

The Holocaust Survivors Project

www.theholocaustsurvivorsproject.org

THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS PROJECT

October 2014

My name is Alex Roberts and my Eagle Project is the creation of a Holocaust Memorial to honor the Survivors of Monmouth County, New Jersey and to combat Holocaust denial. This Memorial will be initially displayed at the Jewish Federation of Greater Monmouth County and will travel to schools, religious institutions and museums to create awareness and to educate the community young and old about the importance of never forgetting the Holocaust.

I want to sincerely thank everyone who made this project possible!

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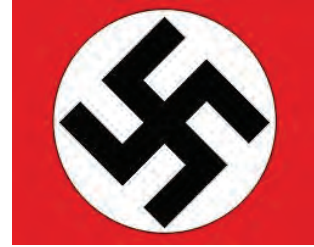
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Information has been obtained from websites of
the following organizations along with selected other sources:
JewishGen, Jewish Virtual Library, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,
Yad Vashem, Aktion Reinhard Camps and the Holocaust Research Project.
Facts and information may differ depending upon the source.

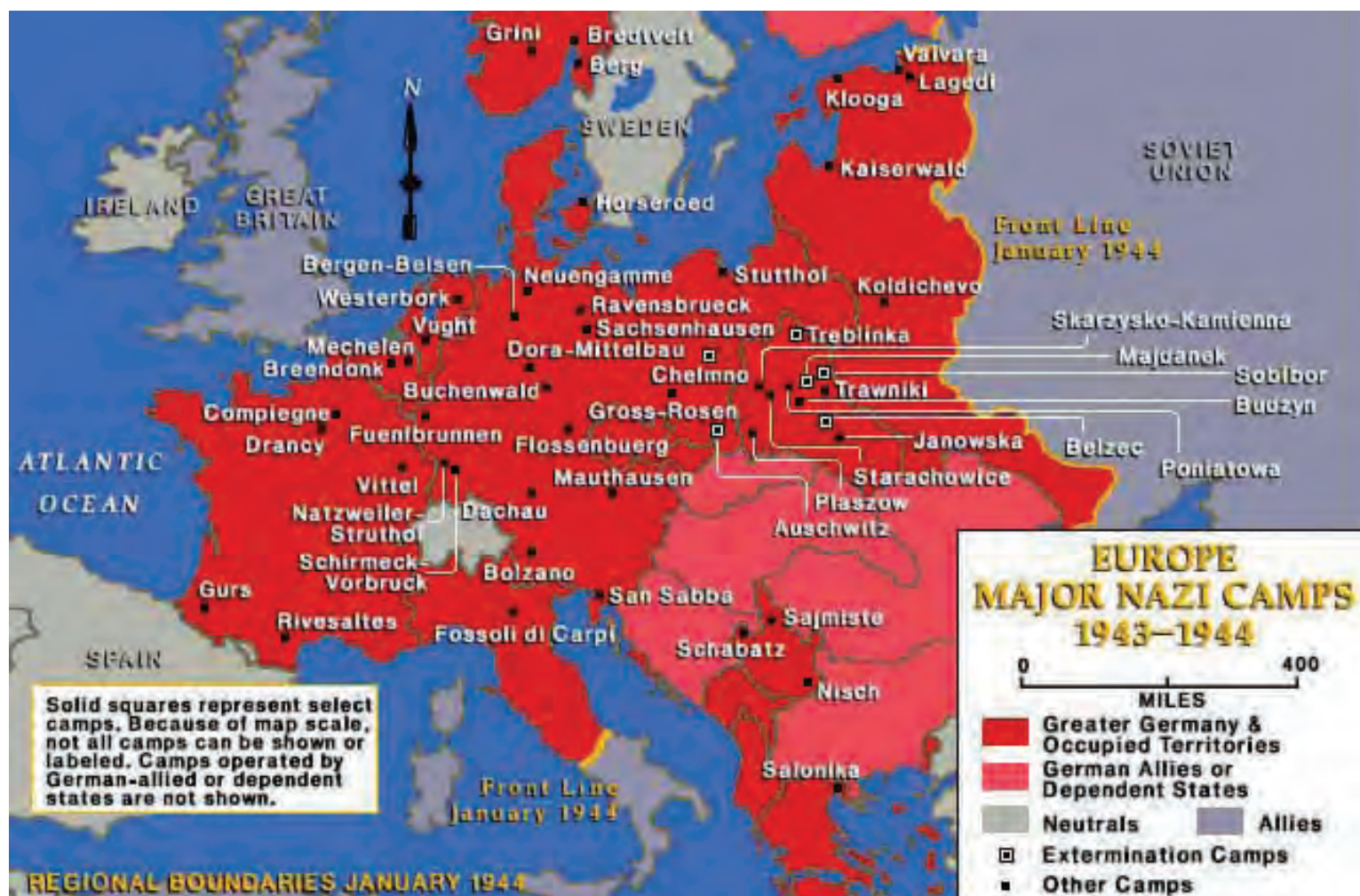




Important Dates



January 30, 1933	Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany
March 22, 1933	Dachau, the first concentration camp, is opened
March 23, 1933	Enabling Act is passed, giving Hitler absolute power
September 15, 1935	First of the Nuremberg Laws is published, taking rights away from Jews and forbidding marriage between Jews and "Aryans"
November 9-10, 1938	Kristallnacht: Also known as "Night of Broken Glass," Nazi-in stigated rampage against Jewish shops in Germany and Austria ends with the arrest of over 30,000 Jews and destruction of their homes and businesses
September 1, 1939	German invasion of Poland starts WWII
January 1940	The Nazis begin a program of gassing the mentally disabled in Germany
June 14, 1940	Auschwitz concentration camp is opened in Poland as a prison for Poles and an outstation for colonization of the East
June 22, 1941	The Germans and their allies invade the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa. SS units known as Einsatzgruppen are ordered to follow the advancing armies and kill all Soviet Jews
September 3, 1941	First gassings with Zyklon-B at Auschwitz
September 28-30, 1941	Over 33,000 Soviet Jews are massacred and buried in a mass grave at Babi Yar, outside Kiev, Ukraine
