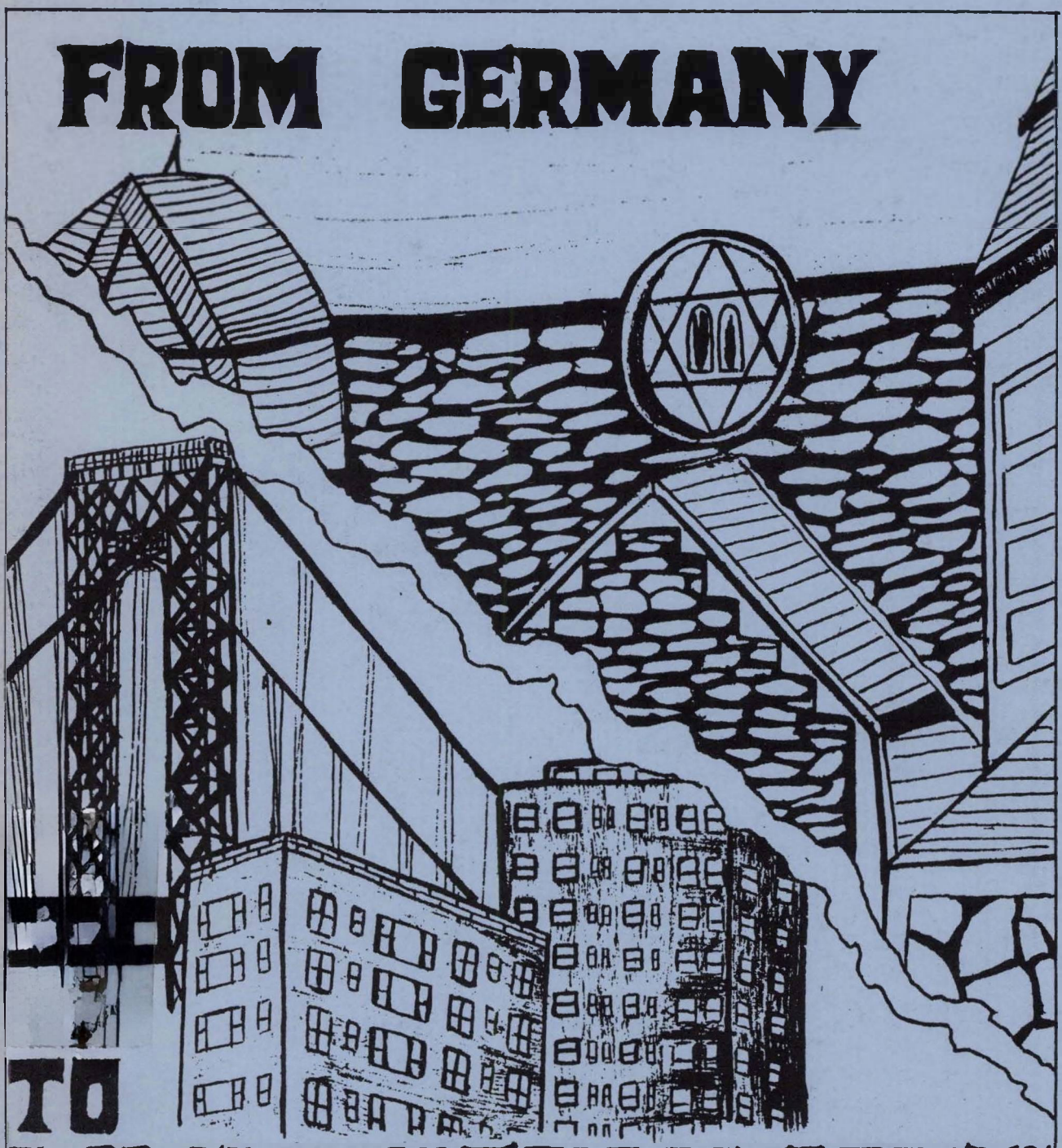
FROM GERMANY



TO WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

KIMIE NAKAHATA

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Yeshiva University

Dr. Irving Greenberg, *President*
National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership

Deborah Dash Moore, *Historian, Author*
Faculty, Vassar College

Dr. Malcolm H. Stern, *President*
Jewish Historical Society of New York, Inc.

