

Upon entry, visitors to the Permanent Exhibition of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum receive identification cards. These identification cards describe the experiences of people caught up in the Holocaust in Europe. Designed as small booklets to be carried through the exhibition, the cards help visitors to personalize the historical events of the time.

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims -- six million were murdered; Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), people with mental and physical disabilities, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi Germany.

The Museum developed nearly 600 identification cards; approximately half of them are about Holocaust survivors. These cards describe the experiences of those who survived internment in ghettos and camps, as well as those who hid or those who were rescued . The others represent the experiences of people who died. To create the identification cards, a team of five Museum staff members interviewed 130 survivors of the Holocaust. The survivors described their own experiences as well as those of relatives who died during the Holocaust. The identification cards were developed from interviews of survivors and from other oral histories and written memoirs.

Each identification card has four sections. The first section provides a biographical sketch of the person. The second describes the individual's experiences from 1933 to 1939, corresponding to the 4th floor of the Permanent Exhibition. The next page describes events during the war years, as depicted on the third floor. The final section describes the fate of the individual and explains the circumstances—to the extent that they are known—in which the individual either died or survived. Most of the cards in this set are about individuals who were children (aged ten years or younger) when the Nazis came to power in Germany.



Bertha Adler

Date of Birth: June 20, 1928

Place of Birth: Selo-Solotvina,
Czechoslovakia

Bertha was the second of three daughters born to Yiddish-speaking Jewish parents in a village in Czechoslovakia's easternmost province. Soon after Bertha was born, her parents moved the family to Liege, an industrial, largely Catholic city in Belgium that had many immigrants from Eastern Europe.

1933-39: Bertha's parents sent her to a local elementary school, where most of her friends were Catholic. At school, Bertha spoke French. At home, she spoke Yiddish. Sometimes her parents spoke Hungarian to each other, a language they had learned while growing up. Bertha's mother, who was religious, made sure that Bertha also studied Hebrew.

1940-44: Bertha was 11 when the Germans occupied [Belgium] Liege. Two years later, the Adlers, along with all the Jews, were ordered to register and Bertha and her sisters were forced out of school. Some Catholic friends helped the Adlers obtain false papers and rented them a house in a nearby village. There, Bertha's father fell ill one Friday and went to the hospital. Bertha promised to visit him on Sunday to bring him shaving cream. That Sunday, the family was awakened at 5 a.m. by the Gestapo. They had been discovered.

Fifteen-year-old Bertha was deported to Auschwitz on May 19, 1944. She was gassed there two days later.



Inge Auerbacher

Date of Birth: December 31, 1934

Place of Birth: Kippenheim,
Germany

Inge was the only child of Berthold and Regina Auerbacher, religious Jews living in Kippenheim, a village in southwestern Germany near the Black Forest. Her father was a textile merchant. The family lived in a large house with 17 rooms and had servants to help with the housework.

1933-39: On November 10, 1938, [Kristallnacht, The Night of Broken Glass] hoodlums threw rocks and broke all the windows of our home. That same day police arrested my father and grandfather. My mother, my grandmother and I managed to hide in a shed until it was quiet. When we came out, the town's Jewish men had been taken to the Dachau concentration camp. My father and grandfather were allowed to return home a few weeks later, but that May my grandfather died of a heart attack.

1940-45: When I was 7, I was deported with my parents to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia. When we arrived, everything was taken from us, except for the clothes we wore and my doll, Marlene. Conditions in the camp were harsh. Potatoes were as valuable as diamonds. I was hungry, scared and sick most of the time. For my eighth birthday, my parents gave me a tiny potato cake with a hint of sugar; for my ninth birthday, an outfit sewn from rags for my doll; and for my tenth birthday, a poem written by my mother.

On May 8, 1945, Inge and her parents were liberated from the Theresienstadt ghetto where they had spent nearly three years. They emigrated to the United States in May 1946.



Gideon
Boissevain

Date of Birth: June 5, 1921

Place of Birth: Amsterdam,
Netherlands

Gideon was known affectionately as “Gi” by his family and friends. His parents were descended from the Huguenots, French Protestants who came to the Netherlands in the 16th and 17th centuries. Gi had two brothers and two sisters, and his father worked in the insurance business.

1933-39: Gi had a large circle of friends, both Christians and Jews, and after school they all liked to get together. He and his friends enjoyed taking bike trips, having parties and playing records. In the mid-1930s his parents joined the Dutch Nazi party because it appeared to them, at first, to offer a good, orderly political system. They quickly abandoned the party, however, when they saw how brutally its members behaved.

1940-42: Gi completed a training course to be an actuary, and was working at an insurance company. Then on May 10, 1940, the Germans invaded the Netherlands, and by the 18th German troops had occupied Amsterdam. Gi and his brother began to work for the Dutch resistance. His parents helped to hide Jews. On Sunday, August 2, 1942, Gi and his brother were arrested and imprisoned.

Gi was executed by the Nazis on October 1, 1942, along with his brother and 18 other resistance fighters. He was 20 years old.



Franco Cesana

Date of Birth: September 20, 1931

Place of Birth: Bologna, Italy

Franco was born to a Jewish family living in the northern Italian city of Bologna. Even though a fascist leader, Benito Mussolini, came to power in 1922, Bologna's Jews continued to live in safety. Like many Italian Jews, Franco's family was well integrated in Italian society. Franco attended public elementary school.

1933-39: When Franco was 7, Mussolini enforced "racial" laws against the Jews: Franco was expelled from school, and went instead to a Jewish school hastily organized in makeshift quarters in one of Bologna's synagogues. Franco could not understand why he had to leave his friends just because he was Jewish. His father died in 1939, and he moved with his mother and older brother, Lelio, to Turin, where he began religious school.

1940-44: Mussolini was overthrown in July 1943. Two months later, German forces occupied Italy, and gained control of the north, the part where Franco's family and most of Italy's Jews lived. The Italians had been protecting the Jews, but now Germany controlled Italy. The Cesana family went into hiding in the mountains. To evade the Germans, they moved from hut to hut. Lelio joined the Justice and Liberty partisan group. Though only 12, Franco joined as well, proud that so many Jews were fighting in the Italian resistance.

