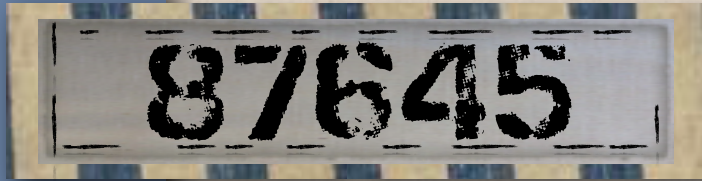
"Go, then," I replied. "Remember what the 'fixers' told you: 'Take your shroud. You will probably never come back.'"

"Perhaps you will one day understand, my son. There are times in one's life when we are obligated to perform mitzvah, a kind deed with no expectation of reward. This is one of those times. I have to do it. I feel I have to do it, and I WILL do it."

"With that, Papa put on his long, tattered coat and hat. He kissed my mother, who was wringing her hands, crying, knowing she had no more words left to talk her husband out of this dangerous venture."

"My father put himself, but actually convinced the German police to allow him to bury the body as long as he was back by midnight."

"Later that night, Schlomo, exhausted from the day's ordeal, returned home to find another kind of darkness — death. When he walked through the door, all the mirrors were covered, a Jewish custom where there is death in the family. This is how he learned that his dear mother had died while he was burying the corpse of a man he never knew."



Istvan Katona

In 1924, Istvan was born in Kartal, Hungary. His family led a normal Hungarian Jewish life until 1942 when anti-Jewish laws began. Life became more restricted for Istvan and his family. His father lost his job and Istvan was not allowed to continue his education.

In March of 1944, they were forced to move into ghettos which were horrible and humiliating for the Jews. They were forced to wear the yellow Jewish star and share one room of a house with two - four other families. Food became scarce and beatings from the police became common.

By May of 1944, they were all packed into cattle cars and deported to Auschwitz concentration camp. His mother, sisters-in-law and their children were sent straight to the gas chamber. His father was sent on to Dachau camp where he died within the year.

In November, 1944, Istvan was sent to Buchenwald concentration camp and worked as an electrician. When the Allies neared the camp, the prisoners were forced onto trains that took them to another camp, Mauthausen.

On May 5th, 1945, American troops arrived and liberated the camp.

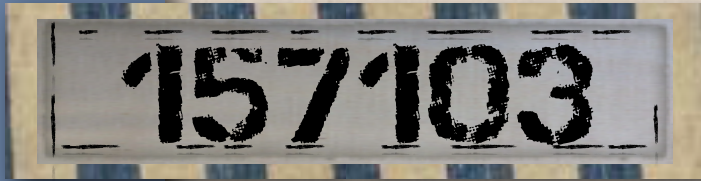
"We arrived in Buchenwald, as we found out later, on the 9th of November, 1944. At the station funny looking, striped-clothed people surrounded us, asking in German and Yiddish to give them all the food and clothing we have, as the Germans will take away everything anyway. We did not believe a word they were saying. How could it happen to us, we were brought here to work, but anyhow, we are part of the Hungarian Army."

"Within minutes we were rudely awakened. We had to strip, put everything we had down, sent to shower, then barbers removed any hair [everywhere] we had, and naked --in November-- marched to pick up the striped prison clothes and wooden shoes. In a short time, we looked the same as the "funny people" in the railway station."

"We were taken to an office building, SS guards asked our name, date of birth, and profession, then they asked, when were we taken prisoners by the German Army? Some of us said, that we are not prisoners, we are in the Hungarian Army. These people were quickly reminded with a box on the ear or a kick in the private parts, that what we are, stinking Jews. Nevertheless in the German files, we were called 'Hungarian Jewish Political Prisoners,' as I have personally seen in records I saw when I went back to Buchenwald in 1990."

"Everybody was given a number, reminded, that we now had no names, just numbers, which should be noted and answered, when called. I became 87645."

"Every morning we had an "Appell" count and marched to the factory. At night even the dead had to be brought back, recounted and if the number was not right, they recounted and recounted again and again for hours. The guards were extremely cruel. The favorite pastime was to take off a prisoner's cap and throw it against the electrified barbed wire fence. The prisoner was ordered to pick it up. Then either he was killed by the high voltage of the fence or shot as a would-be escapee."



Freddie Knoller

Freddie Knoller was born in 1921 in Vienna, Austria. He lived there with his parents and two brothers until the antisemitism became threatening. Freddie left for Belgium, but his parents believed they were too old for anything too bad to happen to them, so they stayed. They were later deported to Theresienstadt concentration camp.

In May 1940, the Nazis invaded Belgium and Freddie fled to France. When the Nazis arrived in Paris, he was a 20 year old student and chose to fight in the French Resistance against the Germans.

A broken love affair led to his betrayal and arrest in 1943. Freddie was soon deported to Auschwitz concentration camp. During the difficult journey, Freddie helped a man named Robert who was trained as a doctor and ended up being put in charge of the Auschwitz hospital. To show his thanks, Robert gave him extra food every day. Freddie credits this for his survival.

In January 1945, Freddie was sent on a Death March to Dora-Nordhausen camp, and then on to Bergen-Belsen.

On April 15th, 1945, Freddie was liberated by Allied forces. Two years later, he emigrated to the United States.

“At the beginning of October 1943, my name came up for deportation to Auschwitz. We were taken to the railway station and 100 people were squeezed into each cattle wagon. There was not enough room for everyone to sit on the floor. We youngsters made room for the old people, women with their babies and the infirm. In the wagon there was one bucket with drinking water and one empty sanitary bucket. We travelled for three days and three nights to our destination. I will never forget the stench, the arguments, the screaming of the babies and the moans of those who were dying.”

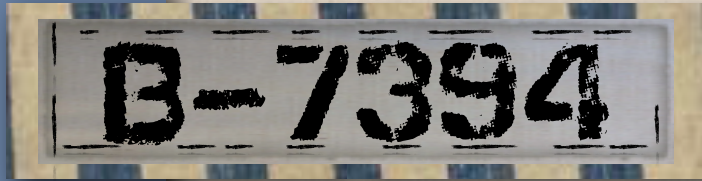
“When we arrived . . . the platform was full of SS with dogs and we saw some young people in striped prisoners’ clothes. The SS selected the younger people who were to walk to the camp, but the older men and women with their children were taken away by trucks. We heard some alarming rumors that they were taken to be killed, but very few believed them. Others, however, who gave credence to the rumors, killed themselves by walking straight into the electrical fences. This was the time when we were taught German discipline through blows and killings.”

“I realized that there were two choices: you could either give up and within 2-3 days you would be dead, or you could fight to live and try to adjust yourself to the situation ‘by hook or by crook’. I chose the latter. I did not look at others who suffered and moaned about hunger, or those who neglected their personal hygiene – a sign that they had given up. I had to take care of myself – I was number one. I had one mission only, to survive, in order to tell the world about the barbarism of Germany.”

“When the Russians approached Auschwitz, the whole camp was evacuated. The date was 18 January 1945. We were lined up in rows of five and were told that we would have to walk, and that anybody trying to escape would be shot. It was very cold and it was snowing. We went westward, walking in our wooden shoes on icy, snow-covered roads. We were still in our striped, thin clothes.

Many collapsed and were immediately shot on the spot. We had to take the corpses and throw them into the ditch next to the road. The SS surrounded each of our columns and were ready with their guns.”





Alberto Israel

Alberto was born August 3, 1927. His family originally made their home on the beautiful Mediterranean island of Rhodes.

After a two-week trip in cattle cars, Alberto, his parents, and his brothers Eli and Aaron and arrived at Auschwitz concentration camp on August 3, 1944, Alberto's 17th birthday.

Upon arrival, they were forced through the selection process where Nazi officers chose which prisoners they thought would be able to work. The others were immediately taken to the gas chambers. Alberto was chosen to work in the coal mines.

Along with the 60,000 other prisoners, Alberto was forced on a death march as the Nazi guards fled the Allies' advancement. They walked in sub-zero temperatures for about 60 miles before being placed on a train to the Mauthausen concentration camp, where he stayed until it was liberated in May 1945. At that time, Alberto weighed only 64 pounds!

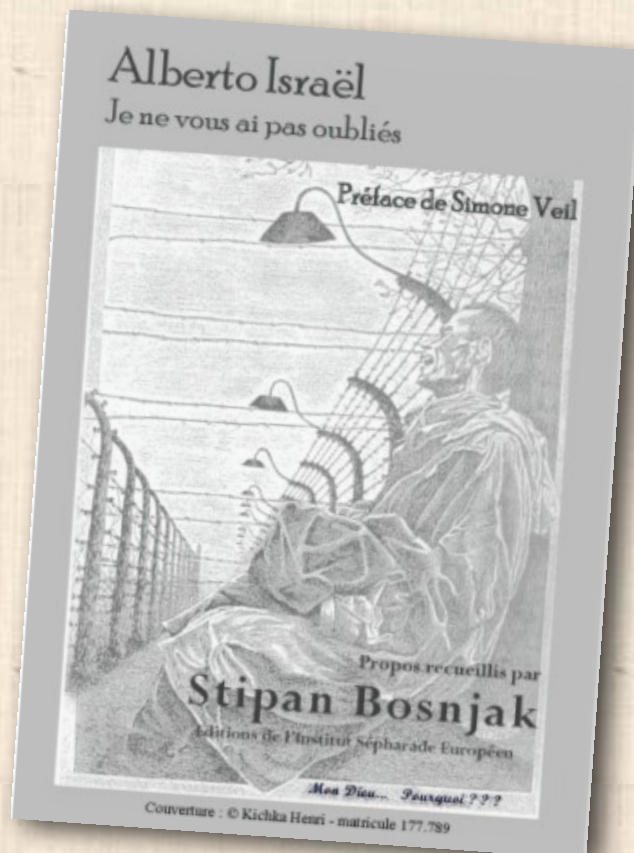
Alberto has returned to visit the death camp five or six times to attend ceremonies and lead tours. He never enjoys it, but feels he must do it to respect his family who perished there.