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District 6, New York City Board of Education

Yvette Hyman, *Junior High School Teacher*
I.S. 187, District 6

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Asher Abramovitz, *Principal*
Kinneret Day School, Riverdale, Bronx, New York

Rabbi Jacob Breuer, *Principal*
S.R. Hirsch Yeshiva

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YM-YWHA of Washington Heights & Inwood

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Consultant

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The German Jews of Washington Heights

An oral history project
produced by
Junior High School Students
under the auspices of
the Yeshiva University Museum



2520 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10033
212-960-5390

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Preface

Sylvia A. Herskowitz

In 1985, the Yeshiva University Museum was awarded a substantial grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to produce a major exhibition, "Ashkenaz: The German Jewish Heritage," covering 1,000 years of Jewish life under German rule from the time of Charlemagne until the Hitler era. One of the important motives for working on such an exhibition was provided by the immediate environment of the Museum—the well-entrenched German Jewish community of Washington Heights, possibly the largest community of its kind in the United States.

Since the exhibition's scope, vast though it was, did not extend beyond 1940, it was apparent to us that a way had to be found to tell the story of the survivors of Ashkenaz: how and why the German Jews came to the Heights and succeeded in transplanting themselves, their institutions, and their thousand-year-old culture to a new world.

Additionally, the knowledge that the number of World War II survivors was dwindling, meant that something had to be done quickly to capture memories and experiences that might not otherwise be preserved.

We made this theme the subject of a second grant proposal which we submitted to the NEH Youth Program Division, for we realized that by involving public and private junior high school students in the investigation, the lessons of the Holocaust would be passed to a new generation.

So we were greatly elated when NEH awarded us the grant for our intergenerational program: "Tracking the German Jewish Presence in Washington Heights." It is a tribute to our American Government and its remarkable and unique support system for the arts and humanities—the endowment agencies—that our museum has been enabled to present continuing exhibitions and programs that interpret Jewish life and history for adults and children of our time.

As this project draws to a close, the museum has been enriched in a number of significant ways:

1. It has become a living presence for the neighborhood participants touched by this project.
2. It now has the beginnings of an oral history archive which can be expanded to include other national groups.
3. The children's exhibit, culled from memorabilia lent by the interviewees, can be regarded as almost a microcosm of Ashkenaz culture transplanted by circumstance to the hospitable avenues of Washington Heights.
4. This brochure, a record of the project and a summary of its achievements, also serves as a finding aid to the oral history interviews.

For the success of this enterprise we are indebted to our team of consultants: Stefa, Tabitha, Michael, and Daniel, and our coordinator Jeannette, who gave freely of their time and energy in the finest tradition of teachers everywhere—"without looking at the clock." If this project has accomplished its goals it is because of their devotion.

Above all, we are especially proud that throughout the project we have been able to maintain the integrity of our mandate: To produce a project for students, by students, in which our consultants were the facilitators, and the students themselves were the investigators, recorders, and bibliographers for the transmission of culture from one generation to another.







If It's Tuesday, It Must be NEH Day

Jeannette Ornstein

Every Tuesday afternoon for the past five months a certain electricity sparked within the Museum halls as the youngsters gathered excitedly for each week's offering. The exact plan of each session was only divulged at the last minute to create an atmosphere of suspense and discovery in the program. The project began with a tour of the "Ashkenaz" exhibition and the Washington Heights neighborhood so that the students could gather background information on the core population of our study. After that, their project of taping oral history interviews began, interspersed with activity workshops in German-Jewish culture and customs that helped them to understand the background of German Jews. They learned about the art form known as micrography, built a model of the "Breuer" synagogue, made Haman doughboys for Purim, and apple strudel, cooked gruenkern soup, and designed individual wimpels for themselves.



The Museum's goal in this project was twofold: To preserve important information for future generations and scholars, and to act as a bridge between the youngsters and the German Jews of Washington Heights.

