Holocaust Education Week has changed the focus of Holocaust education in the State of Florida. Along with the changes in Holocaust standards that will take effect in the 2023-2024 school year, teachers from grades 5-12 will need to address Holocaust education during Holocaust Education Week. This resource is for all teachers. Based upon the new standards, the focus is on antisemitism, a common theme throughout. In this resource you will find age-appropriate resources, testimonies from local survivors for use with secondary students, and other resources that are from the Commissioner of Education’s Task Force on Holocaust Education. These resources are meant to address topics in multiple contents including social studies, English language arts and the arts.

GOALS OF FLORIDA STATE STANDARDS FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION:

Overall Goal
◆ Students will explore age-appropriate resources to define and discuss antisemitism and the ramifications of the actions that led to the Holocaust.

Elementary
◆ Students will be able to define “antisemitism,” give examples of antisemitism and explore ways to be an upstander encouraging tolerance and kindness.

Middle
◆ Students will explain the Holocaust as the planned and systematic state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.
◆ Students will examine the basic beliefs and origins of Judaism, then explore how prejudice, racism and stereotyping define antisemitism.
◆ Students will explore ways people can be responsible and respectful, encourage tolerance in a pluralistic society to nurture and protect democratic values and institutions.

High
◆ Students will define “antisemitism” and analyze examples of past and current antisemitism and the ramifications of such actions.
◆ Students will explain the Holocaust as the most extreme example of antisemitism and discuss how current and future generations can use testimonies, resources from the liberations of concentration camps and Nuremberg Trials to foster civility now and in the future.

REQUIRED INSTRUCTION:
http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.42.html
1003.42 Required instruction
(g)1. The history of the Holocaust (1933-1945), the systematic, planned annihilation of European Jews and other groups by Nazi Germany, a watershed event in the history of humanity, to be taught in a manner that leads to an investigation of human behavior, an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, and an examination of what it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions, including the policy, definition, and historical and current examples of antisemitism, as described in s. 1000.05(7), and the prevention of antisemitism. Each school district must annually certify and provide evidence to the department, in a manner prescribed by the department, that the requirements of this paragraph are met. The department shall prepare and offer standards and curriculum for the instruction required by this paragraph and may seek input from the Commissioner of Education’s Task Force on Holocaust Education or from any state or nationally recognized Holocaust educational organizations. The department may contract with any state or nationally recognized Holocaust educational organizations to develop training for instructional personnel and grade-appropriate classroom resources to support the developed curriculum.

2. The second week in November shall be designated as “Holocaust Education Week” in this state in recognition that November is the anniversary of Kristallnacht, widely recognized as a precipitating event that led to the Holocaust.
Elementary

SS.5.HE.1.1

Define the Holocaust as the planned and systematic state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

- Students will define antisemitism as prejudice against or hatred of the Jewish people.
- Students will recognize the Holocaust as history’s most extreme example of antisemitism.
- Students will identify examples of antisemitism (e.g., calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews).

Middle

SS.68.HE.1.1

Examine the Holocaust as the planned and systematic state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

- Students will describe the basic beliefs of Judaism and trace the origins and history of Jews in Europe.
- Students will analyze how antisemitism led to and contributed to the Holocaust.
- Students will identify examples of antisemitism (e.g., making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing or stereotypical allegations about Jews; demonizing Israel by using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism to characterize Israel or Israelis).

High

AMERICAN HISTORY

SS.912.A6.3

Analyze the impact of the Holocaust during World War II on Jews as well as other groups.

- Students will examine how America and other countries responded to the Holocaust.
- Students will examine what programs (if any) in the United States were in place to help Jews and other targeted groups during the Holocaust.

HOLOCAUST HISTORY

SS.912.HE.2.1

Define the Holocaust as the planned and systematic state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

- Students will explain why the Holocaust is history’s most extreme example of antisemitism.

SS.912.HE.2.14

Explain the purpose of the death marches.

- Students will recognize death marches as the forcible movement of prisoners by Nazis with the dual purpose of removing evidence and murdering as many people as possible (toward the end of World War II and the Holocaust) from Eastern Europe to Germany proper.

SS.912.HE.2.15

Describe the experience of Holocaust survivors following World War II.

- Students will explain how Allied Forces liberated camps, including the relocation and treatment of the survivors.
- Students will discuss the experiences of survivors after liberation (e.g., repatriations, displaced persons camps, pogroms, relocation).
- Students will explain the various ways that Holocaust survivors lived through the state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators (e.g., became partisans, escaped from Nazi controlled territory, went into hiding).
- Students will describe the psychological and physical struggles of Holocaust survivors.
- Students will examine the settlement patterns of Holocaust survivors after World War II, including immigration to the United States and other countries, and the establishment of the modern state of Israel.