January 20, 1942	Wannsee Conference discusses the "Final Solution"
November 3, 1943	Operation Harvest Festival: 18,000-40,000 Jews at Majdanek concentration camp are massacred
November 29, 1944	Last gassings at Auschwitz; camp is ordered to be evacuated on January 19, 1945
January 27, 1945	Auschwitz is liberated by Russians
April 30, 1945	Hitler commits suicide in his Berlin bunker
May 5-8, 1945	Mauthausen and its satellites, the last remaining concentration camp, is liberated by the U.S.
May 8, 1945	Allies accept Germany's unconditional surrender
November 20, 1945- October 1, 1946	War criminals are tried at Nuremberg



A Story of Survival

Claire Boren



The couple on the right are Claire's parents.



Claire and her Sister Bina.

Thousands of Jewish families survived the war in hiding. Sometimes helped by people who put their own lives at risk. At times hiding in the forest, Claire Boren is one of those survivors. She was born in Poland in the town of Mizocz which had a mostly Jewish population of about 2000. She lived with her parents and an aunt, uncle and cousins. Her grandmother and other relatives also lived on the same property. Sometime in 1941 or 42 all the Jews were rounded up and confined in a ghetto in their village. Her most vivid memory at that time was witnessing a public hanging in the town square of Jewish men.

Her father, realizing the growing danger, paid for the whole family to go into hiding with a Christian family. Fortunately, the peasant man warned them that they had to go into hiding immediately that day. That was the last time Claire ever saw her father. Claire and her mother left, but her father stayed behind. The very next day, on Oct. 13, 1942, the ghetto of Mizocz was liquidated. The Jews were either shot or deported to concentration camps. The town of Mizocz, which had existed for 500 years was destroyed in two days. Unfortunately, after several weeks, the peasant fearing for his own safety, told Claire and her mother they had to leave.

After leaving their safe hiding place, while walking on a road Claire's mother saw two farms, one more prosperous than the other and chose the poorer looking farm to ask for shelter. This family of poor religious Christians agreed to hide the two strangers. They dug a hole on their farm under a pig sty about the size of a coffin, just large enough to hold the mother and child. They stayed there day and night, day after day, holding on to each other and waiting for food to be lowered to them at night.