During this exchange there were many poignant moments. Watching an Oriental student from the neighborhood interviewing an older resident and practicing the pronunciation of her name carefully so as not to make any mistakes--that scene was particularly

moving. We saw incredulous expressions on students' faces as they heard how Jewish children were forced out of German schools and had to leave their friends behind. We heard their voices fill with concern as they imagined what it was like for those Jews not able to escape Germany while others around them were leaving. We watched them gently handle decaying photographs and documents and hold with great care objects brought in to illustrate stories of uprooting and resettlement. Observing these youngsters surround an interviewee, eager to ask questions, listen to responses and confront the actual historic material was extremely fulfilling.

At the heart of the project was a certain directness: the students were getting firsthand information from people whose life experiences are difficult for today's children to comprehend.

The interviewees shared both happy and painful memories and communicated to the youngsters the value of the past. Children tend to think of the present as being of prime importance. This project, we hope, taught them to view the older person as a valuable link with the past, who provoked them into thinking and



examining similarities and differences between their time and ours.

The student participants were brought closer to a segment of real history. The interviewees shared memories and passed on knowledge of the past that is essential for all to know. The Washington Heights community represents many ethnic groups and cultures. Many of them realize that only when all groups are free of oppression and fear can any single group feel secure. This lesson impressed itself on our students.

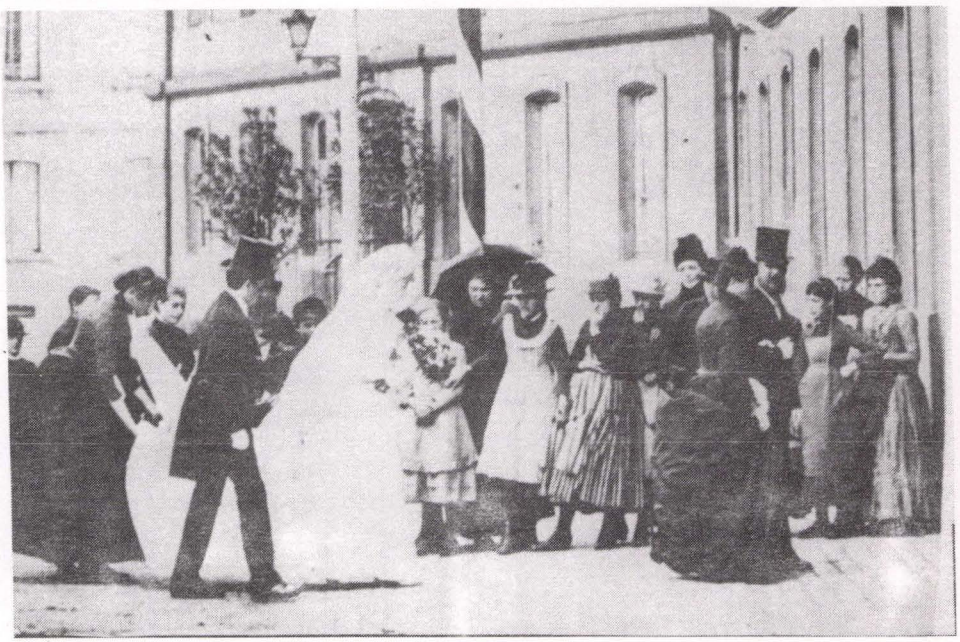
One of our interviewees closed her remarks in this manner: " I hope that my children's children will have a chance to hear this and learn about this...."