SS.912.HE.3.1

Analyze the international community’s efforts to hold perpetrators responsible for their involvement in the Holocaust.

- Students will discuss the role of UN tribunals (Nuremberg Trials) and other subsequent trials related to the Holocaust.
- Students will compare arguments by the prosecution and recognize the falsehoods offered by the defense during the Nuremberg Trials (e.g., Justice Robert Jackson’s opening statement, Prosecutor Ben Ferencz’s opening statement, excerpts from post facto laws, non-existent terminology, crimes against humanity, genocide, statute of limitations, jurisdictional issues).
- Students will discuss how members of the international community were complicit in assisting perpetrators’ escape from both Germany and justice following World War II.

SS.912.HE.3.3

Explain the effects of Holocaust denial on contemporary society.

- Students will explain how Holocaust denial has helped contribute to the creation of contemporary propaganda and the facile denial of political and social realities.

SS.912.HE.3.4

Explain why it is important for current and future generations to learn from the Holocaust.

- Students will explain the significance of learning from Holocaust era primary sources created by Jews who perished and those who survived.
- Students will explain the significance of listening to the testimony of Holocaust survivors (e.g., live and through organizations that offer pre-recorded digital testimony).
- Students will describe the contributions of the Jews (e.g., arts, culture, medicine, sciences) to the United States and the world.
- Students will explain the significance of “Never Again.”

SS.912.HE.3.5

Recognize that antisemitism includes a certain perception of the Jewish people, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jewish people, rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism directed toward a person or his or her property or toward Jewish community institutions or religious facilities.

- Students will analyze examples of antisemitism (e.g., calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews, often in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion; making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective, especially, but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions; accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group).
- Students will analyze examples of antisemitism related to Israel (e.g., demonizing or stereotyping directed toward a person or his or her property or toward Jewish community institutions or religious facilities).
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- Students will explain why it is important for current and future generations to learn from the Holocaust.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

For an explanation about the spelling of “antisemitism” vs. “anti-Semitism,” visit this link: https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/antisemitism/spelling-antisemitism

WORLD HISTORY

SS.912.W.7.8

Explain the causes, events, and effects of the Holocaust (1933-1945) including its roots in the long tradition of antisemitism, 19th century ideas about race and nation, and Nazi dehumanization of the Jews and other victims.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK TEACHERS’ GUIDE

If you are viewing this guide as a PDF or online, clicking on the hyperlinks will take you directly to the page on the internet for each specific link.
The Sarasota-Manatee area has been home to many Holocaust survivors. Our community has also experienced a great loss as survivors have passed away. Pine View School students have met with 10 area survivors to capture their stories for us to use with our studies of Holocaust education. Each of these abbreviated testimonials has a QR code which links to the full testimony as written by the students. In addition, each has a link that leads to another testimony of a survivor who shared a similar experience or to information about her experiences and other people she encountered. You may decide to use these testimonies with your students, however, as with any resource, be sure to read them carefully and notify any parties (administrator, parents, etc.) for permissions. These are recommended for secondary students.

Rifka Glatz
By Felicity Chang, Class of 2023

“Gutting her mother’s hand, a little girl — six and a half years old — watched as a woman cried in the bathroom. Although, the row of outdoor toilets, with no doors, no privacy, no way to flush, as it was practically an open ditch, could hardly be called a bathroom, the woman had thrown the key out the window. More than likely, she had wanted the toilet to remain empty and unclean. The woman’s crying was incessant, her sobs were heard in every corner of the building. Rifka knew instinctively that the Nazis would come for her family. Her mother instructed Rifka’s brother, who was around 13 years old at the time, to dress her younger sister in layer clothing, regardless of the scorching summer heat. Without Rifka’s knowledge, her mother also retrieved the scroll from the mezuzah affixed to their doorway. Upon the parchment scroll were Hebrew words of the She’ma, or a daily declaration of faith, reminding those in the home of their connection to God. Her mother sewed the parchment into the lining of her own jacket. It was undiscovered by Nazi soldiers and, much later, given to Rifka as a gift on her wedding day.

“I was so touched, and I thought to myself, ‘How could she even think about it?’ Here she is with two children. She worries about us. She worries about her husband who hasn’t returned from their labor camp,” Rifka said. “She doesn’t know what’s happening to him. She doesn’t know what will happen to us, and she is thinking of something like this. That’s real faith.”

Bundled in layers of warm clothing, Rifka was shuffled onto a truck with her mother and brother. The truck arrived in a Koloszvar brickyard factory. The bricks were stacked as far as the eye could see. Outside air, and there, Rifka and her family stayed for several weeks. On a day that seemed like any other, yet proved to be anything but, they were brought to Budapest and shoved into a cattle car, or train wagon typically used to transport livestock. The cattle cars, used by Nazi Germany to transport large groups of Jewish people, regardless of age, each had a single window and not much else. There were no seats and no bathroom, as a bucket was used instead. People took off their jackets and shielded themselves the best they could. “It was horrid. A lot of people cried. I was just taking it all in as a child,” Rifka said.