Of course, it was pitch black all the time. At first her mother kept Claire occupied by telling her stories from books and memories. In this black hole, Claire couldn't tell day from night. When she slept her mother was awake and when her mother was sleeping she was awake. She retreated into an imaginary world and lost all touch

with reality. In this disoriented condition, the peasant told her mother that Claire must be possessed by the devil and should be killed. Her mother realized they had to leave that hole and the constant darkness if Claire was to survive. Desperately, she took Claire to another village where she knew someone and Claire was able to play with other children which allowed her to recover. Since Claire spoke fluent Polish and did not look Jewish, she could be out in the open, while her mother had to stay hidden.

Some time later, they learned that there was a group of Jews hiding in the forest nearby. They joined this group which included her uncle and two cousins. They stayed in the forest for several months without any shelter, living on berries and mushrooms. The local Ukrainian and Polish population would come into the woods to find and expose Jews to the Germans. Before long, the whole group was killed, except for Claire and her mother.

At this point, her mother decided to return to their house in Mizocz to try and find some money and jewelry that had been hidden in the back yard and which she planned to use to pay someone to hide them. She left Claire in a shed near their old home while she dug up the money. While this was happening the Allies were shelling and bombing the area and Claire, hidden in a dark shed alone, was terrified that her mother wouldn't return. Imagine, at the age of five she was trying to make a plan of what she would do if her mother didn't come back. When her mother did return with some money, a silver cigarette case and her grandmothers earrings they were able to find someone to hide them until the Russians liberated the area.

This was in the Spring of 1944. Finally, rescued, they were able to get to a nearby town where all the survivors were gathering. Being Polish citizens they were allowed to leave the area to return to Poland. Next they went to Germany to stay with other refugees in a Displaced Person camp. While living in the DP camp, Claire's mother remarried and her sister Bina was born. The family stayed there about 3 years, waiting to emigrate to United States when her mother found a cousin living here.

The one thing Claire says sustained her and gave her the will to survive was that she was never separated from her mother again. Her mother is the true heroine and never gave up hope for them both. This amazing woman just celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends and photos show she is still strong and beautiful. When asked how these experiences during the Holocaust influenced her life, Claire shared that it affects who you become and what you believe. Her message to future generations is, "Always remember that prejudice and hatred must be stopped whenever and wherever they occur. We must all try to do the right thing and cry out whenever you see injustice and other people persecuted. You must not stay silent."

As an accomplished and recognized visual artist, she believes that her art reflects her past experiences and memories that will stay with her forever. They are plainly in view on the walls in museums and in her beautiful home which she shared with her remarkable late husband Adam, who survived Auschwitz and went on to become a successful entrepreneur in America. Together they built a life of close family, community and philanthropy.



*Sitting from left Claire and her Mother Anne.
Standing from left to right Niece Danyel, Sister Bina,
Daughter Sari, Nephew Ari and Brother-in-Law Ira.*

A Story of Survival

Israel Ira Lulinski



Israel Ira Lulinski and the Memorial to the Jewish Population of Miory murdered by German Troops

Israel Ira Lulinski was born in 1935 in a small village of Miory in Poland and grew up with very few comforts. His family was also part of small, tight Jewish community which has been living there for hundreds of years.

Then, his life changed when the German Army invaded. The town's Jewish population was forced to leave their homes and move into a crowded ghetto. Anything of value was confiscated. What was most horrifying was that almost all his non-Jewish neighbors turned on him and his community, collaborating actively with the Nazi occupation.

Then, on June 2, 1942, the "catastrophe" arrived for six-year old Israel. The ghetto was evacuated, and its inhabitants were taken to an open field for a "census" they were told. They were told to undress and then told to walk across a plank that stretched across a huge ditch that had been dug earlier. Men, women and children were then shot by German soldiers and fell dead into the ditch. Ira watched his mother and his brothers executed in front of his eyes. This scene is etched in his memory for the rest of his life.