Franco was shot by Germans while on a scouting mission in the mountains. His body was returned to his mother on his 13th birthday. He was Italy's youngest partisan.



Thomas Elek

Date of Birth: December 7, 1924

Place of Birth: Budapest, Hungary

Thomas was born to a Jewish family who moved to Paris when he was 6. His father's outspoken criticism of the fascist government and his affiliation with the Hungarian Communist Party led to the family's expulsion from Hungary in 1930. With the help of his father, a professor of modern languages, Thomas quickly learned French and excelled in school. He had a special interest in poetry and music.

1933-39: Thomas's father often argued against fascism, and he was greatly disturbed when Hitler became the chancellor of Germany in 1933. His father's uneasiness permeated the Eleks' family life. Thomas concentrated on his studies and was admitted to the Louis-le-Grand secondary school, one of the most prestigious in Paris. He was upset to learn that Hungary, his mother country, had instituted anti-Jewish laws.

1940-44: In 1940, after the Germans occupied France, Thomas's mother enlisted in a women's resistance group. Following her example, Thomas joined a progressive students' organization in 1941 and later, with his brother, Bela, joined the armed resistance group, Franc-Tireurs et Partisans. Thomas participated in sabotage actions against the Germans. His group launched numerous grenade attacks, and set fire to a German library on the Left Bank. On July 28, 1943, his unit blew up a convoy of German officers and soldiers, killing 600.

Arrested on November 21, 1943, Thomas was tortured and condemned to death. On February 21, 1944, at the age of 20, he was executed by a Nazi firing squad.



Marcus Fass

Date of Birth: ca. 1925

Place of Birth: Ulanow, Poland

Marcus, known to his family as Moniek, was one of three children born to a Jewish family in the Polish town of Ulanow. His father worked as a tailor. Ulanow's Jewish community had many of its own organizations and maintained a large library. From the age of 3, Moniek attended a religious school. He started public school when he was 7.

1933-39: In 1935 Moniek's father left for America to find a job so that his family could later join him. He sent money to them while they waited for their emigration papers. Moniek's mother worked as a seamstress to help support the family. At age 14, Moniek graduated from secondary school. In September of the same year, the family was about to complete the paperwork for emigration when Germany invaded Poland.

1940-43: After Ulanow was occupied, Moniek was forced to work as a laborer for the German army. In 1942 the Nazis ordered a roundup of all Ulanow's Jews. Fearing deportation, Moniek went into hiding with a friend. For over a year they managed to elude the Germans by hiding in the forests and fields near Ulanow. But during a German search for partisans, Moniek and his friend were trapped in a rye field. Sweeping the field inch by inch with their dogs, the Germans finally captured the pair.

After being seized outside Ulanow in 1943, Moniek and his friend were never heard from again.



Moishe Felman

Date of Birth: 1926

Place of Birth: Sokolow Podlaski,
Poland

The youngest of seven children, Moishe was raised in a Yiddish-speaking, religious Jewish home in Sokolow Podlaski, a manufacturing town in central Poland with a large Jewish population of some 5,000. Moishe's parents ran a grain business. Moishe attended a Jewish school and began public school in Sokolow Podlaski in 1933.

1933-39: Summer vacation had just finished and 13-year-old Moishe was about to begin another year at elementary school when the Germans invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. German aircraft bombed Sokolow Podlaski's market and other civilian targets before German troops entered the town on September 20. Three days later, they set fire to the main synagogue. Later, the Germans confiscated the family's grain business.

1940-42: Over the next two years, the Germans imposed restrictions on the Jews, eventually ordering them to wear an identifying Jewish star on their clothing. On September 28, 1941, the Germans set up a ghetto and concentrated all of the town's Jews there. About a year later, on the most solemn holiday of the Jewish religion, the Day of Atonement, the Germans began to round up the people in the ghetto. Those who resisted or tried to hide were shot. Moishe, his mother and sister were herded onto the boxcar of a train.

On September 22, 1942, Moishe and his family were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp. He was gassed there shortly after arriving. He was 16 years old.



Moshe Finkler

Date of Birth: October 9, 1926

Place of Birth: The Hague,
Netherlands

Moshe was brought up in a religious Jewish family in The Hague, the center of the government of the Netherlands. His father was a businessman, and his mother raised their seven children. Introspective by nature, Moshe was an avid student.

1933-39: Moshe was starting eighth grade when the war [World War II] began in September 1939. At home, his family discussed the terrible things happening to Jews in Germany. Moshe believed, more than ever, that the Jewish people needed their own homeland [the Yishuv]. He continued attending public school, and also was tutored at home in Jewish studies. He loved learning languages and was studying eight of them, including Hebrew.

1940-44: Germany invaded the Netherlands, reaching The Hague on May 10, 1940. When the Nazis began rounding up Jews in the summer of 1942, Moshe and his family escaped to Belgium, where no one knew them and where they hoped they could pass as Christians. His father secured false papers, an “Aryan” permit to live in Brussels. But on April 7, 1944, while the Finklers were celebrating the Jewish holiday of Passover, Gestapo agents stormed their apartment. They had been betrayed.

Moshe and his family were deported to Auschwitz, where Moshe died at age 18.



Jakob Frenkiel

Date of Birth: December 3, 1929

Place of Birth: Gabin, Poland

Jakob was one of seven boys in a religious Jewish family. They lived in a town 50 miles west of Warsaw called Gabin, where Jakob's father worked as a cap maker. Gabin had one of Poland's oldest synagogues, built of wood in 1710. Like most of Gabin's Jews, Jakob's family lived close to the synagogue. The family of nine occupied a one-room apartment on the top floor of a three-story building.

1933-39: On September 1, 1939, just a few months before I turned 10, the Germans started a war with Poland. After they reached our town, they doused the synagogue and surrounding homes with gasoline and set them on fire. All the Jewish men were rounded up in the marketplace and held there while our synagogue and homes burned to the ground. Our house had also been doused with gasoline, but the fire didn't reach it.