The cattle cars ended up at the Birkenau, a concentration camp in northwest Germany. When Rifka and her family got off the cattle cars and went through the gate to the camp, her mother wrapped her in a blanket and held her like a baby. “They asked her, ‘Is the child sick?’ and she said, ‘No, the child is sleeping,’ and they let us through. She was afraid of them taking me away from her, but I stayed with her all along,” Rifka said. While Bergen-Belsen had no gas chambers, the Jewish Virtual Library estimates that 50,000 people died there of starvation, overwork, disease, brutality and sadistic medical experiments.

When asked about the significance of sharing her life experiences, Rifka said, “I feel a great obligation to tell my story – not because I love my story, but because people have to understand and learn from me to never, ever let this happen again.”

Rifka Glatz – Resources:
Oral History Interview with Alice Lok Cahana: https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504445
Information about Rudolf (Reny) Kasztner – https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/renyi-kasztner

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“Don’t forget to ask her how she met her husband at the end of the war,” her brother, who had an infant and Hersh’s cousin with her, told her to go south to be with the rest of the family. Years later, Hersh would meet this boy again around the very end of the war. They got married on July 28, 1945. He had never been closer to the end of our interview, ending with a note of hope.

“We were not ashamed to be Jewish, but that was a hateful symbol to put on us, so that everybody who sees you in the streets, if they don’t like you, they can spit on you. They can curse you. They can kick you,” Rifka said.

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When asked about the significance of sharing her life experiences, Rifka said, “I feel a great obligation to tell my story – not because I love my story, but because people have to understand and learn from me to never, ever let this happen again.”

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Ginette Hersh
By Zoe Merritt, Class of 2022

Ginette Hersh was born five years shy of a century ago in 1927. For myself, that number is purely conjectural and incredibly distant. For Hersh, however, she remembers as if it was yesterday. Sitting down with Ginette Hersh, one of the first things to strike me was her matter of fact, understated tranquility. Whether you’ve been through such trauma, things might need to be handled that way.

Just before the cameras started rolling, Bette Zaret, one of the key coordinators of the interviews, leaned down by my seat and whispered in my ear, “Don’t forget to ask her how she met her husband at the end of the war.” Her brother, who had an infant and Hersh’s cousin with her, told her to go south to be with the rest of the family. Years later, Hersh would meet this boy again around the very end of the war. They got married on July 28, 1945. He had never been closer to the end of our interview, ending with a note of hope.

“It was in hiding in school, so I was lucky,” she said. Both she and her brother were “Hidden Children,” as they’re known today. Through her aunt, Hersh had a love for education after the war. Hersh was able to get some schooling, where she learned English.

Hersh was hidden in boarding schools; her younger brother was either with their parents or in monasteries. When we began talking about the journey her family made from their home in Dijon at the start of the war, Hersh pulled out a piece of paper with something very important written on it.

“I am a survivor,” Hersh stated, shifting the conversation as decisively. Rochelle was taken by the police from her store.

He said it was because we are taking all the Jews to the police station,” said Hersh. So she understood what was going on. “Rochelle said to the policeman, ‘Look, I will go with you quietly. Let my mother and my children go.’”

Hearing her talk about her aunt felt like I was listening to a woman fulfill a duty. In their stories, Holocaust survivors keep family, friends, coworkers and strangers alive. In tragedy, the stories of the living keep safe within them innumerable dead.

I noticed that throughout the interview she would lead a story with “I have to tell you a story.” With fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors left today, the need for their stories of survival has never been so strong. Understand every chance or decision to tell her story is a drive to do so.

“We were under the false impression that women were not in danger even though they were. I thought only the men were in danger,” Hersh said about her aunt. “But we were wrong.”

At a cafe with her father to sell diamonds from a piece of jewelry, a man ran in, telling everyone that he had jumped off a train taking people to a concentration camp to be gassed. “I asked him what he was doing. And whenever I’m asked to speak in a school, I’m always there. No matter what I have to do, I will come to the school first. I am a survivor… my aim in life and in my old age is to.”

Renee Schwalb Fritz Describes Her Experience as a Jewish Child

While Bergen-Belsen had no gas chambers, the Jewish Virtual Library estimates that 50,000 people died there of starvation, overwork, disease, brutality and sadistic medical experiments.