As the moment of death approached for Israel and his father, they along with others made a break for the woods with Germans firing at them as they ran half-naked. Only about twenty-five people out of a community of over a thousand survived. The forest was cold place with the ground having layer of permafrost, even during the summer. With no clothing, food or shelter, survival was very difficult for adult men but even more so for a young boy. He and his father actually lived in an igloo that they built to protect themselves from the sub-zero winter.

Eventually, Israel and his father joined a group of Russian partisans called "Sazikinis." His childhood consisted of ambushing German garrisons and transports; payback for the atrocity which had been done to his family. Eventually, his unit allied with the Soviet Army and was able to receive medication and ammunition.

After the war, then ten-year old Israel was eligible to attend the Soviet Military academy. However, he and his father saw no future in Europe for them after the Holocaust. They initially attempted to go to Israel but instead immigrated to the United States joining family in Newark, New Jersey. He married his wife Libby and had three daughters along with many grandchildren. He built a successful business, Summit Steel Corporation, and now has homes in both Cranford and West End, New Jersey. Despite atrocities committed upon his family, he remains a deeply religious man and is a member of several synagogues, including Chabad of the Shore.

The scene of death and destruction from his childhood still haunts Israel. He remains deeply committed to preserving the memory of what happened and has built a memorial marking the site where German troops liquidated the Jewish community of Miory and later built a wrought iron fence surrounding the field.

When asked what message he would like to leave those who visit this exhibit, he says

"Without rancor or anger, avoid the prejudices that brought about events like the Holocaust."



We thank G-d for each other and for all our blessings.
Israel Ira Lulinski and his wife Libby.



Left to Right; Gabrielle, Isaac, Daughter Caron, Benjamin, Judah, Son-in-Law Michael, Daughter Sheri, Son-in-Law Marc, Matthew, Joseph, Allyson, Libby, Israel, Eliana, Zachary, Daughter Pearla and Not Pictured Son-in-Law Norman.

וְעֶטְרַת זָקִימִים, בְּנֵי בָנִים;
וְתִפְאֶרֶת בָּנִים אֲבוֹתָם.
& Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

A Story of Survival

Ruth Millman



Leaving the Displaced Persons Camp for the USA. Pictured from Left Right; Ruth's Mother Celina, Sister Lucia, Little Ruth and Father Peter.

Ruth Millman was born on July 16, 1938 to Peter and Celina Iberkleijd in Warsaw, Poland. Ruth resided in Warsaw with her parents and elder sister of ten years, Lucia and grew up surrounded by her extended family of 80 people; the family was very close. Peter Iberkleijd owned three textile mills in Poland and his family enjoyed a life of luxury. Ruth's life changed when Hitler and his army invaded Warsaw, Poland in the fall of 1939. The Iberkleijd family watched in horror as the Nazi troops took over their homeland. After seeing his extended family forced to go to the ghetto, Peter Iberkleijd took his wife and two daughters and went into hiding in the attic of one of his textile mills. Two weeks later, they were discovered and sent to the Warsaw Ghetto in 1941. Ruth and her family were forced to live in and share a small apartment with another family in the ghetto. Ruth was three years old at the time. Ruth grew accustomed to a life without school, with little food and with an environment filled with dead bodies. For Ruth, it was normal to see innocent people being badly beaten or murdered by the Nazis.

Ruth's grandparents were told that they were going to be taken to a place with larger apartments that would provide them with greater comfort. Ruth later found out that her grandparents were among the first people to be murdered at Auschwitz. Peter and Celina Iberkleijd were ingenious. They had hidden emeralds, diamonds, and gold on their bodies in the ghetto. Peter Iberkleijd knew that if his family remained in the ghetto they would not survive. He was innovative and used the jewels to bribe Nazi officers in the ghetto to allow his family to escape in 1942. Peter Iberkleijd was dark skinned and had dark eyes and hair. He did not have the characteristics of Hitler's Aryan race. Peter, therefore, hid in the four-foot basement of a Christian home. Ruth's sister, Lucia was sent to a convent. Ruth and her mother Celina were fair skinned and had blue eyes. It was arranged that a Christian man would be paid to marry Celina for 3-4 months. The marriage would appear to be legitimate in the state of Poland. Ruth went with her mother and Ruth's name was changed to Theresa. Ruth attended church every day and was told that she was not Jewish. After the 3-4 months, Ruth and her mother were on their own. They lived off of the streets of Poland stealing food from food carts and resting their heads wherever they could find space. It was not long before the two were caught by the Nazis and sent to the Lintz Labor Camp in 1943. At the camp, Ruth's mother worked eighteen hours a day making ammunition for the Germans. Ruth and her mother had bread and water for breakfast, soup for lunch and bread and water again for dinner. Ruth soon became very ill. Ruth's mother went to a Nazi officer and pleaded for medication to relieve her child. The officer refused. This refusal did not stop Ruth's mother. During a bombardment at the camp, Ruth's mother and four other women stole sheets and blankets. They wrapped Ruth in the blankets. Celina and the four women then ran the bundled Ruth out of a hole in the fence of the labor camp.