1940-45: At age 12, I was put in a group of men to be sent to labor camps. More than a year later, we were shipped to Auschwitz. The day after we arrived, my brother Chaim and I were lined up with kids and old people. I asked a prisoner what was going to happen to us. He pointed to the chimneys. "Tomorrow the smoke will be from you." He said if we could get a number tattooed on our arms, we'd be put to work instead of being killed. We sneaked to the latrine, then escaped through a back door and lined up with the men getting tattoos.

After 17 months in Auschwitz, Jakob was force-marched to camps in Germany. Liberated in April 1945 near Austria, he emigrated to the United States at the age of 16.



Joseph Gani

Date of Birth: 1926

Place of Birth: Preveza, Greece

Joseph and his family lived in Preveza, a town with a Jewish population of 300 that was located on the Ionian seashore. Joseph's father had a small textile shop. The Ganis were of Romaniot descent, Jews whose ancestors had lived in Greece and the Balkans for more than a thousand years.

1933-39: Joseph attended Greek public school in Preveza. He also received a religious education; the local rabbi would come to the public school for several hours a week to give religious instruction to the Jewish students. Joseph loved sports, especially soccer and baseball.

1940-44: Germany invaded Greece in 1941 and took over the region where Preveza was located in the fall of 1943. The Jews of Preveza were deported to Auschwitz in Poland in March 1944. There, Joseph was assigned to work in Birkenau as part of the Sonderkommando, a work unit that carted corpses to the crematoria. On October 7, 1944, Sonderkommando workers in crematorium IV revolted, disarming SS guards and blowing up the crematorium. Soon, other Sonderkommando workers, including Joseph, joined in the uprising.

Joseph was killed in Birkenau in October 1944. He was 18 years old.



Dorotka
Goldstein

Date of Birth: February 1, 1932

Place of Birth: Warsaw, Poland

Dorotka was the youngest of three children in a Jewish family. Her father was the director of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in Warsaw and worked for a popular newspaper. An avid Zionist, he had traveled to Palestine.

1933-39: My father established a soup kitchen in Warsaw for Jewish refugees who had fled from Germany. In September 1939 I was supposed to begin first grade when war broke out. My father escaped to Vilna with other Jewish leaders. People were suffering, but I didn't understand why. I was content with my playmates and my dolls.

1940-44: After my father brought us to Vilna, the Germans killed him and deported me, my mother and sister to the Stutthof camp. My mother died slowly of hunger. When my sister and I were sent to be gassed, a German saved me, saying, "Look at this rotten Jewish child; she has such beautiful eyes." My sister waved so I wouldn't follow her. When the Soviets neared Stutthof, two Germans with machine guns shot everyone in my barracks. Lying sick on my tummy and weighing just 40 pounds, I felt the sting of two bullets in my back.

Dorotka was found unconscious in her bunk two hours later when the camp was liberated by Soviet troops on May 9, 1945. She emigrated to Israel in 1952.



Matvey Gredinger

Date of Birth: June 2, 1921

Place of Birth: Vertujeni, Romania

Matvey was the youngest of three children born to a Jewish family. The Gredingers lived in the town of Vertujeni, which was located in Bessarabia, a region of Romania. His father was a kosher butcher, preparing meat, especially chicken, for sale in his kosher shop. Matvey attended a Jewish school where he studied Jewish history and Hebrew.

1933-39: We heard stories from other towns about antisemitic groups, especially the League of National Christian Defense, harassing and sometimes attacking Romanian Jews. But only small groups tormented us in our town. After I completed the seventh grade, I went to the Romanian capital of Bucharest in 1934 and secured a job working in a textile factory. While I was away, my family moved to the town of Vysoka.

1940-44: While I was visiting my family in 1940, the Soviets occupied Bessarabia. Within a year the Germans occupied the area. At once, Romanian soldiers began shooting Jews. We barricaded our house but the soldiers broke in. I was dragged out and a soldier fired at me; the bullet passed through my neck. I collapsed, unconscious but alive, lying in a pool of blood. Later, the soldiers used a match to check my breathing. I feigned death. They heaped rocks on me and left. After dark, I rose and ran through the woods.

Matvey fled to a nearby town, but the Germans came the next day. He was then deported to a forced-labor camp in Ukraine. In 1944 he was liberated by the Red Army.



Ita Grynbaum

Date of Birth: 1926

Place of Birth: Starachowice, Poland

Ita was the second-youngest of nine children born to religious Jewish parents in Starachowice, a town in east-central Poland. Their small one-story house served as both the family's residence and their tailor shop. The tailoring was often done in exchange for goods such as firewood or a sack of potatoes. Ita often helped her mother with chores around the house.

1933-39: Ita's father died at home on a Saturday in June 1939, shortly after returning from synagogue. He had lain down to rest, when suddenly blood ran from his mouth. Her brother, Chuna, ran for the doctor, but when he returned, their father had already died. They buried him in the Jewish cemetery outside town. Ita's mother and older siblings kept the tailor shop running. That September, German forces occupied Starachowice.

1940-45: In October 1942, SS guards forced the town's Jews into the marketplace. Ita, who already was a forced laborer at a nearby factory, was lined up with the "able-bodied," along with Chuna. They were marched to a nearby forced-labor camp, where Ita was put to work serving food to the Polish workers. When a typhus epidemic struck the camp, Ita contracted the disease. Unable to work, she was sent to the barracks for sick prisoners. Chuna visited her daily, often bringing her rags to pad her painful bedsores.

With no medicine or doctors for the sick prisoners, Ita died of her illness after three months. She was buried in a nearby stone quarry. Ita was 17 years old.

Zagreb, Yugoslavia

Ivo was an only child born to a Jewish family in the city of Zagreb. His father worked in an insurance company. Though blatant antisemitism was considered uncommon in Yugoslavia, Jews were barred from government and university positions unless they converted to Christianity.

Name: Ivo Herzer
Date of Birth:
February 5, 1925
Place of Birth:

1933-39: In Zagreb I studied at a public secondary school. The curriculum was fixed and included three languages as well as religion. My school was highly selective but I enjoyed studying and did well. Though I didn't personally encounter overt prejudice in Zagreb, some Croatian fascist groups were fiercely antisemitic and supported the policies of the Nazis. I was 16 when the war began.