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Renee Schwalb Fritz Describes Her Experience as a Jewish Child

The route that Ginette Hersh’s family took from Dijon to France is marked with a yellow star.
George Erdstein

I n a series of chain reactions, George Erdstein believes his life has been dominated by cascading effects of luck. “I was too young. I don’t have numbers on my arms. You could say I was lucky, but I experienced a certain aspect of the Holocaust, being in New York with German-speaking parents while the war was still going on. That was embarrassing,” Erdstein said. “All I wanted to do was to fit in and be an American kid, on my birth certificate [too]. My name is G E O R G without the E at the end. That’s the German interpretation of George.”

When Erdstein got an American citizenship papers at age seven, he insisted that his name be spelled with an E at the end. “I’m sorry to this day, because I denied who I was at the time,” Erdstein said. Erdstein was born in 1938, in Vienna, Austria, immi-grating with his family as refugees to Washington Heights in New York.

“My story really is not so much about me, but my family and I’m a part of it. How they reacted to the Holocaust had a lot to do with who I was,” he said.

“During Kristallnacht, his father was arrested and beaten by Nazi soldiers who tried forcing him to convert to a non-Jewish woman.”

“George Erdstein interviewed by Peyton Harris

“George Erdstein – Resources: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/hanne-liebenstein

Hanne Liebenstein describes the effects of Kristallnacht; https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/hanne-liebenstein

Harme Lieben is the testimony of a Jewish woman who survived the Holocaust in Germany and is now a U.S. citizen. She had to leave Germany due to the Nazi regime, and she was eventually able to come to the United States. Her story is an example of how the Holocaust affected many different people in different ways.”

Piezer Kohnstam

Piezer Kohnstam – Resources: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/amsterdam

The Fall of Rotterdam (Primary Source Video): https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/video/fall-of-rotterdam

Escaping through the Pyrenees (image): https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/image/escaping-through-the-pyrenees

Map: Escaping through the Pyrenees, Europe 1942: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/map/escaping-routes-from-german-occupied-europe-1942

In the early days of his childhood in Merwedeplein, Pieter lived two apartments away from the Otto Frank family. The Frank family had a strong connection with the Kohnstams, both being of German Jewish heritage, and Pieter’s mother had a very similar nature to that of Anne Frank, as described by Pieter, the Frank family and Pieter’s parents became really good friends; Anne Frank and Pieter’s mother hit it off immediately. When Edith, Anne’s mother, complained to Pieter’s mother that Anne was leaving papers all around their apartment, Pieter’s mother suggested that she buy Anne a diary for her 13th birthday. And so it was.

“It was a daily occurrence, almost every hour, every minute, killings took place, the Germans hitting, picking people up and pushing and beating them. Raids were part of it,” Pieter said.

“Many times, they murdered people right there, like they did to our neighbors living in the next apartment. They came in, murdered a family except for one girl who somehow survived.”

After the letter for deportation arrived, the Franks decided to go into hiding. The two families exchanged an emotional parting on July 6, 1942. The Franks had invited Pieter’s family to go into hiding with them in the Annex, but they knew that keeping a six-year-old boy safe wouldn’t work.

After the raids, the flight began. His father Hans would leave ahead of his mother Ruth, and Pieter and the family would reconvene at a railroad station in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, Pieter and his parents had to leave Clara, Pieter’s grandmother, behind. They had made arrangements with the milkman to pick her up and take her into hiding. As recorded by Hans, Pieter’s mother kept questioning why Clara wasn’t leaving with them and whether they would be able to see her again.

Fortunately, Pieter’s mother was multilingual, hence, she was key to figuring out who to trust on their flight. At one point, crossing a dangerous and difficult border from Perpignan to Barce- lona, she was apprehended. Later, Pieter found out that his mother was working for the Free France Re- sistance that countered the Nazi German occupation forces in France after the 1940 military collapse of a Metropolitan France. They lost contact with her for a few months and eventually she smuggled herself out of the woman’s camp.

Pieter’s mother had been detained and imprisoned crossing the border and they were now alone with no communication with her. Pieter’s father didn’t speak Spanish and had him in tow. Pieter’s mother was able to act as an interpreter and was freed from the camp three months later. She met up with the family at the prearranged inn. One morning, Pieter and his parents were sitting at a cafe when a man introduced himself and started chatting with them in German. After hearing the story of their flight, he became very interested in Pieter’s story. Pieter’s mother contacted the Chief of Police of Barcelona. The Chief of Police was moved by the story and immediately called the new Bishop of Barcelona to arrange for a meeting. Argentina required law original certificates of baptism. After a long meeting with the Bishop, claiming inspiration from God, the Bishop granted the original certificates of baptism. The result was that with the help of Pieter’s mother, Pieter continued his studies in France and became a French and Spanish lawyer.

