

**Guide to the  
Orange County Holocaust  
Oral History Project Interviews**

**Collection number: MS-M 11**

Special Collections and Archives  
The UCI Libraries

University of California, Irvine  
Irvine, California

**Contact information:**

Special Collections and Archives  
The UCI Libraries  
P.O. Box 19557  
University of California, Irvine  
Irvine, California 92623-9557

**Phone:** (949) 824-7227

**Fax:** (949) 824-2472

**Email:** [spcoll@uci.edu](mailto:spcoll@uci.edu)

**URL:** <http://www.lib.uci.edu/rrsc/speccoll.html>

## Summary data format

Interview No.  
Length:  
# of VHS tapes:

Name:  
Gender:  
Birthdate:  
Birthplace:  
Religion:  
Age Group:  
Type Of Experience:  
Left Family Home:  
Camps Occupied:  
Parents Survived:  
Number Of Siblings:  
Sibling(s) Survived:

A total of fifteen data elements comprise this profile. An explanation of each element follows, including brief statistical summaries of the characteristics of the collection as a whole.

**Interview No.** Each of the interviews was assigned a sequential number by the ADL; numbers were assigned in the order that the interviews were conducted. Interview #1 (Jack P.) took place on April 16, 1992; the last interview, #93 (Edith B.), took place on March 17, 1994. [note: this last is no longer true & needs to be updated] Gaps in numbering are attributable to tapes that have not yet been transferred to UCI.

**Length.** Interviews vary in length from #69 (Ted F.), which is 27 minutes long, to #70 (Rose D.), which is 185 minutes long.

**# of VHS tapes.** The number of videotapes on which the use copy of the interview is recorded.

**Name.** The name listed on each data sheet is always that currently used by the interviewee. In many cases, survivors changed their first and/or last names upon emigrating to the United States.

### Abstracts of Interviews

Interview No.	<b>001 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	120 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Pariser, Jack
Birth:	1929
Birthplace:	Jodlowa, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young Adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1942
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?:	1

Jack Pariser recalls that the Polish village where his family lived was so small that no German troops actually occupied it after the 1939 invasion. Regardless, anti-Jewish measures were established and enforced. One of Jack's grandfathers died after SS men beat him for refusing to step on the Torah. In 1942 the SS ordered extermination of all the Jews in the village, but a local policeman tipped off the Jewish community the night before the intended killings. Jack's family fled into the woods and spent most of the next three years in hiding. He cites five different gentiles who risked their lives to assist them, but also describes how another family deceived and turned in the Parisers. Jack's family escaped transport only because their arrest took place on a holiday weekend; they were in a local jail with somewhat lax security and managed to dig their way to freedom. After the Liberation, gentile Poles committed further atrocities against Jews, so Jack's father decided to take his family out of Poland and into the American Zone of Germany.

Jack gives insightful details in particular about Polish anti-Semitism and gentile Poles' perceptions of Jews. He is the initiator of the Orange County Holocaust Oral History Project and is an engaged, inspiring participant.

Interview No.	<b>002 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	87 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Rubin, Gloria
Birth:	1928
Birthplace:	Nasielsk, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	6
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Gloria Rubin notes that Jewish children in her small town had to sit in the back rows at school, even before the Nazi occupation. "You were always afraid; you had to have your head down." She was eleven when the war broke out, and when her family moved to the Warsaw ghetto she would sneak out and walk the 60 miles to their hometown to get food. She had been separated from her mother and five siblings when she was transported to Auschwitz along with her father and one brother; at this point, she says, "I was already a soldier." Gloria was then selected to work in the gas chambers, sorting the clothes of victims. She knew that her brother and father had perished there when she came upon their garments. She developed tuberculosis and was selected to die herself, but was saved by her bloc leader, with whom she would stay until after the Liberation. In January 1945 they were evacuated to a small German work camp, whose residents dispersed as the Allies approached. After the war Gloria went with the bloc leader to Czechoslovakia, where she lived under an assumed identity until relatives from the U.S. contacted her.

Gloria's testimony is very emotional. During her first years in the U.S., Gloria feared that the Nazis would still come for her. Today, she continues to relive the total isolation, abandonment, and helplessness that she experienced as a young teenager whose parents could not protect her. Now widowed, Gloria feels she has nothing to look forward to. However, she expresses her desire to record her story for posterity.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No:	<b>003 (Box 20)</b>
Length:	45 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Bors, Stanley
Birth:	1912
Birthplace:	Sosnowiec, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp:	Ghettoes, Hidden
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived:	0

Stanley Bors first encountered anti-Semitism in high school, but universities, he says, were "the worst place in Poland for Jewish people;" he describes verbal abuse and actual building lockouts. When the Germans invaded Poland, he and his wife fled to Russian-occupied Eastern Poland, where he was able to work as an agricultural engineer. In 1941, they returned to central Poland and discovered that both their sets of parents had been killed. They moved to the Warsaw ghetto with a cousin. Stanley describes the social groups that formed this ghetto, along with the bureaucratic agencies created within it. Aware of possible liquidation, Stanley arranged his and Irene's escape through a relative who had married a gentile. Given false papers by the underground, they spent the rest of the war posing as gentiles, fearful not only of the Germans but of paid Jewish informers.

Stanley recounts his wartime survival clearly and concisely and relates the role of anti-Semitism in his pre- and postwar experiences. He also tells an interesting, and possibly representative, anecdote about American relatives who bribed a consul in an attempt to get Stanley and his wife into the U.S. through Cuba.

See also: #14 (Interview with Irene Bors -- wife)

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>004 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	117 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Wattenberg, Rosalie
Birth:	1919
Birthplace:	Warsaw, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	Majdenek, Ravensbrhck, Dachau
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	4
Sibling(s) Survived?	3

Rosalie Wattenberg notes the existence of prewar anti-Semitism in Poland by describing a policeman's refusal to act when thugs beat up her father for being a Jew. Her father refused to believe, however, that Hitler would attempt genocide. Rosalie also notes that the anti-Semitic Poles began taunting the Jews of Warsaw about Hitler's plans, even before anti-Jewish laws were passed. Accompanied by her sister Helen, Rosalie survived typhus in the Warsaw ghetto, liquidation measures, an abortion without anaesthesia, stays in several camps, and a forced march from Ravensbrhck in Northern Germany to Dachau in Bavaria. She recalls cutting down a barracks mate who attempted to hang herself, unsuccessfully hiding jewelry by swallowing it, and a pile of corpses "five stories high." Rosalie's sister, Helen, credits her with keeping both of them alive with her optimism and determination.

Rosalie expresses profound gratitude for her American liberators and for the opportunity to emigrate to the U.S. She underlines her emotions with the reading aloud of a leaflet from the Warsaw Uprising.

See also: #5 (Interview with Helen Greenbaum -- sister).

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>005 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	94 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Greenbaum, Helen
Birth:	1923
Birthplace:	Warsaw, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	Majdanek, Ravensbrhck, Dachau
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	4
Sibling(s) Survived?	3

Helen Greenbaum's father denied that anti-Jewish measures had begun in Warsaw, even as Nazis were seizing Jews' radios, furs, and precious metals. He was soon apprehended by the Germans and never returned. Helen's family moved into the Warsaw ghetto, and all worked in a uniform factory for a brief period before deportation. Selections for the gas chambers took place at the factory, where their mother was separated from them. Helen and her sister were sent to Majdanek, where at first they did field work. Helen became so demoralized that she asked an SS man to shoot her, but he refused, telling her she was too young to kill. Subsequently she worked at two different munitions factories; at the second she was beaten for failing to meet a quota and sustained permanent damage to her left kidney. At the end of the war Helen and her sister survived starving conditions and rampant disease at Ravensbrhck and Dachau. She recalls the Liberation and says that prisoners who couldn't walk upright went to meet GI's on all fours.

Helen struggles visibly with the long-term effects of her experiences. She does not believe she would have survived without the moral support of her sister and continues to feel emotionally reliant on her.

See also: #4 (Rosalie Wattenberg -- sister)

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>007 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	103 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Nasser, Stephen
Birth:	1931
Birthplace:	Budapest, Hungary
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz, Murdorf
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Stephen Nasser describes a comfortable life with his family in Budapest up to the German occupation in 1944. His mother paid a gentile factory owner to employ and house thirteen-year-old Stephen and his older brother, but a few months later all three were transported to Auschwitz. Shortly after their arrival, they witnessed an SS officer batter Stephen's infant cousin to death. Separated from their mother, Stephen decided he would find a way to get himself and his brother out of the camp; soon they were able to trade places with two Poles who wanted to get out of assignment to a labor camp in Germany. The camp operated until the end of the war; Stephen survived severe illness there, but his brother did not. After the Liberation he was hospitalized for two months and then went back to Budapest. Stephen came to Canada in 1948 through the Canadian Jewish Congress, then to the U.S. in the 1950's.

Stephen's will and determination are impressive. He describes attacking (without reprisal) an SS man who struck his brother, as well as surviving in a hospice room with pneumonia and typhus, "refusing to die." He has written a memoir of his experiences and expresses great anger at "revisionist" questioning of the Holocaust.



**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>008 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	50 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Rubin, Erno
Birth:	1926
Birthplace:	Dac, Hungary
Type of Exp:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettos, Camps
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	Mauthausen, Gunskirchen
Parents Survived Occupation?	Father
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived?	2

Before the Germans occupied Hungary, Erno Rubin's father told his family that Nazi atrocities could never happen in their country, although the Final Solution had swept much of the rest of Europe. This changed in 1944, however, and Erno had to move into a ghetto with his family. Erno was drafted for labor soon afterward, working on railroads and airports and in steel manufacturing. As the Russians pressed westward, Erno and his group were marched through Austria to Mauthausen. Erno describes starving conditions, illness, and Nazi cruelty on this march. He then spent three weeks in Mauthausen, "just sitting in barracks." Erno describes the arrival at Mauthausen of children who had been saved from Auschwitz; they told him and others about the gas chambers. His group was moved to another camp nearby and still was given no work; this continued until the Liberation. Erno survived a case of typhus at the end of the war and spent more than a month in the hospital. He returned to Hungary in 1945 and stayed until 1957, when he came to the United States.

Erno says he always believed he would survive. His emotions about his experiences are quiet yet clear, and he gives his testimony thoughtfully.

**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>009 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	86 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Goslins, Herman
Birth:	1911
Birthplace:	Groningen, Netherlands
Type of Exp:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1941
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived?	2

Herman Goslins wanted to come to the United States after hearing about Germany's *Kristallnacht* in 1938, but he was deterred by reports of continued unemployment here. After the German invasion of Holland in 1940, he was sent to a labor camp, which he managed to leave with a faked medical excuse. When Herman returned to his wife, they went into hiding with the help of the Dutch underground, which also took care of their five-month-old daughter. By the end of the war, he says, "she had at least thirty different parents." Herman and his wife left their refuge house twice in two and a half years. The house was raided once in a search for Dutch youth who were evading a German draft attempt, but Herman and his wife had a hiding place in a wall between two closets and were not discovered. After the war Herman had an opportunity to get back his family's wholesale meat business, but decided that so many customers had done business and/or collaborated with the Germans that he wanted to start anew elsewhere. Herman ultimately decided to come to the United States in the 1950's because of the Communist presence in Europe at that time.

Herman's successful evasion of the Nazis is fascinating. He also remembers many colorful details of the period, such as German officers' attempt at the end of the war to flee the Allies in their Mercedes convertibles.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>010 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	112 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Friedman, Alice
Birth:	1919
Birthplace:	Prague, Czechoslovakia
Type of Exp:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1938
Camps Occupied:	Theresienstadt, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Alice Friedman's parents had moved to Vienna in 1921, and sent her back to Prague when deportations of Austrian Jews to Buchenwald and Dachau began. "I couldn't imagine what they were doing there," she says. Alice was spared deportation until 1942, in part because relatives were on a council at Theresienstadt and had leverage. Subsequently, an uncle declared her as his bride so she could stay at that camp, rather than go on to ill-reputed Majdenek. Alice had a job assembling caskets at lumber yard; this occupation became more necessary as the camp's population grew from 7,000 to 60,000, and inmates died from unsanitary conditions. She and her parents were sent to Auschwitz in December 1943; Alice dropped a note to a friend out the train window as they passed his town, and she found out after the war that he got it. In June 1944, Alice was chosen to work at an Esso plant in Hamburg with 1,000 other female prisoners; a few months later they were moved to a nearby cement factory. She describes "constant" bombardments over these areas, and the hard winter of 1944-45. Her group was moved to Bergen-Belsen in March 1945. Alice was offered extra rations in exchange for smothering the elderly and the weak in their blankets; she refused. The British liberated the camp in April 1945.