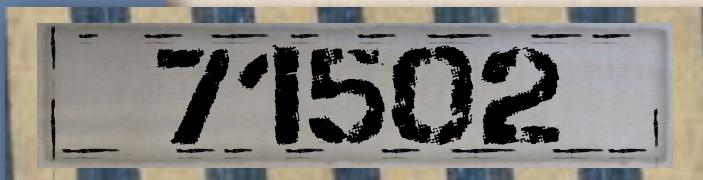
"We knew it was an abattoir (slaughterhouse) when we arrived. We could smell the melting flesh. We got there at 10 in the morning, and by 2 in the afternoon, my mother and father had been gassed."

"[Learning German quickly] probably saved my life. If you didn't understand the SS and the Kapos (the prisoners who supervised work gangs) when they gave orders, then you risked death."

"We only had our thin prison clothes and broken shoes. If you wanted a warm drink, you had to drink your urine,"

"We have to remember, always, but it's never easy."





Judith Jaegermann

Judith Jaegermann was born Judith Pinczovsky on December 24, 1929 in Karlovy Vary Czechoslovakia. She grew up in an orthodox Jewish family. After increasing antisemitic incidents, the family moved to Prague, but they were still captured and deported to Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1941 and then to Auschwitz in 1943.

Although living in the unbearable circumstances, Judith was lucky to stay together with her sister, Ruth, and their mother. Because they previously owned a restaurant, their father was forced to work under dangerous conditions as a cook for the Nazi SS. Judith overheard that the SS would keep his head immersed under water, until he almost drowned if they didn't like the food he made.

Judith, along with her mother and sister were chosen to clean up after air raids in Hamburg, where they worked in the freezing cold throughout the winter. Judith survived sickness almost freezing to death and being lit on fire!

As the Allies approached, the Nazis evacuated their camp and forced them on a death march to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. There was no food or water upon arrival. But, as starvation was closing in, so were the Allies. They were liberated on April 15, 1945.

"In the cattle cars one could hear nothing but moaning and crying, as well as whispers that this 'transport' was going to Auschwitz. Of course, absolutely nobody knew anything definite, but everyone had bad forebodings.

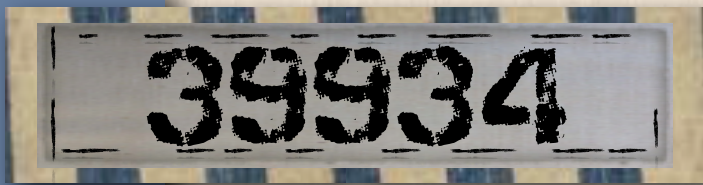
At present I cannot recall how long the trip from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz took, but one of my most dreadful memories, which even cannot forget until this day, was the fact, that they had setup a bucket in the middle of the car to serve as a toilet for all: men, women and children. It was inhuman and degrading.

As we were pretty near to this murderous death machine called Auschwitz, Papa spoke through a tiny opening and asked a railway employee whether from here "transports" would go on to some other destination. The employee replied - thumb up - and said : 'Sure, to up there, through the chimney, which is burning 24 hours a day, that's where the "transports" go.'

Finally the cross bars were taken off the doors outside and the doors opened. Though it was dark, search lights were focussed on us from all directions and again the barking dogs and the shouts: 'Out, out, faster, faster, come on, come on.' Nobody knew what was happening. The men and women were kept separated. Everything happened very fast and again we were without Papa. I saw lots of barbed wire and search lights and felt a strong smell of smoke. We were herded into a huge hall and we had to undress completely. I was 13 years old and I felt probably more ashamed at this age than the adult women, who couldn't care less.

We were standing in rows in order to be shaved everywhere. Our clothes and personal belongings had immediately been taken away from us and it was evident that the people who had to execute this action, were already so callous and dulled by their long imprisonment in Auschwitz, that they lacked all human likeness. These were the early settlers of the place.

When it was my turn to be shaved, I discovered that the person who did the shaving was a man. But then in fact, he wasn't a man. He was just a poor prisoner in a striped suit with hollow eyes and gaunt cheeks. He did his job without caring and without strength. Once we girls had been shaved everywhere, heads, underarms, pubic area, we all looked like monkeys. None of us dared to look at the others. Some had cried, while others started to laugh hysterically. It was definitely grotesque.



Kitty Hart-Moxon

Kitty was born on December 1, 1926 in Bielsko, Poland. She spent her childhood with her parents Felix and Rosa, and a brother, Robert.

As Kitty's parents saw Hitler and anti-semitism spread into Bielsko, they tried first to escape by moving the family further into central Poland, but Hitler's invasion in 1939 saw the family moved into a Jewish Ghetto. In the winter of 1940-41, they family tried to escape to Russia, only to find that the border had been closed 24 hours before they arrived. They were forced to return.

A priest was able to obtain false documents for Kitty and her mother, so they were able to be sent to Germany to work as non-Jews. The family split up at this time, but hoped their odds of surviving were better because of it.

Kitty and her mother were soon found out and sentenced to execution and placed in front of a firing squad. After shots were fired in the air, the commander laughed and said they would not be killed that day, but instead sent to a labor camp. They arrived in Auschwitz on April 2, 1943. Kitty and her mother survived Aushwitz, along with three other concentration camps and a death march across the Sudenten mountains. Their final camp was liberated by the American army on April 14, 1945.

Kitty has written two books about her story: *I am Alive* (1961) and *Return to Aschwitz* (1981).

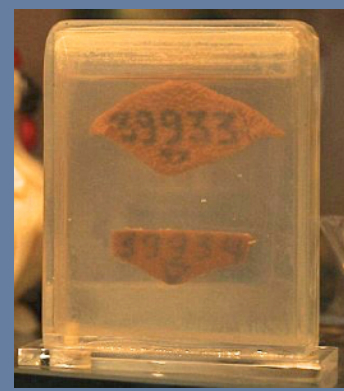
" At the last moment our death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in Auschwitz and we were delivered to the gates of hell. There we were still to be interrogated. On arrival we were stripped, whipped, shaved and tattooed. From then on, we had no names. I was now number 39934 and my mother was number 39933.

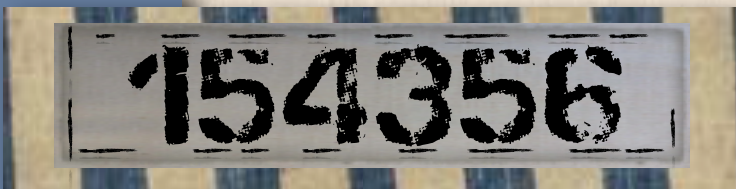
For many months I was assigned to dozens of hard labour work groups, my mother was given a job in the camp sick bay. In spring 1944 I was transferred to work near the gas chambers – the centre of extermination in Auschwitz-Birkenau. For eight months I worked in the doomed 'Kanada Kommando', sorting the clothes and belongings stripped from the Jews murdered in the nearby the gas chambers.

During this period I witnessed more than half a million people – half a million people- sent to their deaths. We knew roughly how many were murdered because we could count the trains that arrived daily and knew how many the SS could cram into the cattle trucks.

On 11 November 1944 my mother and I along with 100 other women were evacuated to a camp in south-eastern Germany. There was almost no food but I had a saviour. A German civilian woman working next to me placed herself in grave danger in order to bring me food. She saved us from certain starvation.

By this time the Russian Army was advancing fast; liberation seemed close. But on 18 February 1945 we were driven out on foot into the wilderness, without food and barefoot into the snow. Our column was joined by thousands of women from neighboring camps but every day we were fewer as women collapsed from lack of food, exhaustions, froze to death or were shot. We covered over 100 miles on foot over a mountain range and reached Trautenau, a camp in Czechoslovakia. There we were loaded into open coal trucks and began a nightmare journey of six days and seven nights, until we reached Porta Westfalica in north-west Germany. We, few who survived worked in a cave 11 shafts underground in an electronic factory."





Hershl Sperling

Hershl as a Polish Jew who—at the age of 12—was first marched through Poland by the Nazis. His family was taken from the town of Kilobuck, Poland and sent through four different concentration camps before they were sent to the Treblinka death camp. Hershel was only 14 years-old. His parents and young sister were sent straight to the gas chamber. Hershl was saved just at the doors of the gas chamber because the Nazis thought they could use him.

Hershl was tasked with pulling the gold from the teeth of those killed, burying them, and folding their leftover clothes.