Nazi soldiers came to Helga’s door on October 18, 1941, and told her family to get ready. “They said, ‘We will take you to a better place,’” she said. She described her childhood in Berlin fondly. Her parents did their best to shelter their children from the war, but they were eventually caught by the Gestapo and imprisoned. Helga’s mother was detained and imprisoned crossing the border and they were now alone with no communication with her. Pieter’s father didn’t speak Spanish and had him in tow. Pieter’s mother was able to act as an interpreter and was freed from the camp three months later. She met up with the family at the prearranged inn. One morning, Pieter and his parents were sitting at a cafe when a man introduced himself and started chatting with them in German. After hearing the story of their flight, he became very interested in Pieter’s story. Pieter’s mother contacted the Chief of Police of Barcelona. The Chief of Police was moved by the story and immediately called the new Bishop of Barcelona to arrange for a meeting. Argentina required law original certificates of baptism. After a long meeting with the Bishop, claiming inspiration from God, the Bishop granted the original certificates of baptism. The result was that with the help of Pieter’s mother, Pieter continued his studies in France and became a French and Spanish lawyer.

In the suburbs of Berlin, though, Helga found a place to hide. She described her childhood in Berlin fondly. Her parents did their best to shelter their children from the war, but they were eventually caught by the Gestapo and imprisoned. Helga’s mother was detained and imprisoned crossing the border and they were now alone with no communication with her. Pieter’s father didn’t speak Spanish and had him in tow. Pieter’s mother was able to act as an interpreter and was freed from the camp three months later. She met up with the family at the prearranged inn. One morning, Pieter and his parents were sitting at a cafe when a man introduced himself and started chatting with them in German. After hearing the story of their flight, he became very interested in Pieter’s story. Pieter’s mother contacted the Chief of Police of Barcelona. The Chief of Police was moved by the story and immediately called the new Bishop of Barcelona to arrange for a meeting. Argentina required law original certificates of baptism. After a long meeting with the Bishop, claiming inspiration from God, the Bishop granted the original certificates of baptism. The result was that with the help of Pieter’s mother, Pieter continued his studies in France and became a French and Spanish lawyer.

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I n 1928, Helga Melmed was born into a home that loved her, surrounded by a world that hated her for being Jewish. She described her childhood in Berlin fondly. Her parents did their best to shelter her from the increasingly hateful world, but at age five, she felt the impact of the Nazi regime.

“My teacher beat my hands with a ruler until they were bloody. She told the kids to call me a dirty Jew. I went home to my mama and asked, ‘Why?’” Helga said. “She told me to be proud to be a Jew.”

Still, Helga felt singled out. In the suburbs of Berlin, though, Helga found a place where she felt safe: a private Jewish school. “I was very happy and safe there,” Helga said, “until 1938. Kristallnacht”

Helga was 10 years old when she witnessed her school and temple burn. The haven that she cherished was gone. Nazi soldiers came to Helga’s door on October 18, 1941, and told her family to get ready to leave.

“They said, ‘We will take you to a better place,’” she said. “What could be better than home?”

They were taken to a slaughterhouse. Helga’s parents hid between them, but she could still hear the screams. Hundreds of people were put into cattle cars and transported to a ghetto in Lodz, Poland. There, women worked in a factory, and men – including her father – performed hard labor.

One day, Nazi soldiers forced the men to run in circles as target practice. Her father was shot.

Helga’s mother later became extremely sick. On Helga’s 14th birthday, her mother gave her “the best onion I ever had,” Helga said, before her mother died that night. “My biggest struggle was survival, maintaining both mental and physical health,” he said. “Under normal circumstances, I think to myself, ‘What would I have done?’ I would make the best decisions I could.”

Edward Lessing Describes Wearing the Compulsory Jewish Badge:

“We were hugging and kissing each other goodbye... They shaved every bit of hair off us... They threw some clothes at us... and transported us.”

The camp sisters were taken to Neuengamme, a concentration camp in Hamburg. Helga was sent to a subdivision where she was forced to do hard labor.

As the Russians approached Poland, the girls were sent to Auschwitz. The sisters were taken to a warehouse where rows of girls sat on the ground. They were regularly called upon for inspection by dogs. Helga has a scar on her hand from where she was bitten.

The Nazis called out numbers, sending them to the gas chambers. It was a terrifying waiting game. “We were hugging and kissing each other... They shaved every bit of hair off us... They threw some clothes at us... and transported us.”

Marcel was sent to a sub division where he was forced to do hard labor. As the bombing grew more severe, the Nazis took the prisoners on trucks into the suburbs. It was then that Helga was separated from her camp sisters. She felt “ready to die,” she said.

In April 1945, Helga was liberated, carried out on a board by British and American troops. She was taken to a Swedish hospital, where she stayed for a year and a half. She weighed just 46 pounds when she arrived.