Alice's recollection of detail makes her testimony especially potent. She also shows a postcard that illustrates the Nazi law requiring that Jews identify themselves with standard middle names: "Sarah" for women, and "Israel" for men.

Interview No.	<b>011 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	101 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Kenig, Ted
Birth:	1922
Birthplace:	Berlin, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	943
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz, Mauthausen
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	0
Sibling(s) Survived?	N/A

Ted Kenig says he didn't know he was Jewish until 1933, when he hastily received his bar mitzvah. He and his friends, all "smart city kids," rebelled against Nazi norms and membership in the Hitler Youth; they had long hair and listened to American music. Early in the war Ted got a job in an airplane factory; this allowed him and his parents to remain in Berlin until 1943, when they were deported. Ted describes the process of turning over all his possessions to the Gestapo and then signing a document that designated him an "enemy of the Reich." He was sent to Auschwitz, where his first job was in a coal mine. He lost a finger in an accident there and risked selection for death by seeking hospital treatment. Ted got word that his mother had come to Auschwitz from Theresienstadt, and he was able to get letters to her; later, he heard that she died in the gas chambers. Ted survived both the death march to Mauthausen in January 1945 and the months spent in different subcamps before liberation. A few months after the war he ran into an Auschwitz commander who had succeeded in posing as a camp inmate and avoiding prosecution. Ted had him arrested and imprisoned.

Ted's account shows the determination and resourcefulness that helped him through his experiences. He also discusses the German obsession with racial purity and suggests the autobiography of Rudolf Hess to anyone who doubts the reality of the Shoah.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>012 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	81 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Fern, Harry
Birth:	1920
Birthplace:	Koblenz, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettos, Camps
Left Family Home:	1941
Camps Occupied:	Lodz, Skarzysko
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	0
Sibling(s) Survived?	N/A

Harry Fern says that he was never conscious of German anti-Semitism as a widespread problem until he was asked to leave *gymnasium* (high school) at age fourteen. His father then lost his business because SA soldiers stood outside it to enforce the anti-Jewish boycott, barring any customers. Harry entered an apprentice program for shoemakers and was expelled when he struck back a swastika-wearing teacher who hit him. The family fled to Cologne and stayed there until 1941, when they were sent to the Lodz ghetto. Harry was able to prevent his parents' deportation until 1943; soon after, he was sent to a munitions factory at Skarzysko. He was able to get food by trading to Polish civilians cigarette holders he made from metal refuse. In January 1945 his camp was moved to another location, which was the first area to be liberated by the Russians. He did not want to return to Germany, so lived in Austria until 1947, when he came to the U.S.

Harry displays the conflicted feelings common to German Jewish survivors. He says that at first he felt angry at German Jews who wanted to emigrate and believed that Nazism could be fought. During and after his ordeal he then experienced intense hatred for Germany, and only in recent years has he found any positive associations with anything German.

See also: #15 (Lilo Fern -- wife)

Interview No.	<b>013 (Box 20)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	59 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Posalski, Martha
Birth:	1916
Birthplace:	Frankfurt, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Refugee
Left Family Home:	1933
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Both
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived?	3

In 1932, Martha Posalski's father saw a gentile lawyer slap a Jewish lawyer in court. Because he offered to testify for the Jew, Martha's father soon was threatened and shortly thereafter left the country for France. The rest of the family followed the next year; Martha says she made the trip the day after Hitler declared himself Chancellor. Eventually her family ran first a refugee house, then a farm in Southern France; she met and married a Jew who was part of the retreating French army. In 1940 Martha was briefly interned as a Jew at a temporary detention camp near her house, but the French officer who ran the camp allowed the inmates to escape one night when he believed that Germans were returning the next day to transport them. Martha and her husband participated in the resistance, hiding other Jews, until he was ordered to report for forced labor in Germany. Although Martha was pregnant at the time, they escaped to Spain through the Pyrenees. They lived in Barcelona until the end of the war.

Martha's story is not only inspiring but is also unusual because it reveals strong anti-Semitism before Hitler was fully in power. Martha currently teaches Hebrew and feels that she "cannot" go back to Germany, even today.

Interview No:	<b>014 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	71 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Bors, Irene
Birth:	1918
Birthplace:	Selleznikowka, Russia
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp:	Ghettos, Hidden
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	0
Sibling(s) Survived:	N/A

Irene Bors was born in Russia because her parents fled there during World War I, but she was raised in Lublin, Poland. She describes her parents as "assimilated Jews" in that they did not attend temple and spoke Polish at home instead of Yiddish. Irene believes that her unaccented Polish helped her to "pass" as a Gentile during the war. Fearful of the Germans, she and her husband fled in 1939 to Russian-occupied Poland and stayed until the collapse of the Hitler-Stalin Pact in 1941. Irene and her husband went to the Warsaw ghetto to join a cousin and found jobs in the hope of putting off deportation. Weeks before the ghetto was liquidated, they made connections with gentile friends and escaped the ghetto by jumping from an armed truck carrying laborers. Irene says that their survival occurred "by miracles." Aided by the Polish underground, they hid in several different spots and escaped capture multiple times.

Irene is extremely matter-of-fact about her survival experience. She gives an equally down-to-earth view of the Polish underground and its motivations for helping Jews: "Nasty people, but they didn't like Germans." She also notes that the anti-Semitism of the emerging Eastern bloc made her and her husband decide to leave Poland for the U.S. following the war. Lastly, she describes how her adherence to the Jewish faith developed out of a desire to meet other Jews in the U.S.

See also: #3 (Interview with Stanley Bors -- husband)

Interview No.	<b>015 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	60 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Fern, Lilo
Birth:	1923
Birthplace:	Herne, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1941
Camps Occupied:	Riga, Kaiserwald, Stutthof
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Lilo Fern recalls that her family's house in Mhnster was raided on *Kristallnacht* in 1938, during which her father was temporarily detained by the Gestapo. However, transport of Jews from Mhnster was deferred until late 1941 due to objections from the large Catholic population there. During this period, her parents lost their house to Allied bombing. Lilo hoped to emigrate but was unable to get a visa by the time she was ordered to go the Riga ghetto in Latvia. She describes the overcrowded conditions there and notes that Latvian gentiles were also required by the Nazis to wear stars. Lilo and her family moved to a work camp, but by 1944 her parents had both been taken away in "selections." She was then chosen to work in a factory at Stutthof (near Danzig). Food was scarce, so Lilo and others foraged for scraps at night outdoors and avoided SS bloodhounds by throwing food for them. She describes her "most horrible experience" as a journey back to Germany by ship shortly before the Liberation. She was ill with typhus and jaundice, and the SS tried to sink the ship by creating a leak, then debarked; only a small group of Swedish political prisoners had the strength to fix the damage. When the ship got to shore, no Germans were in evidence, and British tanks arrived soon afterward. After the war, Lilo spent six months in a hospital.

Lilo's sadness is closer to the surface than that of many survivors. At the same time, she expresses great appreciation for the chance to start over in the United States.

See also: #12 (Interview with Harry Fern -- husband)



**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>016 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	81 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Palmer, Henry
Birth:	1913
Birthplace:	Ostrog, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Refugee
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	1

Henry Palmer describes his hometown of Ostrog, near the Russian border, as "a town where you were born into five languages -- Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Yiddish, and Hebrew." He was a teacher of Hebrew, math and physics when the Russians took possession of eastern Poland in 1939. He was able to stay at his school as a teacher of Russian until the Germans broke the Hitler-Stalin Pact in June 1941. Henry and his wife already had Russian citizenship and were encouraged to flee eastward before the Germans arrived. The Palmers settled in Uzbekistan, a republic in the southwestern part of what later became the Soviet Union, where Henry's teaching skills were in demand. He learned the Uzbeki language, as well as farming skills, and remained there till 1946 as a teacher and small farmer. He and his wife then went to Poland as escorts of refugee children returning from Russia; on their arrival, news of postwar pogroms drove them to leave with the Jewish children. A relief agency brought them to Paris, and Henry became the agency's Hebrew-language secretary. The Palmers stayed in Paris until 1954, when they emigrated to the U.S. All three of their children have become surgeons.

Henry's intelligence has permitted him to adapt rapidly to unusual situations. However, he also attributes his good fortune to luck and youthful energy.

**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No:	<b>017 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	59 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Minsky, Rubin
Birth:	1919
Birthplace:	Warsaw, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1941
Camps Occupied:	Majdenek, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Buchenwald
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	5
Sibling(s) Survived:	0

Rubin Minsky begins his Holocaust experiences by noting the pre-war existence of a Polish Nazi group. He then gives an account of life in the Warsaw ghetto, which for him included sneaking out without his armband to sell hats and clothes his father made. In 1942 he jumped off a transport to Treblinka. He was caught the next day and put to work in a local camp but escaped again into the ghetto. Rubin participated in the Warsaw ghetto uprising and describes how the Germans set fire to scores of buildings; he survived by hiding in a basement protected by brick. He was ultimately sent to Majdenek for a month, then to the I.G. Farben plant at Auschwitz for two years. He survived a death march/transport to Buchenwald in January 1945 and fled a second one two months later. He was liberated by an American tank division. After the war he recovered in Halberstat, Germany, where he met his future wife.

Rubin's testimony focuses mostly on the grim conditions of the Warsaw ghetto. He recalls the widespread starvation, the brutality of collaborating Ukrainians, the Polish children paid as Nazi informers, and the SS tactic of storming the ghetto during Jewish high holy days. Rubin also attributes his survival at Majdenek to the relatively large amounts of food he obtained through illicit trading during his last month in the ghetto.

See also: #18 (Interview with Rose Minsky -- wife)

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No:	<b>018 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	87 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Minsky, Rose
Birth:	1924
Birthplace:	Sosnowiec, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1941
Camps Occupied:	Balkenheim, Buchenwald-Groszrosen
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s)Survived:	3

Rose Minsky became aware of Polish anti-Semitism in elementary school, saying only that even children "needed to be careful." When the Germans invaded, she notes that everyone from her region, upper Silesia, received German citizenship, including Jews. For this reason, the ghetto in Sosnowiec was open (unlike the walled, restricted Warsaw ghetto). Her father paid so that Rose could be drafted into work at a military uniform factory; she was allowed to see her parents weekly as long as the ghetto existed. When out by herself she refused to wear the Jewish star, relying on her proficient German and her blond hair to "pass" as a gentile. After the ghetto was liquidated, she worked at two different labor camps, making parachutes. Together with two other German-speaking girls, she escaped a death march to Bergen-Belsen in January 1945 with two other German-speaking girls, passing again as a gentile. Aware of the war's impending end, they made their way to what became the American zone. While in a displaced persons' camp, she met her future husband.

Rose recalls her certainty about survival, even in the harsh conditions of forced labor. Even more compelling is the story of her role after the war in convicting the sadistic commander of her factory at Groszrosen. He had been apprehended trying to sneak into Holland from Brussels, where she and her husband lived. Rose's positive identification for the authorities led to his hanging, an end she says was "too swift" for someone so cruel.