Amazingly, Hershl took part in a revolt at Treblinka and was actually able to escape. Hundreds of prisoners set fire to the camp and then cut through the barbed wire and ran into the surrounding forest. Of the 800,000 prisoners sent to Treblinka, Sperling was one of just about 100 who got out alive.

Unfortunately, the barbarism that Hershl witnessed—and was forced to take part in—haunted the rest of his life. He ended up taking his own life in Scotland almost 50 years after surviving the holocaust.

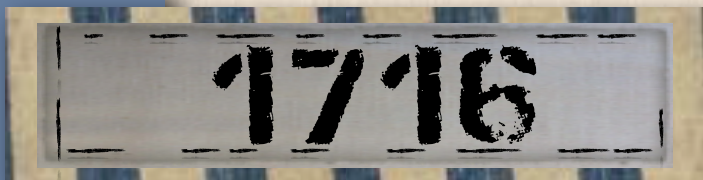
“A command rings out: women to the right, men to the left. There are indescribable, heart-breaking farewell scenes, but the SS drive the people apart. The terrified children cling to their mothers. At last the people have been divided into two groups. Then comes the order; undress, and tie your clothes up in a bundle, tie your shoes together in pairs. The huge crowd just stands there as if waiting for something, until the savage SS let fly with their rubber truncheons and force the people to undress.

Some more slowly, some more quickly, with greater or lesser degrees of embarrassment, the men and women undress and lay their clothes aside. Some still try to exchange a word with the Jews who are working in the squads in order to find out something about what awaits us. We are told the terrible truth; from this camp no one comes out alive, and there can be no question of escaping; we have come to our death. But we simply can't believe it. The human being is too attached to life, even if the truth of these predictions should be confirmed a thousand times.

At last all the men and women are undressed. We are dying of thirst and scream for a drink of water. But we are not given it, even though there is a well in the middle of the yard, as if to spite us.

Now the naked women are driven into the barracks. They do their best to cover their breasts with their arms. At the entrance to the barracks a shearing-squad awaits them. With one cut all the women's hair is hacked off and immediately packed into waiting sacks. Then the women are assembled in groups and, with their hands above their heads, they are led through a back door into the death camp.

Meanwhile the naked men are forced to pack up all the male and female clothing. Everyone has to carry a heavy load and go at a running pace through another gate into a second huge square surrounded by long, single-story barracks. The clothing is laid down by the barracks.”



Cecilie Klein-Pollack

Cecilie was the youngest of six children born in 1925 to a Jewish family in the Czechoslovakian town of Yasinya. The family owned a small grocery store, which Cecilie's mother managed.

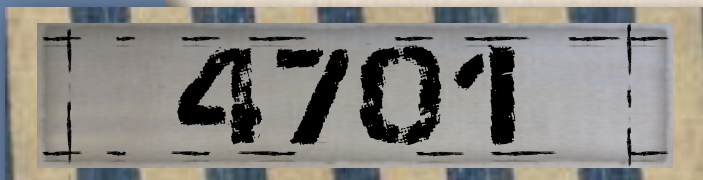
Cecilie's family was imprisoned in the Hustz ghetto in 1944 and were soon deported to Auschwitz. There Cecilie and her sister were chosen for forced labor, but the rest of her family was gassed upon arrival.

In the winter of 1944, Cecilie was deported from Auschwitz to the first of several labor camps. She was liberated by the Soviet army in the spring of 1945. After the war she was reunited with, and married, her fiancé.



"[Upon arrival at Auschwitz, my mother was told] 'Listen, if you have, uh, children, then give it away to, to either older people or, or the women with children, because women and children and, uh, anybody older is going to be killed. They are killing the same, uh, night, the same day. There is no chance...chance for these people to survive.' I couldn't even believe it. And my mother had the presence of mind to, as soon as she heard that--she didn't know, this was my mother --when this man said it.... She ran down with me, and...and I ran after her, and she goes over to my sister, and, and she has the presence of mind to tell her, 'Listen, darling, I just found out that women and children will have it very easy. All they will, all they are going to do is take care, is take care of the children. But, and, and if I don't have a child, then they will send me in hard labor. And you know I will never survive hard labor. But you are young, and you'll be able to survive.' And before she has a chance to even, you know, to, before my sister had a chance, you know, to not to give the child, my mother moved the child from her arms. And, and, and as soon as she removed...she had the child in her arms, she was pushed to this other side, you know, with all the women and children. And me and my sister were, were pushed to the other side. And my mother still yelled out, she yelled out to me, not to my...'Celeke, take care of your sister!' Because she knew, she knew what my sister will suffer when she'll find out where she took her grandson."

"They marched us to a huge building which had shower caps, and we were told to undress, and I was always, I was young and vain, and I dressed in my best clothes, my nice coat, my, my best dress, so I put it nicely together when I, when I undressed, and there comes over this Kapo, and she flings it to the side, and I say, 'This is my clothes.' She said, 'Yes, but you won't need it anymore,' and, and I was terribly scared because I didn't know what that meant. Then when we were undressed, we were ordered, everybody was ordered to stand up on a stool, and they shaved us, they shaved our hair, and the private parts, and we looked, we couldn't even recognize each other once we were stripped, not only of our clothes, but of our hair. Then we were shoved into those, um, showers, and they first opened the hot water, so we were scalded and as we ran out from under the hot water, we were beaten back by the SS and by the Kapos to go under the showers again, so they opened the ice cold water, which had the same effect, and finally we were out of this shower. Each of us was given one garment, which, of course, didn't fit. Some got small, that was too small, some got that was too large. We didn't get, receive not even underwear or brassieres or panties, just that one dress."



David (Dudi) Bergman

David was born May 3, 1931 in a small town in eastern Czechoslovakia. Located in the Carpathian Mountains, the town was so isolated that news from the rest of the country would arrive by a drummer who would read the news in the town's central square. David's father worked as a tailor and his mother was a seamstress.

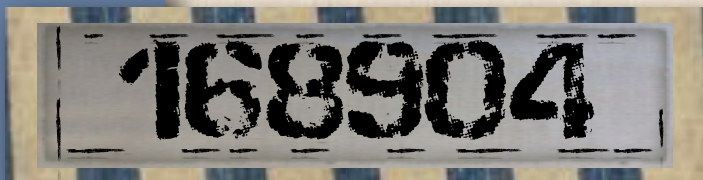
David was first deported to Auschwitz in 1944, then to two other concentration camps before being crammed into a cattle car with 150 other prisoners on route to the Dachau concentration camp.

He was one of three who survived the seven-day trip.

David was freed near Innsbruck, Austria, in May 1945 and immigrated to the United States in 1947.



"When we arrived, I had already passed out, virtually, I was...three out of the 150 there survived. They were all...the rest of them just lay dead. And what they did is, they picked me up from the...with the hands and somebody else with the legs and then they threw me in a stretcher...carr...getting ready to take me to the crematorium. That's where they took...that's where their objective was. And somehow, they...somebody who was carrying me noticed a hand moving, that I was still alive. So at a risk to his life, he took me into a barrack. It was actually like a shower room. And I was dazed at that time, virtually, I had no idea. I thought... And when I came to in the bathroom there, it was...I woke up, and I...I thought I was dead. It was like I was in another world. 'What are these people doing here? Where am I?' And I thought, I...I...I was totally dazed. I couldn't figure out even where I am. And then somebody came over and told me what happened, explained to me that 'You were just a few seconds away from being thrust into the crematorium, and they saw that you were still alive.' They said, 'You're the first youth that age who actually made it alive.' And then they took me and they hid me, you know, secretly in their barracks. So I was not even supposed to have been there. And I became like, to them, like a hero. That here are these fathers who said, well, if I made it then maybe their children would have made it through. And they...since I didn't get any rations, because I was...The ration was there like a piece of bread--enough to keep them alive till they were actually being...were going to be taken to the crematorium. And each one would take a piece of bread they would get, break off a piece and make up a slice for me, so that I could survive. And they said, 'David, you must survive and let the world know what happened.'"



Chaim Engel

Chaim was born in January of 1916 in Brudzew, Poland. His family came from a small town where his father owned a textile store. When antisemitism broke out in Brudzew, the Engels moved to the industrial city of Lodz. Chaim was then just five years old. In Lodz he attended a Jewish school that also provided a secular education. After finishing middle school, Chaim went to work at his uncle's textile factory.

In 1939, Germany invaded Poland. The Germans captured Chaim and sent him to Germany for forced labor. Ultimately, he was deported to the Sobibor concentration camp, where the rest of his family died.

In the 1943 Sobibor uprising, Chaim killed a guard and escaped to the woods with his girlfriend, Selma, whom he later married. A farmer hid them until liberation by Soviet forces in June 1944.

After the war they married and lived in Europe and Israel. The Engels settled in the United States in 1957.

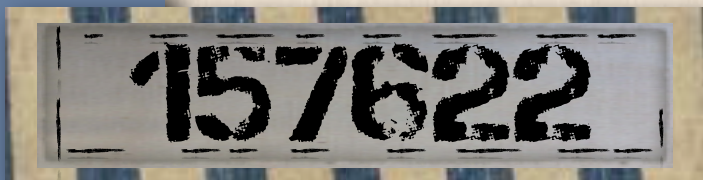


"In March 1940 all Jewish POWs were returned to Poland. I was deported to the Sobibor death camp in the summer of 1942."