1940-44: In 1941 Yugoslavia was invaded by the Axis powers and split into occupation zones. Fearing the Croatian fascists, my family wanted to escape to the Italian zone. Using the only two Italian words I knew, "Jew" and "fear," I approached some Italian army officers. They understood and sneaked us into the Italian zone. We weren't the only refugees; the Italians were shielding many Jews. My family was even invited to one of their army concerts. How ironic that Jews were being protected by a German ally.

Italy, defeated in 1943, pulled out of Yugoslavia, and Ivo crossed the Adriatic to southern Italy, recently liberated by the Allies. In 1948 Ivo emigrated to the United States.



Johanna
(Hanne) Hirsch

Date of Birth: November 28, 1924

Place of Birth: Karlsruhe, Germany

Hanne was born to a Jewish family in the German city of Karlsruhe. Her father, Max, was a photographer. When he died in 1925, Hanne's mother, Ella, continued to maintain his studio. In 1930 Hanne began public school.

1933-39: In April 1933 our studio, like the other Jewish businesses in Karlsruhe, was plastered with signs [the Anti-Jewish boycott]: "Don't buy from Jews." At school, a classmate made me so furious with her taunts that I ripped her sweater. After the November 1938 pogroms [Kristallnacht, Night of Broken Glass] the studio was busy making photos for the new ID cards marked "J" that Jews had to carry. The studio remained open until December 31 when all Jewish businesses had to be closed.

1940-44: In 1940 we were deported to Gurs, a Vichy detention camp on the French-Spanish border. I learned from a social worker there that a pastor in Le Chambon village wanted to bring children out of the camp. This social worker, from the Children's Aid Society, got me out. Being free was heavenly. But by 1942 the German roundups reached even to Le Chambon and I was sent to hide at two different farms. The farmers were glad to help. One said, "Even if we have less, we want to help more people." In early 1943 I escaped to Switzerland.

After the war, Hanne lived in various cities in Switzerland. In 1945 she married Max Liebmann and three years later she emigrated with her husband and daughter to the United States.



Izabella Katz

Date of Birth: May 28, 1924

Place of Birth: Kisvarda, Hungary

Izabella was one of eight children raised in a religious Jewish family in the small town of Kisvarda in northeastern Hungary. Every Friday Izabella and her brother and four younger sisters went to the library to borrow the maximum number of books for their mother. Izabella attended public schools and longed to move to a big city.

1933-39: Antisemitism was prevalent. I can't count the number of times I was called "smelly Jew." We cringed at "Heil Hitler" speeches from Germany on the radio because we knew our neighbors would happily join up with the Nazis, and these were people with whom we'd shared our town for generations. My father went to the United States and desperately tried to obtain immigration papers for us.

1940-44: By the time Papa got our visas, Hungary was at war with America. Later, Hitler invaded Hungary. In April 1944 Jews were moved to Kisvarda's ghetto. On May 28 we were ordered to be ready to travel at 4 a.m. Smiling townspeople lined the street to watch us squeeze into cattle cars. At Auschwitz my mother and youngest sister were gassed. My sisters and I were put in camp "C." As the Soviets advanced, we were moved towards Germany to a labor camp. Force-marched west from there in a blizzard, we made a run for it.

Izabella and two of her sisters hid for two days and were liberated by the Soviets on January 25, 1945. They emigrated to the United States and joined their father.



One of 11 children, Magdalena was raised as a Jehovah's Witness. When she was 7, her family moved to the small town of Bad Lippspringe. Her father was a retired postal official and her mother was a teacher. Their home was known as "The Golden Age" because it was the headquarters of the local Jehovah's Witness congregation. By age 8 Magdalena could recite many Bible verses by heart.

Magdalena Kusserow

Date of Birth: January 23, 1924

Place of Birth: Bochum, Germany

1933-39: Our loyalty was to Jehovah, so the Nazis marked us as enemies. At 12 I joined my parents and sister in missionary work. Catholic priests denounced us. Papa was arrested for hosting Bible study meetings in our home; even Mama was arrested. The Gestapo searched our house many times, but my sisters and I managed to hide the religious literature. In 1939 the police took my three youngest siblings to be "reeducated" in Nazi foster homes.

1940-44: I was arrested in April 1941 and detained in nearby juvenile prisons until I was 18. I was told that I could go home if I signed a statement repudiating my faith. But I refused and was deported to the Ravensbrueck concentration camp. After a harrowing trip with common criminals and prostitutes, I was assigned to do gardening work and look after the children of the SS women. Within a year, my mother and sister Hildegard were also in Ravensbrueck; with God's help, we Jehovah's Witnesses stuck together.

During a forced march from Ravensbrueck in April 1945, Magdalena, her sister and mother were liberated. When the war ended, they returned to Bad Lippspringe.



Helene Melanie Lebel

Date of Birth: September 15, 1911

Place of Birth: Vienna, Austria

The elder of two daughters born to a Jewish father and a Catholic mother, Helene was raised as a Catholic in Vienna. Her father died in action during World War I when Helene was just 5 years old, and her mother remarried when Helene was 15. Known affectionately as Helly, Helene loved to swim and go to the opera. After finishing her secondary education she entered law school.

1933-39: At 19 Helene first showed signs of mental illness. Her condition worsened during 1934, and by 1935 she had to give up her law studies and her job as a legal secretary. After losing her trusted fox terrier, Lydi, she suffered a major breakdown. She was diagnosed as schizophrenic, and was placed in Vienna's Steinhof Psychiatric Hospital. Two years later, in March 1938, the Germans annexed Austria [Anschluss] to Germany.

1940: Helene was confined in Steinhof and was not allowed home even though her condition had improved. Her parents were led to believe that she would soon be released. Instead, Helene's mother was informed in August that Helene had been transferred to a hospital in Niedernhart, just across the border in Bavaria. In fact, Helene was transferred to a converted prison in Brandenburg, Germany, where she was undressed, subjected to a physical examination, and then led into a shower room.

Helene was one of 9,772 persons gassed that year in the Brandenburg "Euthanasia" center. She was officially listed as dying in her room of "acute schizophrenic excitement."