Celina and Ruth jumped on a nearby train without knowing its intended destination. On the train, they met a priest who gave them food. The train stopped in Riccione, Italy, a fascist country at the time. Celina spoke five different languages including Russian and pretended to be the wife of a man in the Russian Army to the people of the town. Ruth and her mother then migrated to the mountains where they lived with fifty or sixty people in 1944. There was a great sense of camaraderie in the mountains. Ruth and her mother felt safe for the first time. The two stayed in the mountains until the end of the war. The Americans invaded Riccione and threw Hershey bars, nylon stockings and cans of peaches into the air while shouting that the war was over. Ruth and her mother went to The American Red Cross that was stationed in Poland. The Red Cross maintained a list of the deceased. They learned that Celina's siblings and parents had been murdered, but that Peter and Lucia Iberkleijd were alive and in Lodge at the conclusion of the war. The Red Cross took Ruth and her mother to them. The Iberkleijd family had a wonderful reunion and were grateful to all be alive. Peter Iberkleijd did not want his family to stay in Poland and applied for a Visa. His application was denied. The Iron Curtain had fallen, but that did not stop Peter. He hired an ambulance to hide his family (not inside but underneath the ambulance) as they moved across boundaries from Poland to East Germany and finally to West Germany. In West Germany, the family stayed at a Displaced Persons Camp. Peter had a friend who lived on Broadway in New York. Peter wrote to him and received a reply of aid. The Iberkleijds soon set out for their 14-day journey at sea to New York. There, Peter's friend greeted the family and soon after helped them to find a home.

The Iberkleijd family resided on Riverside and 96th Street in New York, NY. Ruth was sent to school for the first time at the age of 10. Ruth's school experience was traumatic; she did not speak English. After two years of school and tutors Ruth caught up to the other children in her grade. Eventually Ruth and her family moved out of New York to Asbury Park, New Jersey. In Asbury Park, Peter Iberkleijd opened a textile mill. It was in Asbury Park where Ruth was informed that her real name was not Theresa and that she was not Catholic, but Jewish. After seeing the conflagration, the Holocaust, Ruth resisted her Jewish identity. Over time, Ruth grew to appreciate and take pride in her religion and faith. When asked what message she would like to leave those who visit this exhibit, Ruth stated that we as Jews whose blood is not shed in Israel have no right to judge what Israeli policies are. Ruth believes that if there had been an Israel during the Holocaust someone would have stood up for the Jewish people. Every person, every country turned a blind eye. Ruth says that "if you see someone in trouble, help."



Ruth's family, sitting left to right; Debbie, Valerie, Alexandra, Deborah, Jack, Ruth, Owen, (Andie not born yet), Jennine and Paul. Standing left to right Sophie, Todd and Dan.

A Story of Survival

Ruth Rosenfeld



My sister Helen and me among the children leaving Prague for an orphanage in France .Our uncle found us through this picture.

Ruth Rosenfeld, a resident of Monmouth County, NJ, has an absolutely touching story about her childhood in Europe during World War II. Many stories from survivors leave you pondering the great evil that mankind is capable of. However, Ruth Rosenfeld makes you also consider the strength of human kindness. Among the darkest moments of human history, there were unrecognized heroes who risked their lives and the lives of their families with acts of morality to save victims of the Nazis.