"We arrived in Sobibor. So I was with my brother and myself and my friend. And we all meet the other rest of the people, about seven, eight hundred people and they took us out from the trains and they put us in two lines and uh and they start collecting...picking out people. I didn't know what the picking out means, so uh one German asked me, "Where are you from?" I said, "From Lodz." "Out." And then they went further. "What are you?" "Uh, a carpenter." "Out." Things like that, so they picked about eighteen to twenty people.... I really didn't know what the picking out means, whether life or death, so they took us...the twenty people...they took us in one side and the others went to the camp, to the gas chambers...what we found out later. So we worked in there. Went...in the afternoon, in the afternoon, they took us with all the other people to separate the clothes...that was the clothes from the people who just arrived with the transport what we came with. And while I did that I found the clothes of my brother, his...the pictures from the family, so I knew already...they already told me what's going on, so I knew already what happened...that he went to the gas chamber with my friend and I am here separating his clothes."

"In October 1943 a small group of prisoners revolted. I stabbed our overseer to death. With each jab I cried, 'This is for my father, for my mother, for all the Jews you killed.' The knife slipped, cutting me, covering me with blood. Chaos took over; many prisoners ran out the main gate. Some stepped on mines. Some gave up and didn't run at all. I grabbed my girlfriend and we ran into the woods."

"I saw [SS Sergeant Karl] Frenzel with a machine gun, and he started to shoot. And more people were running and I, I wanted to hold back because afraid for the machine gun, and I figured, "Here is dead. Here is maybe something." So I pulled Selma's hand and we ran through and somehow, some fell, and we made it through the gate."



Abraham Bomba

Abraham was born June 9, 1913, in Germany, but raised in Czestochowa, Poland. His family led an observant Jewish life and Abe learned the trade of a barber.

In 1941, his family was forced into the Czestochowa ghetto where he married a girl named Reizl and had a son, Berl.

He and his family were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp in 1942. He never saw his wife or son again.

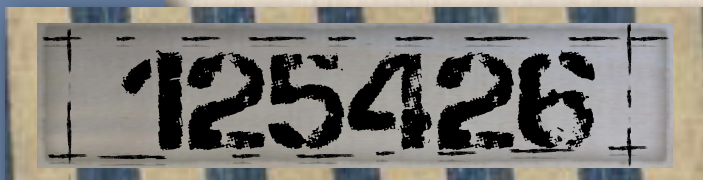
At Treblinka, Abraham was selected for forced labor. He was forced to sort clothing from arriving transports and he actually had to work inside the gas chamber itself to cut women's hair before they were gassed.

Abraham escaped from the camp with his cousin and a friend in 1943 and made his way back to Czestochowa where he took part in the ghetto uprising. He was recaptured and sent to work in one of the Tschenstochau concentration camps from June 1943 until liberation by Soviet troops in 1945.

In 1951, he immigrated to the United States.

"People went in through the gate. Now we know what the gate was, it was the way to the gas chamber and we have never see them again. That was the first hour we came in. After that, we, the people, 18 or 16 people...more people came in from the...working people, they worked already before, in the gas chamber, we had a order to clean up the place. Clean up the place--is not something you can take and clean. It was horrible. But in five, ten minutes this place had to look spotless. And it looked spotless. Like there was never nobody on the place, so the next transport when it comes in, they shouldn't see what's going on. We were cleaning up in the outside. Tell you what mean cleaning up: taking away all the clothes, to those places where the clothes were. Now, not only the clothes, all the papers, all the money, all the, the... whatever somebody had with him. And they had a lot of things with them. Pots and pans they had with them. Other things they had with them. We cleaned that up."

"We had scissors. From them we took bunches of hair. Cut off. Threw on the floor to the side, and about two minute has to be finished. Not even two minute be...because there was a line waiting to come up the next to it. And that's how we worked. Inside it was very painful. Most painful was because some of the barbers, they recognized their dear ones, like wives, mothers, even grandmothers. Can you imagine that you have to cut their hair and not to tell them a word because you were not allowed? If you say a word that they going to...uh...be gassed in five or seven minutes later, there would be a panic over there and they would be killed too."



Blanka Rothschild

Blanka (Fischer) Rothschild was born and raised in Lodz, Poland. As an only child, she was especially close to her mother and grandmother. The Fishcers were forced to move to the Lodz ghetto in the winter of 1939-40. Four years later, the family was separated and Blanka was deported to Ravensbrueck, a concentration camp in Germany. After a few weeks, she was transferred to Wittenberg as a forced laborer in an airplane factory. It was here that a German supervisor beat Blanka so viciously that she suffered broken ribs and permanent spine damage.

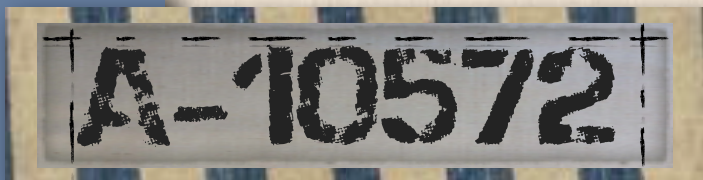
When the Allied Forces closed in on Wittenberg in April of 1945, the Germans deserted the camp and the women broke free. Propped up by friends and in spite of her pain, Blanka ran towards the advancing Russian army and into the line of fire.

She immigrated to the U.S. in 1947.



"[The beating I received] was done not by SS, but it was done by the German supervisor in my factory where I worked, Arado, the airplane factory. I was very sick at the time. I had fever, my finger. I couldn't perform the work. He didn't know that I was sabotaging all along, but the beating was about my inability to perform my work. He threw me down. He wore high boots, and he start, started to stomp on me. They didn't have guns, the Meisters. He was stomping on me breaking my ribs. It was horrible. I had a fever anyway because my finger was infected. And the two girls that worked in the same division, the same horrible place, helped me back after our work and that's when I went to that place where the sick people were. And they said, "Don't say a word because in a few days we will be liberated." We knew the fire was-- we were liberated April 20--something when the Russians reached Wittenberg and displaced the people from the camps. They had no time to kill us. They went, the, the plan was to kill us, but they just plainly didn't have time, and, uh, I survived."

"There was no sanitation. We did not have latrines. There were holes with wooden--there was a wooden board with two holes, and since many of us were sick from whatever they gave us to eat, it was a constant walk to the latrines, to the holes. It was tremendous degradation of, of human beings. It was, the human spirit suffered more than the physical spirit. Uh, the bodies didn't listen to us, didn't obey us. Uh, we had-- as I mentioned before, we lost our menstruation, very thank...gratefully because we couldn't have taken care of this. It was the avitaminosis--the lack of food and vitamins. We slept two, three to a wooden, uh, bunk. The tiers in Ravensbrueck were packed with human beings. There was stench in the air, horrible stench, between the latrines and the bodies. The one who was in charge had a special little room and special privileges and special food. We, the Jews, never got close to it. The Germans who...and the Ukrainians were in charge."



Alice Lok

Alice was born February 7, 1929, and grew up in a Jewish family in Sarvar, Hungary. She had two younger brothers and an older sister. Her father worked for the family's carpet weaving and import/export business and was often away, traveling to their Budapest office. Alice's grandfather was a community leader and president of one of Sarvar's synagogues.

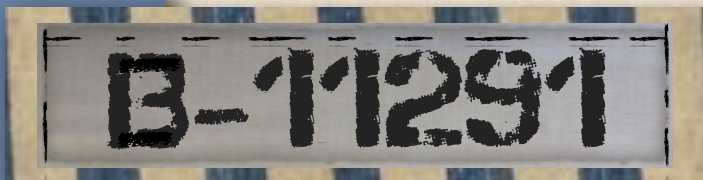
Germany occupied Hungary in 1944. Alice was deported to Auschwitz in the same year. At one time she was selected for the gas chamber, but survived because of a malfunction. As Allied forces approached the camp, Alice and other inmates were evacuated to the Guben labor camp. Alice, her sister, and another girl escaped during a forced march from the camp but were found and sent on to Bergen-Belsen. Two days after liberation, Alice's sister was taken to a Red Cross hospital, but Alice never saw her again. After the war, Alice emigrated to the U.S.



"I had a very special relationship with my grandfather. I admired him. People knew that they could always come to him for help of any kind. He often invited Jewish orphans to our home for meals. Every Sabbath our home was open to guests who came to study holy texts together. I loved to listen to the wonderful stories that Grandfather told, and he asked me to be his scribe and write those stories down."

"In April 1944, when I was 15 years old, the Germans invaded Sarvar and a ghetto was set up. Two months later, I was deported to Auschwitz with my mother, sister, and brothers. On arrival I was sent to a camp with children aged 15 and under. I searched all over for my sister Edith, and when I located her I sent a message. Miraculously, Edith switched places with someone in my camp. Every Friday night, the Sabbath, we'd pray where we could assemble secretly--the latrine. Other children joined us for these prayers."