“Our legs were so thin that we could go around like that with our fingers,” Helga said, holding up her hand, her pointer finger and thumb forming a small circle.

“Hope, being young... and the companionship”

With French as his mother tongue, Marcel learned Hebrew while living in Palestine. He still remembers all the other languages.

One day, someone called the police on him, his sister and his parents because they weren’t wearing Jewish stars.

His father was arrested and taken to a sports arena outside of Paris in Darcey to await deportation to Auschwitz. He was gassed the day he arrived.

The rest of the family went to Switzerland after Marcel’s father was arrested. Since the Swiss government was housing the exiled Dutch government at the time, Dutch citizens were allowed to cross. Marcel’s mother obtained forged Dutch citizen identification. Since they spoke Flemish, they were granted passage into Switzerland.

“My earliest memory was 1945 in Switzerland. I was looking up at the sky. I saw the moon for the first time, and I said to myself, ‘What’s the moon doing there? It’s only seen at night,’” he said.

After the war ended, the family decided they needed a fresh start. Marcel’s mother was able to get a job to immigrate to the newly controlled Palestine.

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“[My life story] was really hard. We were in a kibbutz for the first six months, and they supported us... Mother was not employable because it was not a time when women worked, so she could not support us. She placed my sister with my aunt, and she placed me in an orphanage,” he said.

Marcel lived in the orphanage for three years.

In 1946, Marcel’s mother returned to Antwerp to find a husband to support the family. She met a Hungarian Jew whose wife and five children perished in Auschwitz. After they married, they had two more children and reunited with Marcel and his sister.

“After high school, I no longer felt comfortable being Orthodox, so I became secular. That was difficult because it was a closed community – the Orthodox community – and anyone who left it was frowned upon,” Marcel said. “My parents died when I was young, so I was left without parents and without community... Beyond the age of 15, I was making my own life decisions. I was making the decisions that I could.”

“A few children from the orphanage were able to get a spot to immigrate to British-controlled Palestine. Marcel’s mother returned to Antwerp to find a husband to support the family.

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The family lived with constant fear and unease as Hitler and the Nazis began to strip the family of their civil rights. When Marlies was first at the Dutch Underground, they had to ensure that she would not be discovered. They knew that if they were caught, it would mean the end of their lives. The Nazis were constantly looking for ways to eliminate the Jews, and the family had to be constantly on the lookout for any signs of danger. Marlies was also aware of the dangers, and she knew that she had to be careful. She knew that if she was caught, it would mean the end of her family. She knew that she had to be strong, and she knew that she had to be brave. She knew that she had to be ready to fight, and she knew that she had to be ready to die.

Eventually, the family was caught. They were forced to move to a concentration camp, where they were subjected to unimaginable horrors. Marlies was forced to watch as her family was taken away, and she knew that she had to be strong. She knew that she had to be brave. She knew that she had to be ready to fight, and she knew that she had to be ready to die. She knew that she had to be strong, and she knew that she had to be brave. She knew that she had to be ready to fight, and she knew that she had to be ready to die.
Lora Tobias
By Alyson Mizzan, Class of 2023

Amid a flurry of Saratosa parkgoers sits 93-year-old Lora Tobias. She keeps her hands busy, flicking through photographs and historical records that lie in her lap. Her light up when she picks a book out of the pile. It’s the 2018 edition of the Schirshheim annual. A castle adorns its cover.

“This is where I resided – Schriesheim,” she said. “I was the last Jewish child born to the village, before the Nazis.”

Born in 1929, Lora lived in Schriesheim before she, her parents, and her maternal grandfather fled Germany in 1938 to escape Nazi rule. Lora and her experiences bespeak resilience and determination.

Schriesheim was home to Lora’s family for nearly three centuries. When she was born, 12 Jewish families lived among the village’s 4,000 residents. They had a synagoge. The only evidence that it existed is a picture of Lora standing in front of it.

Lora notes that there was little discrimination in Schriesheim when she was young, but things changed when she started attending kindergarten.

“Every morning when we attended school, we saluted a swastika,” Lora said. “Then we’d all say a prayer to God, to safeguard Hitler and keep him safe from enemies and give him a long life.”

Lora remembers kneeling beside one night and reciting prayers for Hitler. “My parents had to explain to me that I couldn’t pray for Hitler anymore – that I was a Jewish child – but I had to try not to call attention to myself,” she said.

Lora grew lonely as she moved up through the grades. Her former friends began either avoiding or harassing her.

“I wondered, ‘Why? Why am I different? Because I go to a different place to pray?’”

“Second grade was a horror,” she said. Her teacher vehemently hated Jewish people. He forced her to sit in the corner of the classroom surrounded only by empty desks.

All the while, her parents’ business dried up, as nobody wanted to associate themselves with the family. Brownshirts would stand outside their door, recording the names of anyone who dared support them.