Barbara
Ledermann

Date of Birth: September 4, 1925

Place of Birth: Berlin, Germany

Barbara was the older of two daughters born to Jewish parents in Germany's capital, Berlin. Barbara's father was a successful lawyer. As soon as Barbara was old enough to walk, he would take her around Berlin to see the sights and tour the city's art museums. Barbara liked to go horseback riding and dreamed of becoming a dancer.

1933-39: After the Nazis came to power in January 1933, it was illegal for my father to have non-Jewish clients. His law practice quickly folded. Later that year when I was 7, our family moved to the Netherlands where my mother had relatives. I continued my schooling in Amsterdam and quickly learned Dutch. Although we no longer lived in a big house with servants, I enjoyed Amsterdam—it had a much less formal atmosphere than Berlin.

1940-44: The Germans invaded the Netherlands in May 1940. Two years later, when they began to deport many Jews, my boyfriend, Manfred, told me that these deportations to "labor camps" really meant death. He got false IDs for me and my family, and told me, "If you get called up, don't go." I asked, "What will happen to my parents if I don't go?" "Nothing that wouldn't happen otherwise," he answered. "What do you mean?" I asked, and he responded, "Everyone who goes will be killed. They are all going to die."

Barbara remained in hiding until May 1945, when Amsterdam was liberated by Canadian troops. She emigrated to the United States in November 1947.



Susanne
Ledermann

Date of Birth: October 8, 1928

Place of Birth: Berlin, Germany

Susanne was the younger of two daughters born to Jewish parents in the German capital of Berlin. Her father was a successful lawyer. Known affectionately as Sanne, Susanne liked to play with her sister on the veranda of her home and enjoyed visiting the Berlin Zoo and park with her family.

1933-39: After the Nazis came to power in January 1933, it became illegal for Jewish lawyers to have non-Jewish clients. When Susanne was 4, her father's law practice closed down and the Ledermanns moved to the Netherlands. Susanne began attending school in Amsterdam when she was 6. She was a good student, and she quickly made friends in the neighborhood. Some of her friends were also Jewish refugees from Germany.

1940-44: On May 14, 1940, Susanne heard the roar of German planes bombing Rotterdam 35 miles away. Amsterdam was soon occupied by the Germans. When Susanne was 13, the Germans forced the Jews out of public schools and Susanne enrolled in a Jewish school. By June 1942 the Germans were deporting Jews, ostensibly to work camps in the "East." Susanne's father, who worked as a translator for the Jewish council, believed that the family would not be harmed as long as they obeyed the law and followed German instructions.

On June 20, 1943, Susanne and her parents were deported to the Westerbork camp in Holland. In 1944 they were sent [from Westerbork] to Auschwitz, where Susanne perished. She was 15 years old.



Channah
Mazansky-Zaidel

Date of Birth: ca. 1908

Place of Birth: Panevezys, Lithuania

Channah was one of six children born to a Jewish family. In 1914, a year after her father died, the family fled during World War I to Russia. After the war they returned to Lithuania and settled in the village of Pampenai in a house owned by Channah's grandparents. When Channah's three oldest siblings moved to South Africa in the 1920s, Channah helped support the family by sewing.

1933-39: Channah was working as a seamstress in Pampenai when, in the mid 1930s, she met and married Channoch Zaidel. The couple, who continued to live in Pampenai, had one child. In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. At the time, Lithuania was still a free nation.

1940-41: Within days of the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, German troops had overrun the area around Pampenai. In late summer 1941, German troops approached the village, in an action that was part of a Nazi plan to eliminate Lithuania's Jews. Before the troops arrived, however, groups of armed Lithuanian collaborators herded Pampenai's Jews to a nearby forest and then forced them to dig trenches and strip naked. The Jews were then ordered to climb into the trenches and were machine-gunned.

Channah, Channoch, and their child were killed, along with Channa's mother, Sara Rachel, her twin brother, Moishe, and her younger brother, Chaim. Channah was 33.



Henry Maslowicz

Date of Birth: December 25, 1940

Place of Birth: Wierzbnik-
Starachowice, Poland

Henry's Jewish parents lived in a Polish town in which their families had lived for 150 years. The Jewish community enjoyed good relations with their Polish neighbors; the local Polish population refused to cooperate when the government encouraged a boycott of Jewish businesses during a wave of antisemitism that swept Poland in the mid-1930s.

1933-39: In the years before I was born, my father owned an iron and coal factory. The Germans occupied Wierzbnik on September 5, 1939. While some Jews fled, most, including my parents, remained.

1940-44: The Nazis established a ghetto in May 1940. I was born there eight months later. In 1942 my father, learning the ghetto was to be emptied, arranged for me to be hidden in a Catholic convent in Cracow. Perhaps because the convent was bombed, I was put out on the street—I was 3. A woman picked me up and took me to an attic above a candy store. It was dark and I was alone. The only person I ever saw was this woman who fed me and taught me to make the sign of the cross. I didn't know my own name or why I was in an attic.

Henry was discovered by a Jewish social worker and taken to Israel. He was reunited with his father eight years later, and settled in Ecuador. In 1980 he moved to the United States.



Joseph Muscha Mueller

Date of Birth: 1932

Place of Birth: Bitterfeld, Germany

Joseph was born in Bitterfeld, Germany, to Gypsy parents. For reasons unknown, he was raised in an orphanage for the first one-and-a-half years of his life. At the time of Joseph's birth, some 26,000 Gypsies—members of either the Sinti or Roma tribes—lived in Germany. Though most were German citizens, they were often discriminated against by other Germans and subjected to harassment.

1933-39: At age one-and-a-half, Joseph was taken into foster care by a family living in Halle, a city some 20 miles from Bitterfeld. That same year, the Nazi party came to power. When Joseph was in school, he was often made the scapegoat for pranks in the classroom and beaten for “misbehaving.” He was also taunted with insults like “bastard” and “mulatto” by classmates who were members of the Hitler youth movement.