"...later we arrived to Bergen-Belsen. And Bergen-Belsen was hell on earth. Nothing ever in literature could compare to anything what Bergen-Belsen was. When we arrived, the dead were not carried away any more, you stepped over them, you fell over them if you couldn't walk. There were agonizing...people begging for water. They were felling...falling into planks that they were not pulled together in the barracks. They were crying, they were begging. It was, it was hell. It was hell. Day and night. You couldn't escape the crying, you couldn't have escaped the praying, you couldn't escape the [cries of] 'Mercy,' the, it was a chant, the chant of the dead. It was hell."



Abraham Malnik

Abraham was born to a Jewish family in Kovno, Lithuania. It was a lovely city often called "Little Paris." The city had a large Jewish community and considerable Hebrew school system. Abraham's father was a barber, and his mother was a beautician.

His family was ordered into the Kovno ghetto in 1941 when the Nazis occupied Lithuania. Abraham's mother urged his father to flee, but he returned for them. Begging for mercy, he was able to save them from a massacre at the 9th Fort.

In 1944, the family was deported from Kovno. Abraham and his father survived the hell of five different concentration camps. They were at Theresienstadt

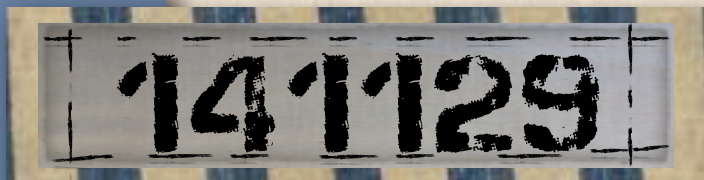
(Terezin) when it was liberated in 1945. His mother had been killed at the Stutthof camp. In 1947, he immigrated to America.



"When I was a kid we used to go to my grandparents' house for Sunday dinner. In the winter we'd take a horse-drawn sleigh. My parents would bundle me up in fur blankets, and we'd set off, the horses' bells ringing, our sleigh gliding over the white roads. When we arrived, my grandfather would kiss me gently on the forehead, his beard tickling my face, and my grandmother would hug me tightly."

"I was 14 when the Germans occupied Kovno and forced the city's Jews into a fenced-off ghetto. One day the Germans started rounding up all children to take us away. I scrambled to hide in a potato cellar with two mothers and their babies. Through a crack I saw a German guard searching for escapees. One baby started crying and I thought, "Please, God, please!" The wailing suddenly stopped. Later, I gave the "all clear" sign and we climbed out of our dark hole. One baby was dead, accidentally choked by his mother."

"And they...they they took the people on the Ninth Fort. They were...they put in bunkers, a hundred at a time...told [they were going to] be stripped in their...to their underwear, and they walked out a hundred at a time and they were machine gunned. For three days... and then they covered them up with dirt. For three days, the graves were moving up and down. They took tractors and ran over the graves in order to squeeze out the last breath. And when the front came closer and the Germans did not want to leave no evidence, they undug the graves and they found mother with children hugged together, by dying, and with parents, with grandmothers. They saw people together. And they burned them all up. We could see from the ghetto. Wasn't far from the ghetto. We could see the flames all the way to the sky."



Bella Jakubowicz Tovey

Born in 1926, Bella was the oldest of four children born to a Jewish family in Sosnowiec, Poland. Her father owned a knitting factory.

After the Germans invaded Poland in 1939, they took over the factory. The family's furniture was given to a German woman.

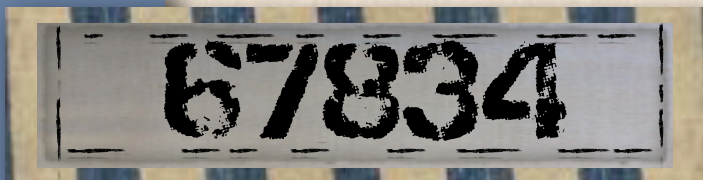
Bella was forced to work in a factory in the Sosnowiec ghetto from 1941 until the end of 1942 when the family was deported to the Bedzin ghetto.

Bella was deported to the Graeben subcamp of Gross-Rosen concentration camp in 1943 and finally to Bergen-Belsen in 1944.

She was liberated in April 1945.

"Bergen-Belsen was, was not a, was not like Auschwitz. There were no gas chambers. They didn't need any gas chambers, it was a really death camp. I remember we were brought into a big, empty barrack. There was only straw on the floor. We were pushed into that barrack so that you could not stretch your legs. We were sitting with our knees practically up to our...you know, next to our chins. And, uh, and you couldn't stretch your legs, and it was cold and we were hungry. Uh, I want to tell you that it didn't take long and we could stretch our legs, because people were... people were dying. Almost immediately people were dying all around us. And, uh, we had to take out the dead people and we had to carry them out on a...outside there were always big piles of dead bodies and I...I carried many. I don't know how I kept going. I tell you I...people have some way of protecting themselves. I know that I never, never looked at the faces, just didn't look at the faces."

"I want you to know that when the war ended, I...I weighed the equivalent of probably what is 70 pounds, and I was skin and bone. And I do remember that when that British soldier came, and asked me...he said he's...can he do something for me? And I said to him, "I'd like two things." I'd like him to give me...bring me warm socks. We're talking, this was already May. It was warm. I was cold. I wanted warm socks, knee-length socks. And I wanted sugar. So he brought me...I was craving sugar, I suppose. He brought me socks and I do remember two things. I remember when he...that I put on the socks and I started to cry because I didn't have any calf. I was all bones and this...the knee-length socks wouldn't stay on. But I also remember that when he gave me the sugar, and it may not have been more than maybe a quarter of a pound maybe, a little bag of sugar, but it was maybe, as I said, sugar, just plain sugar. I took that bag and I just poured it into my mouth. I just ate it like that. And I remember...I remember it because he got scared, and he ran out looking for the nurses because he thought God knows what I did to myself by eating all this sugar. And I remember the nurse said to him in German that it's okay. I was probably just craving sugar."



Abraham Lewent

Abraham was born in Warsaw, Poland on July 27, 1924. Abraham's Jewish family owned a clothing factory and retail store. He attended a Jewish school. Warsaw's Jewish community was the largest in Europe.

In 1942, Abraham hid in a crawl space during a raid listening as his mother and sister were captured and taken away. He never saw them again. Abe and his father were deported to the Majdanek concentration camp in 1943. His father died there and Abraham was sent to seven other Nazi camps, including Buchenwald and Dachau.

On one occasion Abe was very sick, but knew everyone in the hospital would be killed the next day. He was able to convince the doctor to let him go back to work, which saved his life.

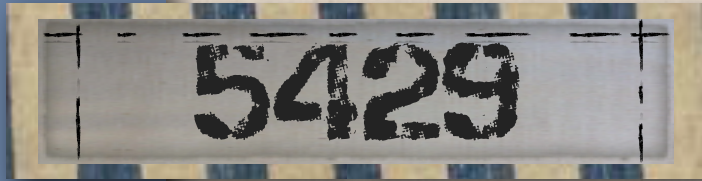


He was liberated on April 30, 1945.

"After the bombardment of Warsaw began on September 8, 1939, my family had little to eat. The stores had been reduced to rubble; we had no water or heat. Hunting for food, I dodged German bombs and stole seven jars of pickles from a nearby pickle factory. For several weeks my family lived on pickles and rice. Because of a lack of water, fires from the bombing raids burned out of control. Relief came when the capital surrendered."

"By April 1943 I was in the Warsaw ghetto in a walled-off forced-labor area. During the ghetto uprising, we could see the flames. We couldn't believe it. To one side I saw whole streets on fire. To the other I saw Poles in Warsaw's non-Jewish section preparing for Easter. When the Nazis liquidated the ghetto after the uprising, my father and I were among those marched out for deportation. Poles stood on the sidewalk, eyeing the suitcases we carried, saying: "You're going to your death, after all. Leave it for us."

"We got to Majdanek was in, in July, I think in August, 1943. We were standing in a ditch and digging, and my father was standing next to me. A Pole passes by, grabs a stone and throws it onto my father. And he was a prisoner too, you know. The stone hit his leg. I don't know what happened, if he broke a bone or something happened. He couldn't walk. In the night when we went home to the barracks, he couldn't walk. He had to hold me here, like this, and, and somehow we dragged him, me and that friend, we dragged him in the barrack. He was laying down. And his foot swelled up like this. All of a sudden it swelled up. So one guy said we should go and call a medic or a doctor or somebody. Over there, they used to call a 'Sanitaer.' Well, I didn't realize what's going to happen if somebody gets sick. I didn't realize it. I thought, well, when a man he got sick, something like this, that medic came. He wore a red cross. He came. He took my father. He says to him, "You know what, you have to go on 'Revier.'" 'Revier' means the hospital. And he took him away. And he says tomorrow he's going to bring him back. I never saw my father anymore. And he, this is for no reason at all. Pick up a stone and throw on somebody. And he was...he was just standing there. The stone could have hit me, but it hit him."



Nechama Shneorson

Nechama Shneorson was born May 29, 1929, in Kovno, Lithuania. She had two older sisters and one younger sister.

She remembers having a very happy home life as a child. Her father owned a butcher shop and her mother was a wonderful cook. But in 1939, her parents began talking about something terrible that was happening between Germany and the Soviet Union.