Paths to the Heights

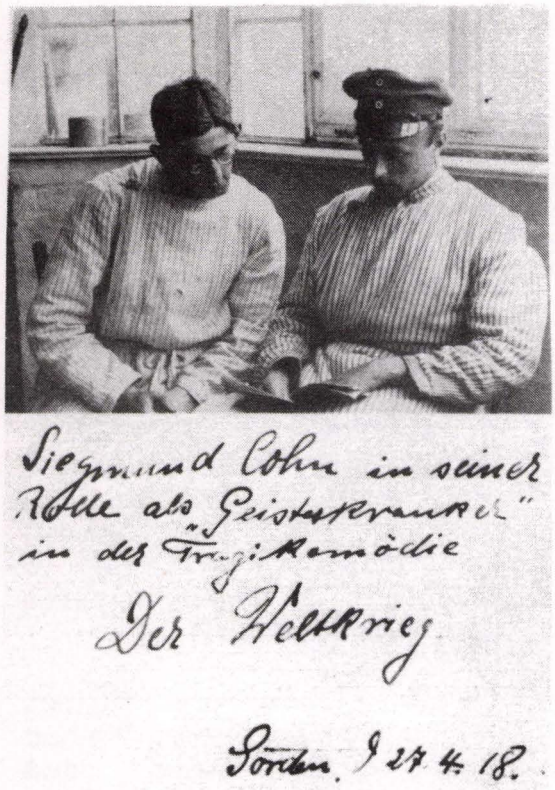
Michael Cohn

From an anthropological viewpoint these oral history tapes present interesting facets of German-Jewish history. More than half of the interviewees came from villages or small towns. Their families had been dealers in cattle, grain, hides and other agricultural produce for hundreds of years. In the midst of the German peasant communities they had retained their Jewish identity. They served in the German army in wartime, they were elected to local political offices, their children went to German universities, but the German Jews remained distinct. Because the Jews did not quite belong, it was easy for the Nazis to destroy the Jewish communities, force their members into exile or transport them to extermination camps.

In remembrance, all of the interviewees think of their childhood as a golden age. "It was a beautiful homelife," "we had everything we wanted" are the comments of both urban and village residents. Perhaps this idealization of early life was later re-enforced when, under the pressure of emigration, the



Wedding of Camilla Rosenbaum and Albert Ettlinger, Zweibrucken, 1888. Courtesy Marianne Ettlinger Cohen.



Sigmund Cohn, soldier-orderly, in what he called "The tragicomedy, World War I" April, 1918. Courtesy Michael Cohn.

family formed the only reliable support network.

Another interesting facet is the lack of concern with the loss of material objects. Nowhere in these tapes is there any mourning for the loss of a favorite toy, a fine ceremonial object or an inherited set of dishes. On the other hand almost everyone preserved some historical books, family documents, paintings or photographs. A few of them are illustrated in this brochure.

Once in America the acquisition of a job and the learning of English were the first priorities. The traditional jobs of immigrants to New York--dishwasher, sewing machine operator, domestic--were filled by German-Jews as well. Socially the German-Jews remained distinct. They joined German-Jewish synagogues, German-Jewish social clubs and read the German-Jewish newspaper, the "Aufbau."

For those interested in the social history of European immigrant groups this material is invaluable. For those interested in social psychology, these descriptions of dislocations and relocations will be of use. For students of the Hitler era there are new viewpoints on events to be found in these transcripts. Researchers will have reason to thank the interviewees, the children who asked the questions, and the Yeshiva University Museum who preserved these transcripts.

As a scientist, as well as a member of the German-Jewish community of Washington Heights, I am pleased to have been able to participate in this project.

From the Depths to the Heights

Edited by Michael Cohn

(These are quotations taken from the tapes recorded by the "German Jews of Washington Heights" project of the Yeshiva University Museum in New York. The selections are organized by subject to show the scope of the German-Jewish experience. The numbers indicate individual interviews.)