In November 1940, Rosenfeld was born into an already Nazi infested Poland. Both of her grandparents were very religious. Her parents were part of the Zionist movement and her father was a communist. Ruth explained that communism didn't have the radical connotation that it is associated with today but was an "idealistic movement." The family of nine lived in the Wadowice ghetto in two rooms and a kitchen. Her father was forced into slave labor. Meanwhile, her mother used her skills to organize a class to teach young girls how to sew. The conditions were clearly awful. When the ghetto was liquidated in 1943, the majority of her family, including her mother, grandparents, aunt and uncle, were sent in crowded trains to Auschwitz. Meanwhile Rosenfeld's father hid her and her sister, Helen, in

an attic. Although she was young and her memory is vague, Ruth can vividly remember being in a "small, dark, hot place."

Her father crept out of the attic with Ruth and her sister and sought out a Communist friend, asking for her help to hide them. This righteous Christian woman took them in and tried to help them escape on a train to Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately, things didn't work out well. On the train the girls sat with the innkeeper, separate from their father. At one of the stops, a Nazi soldier from Wadowice recognized Ruth's father as a Jew and took him off the train, shot and killed him. The Innkeeper took the two girls back to her inn and continued to hide them. Ruth remembers on several occasions having to rush down to the cold cellar because the Nazis suspected that the innkeeper was hiding Jews. She was hidden in large wooden barrels, covered with seeds, while the Nazis poked their rifles in the barrel checking for hidden Jews.

Although the innkeeper kept the girls for a while, she realized that if they stayed with her they would be caught and they would all surely be killed. It was for that reason that she contacted Julia and Anna, two sisters who lived in the small village of Buczkowice, Poland. The women took the girls in claiming they were their nieces from a bombed village. The girls lived on this farm tending goats and taking care of geese until the war was over. After the war, a Zionist organization took Ruth's sister from her Christian family leaving Ruth behind because they didn't realize that she was there. Her sister, Helen, would not stop crying until they went back to find her sister. Ruth remembers the joy of seeing her sister again, knowing they needed each other for survival.

The girls were smuggled out of Poland to Prague along with other children who had survived the war. After a few weeks, they were sent to orphanages in France. Ruth's sister contracted tuberculosis and was taken care of in a sanatorium where she learned French from the nuns that were in charge of her care. The girls were malnourished and their skin was cracked with frost bite from staying in the Alps. It was at this point Eleanor and Sam Banker came from America to the orphanage with the intention of adopting Holocaust survivors. In September, 1949, Ruth and Helen arrived in America with their future adopted mother, Eleanor Banker. The entire community was ecstatic to meet the "two little French girls." Ruth and Helen had no information as to who they were or where they came from until after they were married. All they knew is that they had been through the worst. An uncle who had escaped to Russia and was now living in Israel was trying to track the girls down and would not give up his search. From a picture in the book *My 100 Children* by Lena Silberman, their uncle was able to find them. Most of what she knows about her family's previous life has come from this uncle.

Ruth claims that her experiences have made her extremely "adaptable" to changes and that she looks for the best in things. At the end of the interview Ruth Rosenfeld was asked for any final thoughts. Rosenfeld wanted to emphasize "*the corrosive and destructive force of hate.*" She wants those who hear her story to know that hate is never acceptable and that we need to recognize the humanity in each of us. She also claimed that "*little acts of kindness mean quite enough.*"

Through all of the tragedy, Rosenfeld appreciates the fact that she would not have survived without the generosity of others. Although she cannot find the name of the Innkeeper that saved her and her sister's lives, she was able to successfully express her gratitude by having Julia recognized as a "khassidey umot ha-olam" or "Righteous Among the Nations." The thought that good can be found even in the most treacherous of environments is enough to instill faith in us all.

Nowadays Ruth is married and lives a few blocks from Helen. They remain extremely close after their experiences together proving the strength that comes with love and familiar ties. She was able to go to Poland to get firsthand experience in investigating her roots and to meet all the people that saved her when she was a child. It was amazing to hear Rosenfeld's story and we are all so lucky to learn the lessons that are associated with it.



Ruth's Family: Standing left right, Aaron, Daniel, Michael, Jinni, Ellie. Sitting in center; Gerry, Ruth. On the ground; Judy, holding Evan and Ezra.