See also: #17 (Interview with Rubin Minsky -- husband)

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>020 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	109 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Leefsma, Herman
Birth:	1924
Birthplace:	Leewarden, Netherlands
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1942
Camps Occupied:	Westerbork, Vught, Buchenwald-Groszrosen
Parents Survived Occupation?	Mother
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Herman Leefsma says that in 1940 his parents had inklings of impending disaster, but that "no one could have prepared for the disaster that happened." After the imposition of anti-Jewish laws the family received a lot of support from the mostly gentile community of 3,000, but Herman notes that the Dutch police who arrested him and his brother knew them personally. After this arrest Herman was taken to Westerbork, a Dutch camp; of 1,500 transported with him from there, 2 survived. Herman recounts his stints at various work camps and the seemingly continuous transit: "they never stopped, never gave you a chance to get close to anyone." Along the same logic, guards were replaced if they showed sympathy to prisoners. Herman met up with his father in one camp, and they remained together until evacuation death marches in January 1945, when his father was shot. Herman describes last-chance atrocities committed by Nazis in the last weeks of the war, and a mass grave at Buchenwald that went on for "kilometers and kilometers." He remembers little of the Liberation because of multiple illnesses -- tuberculosis, pneumonia, and kidney damage -- for which he was flown to a Swiss clinic.

Herman wanted to come to the U.S. after the war, but he remained in Holland until 1974, when his wife finally agreed to emigrate. He maintains bitterness at Dutch complicity with the Nazis and the Dutch government's reluctance to deliver Germany's postwar reparations to Jews.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>021 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	120 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Guinness, Margaret
Birth:	1930
Birthplace:	Kosice, Czechoslovakia
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Political prisoner, Camps
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	Ravensbrhck, Bergen-Belsen
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	9
Sibling(s) Survived?	3

Margaret Guinness recalls that in 1938 her family's region of Czechoslovakia was given to Hungary by Hitler. "We became Hungarian," she says, and the native Slovak language became forbidden. Some anti-Jewish laws went into effect, but Margaret's family remained in their home until 1944, when the Nazis occupied Hungary. Rumors of ghetto formation led Margaret's sister to buy false papers and take Margaret to Budapest; they lived there for a few months, but were caught after getting a second set of papers. They were taken to a Gestapo prison for interrogation, but never admitted they were Jewish. They were held as political prisoners until the Eastern front approached, when they were sent to Ravensbrhck. Margaret swore on her arrival there that she would live to tell about the experience, and she worked for extra food. She and her sister were sent to work in a bomb factory, then to Bergen-Belsen at the end of the war. She found another sister at the last camp; she also knew Anne Frank briefly. Sick with typhus, Margaret thought the Liberation was another hallucination until she saw the commandant of the camp, stripped of all his insignia, carrying corpses.

Margaret's story is remarkable because she and her sister experienced the war as political prisoners and were never identified as Jews. She speaks passionately and emphasizes the need to fight prejudice wherever it surfaces.

Interview No.	<b>024 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	48 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Rubin, Katalin
Birth:	1930
Birthplace:	Hajduhadhaz, Hungary
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	Strasshof, Theresienstadt
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived?	3

Katalin Rubin recalls an increase in anti-Semitism in Hungary from 1938, although anti-Jewish laws did not begin until 1942. Her father was taken away for forced labor at this time. In 1944, when the Germans occupied the country, Katalin's family spent a month in a ghetto and then were deported on cattlecars. She says the train's original destination was Auschwitz, but that it changed course and went to Strasshof in Austria instead. Katalin (as well as her mother and siblings) was chosen for farm work on a duke's property. The Germans had taken over most of the duke's castle, and the Jewish workers lived in a nearby warehouse. Katalin recalls crushing ice from the castle moat for use in the kitchen, and frostbite from picking sugar beets in the winter. The family spent the last few months of the war in Theresienstadt, where inmates were amazed to see that Katalin's seven-year-old brother had survived. They were reunited with their father after the war, and all lived in Budapest until the revolution in 1956, when they fled to the West.

The survival of Katalin's entire immediate family is exceptional. However, she notes the "painful" loss of many other relatives. Her testimony is enriched by a display of potent artifacts, such as the green Star of David from her Theresienstadt uniform and currency made and circulated in that camp.

Interview No.	<b>025 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	120 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Dazzo, Marianne
Birth:	1935
Birthplace:	Amsterdam, Netherlands
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1943
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	1

Marianne Dazzo describes herself as a child in Amsterdam escaping a street roundup of Jews by the Nazis, and thereafter seeing her personal circumstances completely disrupted. As she puts it, "my world got smaller and smaller" in the first months of the war. Dazzo survived in hiding in southern Holland through a network run by Dutch university students. Living as a baptized Catholic under an assumed name, Marianne was told virtually nothing about the events of the war until it had ended. Her mother, a member of the underground, hid with a sympathetic family and worked as their maid. Marianne's father survived Auschwitz, largely due to his skills as a diamond cutter. He ultimately committed suicide, however, which Marianne attributes to his recurring memories of the camp. Marianne's younger sister, a mere toddler at the beginning of the war, remained hidden with a childless gentile family for the duration.

This interview is unusual in its focus on the experiences of abandonment and on the issues around living as a "survivor." The young Marianne, deprived of all news of the outside world while in hiding, retained anger at her mother for "giving her up." These feelings were only complicated by her father's insistence after the war that all members of the family resume a "normal" life and cut all ties to those who had helped them. Marianne also discusses her present-day involvement with a group of "hidden child" survivors and her conflicted feelings about her Jewish identity.

**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>026 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	90 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Zavatsky, Jenny
Birth:	1932
Birthplace:	Lodz, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child, Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz, Stutthof
Parents Survived Occupation?	Mother
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Before the war, Jenny Zavatsky's father was warned by gentile friends of the threat that Hitler posed to Jews. The family stayed because he did not want to leave his business, a successful metal factory. They lost the business and their home in 1940 and moved into the Lodz ghetto, second in size only to the Warsaw ghetto. Jenny, at age seven, was put to work in a knitting factory. When the Nazis conducted selections that singled out children, Jenny's parents would hide her in the attic. In August 1944, when the Lodz ghetto was liquidated, the family were transported to Auschwitz. They spent only three days there because her father's metalworking skills were in demand, and they were told they would all go to Dresden. On the way they stayed a few months at Stutthof, which Jenny portrays as worse than Auschwitz, with "bodies piled like trash." Her father lost 100 pounds there, and Jenny believes this was why he died only a few months after they had been moved to a munitions factory in Dresden. She feared they would be sent away, but the British began bombing the city before that could happen. Their group was evacuated and marched to the Sudetenland, and the Liberation occurred soon after. Her brother died in the ghetto of typhoid, and her sister died of tuberculosis in Dresden.

Jenny's story stresses optimism. She believes she kept a hopeful attitude because she remained with her family. She expresses great admiration for her mother's ability to endure under adversity, and notes her mother's remarriage to another survivor who lost his wife and seven children.



**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>027 (Box 21)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	160 min.
# of VHS tapes:	2
Name:	Labin, Fanny
Birth:	1929
Birthplace:	Cologne, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child, Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Refugee, Hidden
Left Family Home:	1938
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	4
Sibling(s) Survived?	4

Fanny Labin recalls the 1938 *Kristallnacht* in her hometown, and how a fire engine stood by as a synagogue burned; she also saw Hitler in a parade honoring his 50th birthday. After her father was sent to a labor camp in Poland, Fanny's mother sent four of the five children on the train to relatives in Brussels. Fanny lived in foster homes, then with her mother when she was able to join her children in Belgium. When the Germans invaded, Fanny and her mother attempted to flee to Paris but were unsuccessful because of the Germans' continued sweep westward. When roundups of Jews began in Belgium, Fanny was sent by the underground to a convent in the Ardennes forest, where she stayed till the end of the war. She was baptized and given a Christian name. Fanny says she embraced Catholicism, and moreover didn't want to be Jewish because of the personal danger it brought. She recalls that convent members were able to follow the war's progress with a map made by one of the monks there. After the war she was housed by a Jewish relief organization, met concentration camp survivors, and learned of the gas chambers and crematoria. Fanny came to the U.S. in 1948, joining three of her brothers who had found refuge here during the war.

Fanny has an excellent memory for the everyday details of her experiences. She also expresses her continued affection for German culture and discusses the social and economic conditions that led to Hitler's ascent. Germany, she points out, had "no heritage of freedom and liberty."

**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>028 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	109 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Caron, Nathan
Birth:	1923
Birthplace:	Warsaw, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1942
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz, Buchenwald
Parents Survived Occupation?	Father
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Nathan Caron's family moved to Brussels, Belgium, when he was an infant. He notes no prewar awareness of anti-Semitism until he began hearing about Nazi Germany in the early 1930's. After the German occupation of Belgium, Nathan joined an underground movement, in which he drew anti-German graffiti and published a contraband newspaper with news obtained from London. He was never caught for these activities, but was deported anyway in 1942, first to labor in France, then to Auschwitz. Nathan worked first in the coal mines, then as a carpenter. He describes the harrowing conditions of the camps and of the death marches from Auschwitz in the snow. Of the 50 people with whom he rode in an open coal car to Buchenwald from Poland, 17 arrived alive.

Nathan underlines his compelling testimony with photographs of Auschwitz today. Among these is one of him beside a pond in which the crematorium ashes were dumped. "I know that my mother and sister and grandmother are here," he says. "This is their cemetery." Nathan also shows medals he received for his resistance efforts, as well as photographs of a memorial wall in Brussels that he and a fellow survivor helped establish.

**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>030 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	173 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Mermelstein, Mel
Birth:	1926
Birthplace:	Munkacs, Czechoslovakia
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz-Birkenau, Buchenwald-Groszrosen
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Mel Mermelstein and his family were not deported until 1944; he notes that this was an indirect outcome of Hungary's seizure of his native region in 1938. Mel recalls that he and his brother regularly broke anti-Jewish laws. In particular, they risked arrest by seeing "Jud Shss (Sweet Jew)," an anti-Semitic propaganda film. Up to the point of deportation, Mel's family received charitable assistance from gentile friends. He describes the brickyard where Jews were confined before transport to Auschwitz and the process of gradual dehumanization; "it worked, perfectly." He says that his family members were strategically separated and returned to one another, and that the desire to stay together aided the Nazis' implementation of the Final Solution. Only at the end of the war, Mel says, did his father believe that survival together was "impossible." Mel survived a number of Auschwitz work camps, as well as a three-week death march to Buchenwald. He credits a Hungarian guard with saving him from being shot to death en route. By the Liberation, he had been in Groszrosen, Buchenwald's "death section," for two months.

Mel has resisted advice to forget his past. He displays commemorative artwork he has created from barbed wire and utensil pieces found at Auschwitz, which he visits yearly. He also discusses lawsuits he has won against the Institute For Historical Review, an organization that alleges the Holocaust did not occur.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>032 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	55 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Goldsmith, Hans
Birth:	1913
Birthplace:	Frankfurt, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps, Refugee
Left Family Home:	1938
Camps Occupied:	Buchenwald
Parents Survived Occupation?	Mother (father died before the Occupation)
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	1

Hans Goldsmith was arrested the day after *Kristallnacht* in 1938 and taken to a convention center in Frankfurt, along with thousands of other Jews. He then spent five weeks in Buchenwald and was released because his employer wrote a letter requesting his return for work. On returning to Frankfurt, he saw a gentile boyhood friend in a Gestapo uniform, who suggested that Hans leave the country as soon as he could. The B'nai Brith League had brought Hans' younger sister to the U.S. in 1934, and she was able to sponsor Hans and his wife, who emigrated in 1941. Hans recounts his mother's experience: she fled to Holland, but was rounded up in 1940 and survived Theresienstadt. Hans shows the "Jude" stars from her camp uniform, as well as the letter he sent his wife from Buchenwald.

Hans' testimony shows the betrayal that many German Jews experienced. He notes that his father had served in World War I, and that his family considered themselves "German down to the bone." When asked when he began to discuss his experiences, Hans says he "never stopped." He attributes the lack of resistance against the Nazis to German conformity and fear of authority and expresses his hatred for anything connected to Germany.