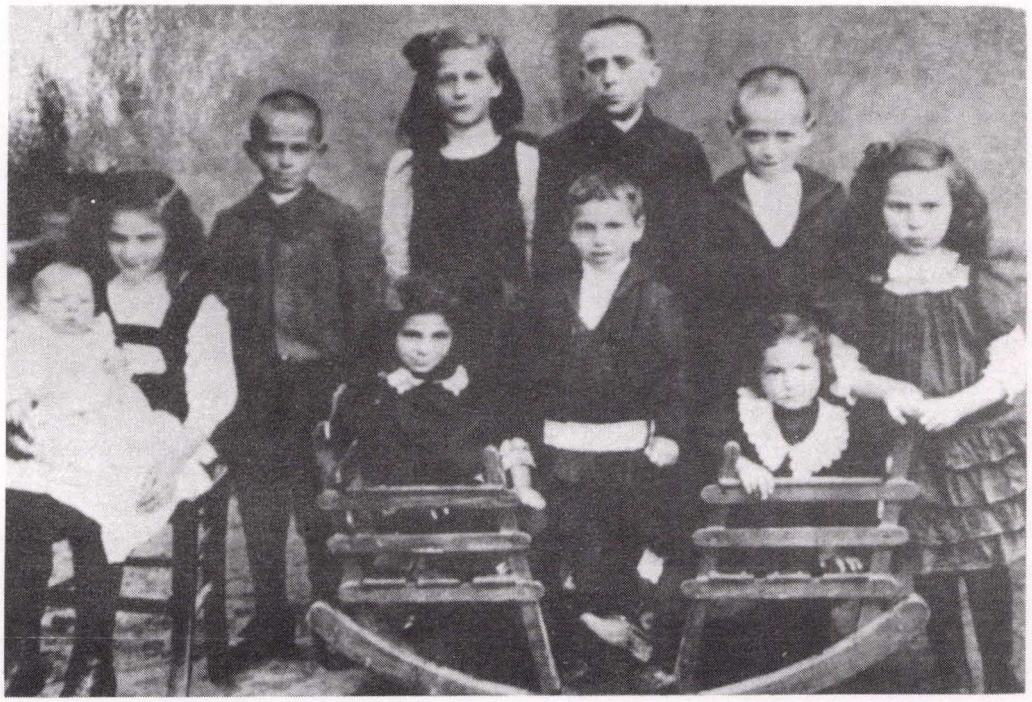
VOICES FROM THE COUNTRY:

The history [of my family] goes back over 200 years in Germany, more or less in the same town. (8)

We were a little town, about 40 [Jewish] families. We had our own Jewish school system...and our own synagogue....The village had about 2,000 people. (9)

My father and grandfather were cattle dealers.... We, as well as other Jewish families, belonged to the Jewish community which had a synagogue, a cemetery, men's club, sisterhood....(11)

We had our own land....We [put up] fruit for the winter. We had cows and horses and chickens....We had a big house....



The children of Bernard and Ernestine Hirsch and Gustave and Johanna Hirsch in Berwangen, circa 1913. Courtesy of Martha Hirsch Strauss and Selma Hirsch Goldschmidt

My husband and my brother-in-law built an extra room [on the house] as a synagogue. (21)

My father was a sales representative for mills and had contacts with the Jewish grain dealers where he came from (6)

AND FROM THE CITIES:

My parents started a bakery in Frankfurt in 1910. Four years later my father was killed in the First World War. My mother kept the business running and...through it I learned the bakery trade. (19)

My late father...had been a decorated physician in the army of the Kaiser. (18)

My parents had a store, selling porcelain and glassware (4)

My father was a salesman and printer. (3)

We had a good middle class home....My father was a well-to-do business man.... In those days it was not unusual to have a servant. We had a servant. (6)

My father was a newspaper-man. (12)

My father ran a bicycle shop (7)

My great-grandfather was the founder of the orthodox Jewish community in Hamburg. (10)

We had a beautiful homelife. My father took us all over when we were small children...to the circus...swimming...bicycling. He sent us to the opera or the theater or later to the movies.(5)

I read mostly what was required in school...you had to read some Goethe and Schiller. (10)

One of my favorite authors was Karl May. (6)

I adored Heidi. (5)

All the life was happy in the Weimar Republic, I mean compared with later... (23)

ON JANUARY 30, 1933 ADOLPH HITLER BECAME CHANCELLOR OF THE GERMAN REICH:

But in 1932, that was one year before Hitler came to power, we already experienced sort of pograms against us. (4)

When the Nazis came to power...nobody ever thought this would really be a matter of life and death, otherwise a lot more people would...have emi-grated, not only emigrated, they would have fled for their lives. (23)

Well, if you know a man, Hitler, that is the event. (12)

I remember very well April 1, 1933 when storm troopers stood before every [Jewish] store...and that is something you don't forget. (8)

So in April, 1933, I tried to enter the local high school...I was the only Jew in my class...I was totally isolated...the students shunned me .... The teacher cried and [told my mother] she had been warned that if she continued to show any positive attitude toward Jews she would be fired. (1)

We used to go to dance. We couldn't go anymore because they didn't want Jewish people. (17)

When ten kids beat you up and the teacher says, "Go ahead, hit him some more." you don't forget that. (8)

If it was a Hitler Youth doing the hitting and the Jew was the one being hit, too bad! (3)