In the summer of 1941, the German Nazis invaded the Soviet Union and then occupied Lithuania. Bombs fell all around her home, destroying her neighborhood. Her family actually survived, but were then forced into the Kovno ghetto. They were able to survive together until the last deportation.

Nechama survived Stutthof and Thorn concentration camps, as well as a death march. The Soviets found and liberated them in January 1945.

The only family member she was able to relocate was her oldest sister, Zlata. The others had been murdered.

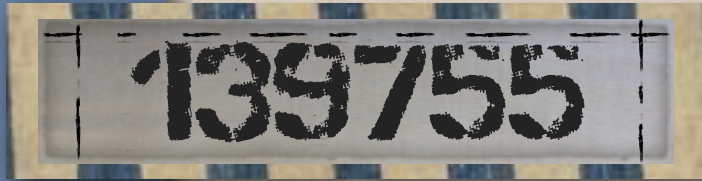
Nechama moved to Israel and then immigrated with her husband to the United States in 1964.

"I would say that the worst impact of life, to me personally, was the day that they came to take all the children away from the ghetto. That was an action that destroyed, actually, me, at this point, because I have seen how they did it and what they did to these kids.

"They came in with trucks and dogs — big German Shepherd dogs. And they went from house to house and screamed, 'Whoever has little kids, come outside.' They didn't take the mother and child together. They just tore out the baby or a child of four or five or ten. If a mother didn't . . . give away the baby away freely, they let the dogs on that woman and then the dog would tear her apart . . . and they would take the baby and throw it in [the trucks]. Just actually throwing it into the trucks. Some of them took the babies by their legs and just [beat] them through their walls into the truck. It was, it was, it was just hard to describe when that was going on there."

"They asked everybody to get out. They asked all the women to go back to the trains. And this is when the men were taken away from us, and my father among them. And the last look on his face saying, 'We will meet again. And don't worry. I'll be okay. Just keep yourself alive and we'll meet again.' And uh, that was the last time I saw him.

"Every mother with a little girl like [my sister] was put in another line. Knowing they were to be taken away from me, I asked the German, 'Can I come along?' And he said, 'No.' And I said, 'But I want to go together with my mother and my sister.' And he said, 'No you cannot.' But I said, 'But I DO want to be with them.' So he gave me — he had this stick in his hand — he gave me [a hit] over my head. I probably lost my [consciousness]. But when I woke up from it . . . they weren't there anymore. Which took me about a year and a half later to find out what really happened to them. They were taken to Auschwitz to the, uh, crematoriums. . . . That was the end of my family . . . At this point I was only left with my sister."



Philip Gans

Philip Gans was born in Amsterdam on January 22, 1928, to Levie and Lea Gans. He had an older brother, Benjamin, and a sister, Rebecca.

The Nazis occupied the Netherlands in 1940, and Philip and his family went into hiding in 1942. In 1943 they were captured and sent to Westerbork transit camp. Philip was 15 years old. From there they were sent to Auschwitz in August 1943.

Philip's sister, mother and grandmother were immediately sent to the gas chambers. Philip was put to work with his father and brother.

His father died on a death march as the Nazis forcibly pushed the prisoners to walk to new locations in an attempt to try to keep ahead of the advancing Allied forces. Philip did survive and in April 1945, the U.S. Army's 90th Infantry Division liberated him.

Philip is the only survivor of the twenty-one family members on his father's side. He has been sharing his story at thousands of schools, urging students to "erase the hate" and not be a silent bystander to bullying.

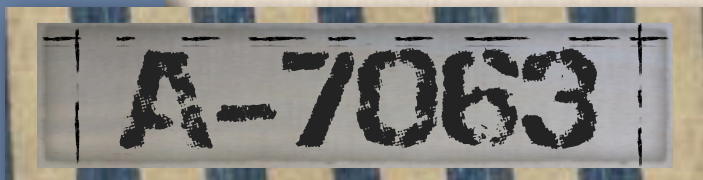
"They took all the men and pushed them to one side. They took all the women to the other side. One by one the men had to walk in front of a Nazi officer. He took one look at you and with a flick of his finger formed a new group to his left or sent you to the right with the women. When it was Father's turn, to the left. When it was my brother's turn, to the left. When it was my turn, he hesitated. Later on I realized, he figured, 'Is this kid old enough to work?' I'm only fifteen years old. He went 'This way.'" Had he not said 'This way' I would not be standing here today. Because all the women, children, and people who had to go to the right were marched straight to the gas chambers where they were gassed and cremated. They did not know they were going to the gas chambers. They were given a bar of soap and told 'You are gonna get a shower and be disinfected.'

"We were loaded in trucks and taken to another camp, Auschwitz III, the slave labor camp. But when we arrived there it was the biggest shock of our lives. We had to get undressed, lost all our clothing, pictures, wallets, everything, shoes, we had nothing. They issued us wooden shoes with a cloth top, uniforms like you see I'm wearing now, our hair was shaven, and the number you see here is tattooed on my forearm. From here in my name was not Philip Gans but einhundertneununddreissigtausendsiebenhundertfünfundfünfzig [139755]."

"We got all the dirty work. Railroad cars with bags of cement — two guys put a bag of cement on your shoulder, you carry it awhile and then two guys take it off. Should you drop the bag, there was a Nazi there kicking you. 'Aufstehen! Aufstehen! Get up! Get up!'"

"One day coming back from work I couldn't find my brother. I said, 'Dad, where is Benjamin?' He had been too weak to work and they had sent him to the gas chambers. Can you imagine how my father must have felt?"

"A Belgium boy had a stomach ache and didn't want to go to work so I stayed with him in the barracks. The Nazis pulled us out, put us over a wooden bench, and gave us 25 lashes with a rubber hose."



Eva Mozes Kor

Eva and her twin sister, Miriam, were born in Portz, Romania on January 30th, 1934. They had a nice life until March 1944, when they were forced into a ghetto in Transylvania. From there they were taken to Auschwitz where feared Nazi doctor, Josef Mengele (*"The Angel of Death"*), did many horrific medical experiments on prisoners. He was especially interested in twins.

During their ordeal at Auschwitz, Eva and Miriam were put through many extremely brutal surgeries and experiments by Mengele. Only a few out of thousands of twins survived Mengele's experiments. Among them were Eva and Miriam. They were the only members of their family to survive the Holocaust.

After liberation, Eva and Miriam immigrated to Israel. In 1960, Eva married American Michael Kor, another concentration camp survivor. She and Miriam then immigrated to the U.S. where Eva founded CANDLES (Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors).

Eva and Miriam are in the far right of this famous photo.



"When the doors to our cattle car opened, I heard SS soldiers yelling, 'Schnell! Schnell!' and ordering everybody out. My mother grabbed Miriam and me by the hand. She was always trying to protect us because we were the youngest.

Everything was moving very fast, and as I looked around, I noticed my father and my two older sisters were gone. As I clutched my mother's hand, an SS man hurried by shouting, 'Twins! Twins!' He stopped to look at us. Miriam and I looked very much alike. 'Are they twins?' he asked my mother. 'Is that good?' she replied. He nodded yes. 'They are twins,' she said.

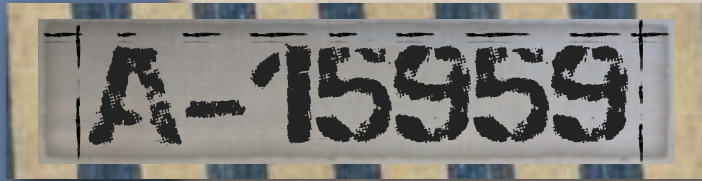
"Once the SS guard knew we were twins, Miriam and I were taken away from our mother, without any warning or explanation. Our screams fell on deaf ears. I remember looking back and seeing my mother's arms stretched out in despair as we were led away by a soldier. That was the last time I saw her.

"Our group was taken to a huge processing center. Our clothes were taken away and we sat naked on long benches for most of the day. . . . We were given short haircuts . . . four people restrained me while they heated a pen gadget with a needle. The needle was heated over the flames of a lamp and when it got hot they dipped it into ink and then they burned into my left arm dot by dot the capital letter "A" dash 7063.

"The first time I went to use the latrine located at the end of the children's barrack, I was greeted by the scattered corpses of several children lying on the ground. I think that image will stay with me forever. It was there that I made a silent pledge — a vow to make sure that Miriam and I didn't end up on that filthy floor.

"I was given five injections. That evening I developed an extremely high fever. I was trembling. My arms and my legs were swollen, huge size. Mengele and Dr. Konig and three other doctors came in the next morning. They looked at my fever chart, and Dr. Mengele said, laughingly, 'Too bad, she is so young. She has only two weeks to live . . .'

"And for the following two weeks I have only one single memory. I remember crawling on the barrack floor to reach a faucet with water at the other end of the barrack because the barrack was not even allocated water. I was crawling and fading in and out of consciousness. I kept telling myself 'I must survive,' and I did."



Ester Bershtel

"[I was] A-15959. We were treated like nothing. They hated us without reason.

"The hooligans entered buildings and smashed windows, robbed and beat any Jew they could find.

"The smell of burning flesh followed us everywhere. Every day, we thought that our turn had come.

"I didn't feel nothing. I was naked, sharing one dress with someone else. I was 25 years old. I weighed 80 pounds. Twenty-five years is when you're supposed to be full of life.