**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>034 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	109 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Seifer, Gerda
Birth:	1927
Birthplace:	Przemysl, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes, Hidden
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	0
Sibling(s) Survived?	N/A

Gerda Seifer's hometown was taken first by the Germans, and then by the Russians, who stayed eighteen months. In the interim, they declared Gerda's father a capitalist and an enemy of the state and took away his business. The family obtained false papers and fled to the Polish city of Lwow, where Gerda remembers attending school and getting Stalinist indoctrination. The Nazis returned to Lwow in June 1941 and almost immediately began deporting Jews. The local Ukrainian population, which had supported the Russians, "went as the wind blew" and aided Germans in pogroms. Gerda lived with her parents in the Lwow ghetto, running errands for them because she was blond and blue-eyed and could "pass" as a gentile child. Large-scale roundups began, and her mother was taken while trying to save a nephew. Before he was also apprehended, Gerda's father paid to have her hidden; she ended up as a nanny to a woman with three illegitimate children. Gerda was forced to practice Catholicism and took care of the children while the mother trusted with her lover at a local church. Gerda also was forced to stay with the family for a time after the war because she did not know where else to go. In 1946, she finally met a rabbi who was able to get her to England.

Gerda displays a very positive attitude about her life since the Holocaust. She speaks to grade schools about her experiences, and conveys her message to children by focusing on the loss of her parents.

Interview No.	<b>039 (Box 22)</b>
Leng of Tape:	115 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Gelbart, Frances
Birth:	1929
Birthplace:	Krakow, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child, Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Mauthausen
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	5
Sibling(s) Survived?	4

Frances Gelbart describes "chinchilla flying through windows" when the Nazis seized furs, gold, and silver from the Jews of Krakow. Her father lost his business, but because of his officer status in the Polish army was able to get ten-year-old Frances a job in a ghetto printing house. She was taken to a labor camp the following year, then to a subcamp of Auschwitz, where she worked sorting belongings seized from Jews. Frances' maiden name was Immerglhck, or "always lucky." The selecting officer on duty when she passed inspection asked her if she were always lucky, to which she replied "I hope so." She also survived Bergen-Belsen and Mauthausen. She says she was "always the youngest," and received a measure of sympathy from fellow inmates. The first few months after the liberation she worked alongside American nurses caring for the infirm in Mauthausen, then returned to Poland, where she found her parents and brother through an aunt who had worked for the underground.

Frances' depictions are the potent memories of a young teenager. She includes such details as the attack dogs in the camps, the WAC's after the war who taught her to apply lipstick, and her desire to be with other survivors because she felt "different" from everyone else after her ordeal.

Interview No.	<b>040 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	120 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Poznanter, Robert
Birth:	1917
Birthplace:	Lodz, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1942
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Theresienstadt
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived?	2

Robert Poznanter's family had moved to Brussels in 1928 in order to escape Polish anti-Semitism. When the Nazis invaded Belgium in 1940 the Poznantes fled westward but were stopped at the French border. With many others, they returned to Brussels and resumed a "normal" life under German control; Robert got married. In 1942 he was drafted for labor, spent three months at Calais building fortifications for the Germans, and was released. His parents went into hiding, but Robert complied when he was ordered to appear for transport to Auschwitz. He was sent to a nearby coal mining camp, where beatings occurred daily. Robert recounts his development of a "survivor" mentality; he stole shirts from storage to exchange for food, and became "the king of saccharin," trading with those who wanted cigarettes. In January 1945 Auschwitz was evacuated, and Robert says at the beginning of the death march he saw the potential for still-unforeseen atrocities. He survived periods in Buchenwald work camps, twenty days' captivity in a train station, and transport to Theresienstadt before being liberated. He spent eighteen days in a coma with typhus at the end of the war.

Robert's first wife died at Auschwitz, but he remarried and had children after the war. He is thoughtful about his experiences and discusses Polish gentiles' prewar attitudes toward Jewish achievement.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>041 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	97 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Selig, Gene
Birth:	1930
Birthplace:	Frankfurt, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child
Type of Exp.:	Refugee
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	0
Sibling(s) Survived?	N/A

Gene Selig says that his young age kept him unaware of the worsening climate for Jews in Nazi Germany. His parents' friends at first believed that Hitler would be voted out of office before long. After *Kristallnacht*, however, he says rampant anti-Semitism "seemed to come all at once." He was kept out of school, while his father quit going to the office and began working at home. His father had a lucrative career as a grain and tobacco broker, and in 1939 he began the process of trading the family's home, bank accounts, and other assets for exit visas. They took the eastward route to the U.S., going through Poland to Moscow, then on the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Shanghai, then on a cruise ship from Kobe, Japan to Seattle. Gene says that he did not understand the grave nature of the situation until a few years later, when the war was over. He and his parents settled in Portland, Oregon; Gene describes their efforts to start over as immigrants who knew no English.

Gene owns and displays many documents related to his family's flight. These include his family's Jewish identity cards, Jewish passports, and a letter from Chase Bank in New York verifying his father's transfer of funds. Gene also recounts details of the two-month journey to the U.S., including a trip to Lenin's tomb in Moscow, and armed soldiers who locked down the window shades on the train trip through Siberia. Gene says that every year he is invited by the mayor of Frankfurt to visit Germany, and that he always refuses the offer.



**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>043 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	122 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Goldstein, Abe
Birth:	1928
Birthplace:	Chrasonow, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1942
Camps Occupied:	Mauthausen, Bergen-Belsen
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Abe Goldstein was eleven years old when the Germans invaded Poland, and he vividly recalls the 1939 hanging of five Jewish elders from a tree in his town. His family was able to remain in their home until 1942; at that point Abe and his father were sent to a German labor camp, and he never saw his mother and sister again. A few months later the labor camp became a concentration camp, and his father was among those "selected" for removal. Subsequently, Abe worked on the construction of a Krupp factory. In the last months of the war Abe and his group were evacuated to Bremen, where the SS had planned to put them on boats and sink them, but no boats were available. A death march across Germany to Mauthausen followed; Abe notes that he was so ill after arriving there that other inmates hid him from the Nazis until he was stronger. Abe's last camp was Bergen-Belsen, which he describes as masses of "faces and pajamas."

Abe's testimony conveys the isolation of a teenage boy left alone in an incomprehensible situation. He has kept photographs from the displaced persons' camp where he spent two years after the war; the photos show the toolmaking instruction he received there and a memorial to Holocaust victims built by camp residents.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>044 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	60 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Goldfarb, Raymond
Birth:	1918
Birthplace:	Paris, France
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Prisoner of War
Left Family Home:	1938
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	1

Raymond Goldfarb was a French soldier stationed at a fortress on the Maginot Line when the Germans invaded in 1939. Taken prisoner, he spent most of the war in forced labor at a German brewery. Although no media news had reached France about anti-Jewish policies before the war, Raymond's German aunt had visited Paris while emigrating to the U.S., and her stories made him decide to "lose" his military passport by the time he was captured and claim a French last name. Throughout his captivity he feared discovery of his actual identity, and never discussed it with the four other French POW's (gentile) with whom he shared quarters at the brewery for four years. Nevertheless, Raymond did not find out about the Final Solution until the Liberation. On returning to France, he discovered that his parents and sister had escaped deportation through refuge from French Catholics. He did lose other relatives, however.

Raymond says he cannot remember having any Jewish friends in childhood; most were Catholic. Raymond also offers interesting insights drawn from extended daily contact with civilian Germans. After the Allied invasion of France in 1944, he says, two distinct groups emerged: those who saw reason to treat the P.O.W.'s with more kindness, and those who remained pro-Nazi until the end.

Interview No.	<b>046 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	44 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Korn, Leo
Birth:	1918
Birthplace:	U.S.A.
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Liberator
Left Family Home:	N/A
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	N/A
Number of Siblings:	N/A
Sibling(s) Survived?	N/A

Leo Korn was a tank commander and platoon sergeant and the only Jew in his company; only two Jews belonged to the entire battalion. He describes his company's progress through the Ruhr region in 1945 and the mass surrender of the civilian population. Leo says he knew "absolutely nothing" about the fate of the Jews while fighting in Europe, and that he first heard the term "concentration camp" from his commander after the Liberation. He and his platoon visited Dachau while en route to an assignment in Bavaria and received a tour of the camp from a recently arrived Hungarian inmate. Leo recalls seeing crematoria, gallows, and prisoners who were still recuperating; he notes he was so shocked that he asked no questions and spoke to no prisoners other than the Hungarian guide. He felt much less sympathetic to the defeated Germans after seeing Dachau, but on returning to the U.S. after his tour of duty he says that he wanted to forget all of his war experiences.

Leo's testimony is interesting, yet full of unresolved feelings. He describes himself as devoutly Jewish both before and after the war, but says he did not discuss the Holocaust with anyone in his family. At the same time, he objects to historical revisionism, and believes that "the whole world should know" about the Nazis' atrocities.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>047 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	42 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Butnik, Suzanne
Birth:	1939
Birthplace:	Budapest, Hungary
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	0
Sibling(s) Survived?	N/A

Suzanne Butnik was five years old when the Germans marched into Hungary. Although she did understand what was happening, she remembers being restricted to the apartment where she lived with her mother and grandparents. "All the people I loved acted different," she says. Suzanne says that her memories of the rest of the war blur after the first of two occasions when her mother was taken temporarily by the Nazis. She vividly recalls frequent hunger and cold. She also remembers time spent in a Wallenberg safe house with her mother and grandparents, as well as a period in a Red Cross orphanage which she describes as "awful." She describes living in the country with her mother under a false identity and being "drilled" by her mother about what to say if they were ever questioned. Suzanne also recounts that upon returning to Budapest at the end of the war, her mother tore the yellow stars from her grandparents' clothing and trampled them.

Suzanne's account conveys a small child's conception of time in that often she cannot recall durations for her experiences. She also notes the alienation she experienced on coming to the U.S. after the war. She says that she tried to bury her memories for many years. However, her daughters' increasing curiosity has helped her come to terms with the past.

See also: Interview with Magda Salzer-Weinberg (#78 -- mother)

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>048 (Box 22)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	50 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Lowe, Valerie
Birth:	1921
Birthplace:	Zilina, Czechoslovakia
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1942
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived?	1

Valerie Lowe says that her family had always considered themselves more Slovak than Jewish. After Hitler took over Czechoslovakia, however, her family had to move into an apartment with two other Jewish families. Valerie knew the police chief in her town, and when rumors about forced labor for young Jews began to surface around 1942, he urged her to hide in the mountains. She and her sister fled and took refuge with the help of a network of Baptists, whose faith required daily good deeds. Valerie changed her name four or five times during the war and lived in several different homes. One family asked her to consent to baptism, which she did. Valerie also participated in a five-month partisan "uprising" that took place in the mountains in 1944. She describes liberation by the Russians, noting that the front line fighters were more "decent" than those who followed them. After the war she came to New York and married a Czech who had left in 1937; he had served in the U.S. Army during World War II and worked as a translator during the Nuremberg Trials.

Valerie's story shows great bravery and determination. She says that her experiences have taught her the importance of tolerating minorities, and she works for many liberal causes in the U.S.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>049 (Box 23)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	121 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Gelman, Irving
Birth:	1924
Birthplace:	Hosht, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1941
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Both
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived:	1

In 1937, Irving Gelman's father gave a three-day party to celebrate his son's bar mitzvah. When asked why he'd gone to such measures, the father answered that he wasn't sure he'd make his son's wedding. But Irving's parents did survive the Holocaust, as well as the Russian occupation of eastern Poland during the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Irving describes the hiding place his father built in their house that enabled the family to escape several pogroms once the Germans returned. Eventually they left the house and paid a gentile farmer to hide them under his barn. Although they hid in a few other spots as well before the end of the war, Irving notes that he named his first business in the U.S. for the farmer's wife and kept a photograph of the couple on the office wall.

Irving tells his amazing story in a clear, straightforward manner. He also provides information about Polish anti-Semitism before and after the war and discusses his prewar involvement in Zionism. He has continued his commitment to Judaism by establishing two Jewish grammar schools in the U.S.