1940-44: When Joseph was 12 he was taken from his classroom by two strangers who said he had “appendicitis” and needed immediate surgery. He protested, but was beaten and forcefully taken into surgery where he was sterilized, a procedure legalized by a Nazi law allowing the forced sterilization of “asocials,” a category that included Gypsies. After his recovery, Joseph was to be deported to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, but his foster father managed to have him smuggled from the hospital and hidden.

Joseph survived the remainder of the war by hiding for five months in a garden shed.



Andras Muhlrad

Date of Birth: July 27, 1930

Place of Birth: Ujpest, Hungary

The second of two children, Andras was born to Jewish parents living in a suburb of Budapest. His father was a pharmacist. The Muhlrads lived in a large house with Andras' grandfather and aunts. As a toddler, Andras often played with his older sister, Eva, and their cousins in the big yard behind their home.

1933-39: Andras was 4 when his family moved to their own apartment. It was 1936 when he began primary school and Hitler had already been in power in Nazi Germany for three years. At night his father would turn on the radio to listen to news of the Third Reich. All this still seemed far away from Hungary. The young boy concentrated on earning good grades. He knew only a few top Jewish students were admitted to the public high school every year.

1940-44: Four months before Andras turned 14, the Germans invaded Hungary. Soon after, the Muhlrads had to leave their apartment and move in with the family of Andras' friend Yannos, whose building had been marked with a Star of David. At first, living together was tolerable, but conditions became increasingly more crowded until there were 25 in the apartment. The residents were allowed to leave the building for errands a few hours a day. Then one day a gendarme took up guard in front of the entrance. The residents spent three days trapped inside fearing what would happen next.

Andras and his family were among the 435,000 Hungarian Jews deported to Auschwitz in the early summer of 1944. Andras was later moved to a camp in Bavaria, where he perished.



Preben Munch-Nielsen

Date of Birth: June 13, 1926

Place of Birth: Snekkersten,
Denmark

Preben was born to a Protestant family in the small Danish fishing village of Snekkersten. He was raised by his grandmother, who was also responsible for raising five other grandchildren. Every day Preben commuted to school in the Danish capital of Copenhagen, about 25 miles south of Snekkersten.

1933-39: There were very few Jews in my elementary school, but I didn't think of them as Jews; they were just my classmates and pals. In Denmark we didn't distinguish between Jews and non-Jews, we were all just Danes. By fifth grade, my classmates and I heard rumors of a German military build-up. But later, in 1939, my parents said that Hitler had promised not to invade Denmark, which made us feel relatively safe.

1940-42: Occupation. In April 1940 I arrived in Copenhagen, where I saw planes overhead and German officers in the street. I joined the resistance as a courier, but I became more involved in October 1943 when the Gestapo began hunting down Danish Jews. We began to help Jewish refugees. We hid them in houses near the shore and brought them to waiting boats at an appointed time. Under cover of darkness, we took up to 12 Jews at a time across the straits to Sweden. The four-mile trip took about 50 minutes.

Preben helped transport 1,400 refugees to Sweden. He fled to Sweden as well in November 1943 when the Germans seized the Danish government. Preben returned home in May 1945.



Maria's parents lived in Szentes, a town in southeastern Hungary, located 30 miles from the city of Szeged. Her mother, Barbara, was born in the neighboring town of Hodmezovasarhely, but moved to Szentes when she married. Maria's father was a dentist.

1933-39: Maria was born in 1932. In 1937 her mother took in a young Austrian woman who lived with the family and helped Maria learn German.

Maria Nemeth

Date of Birth: December 14, 1932

Place of Birth: Szentes, Hungary

1940-44: In March 1944 German troops occupied Hungary. Members of the Hungarian fascist party, Arrow Cross, confiscated Maria's grandparents' store. She and her parents, grandparents, uncle and aunt and their families were among thousands of Jews from towns around Szeged who were deported to a makeshift ghetto in Szeged's Rokus sports field and brickyards. The Nemeths were deported from Szeged to Austria, via the Strasshof concentration camp, to a labor camp in the small farming village of Goestling an der Ybbs.

Maria and her family were among 80 Jews in the camp who were machine-gunned to death by retreating SS soldiers just days before U.S. forces reached the area. Maria was 13.



Robert T.
Odeman

Date of Birth: November 30, 1904

Place of Birth: Hamburg, Germany

Born Martin Hoyer, Robert took Robert T. Odeman as his stage name when he began a professional career as an actor and musician. A classical pianist, Robert gave concerts throughout Europe, but a hand injury tragically ended his concert career.

1933-39: In 1935 Robert opened a cabaret in Hamburg. One year later the Nazis shut it down, charging that it was politically subversive. Robert then moved to Berlin where he developed a close relationship with a male friend who was pressured to denounce Robert to the Gestapo. In November 1937 Robert was arrested under paragraph 175 of the Nazi-revised criminal code, which outlawed homosexuality. He was sentenced to 27 months in prison.

1940-44: Robert was released from prison in 1940 but remained under police surveillance. They monitored his correspondence with a half-Jewish friend in Munich and with friends abroad. In 1942 Robert was arrested again under paragraph 175 and deported to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. There he was assigned an office job. On a forced march from the camp towards the Baltic in April 1945, 40-year-old Robert escaped with two other “175ers.”

After the war, Robert returned to Berlin, where he worked as a writer and composer. He died in 1985.



Name: Shulamit
Perlmutter
(Charlene Schiff)

Date of Birth: December 16, 1929

Place of Birth: Horochow, Poland

Shulamit, known as Musia, was the youngest of two daughters born to a Jewish family in the town of Horochow, 50 miles northeast of Lvov. Her father was a philosophy professor who taught at the university in Lvov, and both of her parents were civic leaders in Horochow. Shulamit began her education with private tutors at the age of 4.

1933-39: In September 1939 Germany invaded Poland, and three weeks later the Soviet Union occupied eastern Poland, where our town was located. Hordes of refugees fleeing the Germans streamed through our town. Soviet rule didn't change our lives very much. We remained in our home and Father continued to teach in Lvov. The most important change for me was at school; we were now taught in Russian.