“I couldn’t understand this. How could it be a threat to the country? I’m just a young girl. What do I possess? What did I do? Why am I a danger?” Lora said.

Having already escaped Germany, Lora’s maternal uncle found strangers to sponsor Lora’s family and give them affida- vits so they could come to the United States. Lora’s passport – issued June 2, 1938 – is unique. A law went into effect June 1 that all Jewish passports needed to be inscribed with the letter “J,” but Lora’s doesn’t have one.

Because Lora’s other maternal uncle, Ludwig Oppenheimer, suffered from spinal meningitis as a child, he didn’t receive a visa. The family sent him to a nursing home with the hopes of bringing him to the United States in 1939, but Lora later discovered that he died in the Gurs concentration camp in 1940.

“I wish I could tell [my family], ‘We survived. I’m still here. They didn’t destroy us.’”

Lora arrived in the United States on October 6, 1938. She taught fourth grade in the Bronx before becoming a reading specialist and teacher trainer. She and Sigmund Tobias married when she was in her early 30s.

Lora has since visited Schriesheim many times. She recalls going back to her school.

“I spread my arms and in my best Italian, I yelled ‘Ritorina Vendita’! That’s from Aida, and that’s the way I felt. I have returned victorious!’”

Lora said, “They put them in front of homes that were owned by Jews. We had to live in the basement and not forgotten.”

She notes that she has always been open to sharing her story. Doing so is important “because it’s true,” she said. “You can’t deny it.”

When considering her granddaughter’s futures, Loras envision a world that will treat them and their peers indiscriminately.

“I hope the generation of my granddaughter will do something to save this world,” Lora said. “If we don’t preserve it, it’s not going to last. I want my grandchildren to have a wonderful world without hatred.”

Lora Tobias – Resources:
Wilek Loew Describe Jewish Life in Prewar Lvov, including restrictions on admissions to schools:
Antisemitic Legislation 1933-1939:
https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/antisemitic-legislation-1933-1939

Sigmund Tobias
By Lora Rini, Class of 2023

Raised during the Holocaust, Sigmund Tobias was only three or four years old when his regular life in Berlin was shattered.

There was a tree-lined street with benches in the center. One day a gang of guys appeared. They signed on the benches. The signs said, ‘Jews forbidden.’ And that was my first real sense that something awful was about to happen, Tobias said.

When he was five years old, Tobias lived through Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass.

“I remember cowering in our apartment and hearing the sounds of smashing glass as Jewish businesses and residences were being vandalism,” he said.

After that, Tobias’s father decided their family needed to leave Germany for a safer location. They decided to go to Russia.

“My father tried to smuggle into Belgium, was caught by the Belgians and was imprisoned in Dachau concentration camp for two weeks. My mother found out that he could be released if he left the country immediately. So that’s when we learned that the Japanese-occupied portion of Shanghai was the only place in the world at that time which was open to Jewish refugees.”

After living in Shanghai for over 10 years, the residents of the ghetto observed some changes in leadership.

“What happened was in Shanghai, from one day to the next, the Japanese disappeared,” Tobias said. “We didn’t know what happened – they just disappeared. A few days later, it became clear that the war was over. We never really heard formally.”

In the weeks leading up to this, Tobias was not completely unaware of the new developments in the war.

“About two weeks before, there was a German-language newspaper published by Jewish refugees, which had one tiny paragraph saying that a bomb had been exploded using atomic fuel,” he said. “I didn’t know what that meant, but physicists in our community who understood what was going on, ‘If they did that, the war cannot last much longer.’”

While Tobias and his family were very aware of the war during their time in Shanghai, they did not hear about the horrors that occurred in Europe until World War II was over.

“We knew nothing about the Holocaust until we heard about it after the war in Shanghai,” he said. “And horror ralled through the ghetto because virtually every family lost somebody. Fourteen aunts, uncles and cousins of mine were killed in the Holocaust in Europe. And those were not just names to me. These were people with whom I had lived and laughed and cried and never would again.”

The Tobias family decided to move to New York after the war. American immigration laws were a barrier, but eventually they all made it over. In New York, Tobias had a successful career and a happy life with his wife and two daughters. The Atlantic Ocean provided a necessary barrier between Tobias and the horrors of his childhood. It took many years until he felt prepared to publicly speak about his life.

“I wrote a book about growing up in Shanghai called Strange Haven, and I published it in 2000. Beginning with that, I was invited to do a lot of speaking, and I’ve been glad to do so,” he said. “I’m particularly glad to speak to young people because I think it’s important for them to know something of this history. When we go to some classes, they’ve never even heard the word ‘Holocaust,’ and it’s very up-setting. Not because it happened to me. It’s upsetting because if people can’t remember the horror of the Holocaust, there’s grave danger that it may happen again. The only defense is to know, to be aware and to fight the tendencies within us to hate other people.”