The Parents of Anita Raboi



From the left; Anita's sister Susan, Father Pinchas, Anita and Mother Clara.

Anita Raboi's parents, Clara and Pinchas Reif, from Chernovitz, Romania, used extraordinary means to avoid extermination in the Holocaust. Freedom didn't come to them after the war, as they ended up back in Communist Romania. There, they continued to be persecuted. They only achieved freedom 20 years after the war ended.

As a child, Anita's mother Clara Spirer became fluent in German, Yiddish and Hebrew. She later became a seamstress. Two of Clara's sisters went to Palestine around the beginning of the war, joining a Zionist organization and learning how to work the land. Clara had two brothers who perished in the Holocaust. One of the brothers left behind his two children, who later went to Palestine and started Kibbutz Rosh Hannikra. Tragically, almost all of the Spirer extended family was murdered by the Nazis. Anita never knew her grandparents or most of her other relatives.

Anita's father Pinchas came from a family of eight siblings. He was forced to deal with the death of both of his parents at an early age, becoming an orphan at the age of sixteen. Knowing that he had to make a life for himself, he became a locksmith, while many of his younger siblings were brought to live in the local orphanages. Anita believes that Pinchas' younger orphaned siblings were taken by the Russians to work in labor camps in a coal mine.

Clara and Pinchas were introduced when Pinchas stayed in a room and board at Clara's parents home. They were married shortly before the war and had a son in 1941. Now feeling the threat of the Nazi's, the Reif family took refuge in the house of an affluent family whose wife hid the family to help avoid them being taken to a camp. For a period of time, Pinchas was able to pass as a German because he was able to speak fluent German, in addition to his blonde hair and blue eyes. This arrangement continued until the situation became too perilous for the matriarch of the family when Pinchas lost his job. They were finally found and taken to Transnistria labor camp, which was later liberated by the Russians.

After liberation, they ran away, in an attempt to distance themselves from the Russians and Communism, hoping to go to Israel. Anita was just a baby when this happened. The Reifs made it to the Romanian border, but, it was closed, never giving them the opportunity to leave for many years to come. When Anita was about three, her brother died in a freak accident. Life in Romania was very hard and devastating for her parents. Anita never had a social life with other children and there were very few Jewish children left. The only way to leave the country was during certain small time frames where families could claim that they desired to join with other family. Pinchas applied for his family to go to Israel in 1949 and 1953, but was denied. In 1964, after first arriving in Italy for four months awaiting their visas, Anita and her family finally came to the United States when she was 19 years old.

The Reif family then settled in Michigan where Pinchas' brother was residing. Pinchas began by working with his brother who sent money to help other family members get out of Romania. Anita attended school at the International Institute where she learned English and received a job as a lab technician at the age of twenty.

Anita would like those who visit this exhibit to know that she admires everybody's strength, zest for life and for raising and educating their families.



Anita and her Grandchildren. Standing from left to right; Sarah, Anita and Jacob. Sitting from left to right are Jared and Aaron.

The Family of Carl Gross



*Mordecai Dov, Etel, and their six children.
The three oldest siblings survived. In the back row from the left is
Hershe (Carl's Father), Joseph Meir (Nissim's Father) and Hana.*

Only some of Carl Gross's family were able to avoid annihilation at the hands of the Nazis. Before the war began, Carl's family was living separately. His grandparents, Mordecai Dov and Etel, were living in a Lithuanian shtetl known as Abel. They resided in a modest, religious home with the three youngest of their six children. The older three had already left Lithuania to emigrate to the Americas. Carl's father Harry, the second son, lived in Brooklyn, New York with his Uncle Joe and then moved to Freehold, New Jersey around 1938.

Mordecai Dov, Carl's grandfather, died in 1928 in a small hospital in Panevitz. He was there delivering hay when he fell off of his wagon and broke his neck. Having lost her husband, Etel was left alone in Lithuania with her three youngest children.

In 1941, the slaughter began. Abel had a small Jewish community of over 600 people. With the help of non-Jewish townspeople, the Nazis rounded all of Abel's Jews together. They were marched six kilometers to a hill in the woods where they were demanded to dig their own grave. Then were then forced to strip and all the Jews were shot and killed, including Etel and her three children.