1940-45: In 1941 the Germans invaded the USSR and set up a ghetto in Horochow. In 1942, with rumors that the ghetto was about to be destroyed, Mother and I fled. We had just hidden in the underbrush at the river's edge when we heard shots. We hid, submerged in the water, all night as machine guns blazed in the ghetto. By morning others were hiding in the brush and I heard a Ukrainian guard scream, "I see you there Jews; come out!" Most obeyed, but we hid in the water for several more days as the gunfire continued. Sometimes we would doze; once I woke to find Mother had vanished.

Shulamit never saw her mother again and never found out what happened to her. Shulamit spent the rest of the war living in the forests near Horochow. She is the only survivor of her family.



Stefania (Fusia)
Podgorska

Date of Birth: 1925
Place of Birth: Lipa, Poland

Stefania was born to a Catholic family in a village near Przemysl. They lived on a large farm and cultivated several different crops. While her father worked with the farmhands in the fields, Stefania's mother, a trained midwife, managed the house and cared for her eight children.

1933-39: My father died in 1938 after an illness. With my mother's approval, I joined my sister in Przemysl in 1939. At 14 I worked in a grocery store owned by the Diamants, a Jewish family. They treated me like family, and I moved in with them when the Germans invaded [Poland] on September 14, 1939. But two weeks later, the Soviets occupied the city [under the Nazi-Soviet Pact]. The grocery store stayed open; I shopped in the market for food to sell to our customers.

1940-44: The Germans again occupied the city in June 1941. Like all Jews in Przemysl, the Diamants were forced into a ghetto. My mother was sent to Germany for forced labor; I was 16 and left to care for my 6-year-old sister. I found us an apartment outside the ghetto and traded clothes for food. In 1942 news spread that the ghetto was being liquidated. I decided to help some Jews escape the final roundups by hiding them. I moved into a cottage for more space. Soon, 13 Jews were living in a secret space in my attic.

Przemysl was liberated on July 27, 1944. The Jews that 17-year-old Stefania helped to hide all survived the war. In 1961 she moved to the United States with Josef Diamant, whom she married.



Ruth Freund
Reiser

Date of Birth: April 11, 1926

Place of Birth: Prague,
Czechoslovakia

Ruth was a child of middle-class Jewish parents living in the Czechoslovakian capital of Prague, where her father worked as a bank clerk. As native Czechs, her parents considered themselves as much Czech as Jewish. In 1933 Ruth was in her second year at a public girls' secondary school.

1933-39: The Germans occupied Prague in March 1939 and imposed many restrictions. Jews were no longer allowed to attend school, so my education stopped at age 13. Jews had to surrender many of their possessions such as radios, bicycles, musical instruments, and pets. We weren't allowed to walk in certain streets, or to go to a park or a cinema, or use a bus or a street car. For me, normal life was at an end.

1940-44: I was deported to Auschwitz from the Theresienstadt ghetto in late 1944. Some weeks later I was selected for a labor transport. Wanting to be sure I'd get out of Auschwitz, I managed to stand near the front of the column of 1,000 women. Then a command of "Turn about!" dashed my hopes. I ended up at the back of the line with those to be gassed. Nobody slept that night as, expecting to be gassed, we waited in front of the crematorium. By a twist of fate, the next day I was put on another labor transport.

Ruth was deported to Lenzing, a subcamp of the Mauthausen concentration camp. Liberated by American troops, Ruth returned to Prague. She was the sole survivor of her family.



Dora Rivkina

Date of Birth: November 7, 1924

Place of Birth: Minsk, Belorussia

Dora was the second of three girls born to a Jewish family in Minsk, the capital of Belorussia. Before World War II, more than a third of the city was Jewish. Dora and her family lived on Novomesnitskaya Street in central Minsk. Dora's father worked in a state-owned factory building furniture.

1933-39: As a young girl, Dora was athletic and excelled at swimming and dancing. When she was in the second grade, she was chosen to dance the lead part in a New Year's performance. She was also a member of the Young Pioneers, a Soviet youth organization that held lectures on Soviet history, and also organized camping trips.

1940-43: The invading Germans reached Minsk in 1941 and Dora's family was ordered into the Minsk ghetto. In 1943, when the ghetto was emptied, 19-year-old Dora escaped from a transport and joined the partisans but the Germans soon captured her band. When the guards ordered them to identify any Jews, everyone remained silent at first. But after a guard threatened to shoot them all if they didn't speak, a woman pointed at Dora. The Germans bound Dora's hands, tied a rock around her neck, threw her in a river and shot her.

Some young girls who were in the partisan band later related the story of Dora's death to her sister, Berta, the only surviving member of Dora's family.



Max Rosenblat

Date of Birth: July 1939

Place of Birth: Radom, Poland

Max's parents, Taube and Itzik, first met as children in 1925. Taube was the daughter of a tailor who hired apprentices in his shop, and Itzik was one such apprentice. The Jewish youngsters fell in love and dreamed of getting married even though Taube's family frowned upon the match.

1933-39: In 1938 Taube and Itzik married. The couple lived in an apartment on 49 Zeromskiego Street in Radom, where Itzik opened a women's tailor shop. Max was born in July 1939. He had curly hair and blue eyes like his father. Two months after he was born, Germany invaded Poland. The Germans occupied Radom and evicted all the Jews from Zeromskiego Street. The Rosenblats had to leave everything, even Max's baby carriage.

1940-42: Radom's Jewish Council assigned the Rosenblats to a shack, which was enclosed in a Jewish ghetto in April 1941. Max slept in a homemade bed of straw. He had no toys and little food. In August 1942, when Max was 3, the Germans began rounding up and deporting all the Jews in Radom's two ghettos who could not work for them. Max's father tried to hide his family in his shop, but they were caught in a roundup and Max and his mother were taken away. They were marched to the railroad and herded into a boxcar.

In August 1942 Max and his mother were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp, where they were gassed upon arrival. Max was 3 years old.



Shulim Saleschutz

Date of Birth: March 7, 1930

Place of Birth: Kolbuszowa, Poland

Shulim was the oldest of three children born to religious Jewish parents living in Kolbuszowa, a town in south central Poland. His father owned a wholesale general store in town, and was known in the region for his impressive strength. Shulim's mother tended to the house and cared for him, his brother, Shlomo, and his sister, Rozia.