See also: #52 (Rochelle Gelman -- wife)

Interview No.	<b>050 (Box 23)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	96 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Schotland, Lou
Birth:	1922
Birthplace:	Zwolen, Poland
Religion:	ewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes, Camps
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz, Blechhammer
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	4
Sibling(s) Survived?	3

Lou Schotland recalls a thriving Jewish community in the Polish town of Radom, where he spent his adolescence. He says that the Gestapo followed closely on the heels of invading German troops, and quickly established fear among local Jewish leaders. Lou's family fled to nearby Lublin, but the Russian occupation led them to return to Radom. He describes life in the ghetto, and a "Jewish police force" that complied with Gestapo orders. He married his girlfriend in 1942 and got a factory job, spurred by a rumor that one could save a spouse in this way. When the ghetto was evacuated a few months later, Lou hid in the factory for a week; ultimately, his German boss covered for him and saved his life. He was transported to Auschwitz, but through a random detention incident Lou became classified as a political prisoner rather than as a routinely detained Jew. He says that all prisoners were treated alike, but he wore a red star rather than a yellow one, and was transported with several gentile Poles, Catholic priests, and teachers. Lou spent most of his time at Auschwitz working in a coal mine. He notes that during Christmas 1944, as German defeat seemed imminent, inmates were shown films about Jesus that emphasized "forgiving and forgetting." Lou survived a death march following the evacuation of Auschwitz in January 1945. His group stayed overnight at Blechhammer, and he and a friend hid in order to avoid departing. They were soon liberated by the Russians.

Lou characterizes himself as a survivor; however, he says he sometimes does not "accept" that his parents died and he did not. He is moved to tears when he discusses their demise.

Interview No.	<b>051 (Box 23)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	60 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Mergrun, Leo
Birth:	1929
Birthplace:	Berlin, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child
Type of Exp.:	Refugee
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	4
Sibling(s) Survived?	4

Leo Mergrun recalls seeing hangings, desecrations, and synagogue fires on *Kristallnacht* in 1938; he was nine years old. He says that the Gestapo did not bother him because he had blond hair and blue eyes and therefore "passed" as a gentile child. His father was also taken away for good that year, and Leo says his mother "seemed to know" what would happen if her children did not leave Germany. One of Leo's sisters was already in England with relatives, and arrangements were made to send the rest on a "Kindertransport." Leo's problems did not end when he arrived in England, however. He went through several homes and boarding schools; at one school he and his brother were beaten by the headmaster if they spoke German. Leo also suffered molestation when he started work at age twelve and says that he "buried" the experience.

Leo becomes quite emotional when talking about his parents and still does not know where they died; he last heard from his mother in 1942, when she was in the Warsaw ghetto. He also wonders about why the German Jews did not attempt armed resistance against the Nazis.



**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>052 (Box 23)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	103 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Gelman, Rochelle
Birth:	1925
Birthplace:	Hosht, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived:	0

Rochelle Gelman recalls considerable anti-Semitism before Hitler's invasion of Poland. She mentions Jewish quotas in public high schools and violence that broke out on Christian holidays. However, Rochelle and her family's difficulties came first from the Russian takeover of their town in 1939. They were proclaimed capitalist enemies of the state and lost their home and business. When the Germans declared war on Russia in 1941, pogroms began almost immediately, and Rochelle's parents were killed. She fled with cousins and went into hiding in a rural area with a man who became her husband after the war. Rochelle describes a variety of rescuers and their motives, which ranged from mercenary to altruistic.

Rochelle is eloquent about the feelings she experienced after the war. She wondered how her American relatives could complain about the trivial in the presence of survivors. She also became angry at her parents for bringing her into a world of pogroms. Only when the state of Israel was born, she says, did she feel "safe" in bearing children herself.

See also: #49 (Irving Gelman -- husband)

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No. **053 (Box 23)**  
Leng. of Tape: 47 min.  
# of VHS tapes: 1

Name: Fisher, Wilfred  
Birth: 1924  
Birthplace: Louisiana, U.S.A.  
Religion: Christian  
Age Group: Adult  
Type of Exp.: Liberator  
Left Family Home: N/A  
Camps Occupied: N/A  
Parents Survived Occupation? N/A  
Number of Siblings: N/A  
Sibling(s) Survived? N/A

See Also: #56 (The 3 Liberators -- joint interview with Darden and DuPlechein)

Wilfred Fisher belonged to the Second U.S. Army, which consisted entirely of black soldiers. Because of his race he was barred from his goal of becoming a pilot; instead, he joined a medical battalion that was sent to Europe. Wilfred notes that due to Hitler's remarks about blacks he resented the Geneva Accord requirement that Allied medical forces give equitable care to Germans. However, his unit was sent to Dachau to treat Jewish survivors; later, he was told that a black unit was deliberately chosen to precede establishment of an evacuation hospital, in case disease proved unstoppable. His unit knew nothing about what they were entering; Wilfred recalls the sounds of screaming and crying that greeted them, and the lingering smell of the crematoria. "I too became a prisoner," he says, and describes round-the-clock efforts to save survivors from illness and malnutrition. He also notes evidence of cannibalism in the camp.

Wilfred says that he has brought his experience at Dachau into his ministry work. "I'm wounded," he declares, "I always will be." This interview precedes #56 on the same VHS tape.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.                               **056 (Box 23)**  
Leng. of Tape:                               35 min.  
# of VHS tapes:                               1

Name:    The 3 Liberators --  
  Wilfred Fisher  
  Melvin Darden  
  Doris DuPlechein

Birthplace:                                    U.S.A.  
Age Group:                                    Adults  
Type of Exp.:                                  Liberators

See also: #53 (Wilfred Fisher individual interview; on same VHS tape as #56)

Fisher, Darden, and DuPlechein all belonged to the black medical unit sent into Dachau before establishment of a medical evacuation hospital there. DuPlechein was one of several Jewish officers who supervised the team. The three recall being sprayed with DDT before entering the camp, and that at first they thought the prisoners were simply non-Germans; not until GIs spoke to them did the nature of Dachau become fully apparent. They characterize the unit's reaction as one of "collective shock." Fisher recalls talking to prisoners who had had the duty of moving bodies from the gas chambers to the crematorium and says that piles of corpses filled the camp; more inmates had died than could be cremated. Darden, Fisher, and DuPlechein also note that no high-ranking American officers entered Dachau during their duty there; sergeants and lieutenants relayed virtually all orders to the unit. This reenforces the belief held by some that a black unit was deliberately sent into Dachau because of the disease risks involved, and because it was considered more expendable than a Caucasian unit.

This interview provides a different perspective on issues of race related to the Holocaust. In addition, the three veterans have maintained a strong bond and still see one another on a regular basis. This camaraderie gives further substance to their testimony. The group interview is also an excellent supplement to the individual interview with Wilfred Fisher.

Interview No.	<b>058 (Box 23)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	40 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Rich, Gerda
Birth:	1919
Birthplace:	Paderborn, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Refugee
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	N/A
Number of Siblings:	0
Sibling(s) Survived?	N/A

By the time she was nineteen, Gerda Rich had lost both parents to natural causes; she was the sole inheritor of their house and of the proceeds from the sale of her father's hat factory. But she credits her parents with foresight: before his death, Gerda's father had strongly encouraged her to emigrate to the U.S. She describes the gradual upswing of anti-Semitic sentiment after Hitler came to power, the prevalence of the Hitler Youth among her peer group, and the loss of gentile friends who gave in to Nazi norms. Gerda recalls working as a hospital volunteer on *Kristallnacht* and the casualties that came in that night. Afterward, she took in two families who had lost their homes to *Kristallnacht* fires. But the deportation of her two legal guardians made the necessity of emigrating difficult to ignore, and her father's attorney assisted her in getting the proper papers. Gerda went to England in early 1939, then came to the U.S. during World War II. In 1946 she married an American Jew who fought the Germans in North Africa.

Gerda considers herself very fortunate and notes that she tries to help others. She reminds her grandchildren about the importance of freedom and tells them her memories of the anti-Jewish laws. She also describes a trip she made to Germany in 1989, during which she spoke at her former high school about *Kristallnacht*. She believes that German attitudes toward Jews have changed markedly.

Interview No.	<b>059 (Box 23)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	115 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Boehm, Irene
Birth:	1919
Birthplace:	Budapest, Hungary
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1943
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	6
Sibling(s) Survived?	3

Irene Boehm names 1938 as the beginning of Jewish difficulties in Hungary, although the Germans did not move in until 1944. At that time her parents lost their bakery due to anti-Semitic discrimination. Irene got a job with a wealthy Jewish dentist, who urged her to "fight" and not move into the apartment buildings designated for Jews in Budapest. The dentist obtained false identity papers for Irene and one other person, and she had to choose which of three sisters to save with them. Ultimately, the sister she chose was able to help the others. Irene spent most of the following year in southern Hungary as a companion to a wealthy old woman in an abandoned resort town. During this time she hid her identity from Hungarian military police who occupied the old woman's property. The Russians controlled this area by December 1944, and within a month Irene was raped by their troops multiple times. She was eventually able to escape to safety by illegally crossing the Danube and travelling to a nearby city. She spent the final months of the war in a house for refugee Jews. She came to the U.S. in 1949, through an uncle who had emigrated in the 1930's.

Irene's testimony is remarkable not only because of her own experiences; she also recounts the stories of four sisters who worked for the underground. She relates important historical details, and is an excellent storyteller.

Interview No.	<b>060 (Box 23)</b>
Length:	101 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Rosman, Mariana
Birth	1932
Birthplace:	Bradiceni, Bessarabia ( <i>now Romania</i> )
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child; Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettos; Camps
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	Lucenti
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Both
Number of Siblings:	0
Sibling(s) Survived:	N/A

Mariana Rosman has learned eight languages in her life; several, she says, "by necessity." Her native Bessarabia was a pawn between Russia and Romania, so she knew both of these languages as a child. In 1939, her family were declared enemies of the Russian state because her father was a successful businessman. They lost their house and business, but got false papers and relocated within Romania. The following year, the Germans invaded and began deporting Jews. After three weeks in a local ghetto, the family was sent to one of many small Ukrainian camps run by Romanians. They lived in a small house with another family; no one was asked to work, but they had very few resources, and were prohibited to leave the camp. Mariana recalls frequent hunger and relying on carrots, sugar beets, and potatoes. Her father became an expert bargainer and trader, and her mother remained "absolutely convinced" that they would all manage; both parents survived typhus. The community received news about the war from families of young men who had joined the Russians. The camp was liberated in 1944, but Mariana describes the next four years as "a battle to get rid of Europe" and emigrate. Although she had an aunt in Miami, her family could not get to the U.S., only to Cuba. Mariana recounts their life there before the rise of Fidel Castro, and how she got her parents out before the Cuban revolution.

Mariana is very knowledgeable about the political and historical issues tied to her story and explains them well. In discussing the German responsibility for the Final Solution, she assigns a large measure of guilt to the Romanians who complied.

Interview No.	<b>061 (Box 23)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	62 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Frankl, Marika
Birth:	1931
Birthplace:	Budapest, Hungary
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived?	2

Marika Frankl notes that anti-Semitism existed in Hungary before the German occupation in 1944. She knew that cousins in Czechoslovakia had been taken away months before, so she felt immediate fear when the Germans arrived in Budapest. Marika's family did not stay in their apartment, which became one of the overcrowded Budapest "star houses," apartment buildings designated for Jews. Instead, they lived in her father's small auto parts factory. Marika describes nightly air raids and bombings nearby. By the time her father was sent to a labor camp he had arranged false papers for his wife and children. Marika recalls two locations where they hid under assumed identities, as well as a trip on the streetcar from one safehouse to the next. The last weeks of the war involved house-to-house street fighting; "Everyone was killing everyone," says Marika. During this phase she and her family were hidden in a basement with over a dozen others, and raw cabbage was the only available food. Marika says her strong faith in an afterlife helped her through this period, although this is not a typically Jewish belief. Marika describes liberation as first "marvelous," then frightening. The Russian troops took their possessions, and she pretended to be ill to avoid rape.

Marika concludes her story with observations about Hungarian anti-Semitism. She notes its reappearance during the 1956 revolution, and in the demise of Communism.