Sigmund Tobias – Resources:
Sign excluding Jews from Public Places:
https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/sign-excluding-jews-from-public-places
Polish Jewish Refugees in the Shanghai Ghetto, 1941-1945:
Ernest G. Heppner Describes Arrival in Shanghai:
Ernest G. Heppner Describes the Shanghai Ghetto and its Japanese Overseer:

Sigmund Tobias interviewed by Lora Rini

Annihilation of the Jews in Germany, continu-
July 24: Russians liberate Majdanek killing center
1944 – The long march to Germany, continued
May 23: Himmelt commits suicide

April 6: Death March of inmates of Buchenwald
May 8: Goring commits suicide (captured in 1946)

January 17: Evacuation of Auschwitz: beginning of death march
January 25: Beginning of death march for inmates of Stutthof

June 8: Death march of inmates of Dachau

December 15: Beginning of death march from Budapest to Austria

November 8: Beginning of death march from Warsaw to Treblinka

July 4: Polish Jewish Refugees in the Shanghai Ghetto, 1941-1945

July 8: Start of evacuation in Auschwitz

April 6: Death March of inmates of Buchenwald

April 10: Himmler commits suicide

July 5: Germany surrenders; end of Third Reich
May 8: Y’E Day
May 3: Goring commits suicide (captured in 1946)
May 23: Himmelt commits suicide
**ADDITITIONAL USEFUL RESOURCES**

**Resources:**
- [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)
- [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)
- [www.echoesandreminis.org](http://www.echoesandreminis.org)

**The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – Definitions:**

HOLocaust v Shoah v Genocide: [https://www.ushmm.org/search-results/?q=Definitions%3A+Holocaust+v+Shoah+v+Genocide](https://www.ushmm.org/search-results/?q=Definitions%3A+Holocaust+v+Shoah+v+Genocide)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holocaust:</th>
<th>Shoa:</th>
<th>Genocide:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Used in the U.S. and U.K.</td>
<td>Hebrew word for catastrophe</td>
<td>Developed in 1948 by Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin to define a crime: Greek genos (race or tribe) and Latin suffix cide (killing)</td>
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<td>Ancient Greek word for burnt offering</td>
<td>Antonym - indiscriminate killing or slaughter</td>
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<td>As defined by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum</td>
<td>First used in 1942 by a historian in Jerusalem, Ben-Zion Dinur</td>
<td>Name in Hebrew</td>
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<td>Name in English</td>
<td>The extermination of European Jewry and called it a &quot;catastrophe&quot; that showed how different and unique the European Jewry and called it a &quot;catastrophe&quot; that showed how different and unique the European Jewish community. By the 1950s, the English term Holocaust came to be employed as the term for the murder of the Jews in Europe by the Nazis. Although the term is sometimes used with reference to the murder of other groups by the Nazis, strictly speaking, those groups do not belong under the heading of the Holocaust, nor are they included in the generally accepted statistic of six million victims of the Holocaust.</td>
<td>The international crime defined by the United Nations:</td>
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<td>The systematic destruction of European Jewry at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. The word Holocaust comes from the Greek word holokauston, which is a translation of the Hebrew word olah. During Biblical times, an olah was a type of sacrifice to God that was totally consumed or burnt by fire.</td>
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<td>Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:</td>
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<td>Resources from the Commissioner of Education’s Task Force on Holocaust Education: <a href="https://www.fldoe.org/holocausteducation/holo-ed-week.stml">https://www.fldoe.org/holocausteducation/holo-ed-week.stml</a></td>
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<td>Topics include, but are not limited to:</td>
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<td>Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust</td>
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<td>Kristallnacht</td>
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<td>Combating Antisemitism</td>
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<td>Virtual Tours</td>
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<td>The Holocaust Teachers’ Resource Center at The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee: <a href="https://www.fedreq.org/holocaust-teacher-resources">https://www.fedreq.org/holocaust-teacher-resources</a></td>
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<td>The Museum of Tolerance: A Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum: <a href="https://www.museumoftolerance.com/">https://www.museumoftolerance.com/</a></td>
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<td>The Holocaust Animated Map: <a href="https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/gallery/introduction-to-the-holocaust-maps">https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/gallery/introduction-to-the-holocaust-maps</a></td>
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**If you are interested in learning more about Judaism, the Jewish People and the Jewish holidays, visit the link below. It’s an introduction to Judaism as prepared for law enforcement and security agencies across the country:**

[https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-91/2/SCN_3371%2520-%2520IntroductionToJudaism%2520-%2520063022.pdf](https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-91/2/SCN_3371%2520-%2520IntroductionToJudaism%2520-%2520063022.pdf)