What was very hard for people to realize all of a sudden they were no more Germans, they



Stormtroopers before Jewish store, Boycott Day, April 1, 1933. Courtesy of E. Hirsch.

were Jews. German Jews felt so very sure of their German citizenship. (15)

We told you that we were German. Only our religion was Jewish. (22)

Before Hitler came we had a Christmas tree...we considered ourselves Jewish, but this was just sort of ...a holiday. As soon as Hitler came we stopped having a Christmas tree and had a Menorah. (1)

Through the years there were laws reducing the German Jews... to being [only] Jews. (4)

We owned a factory and we owned a house and my mother was forced to sell it, what was called "under duress" getting very little money for it (1)

They came to arrest him since a lot of farmers borrowed money from him and they didn't want to pay him back, so they wanted to arrest him. (9)

My husband was a teacher in a German school and then he couldn't be there anymore. (15)

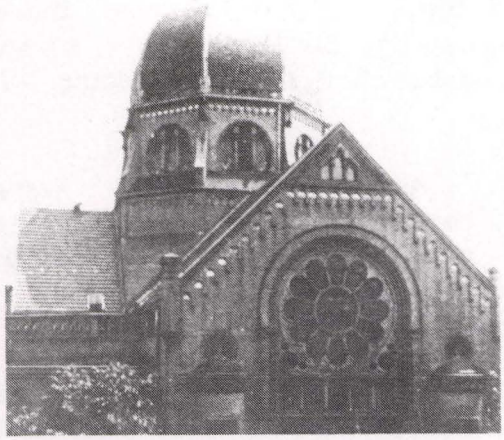
I was deported from Germany [28 October 1938] as a Polish citizen together with about 15,000 other Polish Jews....which today is almost forgotten because the later events were much more severe. (23)

ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 9-10, 1938, ALL JEWISH INSTITUTIONS, SYNAGOGUES, ETC. WERE SMASHED AND BURNED BY THE NAZIS. THIS WAS CALLED THE "KRISTALLNACHT" --THE NIGHT OF SMASHED GLASS:

I was Bar Mitzvah'd....We had a lot of relatives....Everybody was afraid to come...that was the last Bar Mitzvah in our shul. (8)

This temple I'll show you from our home town...was burned. (4)

During that night, [Kristallnacht], I was in the dormitory of a Jewish school... about 3:30 in the morning we [20 or more boys] were awakened by a bang on the door...a whole mob of people came in and with axes...they broke down the sinks, they cut down the hanging lamps... someone went to the police station, but that night the Nazis told the police not to be on



Borneplatz Synagogue (destroyed). Courtesy of E. Hirsch.



Jewish Identification card issued by the Nazis. Courtesy of Dina Ullmann.

duty .... They took us to prison and after seven days all the boys were sent to concentration camp except seven boys. I was one of them...I went to our house...there were no glass windows, only wood.... I went to the police station and the man...said to me: "They shot your mother and your father ran away over the roofs. Your brother went to call a doctor, but they chased him" (7)

Following the Kristallnacht I remember I visited our Rabbi who had been in a concentration camp.....His head was completely shaven and he was a broken man (1)

My parents I was able to get into an old age home and from there they were transported. (4)

I lived in Germany until December 1, 1941. On this day I was deported to Riga, Latvia. (11)

The young people didn't dare have children. We were afraid of Hitler. (22)

And when the English bombers came we couldn't go to the shelters, being Jews (22)

After I came back from the concentration camp, nobody from my family lived in Germany anymore. (11)

AFTER HITLER'S RISE EMIGRATION FROM GERMANY BECAME A DESPERATE RACE FOR JEWS:

It became very clear that there was no future whatsoever for the Jews, not only in Germany, but also in Europe. So everybody tried to get out. (4)

I had family--my mother had five sisters--in the United States who had lived there already 30 to 40 years, so we asked them if we could come. (8)

Almost all classes were conducted in English because everybody was getting ready to leave. (1)

My mother, my sister, and I spent two years in England and the reason for this was that there was an immigration quota. (1)

Originally I couldn't get a visa because certain people at the American consulate in Stuttgart were selling quota [numbers] to the highest bidder. (4)