Interview No.	<b>062 (Box 23)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	85 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Erlik, Sasha
Birth:	1925
Birthplace:	Prague, Czechoslovakia
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1941
Camps Occupied:	Theresienstadt, Auschwitz
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Father
Number of Siblings:	0
Sibling(s) Survived:	N/A

Sasha Erlik asserts that two major categories of Jews existed in Czechoslovakia prior to invasion: “very assimilated,” or “very religious.” His grandfather was orthodox, but his affluent parents observed only the high holidays. Nonetheless, Sasha’s father hastily left the country after Hitler took over. Sasha stayed in order to take care of his mother, who was reluctant to abandon her couture salon. They were taken to Theresienstadt in 1941 along with several other relatives; he describes the process of getting extra food to help them. In early 1944, Sasha was sent to Auschwitz without his family. He spent four weeks there, then was sent to a small North German work camp where gasoline was made from coal. Sasha recalls a work accident in which he received an enormous electrical shock and could not let go of the cable; he says that an SS officer saved his life. Sasha was paralyzed from the waist down and was convinced he would be killed, but a German sickroom attendant massaged his legs every day until he was rehabilitated. Sasha was also one of 40 (out of 300) to survive a death march at the end of the war; he says that this was his worst experience.

Sasha has visited Theresienstadt in recent years and speaks knowledgeably about it. He also relates a failed attempt by a local group to open a Nazi bookstore in his community and says that he and other members of his temple were prepared to burn it down.



**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>063 (Box 23)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	109 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Stern, Margot
Birth:	1925
Birthplace:	Mersch, Luxembourg
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	Ravensbrück
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived?	2

Margot Stern's father had moved their family to Luxembourg in the early 1930's to pursue a career in the booming steel industry there, but they were forced to leave in 1939 because of new citizenship laws. They returned to his native Hungary, and avoided the Final Solution until 1944, when Germany occupied the country. Margot's father and brother disappeared, so she and her mother got jobs at a military uniform factory in the hope of sparing themselves. They were ultimately transported to Ravensbrück, where the barracks were so crowded they had to sleep in tents. Margot and a cousin were picked for munitions factory work in Leipzig and stayed there until just before the end of the war. Margot mentions an attempt by an SS officer to bury her alive, and a sympathetic young SS woman who got her food from the officers' dining room. Margot also recalls that after the factory was evacuated toward the end of the war, SS officers tried to hide from low-flying American planes overhead by stripping off their uniforms. After the war she discovered that her father dies of illness in a labor camp, and her mother died by lethal injection at Ravensbrück a week before the Liberation.

Margot says that she thinks of her survival experiences every day. She also mentions that one of her daughters has become an Israeli citizen because she believes it is the safest place to raise Jewish children.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>064 (Box 24)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	60 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Brookhouse, Ida
Birth:	1923
Birthplace:	Amsterdam, Netherlands
Religion:	Christian
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Rescuer
Left Family Home:	N/A
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived?	2

“Every day you’re confronted with the cruelty of the Nazi system. We had to do something.” Ida Brookhouse lived with her family in a mixed Amsterdam neighborhood, alongside Jews and other gentiles. She portrays the Nazi presence during the war as an ordeal for the entire population. Gentile men of working age were seized off the street and taken to Germany for forced labor, and the Nazis ordered citizens to hand over precious metals and vehicles. Ida’s father joined the Dutch resistance movement early in the war, and this included aiding Jews; she describes helping her father smuggle false papers. She says that the Dutch knew about the situation for Jews in Germany from refuges, and that entire families of Jews committed suicide when the Germans invaded Holland. Ida’s family took in a seven-month-old girl when her Jewish parents went into hiding, and Ida and her sister risked arrest to get her back from a Nazi orphanage. Ida recounts the “Hunger Winter” of 1944-45 and says that at the Liberation she weighed 80 pounds.

Ida speaks of her resistance activities with great conviction and says she would do it all again. She displays medals of recognition that she and her family have received from Holland and Israel and expresses her admiration for the goals of the Israeli state.

**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>065 (Box 24)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	3 hrs.
# of VHS tapes:	2
Name:	Opdyke, Irene
Birth:	1922
Birthplace:	Koziencie, Poland
Religion:	Christian
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Rescuer
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Mother
Number of Siblings:	4
Sibling(s) Survived?	4

Irene Opdyke was a seventeen-year-old nursing student far from home when Germany invaded Poland. After a brutal rape by Russian soldiers, she was brought back to western Poland during a prisoner exchange as part of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Only on returning to the “German zone” did she learn that the Nazis were killing and deporting Jews. The German major who ran the munitions factory where she’d been forced to work hired Opdyke as a serving maid, and she used her position to get information and otherwise aid Jews. Opdyke hid refugees in two different residences; eventually discovered by the major, she became his mistress in exchange for their safety. By the war’s end she was a messenger for the Polish partisans, and became a heroine when she escaped from Russian custody by jumping from a window. Fleeing Poland, she spent over two years in a Bavarian camp for displaced Jews.

This interview carries enormous moral force. Raised in a household that encouraged tolerance, mutual respect, and hard work, Opdyke always desired to help others to resolve differences. She continues to pursue this aim today by talking to schools, congregations, and other community groups about her experiences. Opdyke has received a medal from the state of Israel and has planted a tree on Jerusalem’s Avenue of the Righteous.

Interview No.	<b>066 (Box 24)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	86 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Kaaren, Mark
Birth:	1919
Birthplace:	Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Prisoner of War
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	unidentified Siberian camp
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	5
Sibling(s) Survived?	4

Mark Kaaren's anti-Semitic experiences included gentile children who threw rocks at him and his siblings. "We threw them back," he says. Mark had gentile friends, but also attended Jewish schools and belonged to a Zionist youth organization. After the German invasion, Mark's parents urged him to flee to the Russian-controlled east with his brother. They were successful in this, but Mark attempted to return to rescue his parents and was arrested at the border for crossing illegally. He then spent four years in a Russian labor camp near the Arctic Circle, working in a lumberyard. Winter lasted eleven months of the year, and all supplies were scarce. Mark was helped to escape by a civilian engineer whose job he helped save; he then served a year in the Polish army. Mark concluded his testimony with the reading of a wartime poem about Jewish persecution.

Mark's story of survival is unusual for a Polish Jew. He also recounts his experiences in Israel in the 1950's. Among his reasons for leaving were Israel's "socialistic" tendencies, which he especially disliked after imprisonment in the Russian camp.

SEE ALSO: #35 (Rita Kaaren – wife)

Interview No.	<b>067 (Box 24)</b>
Length:	137 min.
# of VHS tapes:	2
Name:	Wigodsky, Esther
Birth:	1922
Birthplace:	Sosnowiec, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz-Birkenau; Bergen-Belsen
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived:	1

When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, seventeen-year-old Esther Wigodsky was visiting Warsaw, applying to the ballet academy there. By the time she was able to return to her hometown in December, her father had been arrested as a political prisoner. Through an uncle, Esther got a job in a Luftwaffe uniform factory. She stayed there till 1943, when deportation and liquidation orders came through. Esther tried three different times to escape reporting to the station, but was caught each time. She describes the arrival area of Auschwitz, where she heard many languages spoken at once, as “a mean Babel.” She survived a tattoo infection, malaria, two years of factory work, and the death march of Bergen-Belsen. After the Liberation, Esther participated in a show for British troops; she choreographed and performed a solo dance entitled “Death of a Prisoner,” in which her final gesture was crushing a Nazi swastika. She received a standing ovation but was frightened by the cheering.

Esther is an excellent storyteller. She remembers her surprise at a Scottish division of the British forces because they wore kilts and played bagpipes. She also explains some of the other symbols and used to identify non-Jewish prisoners of the Nazis – prostitutes wore black triangles, Poles wore red ones, and criminals wore green. These and other details highlight her story of survival quite effectively.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>068 (Box 24)</b>
Length:	148 min.
# of VHS tapes:	2
Name:	Goldstein, Rabbi Baruch
Birth:	1923
Birthplace:	Mlawa, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult, Adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz, Buchenwald
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived:	0

Rabbi Baruch Goldstein recalls anti-Semitism in his hometown but says it seemed minor in comparison to the strength and worth of the Jewish community, which comprised one-third of the population. He notes pre-war pogroms in other cities and national economic boycotts of Jewish business in the mid-1930's. After the Germans invaded, Baruch and other youths were routinely drafted for day labor without pay. His family were split after they were evicted from their apartment, and Baruch lived in the Mlawa ghetto for a year and a half with his mother and brother. Separated from both by the time he got into Auschwitz, Baruch was chosen for training as a brickmason. He worked hard, and "learned not to be seen." When Auschwitz was evacuated in January 1945, Baruch was sent to subcamps of Buchenwald; weeks before the Liberation, his group were put on cattlecars that traveled without destinations or food. Baruch says that he lost consciousness after a few weeks, and after the Liberation awakened in a Theresienstadt hospital without knowing how he arrived.

Rabbi Goldstein gives a striking description of his psychological state after the war. He notes his fear of making noise or speaking to others and his inability to make decisions. He also recounts his loss of rebuilding of religious faith after the war. But he continues to wonder why he survived when the rest of his family perished, and feels lonely for them although he has married and raised a son.

Interview No.	<b>069 (Box 24)</b>
Length:	27 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Frumes, Ted
Birth:	1923
Birthplace:	Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Liberator
Left Family Home:	N/A
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?:	N/A
Number of Siblings:	N/A
Sibling(s) Survived:	N/A

Ted Frumes came to Europe in 1944 as a mechanic for a tank division; he participated in the Battle of the Bulge. He says that no GIs he knew were aware of the Holocaust until the end of the war. He recounts moving through Munich in May 1945 with his tank division and encountering “people in long, dark coats.” Stopping the tanks to beg for food. The GIs thought they were Germans, until they talked to them and were told about the concentration camps. Ted’s division also stopped briefly at Dachau, located outside Munich. Because of the diseases that pervaded the camp only specific military personnel were granted entry, but Ted says that from outside the gates he could see corpses piled around boxcars. He believes that his tankmates were particularly unable to express their reactions because they knew he was Jewish. The sole exception was an American Indian soldier, who spoke to Ted of the atrocities his forebears had suffered at the hands of nineteenth-century settlers.

Ted believes that his experience in Germany made him more aware of the importance of family. He recounts his volunteer work in the later 1940’s and early ‘50’s with Jewish youth who were interested in going to Israel; he and a few other veterans taught them about guns and shooting until local authorities objected. In concluding his testimony, he recommends visiting the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

Interview No.	<b>070 (Box 24)</b>
Length:	185 min.
# of VHS tapes:	2
Name:	De Liema, Rose
Birth:	1921
Birthplace:	The Hague, Netherlands
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden; Camps
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	Westerbork; Auschwitz
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived:	0

Rose De Liema's family had some protection from transport because her father was a pallbearer for Jewish funerals, and provided a necessary service. Also, Rose worked as a secretary at an office that administered Jewish deportation. She and her husband went into hiding in 1943 and experienced three different situations – two with mercenary protectors, and the third with an independent-minded cleaning woman from Rose's high school. The success of the June 1944 D-Day landings led them to assume that the war would end soon, but in August they were apprehended; ironically, southern Holland was already liberated by this time. Rose and her husband were taken first to Westerbork, then to Auschwitz. Grouped with other Dutch women in the camps, Rose met Anne Frank and her family. Rose was chosen for work in a Silesian snow chain factory and describes relatively good conditions there. She was able to get information about the war front from local laborers and knew about Hitler's death in April 1945. Inmates at her work camp barely escaped death before the Liberation; the Gestapo woman in charge had ordered poison to be administered at their last meal before release, but the poison never arrived, and the Gestapo woman fled. When the Red Cross didn't show up, Rose and her friends left the factory and walked for three weeks until they could get a train back to Holland. Only on her return did she discover that her husband had survived.

Rose's survival experiences are exceptional, both in that she successfully hid for so long, and that she endured capture. She also displays a picture of herself taken with Otto Frank (Anne's father) after the war and criticized Germany for blaming the Shoah on "a few evil SS men."