Born in 1920, Ester Bershtel spent her childhood in Przytyk, Poland, where her father, Sholem and mother, Gitl, Ester was the oldest of five children with two younger sisters and brothers. She helped in the family orchard and tutored children to earn money.

Persecution of the Jewish people began when Hitler came into power, and a "progrom" (directed violence or attack against Jews) occurred against Ester's community on March 9, 1936. Ester was just sixteen years old. In 1939, her family fled to a nearby forest when the Nazi army arrived.

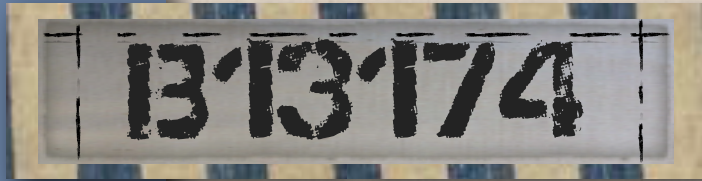
In 1941, the Nazis built an airbase at Przytyk, so Ester, her new husband, and her sister, Rokhl, fled again, ending up in a ghetto in Skaryzew where they were used for forced labor. Her father and younger sister killed. The abuse at Skaryzew was so bad that they fled once again to the forests, but by the end of December they were dying of cold and hunger, so they gave themselves up. Ester's husband was sent one way while Ester and her sister were sent with other Jews to work in farm fields. It was the summer of 1943 and they could steal food from the fields, so the conditions were much better. But that did not last long. Ester and Rokhl were sent to Auschwitz. Ester was 23 years old.

At Auschwitz, Ester spotted her husband on the other side of an electric fence. He later threw her a pair of shoes and a loaf of bread. She never saw him again after that.

In 1944, while standing outside for roll call at Auschwitz, Ester Bershtel and hundreds of other women faced the selections of the Nazi "Angel of Death," Dr. Mengele. They were ordered to take off their clothes and stand for inspection. Ester watched as her grandmother and her sister were selected and marched away. Panicked at how to save her sister, Ester found where her sister was being held and bribed an overseer of Rokhl's pen. She claimed to have a diamond hidden that she'd give to him if he released Rokhl. It worked! Ester then hid because she knew the man would come to claim his diamond. Luckily, after just two days, many of the women were herded onto a train to be sent to work at a munitions factory. Ester and Rokhl were among them, so they escaped that situation. They were, however, locked into a crowded cattle car without food, water, or fresh air for several days.

After working at that factory for a few months, they heard the Allied bombs getting closer. The Nazis put the prisoners on another horrible train ride to Theresienstadt (Terezin) camp in Czechoslovakia. Russian troops liberated them on May 8, 1945.

In 1956, Ester, her new husband, and Rokhl immigrated to New York City.



Steven Fenves

Steve was born on June 6, 1931 in Subotica, Yugoslavia. He was living a happy, upper-class life with his parents and sister until Nazis occupied Subotica in 1941. Jews were then subjected to racial laws, one of which restricted the number of Jews allowed to go to school. Steve made the cut, but said the Jewish students had to sit in the back of his high school classrooms and were never addressed by the teacher.

From September 1940 to May 1944, Steve's family lived in one corner of their apartment. At that point Steve's father was deported to Auschwitz while the rest of the family forced into a ghetto in Subotica. At the end of June, Steve and others were sent on to Auschwitz where he spent five months before being sent to the Nieder Orschel work camp. On April 1, 1945, Steve was sent on a Death march to the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. Seven hundred inmates were forced to march for 11 days. Only around 300 survived it. Steve's arm was broken by a guard. Buchenwald was liberated by US troops on April 11, 1945.

Steve's mother was killed in Auschwitz, but his father and sister survived. Steve immigrated to the U.S. in 1950.



"On the very first day of occupation my father was forced out at gun point from his office, the newspaper and the printing plant confiscated by the military, turned over to an Aryan manager who definitely intended to bankrupt the family. One of his early actions was to block access to the family banking account to my aunt and my father and then charging the entire payroll of that plant to that personal account. So my father's wealth lasted a week.

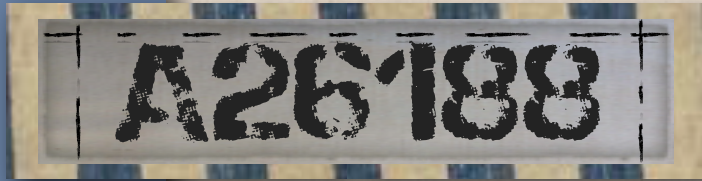
"Boxcars were lined up, Hungarian gendarmes pushed you in, 60, 80 to a boxcar, one bucket for sanitation, which, of course, didn't last very long. People barely able to sit down at first. No food, no drink, nothing. I don't know the exact time but it must have been four or five days and nights. People going mad. People dying which meant that you could stack them in one corner and free up a little space for sitting down.

"We didn't know where we were going. This incredible thing facing you. I think the first thing I remember was the smell, the stench, the stench of burning flesh. The smog falling down including small pieces of prayer books burnt. You had two choices. You jumped out [of the box car] or you were thrown out. Lined up, thousands and thousands of people, women on one side, men on the other side. It was my last look at my mother and sister.

"We wound up in this huge facility, stripped naked, shaving off all hair, disinfected with stuff, hours later given some tattered clothing and broken down shoes. No underwear, no socks, no nothing like that. Eventually you could trade with each other to get some shoes that were useable. Marched at running speeds into the compound that you showed. The following morning, lined up for the first food in six or seven days which until you had a cup, you took it in your hand.

"The conditions were horrible. One day a week, one occasion a day to go to the latrine. Older inmates advised you to take a pebble so you have something to wipe yourself at the end of using the latrine because

toilet paper was not one of the things provided. Food, horrible. And very soon, understanding that the other side meant the gas chamber and the crematorium.



Henia Bryer

In September 1938, Henia Bryer was 13 years old and happily living with her parents and three siblings in Radom, Poland when Nazis invaded her town. Loud speakers were installed around town that blasted Nazi propaganda and Hitler's speeches. Jewish citizens, like Henia were forced to wear white armbands with the blue star of David.

Henia's family was crowded into the Radom ghetto in 1941, along with 30,000 other Jews. In 1942, 20,000 of the Radom Jews were either shot on the spot or sent on to a concentration camp. Her disabled brother was among them. Henia was one of the last 300 Jews left in the ghetto in March of 1944 when they were sent to the Majdanek camp. She spent her seventeenth birthday there.

After six weeks they were sent on to the Plaszow concentration camp and then to Auschwitz. In January 1945 she was forced on a death march to Bergen Belsen to stay ahead of the Russians. Henia said each camp she was sent to was worse than the last.

Henia was liberated by British forces in 1945. She was able to find her mother and move to Paris where they began to rebuild their lives.



"They took us off the train [at Auschwitz] and we had to line up and again strip . . . and there stood Dr. Mengele and his cronies fully dressed in uniforms and we had to parade in front of them. You can imagine what that felt like. He was just flicking his finger; if he flicked the finger to the left, those people were going straight to the crematorium. If to the right, they were going to the camp. We were sorted out that way. Those who were strong enough to work were sent to the proper Auschwitz. My [little] sister wasn't there. She was with the children's transport. The mothers and fathers were crying . . . [The Nazis] had loud music blaring over speakers and they took all the children away. And we knew they were going — I mean where could they take children? She was sent into the ovens. The children were singing when they left.

"We were given a number. Everybody gets a tattoo. There is mine still; I wouldn't let them remove it after the war. They came to shave every woman's head and [we were] also divided into groups of ten. I cannot describe to you how a girl looks without hair and that was the last thing they were sort of holding on to.

"It was a matter of surviving every minute. . . . Every one of us got a bundle of clothes — not the striped clothes — they were civilian clothes. You knew they took them from the people who were obviously killed before you. I got a parcel of clothes . . . that would have fit a 12 year-old girl. And the shoes . . . they were wooden clogs but they were too small and I couldn't put my foot into them. I thought to myself now this is the end. . . . They'll bury me now. . . . I stood there in the courtyard and cried and I don't know how I'm going to survive here in these clothes and . . . in the middle of my tears . . . I hear a voice calling my name. I can't see who it is because my tears are all over my face and eyes. On the other side of the fence there was a young chap standing and calling my name. He called me to the fence . . . and he said, "Wait right here for five minutes. Wait." I said, "Who are you?" . . .

He said, "Never mind who I am, I'm in a hurry, I used to work for your dad." . . . He came back — he was working the the clothes of the dead people they just killed in the ovens, they gassed them — so he came back and he threw over the fence a parcel for me with clothes. This was life saving. . . . Now I know that I can carry on.



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DDE/nmr

15 April 1945

Dear General:



✓ BCOS
✓ Patton

Today I forwarded to the Combined Chiefs of Staff the essentials of my future plans. In a word, what I am going to do now that the western enemy is split into two parts, is to take up a defensive line in the center (along a geographical feature that will tend to separate our forces physically from the advancing Russians) and clean up the important jobs on our flanks. A mere glance at the map shows that one of these is to get Lubeck and then clear up all the areas west and north of there. The other job is the so-called "redoubt". I deem both of these to be vastly more important than the capture of Berlin + anyway, to plan for making an immediate effort against Berlin would be foolish in view of the relative situation of the Russians and ourselves at this moment. We'd get all coiled up for something that in all probability would never come off. While true that we have seized a small bridgehead over the Elbe, it must be remembered that only our spearheads are up to that river; our center of gravity is well back of there.