I went from Germany to France, from France to Argentina, from Argentina to the United States (2)

The condition was to leave all our money. So we really arrived with nothing. (5)

I brought ten dollars, my clothing and my dowry [linens]. (17)

You couldn't take money out but we were allowed to bring our posessions. So we brought the contents of a 14 room house in large lifts. (13)

You couldn't just pick up and go. America wouldn't let you in. (9)

My brother was the last one...He said: "I have a good place. I have a good business. I would never leave." So in the last minute he had to leave or he would have been in Dachau. (17)

Family documents I could bring. I could bring some books. (19)

I brought just two books, that's all...I still have them. (8)

We had a lift that was packed in Germany. Then the war broke out. [The lift] wasn't important. (20)

They're family treasures, but actually you don't need them. You have your memories. (3)

AMERICA WAS THE PROMISED LAND, THE PLACE TO STRIVE FOR:

One of my happiest memories was when I arrived in the United States and saw the Statue of Liberty. (11)

[It was] extremely difficult for a so-called greenhorn to go to a city like Hot Springs, Arkansas (8)

I got a scholarship.... The Jewish community had raised the money for my room and board and the students of the college had raised the money for my tuition...every year until I graduated. (1)

MANY GERMAN JEWS WENT TO WASHINGTON HEIGHTS IN NEW YORK CITY:

We took them in for nothing--they came penniless, just what they had on. (17)

Everyone went to Washington Heights to be with family. And, of course, we came over with no money so we had to depend on relatives. (4)

I remember the first few weeks when we still came with that fear of the Nazis...my husband when he saw a group of people and boys, he didn't want to pass them. He said, "Let's go to a different street." (15)

My mother found an apartment on 148th Street near Broadway..to us it was heaven. (9)

My uncle , my mother's brother, had taken all our furniture...and had rented an apartment for us and my mother just sat down and cried. (1)

Well, in Washington Heights it was very easy to make friends. (8)

There were mostly German Jews living there. There were ...also Americans but it was called the "Fourth Reich." (1)

They all spoke German, the butcher, the baker, the shoemaker, everything in German. (16)

I will admit the Irish didn't care for us particularly. (3)

It was a wonderful community. I remember on 148th Street there was four, five blocks of different synagogues or stubels [one-room synagogues]. (9)

[The synagogue] was founded by conservative Jews who came from the region I came from. (13)



Maintaining tradition in Washington Heights. Courtesy E. Hirsch.

I joined a synagogue in Washington Heights, a German-Jewish congregation of which I am still a member today. (8)

Here it was one of the oldest synagogues in Washington Heights and it was a real orthodox synagogue....They were mostly from Eastern Europe while we, Germans, came from Western Europe. So we had different customs. (15)

My parents were my best friends. (9)

ONE NEEDED A JOB, ANY JOB:

My husband's first job was as a busboy in the Essex House. You know, the big hotel. [He] didn't know much English when he came over...later on [he] became a Fuller Brush Man... and much later on he went back into his old profession. He used to be a grain merchant. (5)

In 1937 I started working selling beverages in a construction company...at 230th Street, where they were building the railway...at Spuyten Duyvil. (9)

Then I got a job at a corset factory. There I picked up a little English with a bunch of Italian ladies. (17)

I didn't want to work on Shabbos in a factory so I took in boarders. (20)

I went directly to the infant and orphan home, but then you don't get well paid. (22)

TO BECOME AN AMERICAN:

I tried to learn as much English as I could. I didn't read very many German papers even though there was the Aufbau. (7)

The first half year was terrible because I didn't speak a word of English. (13)

I learned English in Germany, already (11)

I learned English, I learned. (14)

To hear American English is different from teaching English in Europe. So everybody thought I was hard of hearing. (4)

I believe as long as you are in a country, you speak the language of the country and you follow the customs of the country. That's what we believe in. (22)

My accent I will never lose. (9)

You have two languages. You dream in two languages. You read in two languages. (3)

I joined the Army and went overseas. I was in the invasion of Normandy and swam to the beach. I was one of the first Americans on the beach. (9)

When the war broke out I brought my parents to Washington Heights because I had to go to the Army. (8)