**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No:	<b>071 (Box 24)</b>
Length:	99 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Factor, Lena
Birth:	1920
Birthplace:	Zarki, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz; Bergen-Belsen
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived:	1

As a child, Lena Factor learned German from her stepfather, who ran a small school. This may have saved her life, as she was chosen to work as a waitress at the local German headquarters because she could translate their requests for the Polish cook. There, Lena gained enough favor that she was one of the last 30 Jews in a town that was virtually "cleansed." In 1943, she was sent for thirteen months to a munitions factory; here, she says, an individual's will to live was tested by guards who committed random hangings. When the Russians got too near, Lena and her group were taken to Auschwitz. Lena notes that by this time they had prior knowledge of Auschwitz, and on arriving there they believed they would all die. She and 500 others, however, were selected for a munitions factory in Germany. They worked there until January of 1945, then were marched at gunpoint through the snow to Bergen-Belsen. Lena portrays the illness and filth there as lethal; "they didn't need gas chambers or bullets," she says. Lena survived typhus and describes the resistance she and others acquired to the odor of the corpses that surrounded them by the time the British liberated the camp in April.

Lena is very direct about the after effects of the Holocaust. After the war, so many friends and relatives had perished that "it was hard to find anyone, even in the cemetery...so many people died in the gas chamber." She emphasizes the role of Polish anti-Semitism and how its resurgence after the war determined her decision to emigrate.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>073 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	58 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Ungar, Stella
Birth:	1927
Birthplace:	Lauterecken, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child
Type of Exp.:	Refugee
Left Family Home:	1937
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	1

Stella Ungar recalls that the day after Hitler came to power, SA (*Sturmabteilung*) guards were stationed outside her father's tobacco store so that customers could be reported to the town's Nazi party. This was also the day that Stella's father discovered his best friend headed the local Nazis. Stella recalls the gradual decline of her father's business, and the worsening treatment she and her sister received at school. "I gradually lost my name," Stella says; even her teacher called her "the Jew-girl." By 1937, the year her family emigrated, her family was forced to get food illegally. Her father also was that convinced Hitler was preparing for war because of a large construction project nearby; authorities said it would be a playground, but he believed it was an airfield. Stella's family received sponsorship for U.S. entry from a relative and left Germany without trying first to sell their house. They lived first in Indiana, and later in Chicago; Stella says that by the war's end she felt very Americanized, and wondered if her childhood experiences had been "just a nightmare."

Stella says she cannot attend any stadium event without becoming physically sick from memories of Hitler newsreels and radio broadcasts. She has returned to Germany in recent years and believes that anti-Semitism there has not been eradicated.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>074 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	176 min.
# of VHS tapes:	2
Name:	List, Martin
Birth:	1929
Birthplace:	Pilzno, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Child; Young adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettos; Hidden
Left Family Home:	1942
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Before World War II, Martin List's father often travelled to Germany on business, and had close German friends, one family in particular. This circumstance had far-reaching effects. Once Germany occupied western Poland under the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the Lists received help from some members of the German family, and threats from other members. Martin recalls that as Germans troops rolled into town, the soldiers sang a song about "Jewish blood sprouting" on their knives. His family moved out of their home and into the ghetto in 1942, and soon afterward became the only Jews in the community to escape transport. They hid in different locations in the forest in groups of two and three; by October 1943, Martin was the sole survivor of his immediate family. His father and brother were killed by the Gestapo, and Martin believes that one of their German "friends" reported their location. He spent the bulk of the war in the forest, hiding with small groups of fellow Jewish refugees. For the last six months, as the front line approached the area, Martin lived next to a German encampment and survived by stealing soldiers' food.

Martin survived against high odds in hard conditions, and moreover as an orphaned child; the experiences associated with this have affected the rest of his life. He remembers many details of his ordeal and tells his story intelligently.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>075 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	90 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Trompetter, Rosie
Birth:	1905
Birthplace:	Amsterdam, Netherlands
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1942
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Rosie Trompetter grew up in a "mixed" neighborhood, and before the war had Jewish and gentile friends. But she says that trusting the Dutch people was "the dumbest thing we ever did." She recalls the German invasion as a shock, and describes roundups by the SS in Amsterdam's Jewish neighborhoods. Rosie's husband bought time by working for the *Judesrat*, then fled with Rosie and their son in 1942. In the meantime, Rosie had sold a pair of jewelry stores owned by her family, and the sale funded their efforts to hide in western Holland. They also worked for the underground, and Rosie describes the way contacts and arrangements were made. She and her husband were separated during a raid by the NSB (Dutch Nazis), and Rosie lived at the end of the war under an assumed name on a farm that hid several other Jews as well. Her husband, she says, was shot two days before the Liberation while in German custody. On returning to Amsterdam after the war, Rosie checked the Red Cross lists nightly for surviving relatives. "No one came back," she says simply. After the war she adopted a niece who had been hidden, supporting her and her own son by working as a dressmaker. She came to the U.S. in 1946, and remarried in New York to another Dutch Jewish survivor.

Rosie is the oldest participant in the Orange County Holocaust Oral History Project. Her story is especially remarkable because she succeeded in rebuilding her life after the Holocaust as a middle-aged person.

Interview No. **076 (Box 25)**  
 Leng. of Tape: 114 min.  
 # of VHS tapes: 1

Name: Gable, Harry  
 Birth: 1923  
 Birthplace: Karlsruhe, Germany  
 Religion: Jewish  
 Age Group: Young adult  
 Type of Exp.: Refugee  
 Left Family Home: 1938  
 Camps Occupied: N/A  
 Parents Survived Occupation? Neither  
 Number of Siblings: 3  
 Sibling(s) Survived? 3

Harry Gable was ten years old when Hitler came to power. He says he was unaware of anti-Semitism before this, but that the climate in Germany changed immediately afterward. Harry describes repeated violence by gentile schoolmates, and says teachers encouraged this. His parents would not let him go out by himself, and gentile parents told their children to "hate Jewish children." Harry recalls the raising of the Nazi flag at school every Monday, and how Jewish pupils were forbidden to salute it. His father was taken away in 1938 without warning and never seen again. Harry's family were too poor to consider leaving the country, but his mother allowed all four children to go to farms designed to prepare them for emigration to Palestine. Passage to the Middle East was barred when Italy joined the war, but eventually Harry and one sister got to England through the Palestine program. Harry describes the English people as very kind and understanding toward the refugees. When he came of age he wanted to contribute to the war effort against the Nazis, and worked for the Royal Air Force as an interpreter. Harry was stationed in Germany at the end of the war, and describes looking for his parents in several concentration camps. He never found any record of them, but at Mauthausen he did find the mother of the German-Jewish woman he had met and married in England.

Harry's childhood recollections of anti-Semitism are quite disturbing. He also describes *Kristallnacht*, and how he and his mother risked reprisal to save a Torah scroll from their synagogue before the building was destroyed.

**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>077 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	60 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Peltyn, Cecylia
Birth:	1915
Birthplace:	Crakow, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes; Camps
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	Plaszow, Skarzysko
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Cecilia Peltyn describes a mid-1930's "revolution" against Jewish enrollment in Polish universities. She also notes rumors before the German invasion of Poland that Jews would be rounded up and put into camps. She and her family attempted to sidestep the Crakow ghetto by escaping to the countryside, but were forced to return. Cecilia and her father were able to put off transport by working in a local brick factory. Her mother and sister suffocated on a camp transport, and her father died of tuberculosis in a labor camp. From 1944, Cecilia worked in a munitions factory at Skarzysko, where she was severely injured by a missile that fell on her foot. She credits a Polish nurse for saving her from selection during a six-week hospital stay after the factory was evacuated to Leipzig. Cecilia says that after the liberation she remained the most fragile of her friends, so they would recruit her to get food from civilians. She describes the Russian liberators as kind and generous. Cecilia returned to Poland after the war, but decided to leave because of continued anti-Semitism.

Cecilia recalls unusual details of her experiences, such as the extent of the food shortage at the end of the war; "even the SS soldiers" went hungry. She also expresses skepticism at the Germans' professed ignorance of the concentration camps after the war.

Interview No.	<b>078 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	98 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Salzer-Weinberg, Magda
Birth:	1913
Birthplace:	Balasagyarmat, Hungary
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	4
Sibling(s) Survived?	4

Magda's family moved to Budapest from a nearby town in 1937. This was fortunate, she says; "otherwise we'd have been taken with the rest." She married in 1938, and her husband went to the U.S. the following year, planning to send for Magda and their daughter once he was established. Instead, she stayed in Budapest at her parents' apartment, which after the Germans occupied Hungary in 1944 was declared a "Jewish building." Three of Magda's siblings joined the underground and got her out of deportation two separate times. Magda spent time with her parents in a Wallenberg diplomatic safehouse in Budapest until she got false papers and was able to live with a family in the countryside as a gentile refugee. Only after the war's end was she able to let her husband know she had survived.

Magda has a good memory and a thorough understanding of the historical and political forces in play. She notes the 1944 seizure of power by the Arrow Cross (Hungarian Nazis), and describes them as "primitive, uneducated people who suddenly felt important and wanted to show everyone." She speaks with great pride of recent efforts to restore a temple in Budapest, and of her granddaughter's year abroad at the University of Budapest.

See also : Interview with Suzanne Butnik (#47 -- daughter)

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>082 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	119 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Gonda, Clara
Birth:	1915
Birthplace:	Hungary
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp:	Ghettos; Camps
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz; Ravensbrhck
Parents Survived Occupation? :	Neither
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived:	1

Clara Gonda began experiencing anti-Semitism while in medical school in her native Hungary; she and her four Jewish classmates could sit only in the back rows of their classes. On receiving her medical degree, she could not legally practice as a Jew. Due to the cooperation given Hitler by the Horthy rJgime, Hungary was spared occupation till 1944. But as Clara points out, once ordered to assist Hungary was fully complicit in the Final Solution. Clara also describes surrendering her household possessions to the Nazis and living first in a ghetto, then in a brickyard before transport to Auschwitz. She spent only a few months in the Polish camp, then was chosen by Dr. Mengele as one of 800 Hungarian women to work in an airplane factory outside Berlin. There, serving as the only doctor, she worked constantly. Conditions were unhealthy and supplies scarce, and when she criticized this she was accused of sabotage. Clara became so discouraged that she considered suicide. The factory was evacuated, and her group were ultimately liberated by the Russians. On returning to Hungary, she found her husband had survived the war, though her parents had perished.

Clara's clear memory for the details of her experiences offsets her occasional difficulty with English vocabulary. She is intelligent and observant, and her status as a female physician provides an unusual perspective.

See also Related Interview: #88 (Harry Gonda -- husband)



Interview No.:	<b>083 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	117 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Strauss, Margie
Birth:	1915
Birthplace:	Hanover, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes; Camps
Left Family Home:	1941
Camps Occupied:	Riga; Stutthof
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	2
Sibling(s) Survived?	1

Margie Strauss tried to escape from Germany to Africa in the late 1930's, but the Nazi government barred the ship she had booked from making the journey. Instead, she got a job at an agricultural school that trained Jews who were planning to emigrate to Palestine. This allowed Margie to remain in Germany until late 1941, when she was transported to the Latvian ghetto of Riga with her mother and daughter. She learned Yiddish there and then was able to communicate with Latvian Jews. Margie and her mother escaped selection for Auschwitz and instead went to work in an ultramarine factory. She received adoption offers for her five-year-old daughter, but refused. The child was shot and killed in a 1944 roundup, and Margie's mother was selected and removed a few months later. Margie was sent to the Stutthof death camp in early 1945 and managed to get herself and some friends assigned to a nearby camp where cremation did not occur. She describes Wehrmacht officers at their last camp who were appalled by the Nazis, and who got extra food and clothing for the camp inmates. The Russians killed them at the Liberation, but Margie says that they did not deserve to die.

Margie's story differs notably from those of the many Jews who were sent through Auschwitz in that her equally arduous odyssey took her nowhere near it. She expresses frustration that she does not remember sequences of her experiences better, but her recall is nonetheless impressive.

Interview No.	<b>084 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	95 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Haas, Miriam
Birth:	1922
Birthplace:	Auschwitz, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Young adult; Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettos; Camps
Left Family Home:	1942
Camps Occupied:	Subcamp of Buchenwald-Groszrosen
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived?	1

Miriam Haas was born in the town of Auschwitz, but her family moved to Sosnowiec in the 1930's for her father's fabric business. She describes prewar anti-Semitism and institutionalized segregation in Polish schools. She recounts the gradual loss of her family, which started with her father's flight to Russian-occupied Poland in 1939 and continued with deportations to death camps. Miriam briefly worked in a ghetto factory, then was sent to the Sudetenland to a textile plant. She sabotaged, stole yarn to make socks, and simulated asthma so she could switch from the night shift to daytime. She describes her group of friends there as "religious" and notes that for much of the war they were well-fed enough to disdain eating food scraps. In the last months of the war, the factory became a concentration camp; work ceased, the food grew scarce, and the inmates received dogtags that served the same purpose as numbered tattoos. They were liberated by the Russians, and she recalls that she rode away from the factory atop a Russian tank.