Thankfully, the two sons and one daughter in America were safe and could continue to remember the family and the tragedy in Abel. Carl's father Harry married Ruth and had two children. Carl visited Abel five times over the years. His first trip was with his parents in 1980. Carl later returned with Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz for the dedication of the restoration of the cemetery.

He again returned with his cousin Nissim Greisas, whose father had also survived, and another trip which included Carl's brother David and Wife Marina. On his most recent trip about four years ago with his wife Mary and son Zac, they visited the Jewish cemetery. Carl was shocked by the state of disrepair at the memorial site and the desecration of the mass grave.

Carl believes that the Holocaust and the slaughter of Jewish families like his own are bound to happen again. He says that intolerance for Jews will always exist and that we should be mindful of this. Through his experience, Carl has concluded that something like the Holocaust could definitely happen again and we must never forget.



*In the back row are, from left to right: Mary Gross (wife of Carl Gross), David Gross (son of Ruth Gross), Michael Prashad (son of David Gross), Carl Gross (son of Ruth Gross), Zachary Gross (son of Carl & Mary). In the front, from left to right: Helena Martone (mother of Mary Gross), seated on scooter – Ruth Gross (matriarch of the Gross family – mother of David and Carl).
The occasion was the graduation of Zachary Gross from Suffolk Law School, May 2013.*

The Family of Pastor Jackie Burgess



The Hadamar Mental Institution where killings of disabled people took place.

Through family history and lore, Pastor Jackie Burgess describes the stigma of mental illness in her family and the attempts to hide it. The true tragedy is that many families experience this. Pastor Jackie believes that members of her extended family had to bear the systematic murder of less perfect family members, but could not protest for fear of further Nazi horrors inflicted on her family.

In January of 1934, Adolf Hitler called for a group of people to be removed from society, but it wasn't for religious beliefs. The group was the mentally and physically disabled. That January, the Nazis started the forced sterilization of the so called "feeble-minded" (people with epilepsy or schizophrenia). The Catholic Church openly opposed this practice, but they had no success. Hitler thought the sterilization method was a too slow and ineffective a solution to the "problem."

In October of 1939, Hitler initiated a decree for physicians to grant "mercy of death" to patients considered "incurable of their state of health." So began the cleansing of the Aryan race, codenamed operation T-4, after the place the officers met. Physicians would make reviews of patient's records and mark the records with a red "+" to mean "unworthy of life". Those who were marked with a red+ were schizophrenics, epileptics, alcoholics, homosexuals and other various diagnoses.

These people were transferred to different facilities without the family's knowledge. Then all things of value (jewelry, gold teeth, etc.) were removed. Finally, they would be "euthanized." At first they were executed either by lethal injection or shooting, but in 1940 at the advice of Dr. Werner Heyde, Hitler had six gas chambers built disguised as showers (the first prototypes of the ones used in Poland). After they were injected or gassed, death certificates were falsified to read natural causes and the bodies were burned. Records indicate that 70,273 people were gassed and about 200,000 people in total were killed in the T-4 program.



Cemetery at Hadamar where victims of "euthanasia" at the Hadamar "euthanasia" killing center were buried. This photograph was taken toward the end of the war.

In August of 1941, after much pressure from the public and the church, Hitler halted the program. The gas chambers were dissembled and sent to concentration camps where similar systems had been set up. The physicians from the T-4 program were sent to "weed out" those too ill to work from concentration camps.

This is what I know of the T-4 program. Since there were no survivors of this program and the officers were sworn to secrecy, all else is inferred. I come from a family who is said to have a statistically higher chance of addiction, depression and other mental disabilities. Most of my family left Germany before or during World War I but some did not leave. I believe that some of my family members were eliminated through this program. Unfortunately, we have lost contact and records of those who stayed in Germany during World War II.

"I believe this is something our nation needs to remember because the fear of persecution for one who is different lasts to this day."



Hartheim Castle, a "euthanasia" killing center where the physically and mentally disabled were killed by gassing and lethal injection.

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Attn: Finance Director

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South River, NJ 08882

(732) 588-1800

info@jewishheartnj.org

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