Montgomery anticipates that he will need no help from the Americans other than that involved in an extension of Simpson's left. However, I rather think that he will want possibly an American Airborne Division and maybe an Armored Division. I will have enough in reserve to give him this much help if he needs it. But assuming that he needs no American help, that job will be performed by the 17 divisions of the 21st Army Group.

In the center, extending all the way from Newhouse on the Elbe down to the vicinity of Selb on the border of Czechoslovakia, will be the Ninth and First Armies, probably with about 23 to 24 divisions, including their own reserves. This will be enough to push on to Berlin if resistance is light, and the Russians do not advance in that sector. Bradley's main offensive effort will be the thrust along the line Wursberg-Nuremberg-Linz, carried out by the Third Army with about 12 divisions. Devers, with another 12 U.S. divisions and 6 French divisions, will capture Munich and all of the German territory lying within his zone of advance.

About 8 divisions at that time will be on strictly occupational duties, largely under Fifteenth Army. This will leave about 5 divisions, including Airborne, in my Reserve.

The intervention of the British Chiefs of Staff in my military dealings with the Soviet has thrown quite a monkey-wrench into our speed of communication. If you will note from Antonov's reply to the telegram that

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we finally sent (as revised on recommendation of the BCOS) the point he immediately raised is whether our message implies an attempt, under the guise of military operations, to change the occupational boundaries already agreed upon by our three governments. Frankly, if I should have forces in the Russian occupational zone and be faced with an order of "request" to retire so that they may advance to the points they choose, I see no recourse except to comply. To do otherwise would probably provoke an incident, with the logic of the situation all on the side of the Soviets. I cannot see exactly what the British have in mind for me to do, under such circumstances. It is a bridge that I will have to cross when I come to it but I must say that I feel a bit lost in trying to give sensible instructions to my various commanders in the field.

On a recent tour of the forward areas in First and Third Armies, I stopped momentarily at the salt mines to take a look at the German treasure. There is a lot of it. But the most interesting - although horrible - sight that I encountered during the trip was a visit to a German internment camp near Gotha. The things I saw beggar description. While I was touring the camp I encountered three men who had been inmates and by one ruse or another had made their escape. I interviewed them through an interpreter. The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick. In one room, where they were piled up twenty or thirty naked men, killed by starvation, George Patton would not even enter. He said he would get sick if he did so. I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to "propaganda".

If you could see your way clear to do it, I think you should make a visit here at the earliest possible moment, while we are still conducting a general offensive. You would be proud of the Army you have produced. In the first place, the U.S. ground and air forces are a unit; they both participate in the same battle all the way down the line from me to the lowest private. I can find no evidence whatsoever of any mutual jealousy, suspicion or lack of understanding. In fact, I know of one or two Major Generals in the Air Force that one of my Army Commanders would accept as Division Commanders today.

Next, you would be struck by the "veteran" quality of the whole organization. Commanders, staffs, and troops, both air and ground, go about their business in a perfectly calm and sure manner that gets results. I am quite certain that no organization has ever existed that can re-shuffle and re-group on a large scale and continue offensives without a single pause, better than can Bradley and his staff.

Another thing that would strike you is the high average of ability in our higher command team. In recent telegrams to you I explained something of

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the quality of our Corps Commanders. Inadvertently I left out the name of Ridgway, one of the finest soldiers this war has produced. If ever we get to the point that I can recommend to you additional Corps Commanders for promotion, he will certainly have to be one.

In Army command, there is no weakness except for the one feature of Patton's unpredictability so far as his judgment (usually in small things) is concerned. These Army Commanders, with Bradley, make up a team that could scarcely be improved upon. Bradley, of course, remains the one whose tactical and strategical judgment I consider almost unimpeachable. Only once have we had a real difference of opinion on a major question. He is big, sound, and has the complete confidence of those above and below him.

Patton's latest crackpot actions may possibly get some publicity. One involved the arbitrary relief of a censor (over whom he had no authority whatsoever) for what Patton considered to be an error in judgment. All the censor did was to allow the printing of a story saying we had captured some of the German monetary reserves. Three or four newspapers have written very bitter articles about Patton, on this incident, and to my disgust they call it another example of "Army Blundering". I took Patton's hide off, but there is nothing else to do about it. Then again, he sent off a little expedition on a wild goose chase in an effort to liberate some American prisoners. The upshot was that he got 25 prisoners back and lost a full company of medium tanks and a platoon of light tanks. Foolishly, he then imposed censorship on the movement, meaning to lift it later, which he forgot to do. The story has now been released and I hope the newspapers do not make too much of it. One bad, though Patton says accidental, feature of the affair was that his own son-in-law was one of the 25 released. Patton is a problem child, but he is a great fighting leader in pursuit and exploitation.

This developed into quite a long story, all to convince you that in a short visit here you could see, in visible form, the fruits of much of your work over the past five years. In a matter of three or four days I am sure you would see things that would be of great satisfaction to you from now on. This sounds like I am completely and wholly satisfied with everything that I see. This is far from the case, but the point is that higher commanders have learned to handle the important things and we have gradually developed an organization that keeps the nagging details in the hands of people that can give their whole attention to them.

With best wishes,



Sincerely,

General of the Army George C. Marshall,
The Chief of Staff,
Washington, D.C.

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BSR

RETURN THIS COPY TO LT.COL. LEE, ADC

ORIGINATORS FILE No.

SHAFF MESSAGE FORM

CALL CIRCUIT No. PRIORITY TRANSMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

NR 21

SPACES WITHIN HEAVY LINES FOR SIGNALS USE ONLY

FROM (A) SHAFF FWD ORIGINATOR Supreme Commander DDE/nmr DATE-TIME OF ORIGIN 19 April 1945

TO FOR ACTION ACTWAR

TO (W) FOR INFORMATION (INFO)

~~SECRET~~



EYES ONLY

MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS

GR 106

191215 B.

(REF NO.) FWD 19461. (CLASSIFICATION) ~~SECRET~~ EYES ONLY

WE CONTINUE TO UNCOVER GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMPS FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS IN WHICH CONDITIONS OF INDESCRIBABLE HORROR PREVAIL. FROM EISENHOWER TO GENERAL MARSHALL FOR EYES ONLY. I HAVE VISITED ONE OF THESE MYSELF AND I ASSURE YOU THAT WHATEVER HAS BEEN PRINTED ON THEM TO DATE HAS BEEN UNDERSTATEMENT. IF YOU WOULD SEE ANY ADVANTAGE IN ASKING ABOUT A DOZEN LEADERS OF CONGRESS AND A DOZEN PROMINENT EDITORS TO MAKE A SHORT VISIT TO THIS THEATER IN A COUPLE OF C-54s, I WILL ARRANGE TO HAVE THEM CONDUCTED TO ONE OF THESE PLACES WHERE THE EVIDENCE OF BESTIALITY AND CRUELTY IS SO OVERPOWERING AS TO LEAVE NO DOUBT IN THEIR MINDS ABOUT THE NORMAL PRACTICES OF THE GERMANS IN THESE CAMPS. I AM HOPEFUL THAT SOME BRITISH INDIVIDUALS IN SIMILAR CATEGORIES WILL VISIT THE NORTHERN AREA TO WITNESS SIMILAR EVIDENCE OF ATROCITY.

DL

~~SECRET~~

EYES ONLY

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	THIS MESSAGE MUST BE SENT IN CYPHER IF LIABLE TO INTERCEPTION	URGENT		
DECLASSIFIED DOD DIR. 5200.10, June 29, 1960 NE by WGL date 7-5-67	INITIALS	ORIGINATING-DIVISION	APR 19 1945 12 27 TIME CLEARED	517
	THIS MESSAGE MAY BE SENT IN CLEAR BY ANY MEANS	SHSC		
	INITIALS	NAME AND RANK TYPED. TEL NO.		
	Lt.Col.E.R.Lee,ADC 4170			
	AUTHENTICATING SIGNATURE			
	<i>E.R. Lee</i>			

Sources

The following are recommended sources of content, primary sources, or artifact replicas suitable for classroom use.

Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum, and Boyhood Home

- Letter, General Eisenhower to General Marshall concerning his visit to a Germany internment camp near Gotha (Ohrdruf), April 15, 1945 [Dwight D. Eisenhower's Pre-Presidential Papers, Principal File, Box 80, Marshall George C. (6); NAID #12005711]
- Cable, General Eisenhower to General Marshall concerning Nazi horrors; requests visit by members of Congress and the media, April 19, 1945 [Dwight D. Eisenhower's Pre-Presidential Papers, Principal File, Box 134, Cables Off (GCM/DDE 19 Apr - 10 Nov 45 (4); NAID #12007738]
- Photos, General Eisenhower views sites at Ohrdruf. April 12, 1945. [66-699-361, 68-509-2, 68-509-4, 71-321-2, 71-321-3, 71-374, 86-12-2, 86-12-3]

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