1933-39: When Shulim was 9, the Germans invaded Poland. Polish soldiers on horses tried to fight against the German army, but they were no match against the tanks. After the short battle, there were many dead horses in the streets. Shulim's father and his uncle Naftali were forced to help bury the horses. The Germans ordered that Jewish children could not go to school anymore. Shulim stayed at home with his mother, brother and sister.

1940-42: In July 1941 the Germans forced all the Jews of Kolbuszowa to live in one small section of town. Two of Shulim's grandparents, an uncle and two aunts moved in with his family, making their apartment very crowded. Shulim's twelfth birthday was a milestone—he now had to wear an armband with a Star of David like the other men. He felt proud, and asked his uncle Naftali to take a picture of him wearing the armband. Shulim was assigned to work details with the other men. He cleared snow and repaired the roads.

Shulim was deported to the Rzeszow ghetto on June 25, 1942, and then to the Belzec camp in July. There, Shulim was gassed with his mother, brother and sister. He was 12 years old.



Ceija Stojka

Date of Birth: 1933

Place of Birth: Kraubath bei
Knittelfeld, Austria

Ceija was the fifth of six children born to Roman Catholic Gypsy parents. The Stojka's family wagon traveled with a caravan that spent winters in the Austrian capital of Vienna and summers in the Austrian countryside. The Stojkas belonged to a tribe of Gypsies called the Lowara Roma, who made their living as itinerant horse traders.

1933-39: I grew up used to freedom, travel and hard work. Once, my father made me a skirt out of some material from a broken sunshade. I was 5 years old and our wagon was parked for the winter in a Vienna campground, when Germany annexed Austria [the Anschluss] in March 1938. The Germans ordered us to stay put. My parents had to convert our wagon into a wooden house, and we had to learn how to cook with an oven instead of on an open fire.

1940-44: Gypsies were forced to register as members of another "race." Our campground was fenced off and placed under police guard. I was 8 when the Germans took my father away; a few months later, my mother received his ashes in a box. Next, the Germans took my sister, Kathi. Finally, they deported all of us to a Nazi camp for Gypsies in Birkenau [Auschwitz]. We lived in the shadows of a smoking crematorium, and we called the path in front of our barracks the "highway to hell" because it led to the gas chambers.

Ceija was subsequently freed in the Bergen-Belsen camp in 1945. After the war, she documented and published Lowara Gypsy songs about the Holocaust.



Sophie Weisz

Date of Birth: February 23, 1927

Place of Birth: Valea-lui-Mihai,
Romania

Sophie was born to a prosperous Jewish family in a village near the Hungarian border known for its winemaking and carriage wheel industries. The village had many Jewish merchants. Her father owned a lumber yard. Sophie loved to dance in the large living room of their home as her older sister, Agnes, played the piano.

1933-39: My father believed in a Jewish homeland and sent money to Palestine to plant trees and establish settlements there. When I was 10, I was sent to a school in nearby Oradea because our village had only elementary schools. I missed my family, but studied hard, and swam and ice skated for fun. Though we heard about the roundups of Jews after the Germans invaded Poland in 1939, we felt safe in Romania.

1940-44: Hungary annexed our region in 1940; by mid-1941 they'd joined the German forces. We were forced into the Oradea ghetto in May 1944, and then deported to Auschwitz. In August my mother, sister and I were moved hundreds of miles north to Stutthof on the Baltic coast for forced labor. The prisoners were asked to entertain the German soldiers at Christmas; I danced to the music of the ballet Coppelia in a costume fashioned from gauze and paper. I earned extra food for this, and shared it with my sister Agnes.

Sophie and her sister escaped while on a forced march in February 1945. Her mother and father perished in the camps. In February 1949 Sophie emigrated to the United States.



Paula Wajcman

Date of Birth: 1928

Place of Birth: Kielce, Poland

Paula was raised in a religious Jewish family in Kielce, a city in the southeast of Poland. Her family lived in a modern two-story apartment complex. Paula's father owned the only trucking company in the district. Her older brother, Herman, attended religious school, while Paula attended public kindergarten in the morning and religious school in the afternoon.

1933-39: Paula's school uniform was a navy blazer with a white blouse and pleated skirt. At age 9, she did the "Krakowiak" dance at school. Boys flirted with her when her overprotective brother was not around. Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Paula's father did not wait for German troops to reach Kielce. He loaded one of his trucks, and the family fled east to the town of Tuchin, 30 miles from the Soviet border.

1940-44: Paula's mother, returning to Kielce for supplies, was stranded when the border dividing Poland closed. German forces occupied Tuchin on July 4, 1941. Hearing that Jews nearby had been massacred, the family built a bunker under the wooden floor of the textile factory where they worked. They knew that the pits the Germans and Ukrainians were digging were intended for them. At dawn on September 24, 1942, police moved into the ghetto. People set fires everywhere. In the chaos, Paula and her father ran to the bunker.

The bunker was discovered by the Germans, and Paula and her father were shot. She was 14 years old.



Joseph von
Hoppen
Waldhorn

Date of Birth: November 14, 1930

Place of Birth: Paris, France

Joseph was the youngest of three children born to immigrant Jewish parents. His Polish-born father was a former officer in the Austro-Hungarian army who had met and married Joseph's Hungarian-born mother during World War I. Joseph was raised in a religious household and grew up speaking French.

1933-39: My mother says it's better here in Paris than in the poor village where she grew up. Unlike my mother, who speaks broken French, my older sisters and I have grown up speaking French fluently. I attend a special public school funded by the Rothschild family. My father says that the terrible things happening to Jews in Germany won't happen to us here.

1940-44: I've fled Paris and am staying with the sister of a friend who is letting me hide on her farm in Sees in western France. About a year ago, when I was 9, German troops occupied Paris. At first, I wasn't in danger. Unlike my foreign-born parents who were subject to being immediately deported, I was a French citizen. I fled Paris after the Germans deported my father in 1941. I have false papers; my new name is Georges Guerin. My sisters also have false identities and have gotten office jobs in nearby Alencon.

Joseph's sisters in Alencon were discovered and arrested. Joseph managed to remain concealed until the end of the war, and emigrated to the United States in 1949.