Miriam speaks thoughtfully about her experiences. She emphasizes the strength of Polish anti-Semitism, but also believes that "only the Germans" were capable of masterminding and carrying out the Final Solution.

Interview No.	<b>086 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	58 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Warner, Gretl
Birth:	1911
Birthplace:	Ermethofen, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Refugee; Ghettoes
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	1
Sibling(s) Survived?	1

Gretl Warner was working as a couture dressmaker in Berlin when *Kristallnacht* occurred, and her parents and husband decided that emigration was necessary. Her parents owned three houses and some farmland but were forced to accept an artificially low price for them. They all emigrated to Shanghai, and Gretl and her husband were able to start and run an exclusive dress salon there. One U.S. dollar would pay for an entire week's survival, and thus Gretl and her husband managed to recover some of the family's financial losses. But the Japanese invaded in 1941, and under pressure from the Germans they forced the 22,000 Jews in Shanghai to live in a ghetto. Gretl describes heavy inflation, the withdrawal of ration cards, and living on peanuts. Typhus and dysentery were rampant, and only 14,000 Jews remained there at the end of the war; Gretl weighed 73 pounds at this point. She and her husband came to the U.S. in 1947, and she recalls her happiness at seeing Jewish holidays publicly acknowledged here.

Gretl provides informative details about the terms of refugee life in Shanghai, in particular regarding the politics of the Jewish community. She also notes that although the occupation was extremely difficult, she had Japanese clients who brought her food and staples and probably saved her life.

**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>087 (Box 25)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	49 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Lowenstein, Harold
Birth:	1909
Birthplace:	Werden, Germany
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Refugee
Left Family Home:	1939
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Both
Number of Siblings:	5
Sibling(s) Survived?	4

Harold Lowenstein's family traced its German heritage to 1684. On Kristallnacht in 1938, the Nazis arrested and imprisoned Harold and his brother. Harold also describes the burning of the town synagogue, and the desecration of the Torah. He says that the few "arch-Nazis" who occupied his town pressured other citizens to boycott Jewish businesses. But local police, he notes, would not participate in deportation measures. His family lost their home and store, and in early 1939 Harold and his wife devoted their "honeymoon" to finding exit visas. They obtained permission to emigrate to Bolivia but got off their ship in Panama in the hope of gaining entry to the U.S. They obtained refuge here in 1940; Harold served two years in the U.S. Navy and fought at Iwo Jima. Harold also describes how most of his family escaped, and how one brother died in Minsk.

Harold's testimony emphasizes recovery, and he contends that he does not want to blame "endless generations" of Germans for the Holocaust. Harold shows photos of a Holocaust memorial completed recently in his small hometown. He also describes its dedication, for which the town council hosted all the town's Jewish survivors and their descendants.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>088 (Box 26)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	109 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Gonda, Harry
Birth:	1915
Birthplace:	Mako, Hungary
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp:	Hidden
Left Family Home:	1943
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation? :	Neither
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived:	3

Harry Gonda credits his status as a doctor for saving him during the Holocaust. "I was sitting in the balcony, watching the horror," he says. Although anti-Jewish laws prevented him from practicing in Hungary prior to the war, he was sent to northern Transylvania as the doctor for a military unit of miners. As the Russians approached and his unit faced evacuation in 1944, Harry received refuge from his brother-in-law, who worked in Budapest for the rescue organization of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg. Harry spent the rest of the war in the Wallenberg safehouse system, which housed over 15,000 refugee Jews. Harry describes the liberation as an ambivalent experience. "The Russians were brutes too," he notes. After the war Harry and his wife sneaked out of Hungary and treated patients in a displaced persons' camp until they received visas to the U.S. in 1949.

Harry discusses the history of Hungarian Jewry, citing continual infighting as an impediment to social integration. He also gives rich details about the development of anti-Semitism in Hungary before World War II. He has written his memoirs for his grandchildren in the hope that they will adopt Judaism, although his children are non-observant.

See also: #82 (Clara Gonda -- wife)

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>090 (Box 26)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	106 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Van-Sligter-Jansma, Hendrika (Ria)
Birth:	1920
Birthplace:	Amsterdam, Netherlands
Religion:	Christian
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp:	Rescuer
Left Family Home:	N/A
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation? :	Both
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived:	3

Ria Van Sligter-Jansma describes the German occupation of Holland as sudden and brutal. Beatings and killings occurred daily against Jews and gentiles alike, and soldiers commonly confiscated food staples from civilians. Ria sees such conditions as the reason for widespread Dutch hatred of the invaders and describes assistance to Jews as one type of Dutch patriotism. Ria belonged to a resistance organization, hiding Jews in her house, smuggling them to farms in southern Holland, and working as a courier. Among her organization's refugees were the family of Anne Frank, who were discovered because the Germans wanted the chemicals stored in the warehouse where they were hidden. Ria once escaped a firing squad only by a last-minute reprieve. She also committed everyday acts of protest against the Germans; after criticizing a soldier's treatment of a deaf man she received two broken arms as punishment. By the end of the war Ria suffered severe mental exhaustion, and she was at home in bed during the Liberation. After the war, she became a nurse. Now retired, she considers herself an active Christian and seeks worthwhile charitable causes.

Ria attributes her willingness to help Jews to her family, who taught tolerance, and to high school friendships before the war with German refugees. Her story conveys the tensions that characterized wartime Holland, as well as the relationship between aiding Jews and rebelling against the occupying Germans.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>091 (Box 26)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	178 min.
# of VHS tapes:	2
Name:	Ben-Joseph, Helena
Birth:	1914
Birthplace:	Barslow, Poland
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Ghettoes; Hidden
Left Family Home:	1940
Camps Occupied:	N/A
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	3
Sibling(s) Survived?	0

Before the Germans invaded Poland, Helena Ben-Josef and her husband owned a home and two jewelry stores; they had also invested in the oil industry that had made their town prosperous and relatively modern. Helena's family had been watchmakers and jewelers for four generations and were quite wealthy. Aware of the anti-Semitism in Poland, they wanted to leave the country before the war, but they could not bring their assets with them, and so stayed. All of her immediate family, including her husband, were killed by 1942, but Helena never lost access to her family's fortune, and paid many people (including local police) to hide her and her two daughters. By the Liberation, Helena weighed 79 pounds, and her younger daughter required sanatorium treatment for malnutrition. Throughout the occupation, Helena received enormous assistance from a gentile maid who had worked for her family for 25 years.

Helena's story shows how destruction of Jewry occurred outside of concentration camps; all of her family, and that of her husband, died in local pogroms. She also discusses the role of public notices and newspaper ads in the Final Solution. Although Helena does not always answer questions directly, she has excellent recall of details. She also expresses a strong passion for the Jewish faith.

**Holocaust Interviews**

MS-M 11

Interview No.	<b>092 (Box 26)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	108 min
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Cohen, Isaac
Birth:	1916
Birthplace:	Dr<ma, Greece
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1943
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz-Birkenau; Buchenwald
Parents Survived Occupation?	Neither
Number of Siblings:	4
Sibling(s)Survived:	2

Before World War II Isaac Cohen ran a wholesale produce business in Salonika, a town with an estimated 70,000 Jewish families. He describes the German invasion and occupation of Greece, which led in 1942 to his forced deportation. Several gentile friends offered to hide him, but Isaac refused, choosing instead to stay with his family; he did not envision what he eventually experienced. Only on arriving at Auschwitz with one brother and one sister did he decide that the desire for family cohesion was a liability (his parents died with his other sister on a boat sunk by the SS). Isaac worked first within Birkenau, then nearby at the Buna factory owned by I.G. Farben. He believed he would not survive, but regardless struggled to acquire as much food as possible through barter. Isaac endured the death marches following evacuation of the Auschwitz camps in January 1945; by the time of the Liberation in May, he had been in five more camps. He was placed in a hospital near Munich for several weeks at that time.

Isaac recounts his vivid memories of these experiences in heavily accented English. He conveys his emotions about the Holocaust by showing photographs of crematorium interiors, mass graves, and emaciated inmates.



**Holocaust Interviews****MS-M 11**

Interview No.	<b>093 (Box 26)</b>
Leng. of Tape:	58 min.
# of VHS tapes:	1
Name:	Burke, Edith
Birth:	1924
Birthplace:	Hungary
Religion:	Jewish
Age Group:	Adult
Type of Exp.:	Camps
Left Family Home:	1944
Camps Occupied:	Auschwitz; Bergen-Belsen
Parents Survived Occupation?:	Neither
Number of Siblings:	5
Sibling(s) Survived:	2

Edith Burke describes her existence in a small Hungarian college town as "sheltered." Her deportation did not occur until 1944 because of Hungary's alignment with Germany. Edith notes that one occasionally heard rumors about the concentration camps, but that it was easier to believe the claims that they were going to a "labor camp," even as one was packed into cattlecars. She recounts the two-day trip to Auschwitz with her parents and three sisters; her parents were exterminated on arrival, along with her oldest sister, and the sister's infant son. After two months, Edith and the remaining two sisters were chosen to work at Reichenbach, an airplane factory. They were grateful for this, as conditions there were "a notch better" than at Auschwitz. The factory was evacuated with the approach of the Russians in February 1945, and Edith and her sisters were taken to Bergen-Belsen. This camp, she believes, was worse than Auschwitz; "dead people, wandering around, waiting to die." Typhus killed her sisters right around the Liberation, and Edith believes she would have died as well if medical attention had arrived any later. Afterward she was sent to Sweden, where she recovered at a resort, then worked in a clothing factory.

Edith does not give elaborate detail of her experiences, and apologizes for this several times. However, she is explicit about her feelings. She says that the hope for freedom sustained her and her sisters, although after their deaths she did not want to survive. Edith also still wonders why she lived and others died. Edith hopes that her children and grandchildren will carry on orthodox Judaism, which she has imparted to them.

## Glossary

The following terms occur in the interviews and in the narrative summaries.

**Pogroms.** Yiddish for devastation or destruction. An organized massacre and looting of helpless people, usually with the cooperation of local officials. An act periodically committed against modern European Jewry, particularly in the early years of the Holocaust.

**"Star houses."** Term used in Budapest, Hungary, to designate apartment buildings marked with Stars of David and intended exclusively for occupation by Jews. Employed between June 17 and 24, 1944 as a preferable alternative to the institution of ghettos. President Miklos Horthy's daughter had married a leader in the city's Jewish community, and the star houses were considered a political concession.

**Shoah.** A Hebrew word meaning destruction of the Jews. This term came into use after World War II to denote Hitler's attempt to destroy Jewry.

**SA.** Abbreviation of *Sturmabteilung*, or "storm troopers." This Nazi militia force came into existence in 1923 and played a strong role in the early years of Hitler's regime. After the SA leader, Ernst R`hm, attempted to take over the German army in 1934, the SA's importance diminished considerably, and the **SS** became the dominant Nazi military force.

**SS.** Abbreviation of *Schutzstaffel*, or "protection squad." Recruited from the **SA**, SS members served as Hitler's bodyguard and as Nazi party police. They controlled the concentration camps and all political prisoner affairs.

**Wehrmacht.** The armed forces of Germany in the period between 1935 and 1945. Although they played a more peripheral role in the Holocaust than the **SS**, it is generally recognized that the Wehrmacht was aware of German atrocities against Jews.

## **Related Collections**

The Orange County Holocaust Oral History Project figures into a broader context of worldwide efforts to document the experiences of Holocaust survivors. Other notable sources of such material include the Simon Wiesenthal Center & Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City, the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University, and the International Center For Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel. Additionally, film director Steven Spielberg has created the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, which aims to record testimonies from every living survivor.