I lived in Texas because Uncle Sam sent me to Texas. (4)

I saw the end of Hitler in Nuremberg, when I was there with the American Army in 1946. (3)

I am still involved with the New World Club. We had lectures...we had social contacts...I was soccer coach. (6)

My mother cooked pretty much the same as she [had] cooked in Europe. (13)

Go back? Never! Nobody will ever see me in Germany again. When the train left we were locked in, like we were criminals. (22)

After the war, [my father's] name was put back...and when I visited with my sons I made sure I took a picture of them standing by the plaque that was dedicated to their grandfather. (1)



U.S. Soldier in France, 1944 with Edgar Hirsch among them. Courtesy Edgar Hirsch.



Gruenebaum Pastry Shop in Frankfurt c. 1920. The Bakery was across the street from the Orthodox Synagogue which is reflected in its window. This was the Israelitische Religiongesellschaft parent congregation of K'hal Adath Yeshurun. Courtesy Willi Gruenebaum.

In Germany during the worst of times, if there wouldn't have been good people there, no one would have escaped. I found them in France, I found them in Argentina....Recently my wife and I, we got an invitation from my home town to attend with other survivors, a reconciliation meeting, all expenses--airfare, hotel, etc.--paid. They even asked us if we would request kosher meals. But after all that happened, I could not accept such generosity. It would indebt me...to gratitude I do not feel. (2)

The injuries caused by the Holocaust are far from forgotten. (18)

The Berlin government invited me to come back to visit, at their expense. I could not go back to live....I am too much of an American for that (3).

Oral History: The Application of a Method

Tabitha Kirin

During the winter and spring of 1987, over 70 persons--interviewees, youngsters, consultants, docents, and museum educators--participated in a unique project involving the use of oral history testimony taken from German Jews. The subjects recall their former lives in Europe during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s and their American experience as long-time residents in New York's upper West Side Washington Heights neighborhood. The unusual thing about this project, conducted at Yeshiva University Museum under a National Endowment for the Humanities youth grant, is that the resulting 23 (half-hour) oral history interviews were conducted by youngsters, eleven through thirteen years of age, who attend local New York City public schools and Jewish day schools.

Subjects to be interviewed were chosen to afford as representative and complementary a sample as possible. They came from 21 different villages, towns, and cities (*See map.*) and represented a broad spectrum of Jewish lifestyles and beliefs. The oldest was born in 1900, the youngest in 1932.

A tightly structured questionnaire covered seven aspects of German- Jewish experience: 1) prior life and cultural identity in Germany; 2) immigration experiences; 3) arrival in Washington Heights and renewal of cultural identity; 4) re-establishment of religious and service organizations; 5) assimilation (work, education, friends); 6) comparison of German and American Jewish lifestyles; 7) overview of life and experience. The questions were carefully adhered to by the children as they met with, talked to, and taped the life stories of the interviewees. Each personal narrative (told by the person who lived it) was shared with five or more youngsters, who simultaneously acted as interviewers, taperecorder technicians, word checkers, curators of photographs/documents, and notetakers/abstractors.

Themes, as expected, developed for each of the seven questionnaire areas. Several unanticipated sub-themes appeared and were repeated. Such repetitive accounts by discrete interviewees about commonly experienced events build evidence which historians can weigh in as part of the record

of human events. The importance of this material will be left to the judgment of those scholars in a variety of disciplines for whom this testimony may offer insights and valuable personal observations of the events recounted. For German-Jewish residents of Washington Heights the material will be a mirror of their collective experience. Some interviewees earnestly took the time to make connections, discuss issues, and place their own experience in historical perspective.

In this project, oral history has served well. It has been the catalyst by which 23 discrete personal narratives have been recorded and thus become part of the record of human events. Yet, it is only a beginning. From an oral historian's perspective, the limitations of time, the strictly adhered to interview questions, and the intergenerational focus of this project itself, while collecting much relevant data, also left much unasked, and thus unanswered. Our work must now be passed on to future scholars for appraisal and with hope that it will be continued.

For the youngsters who heard these first-hand accounts of how it felt to be a Jew living in Hitler's Germany, this chapter in the human record will never be forgotten.



Interview Abstracts

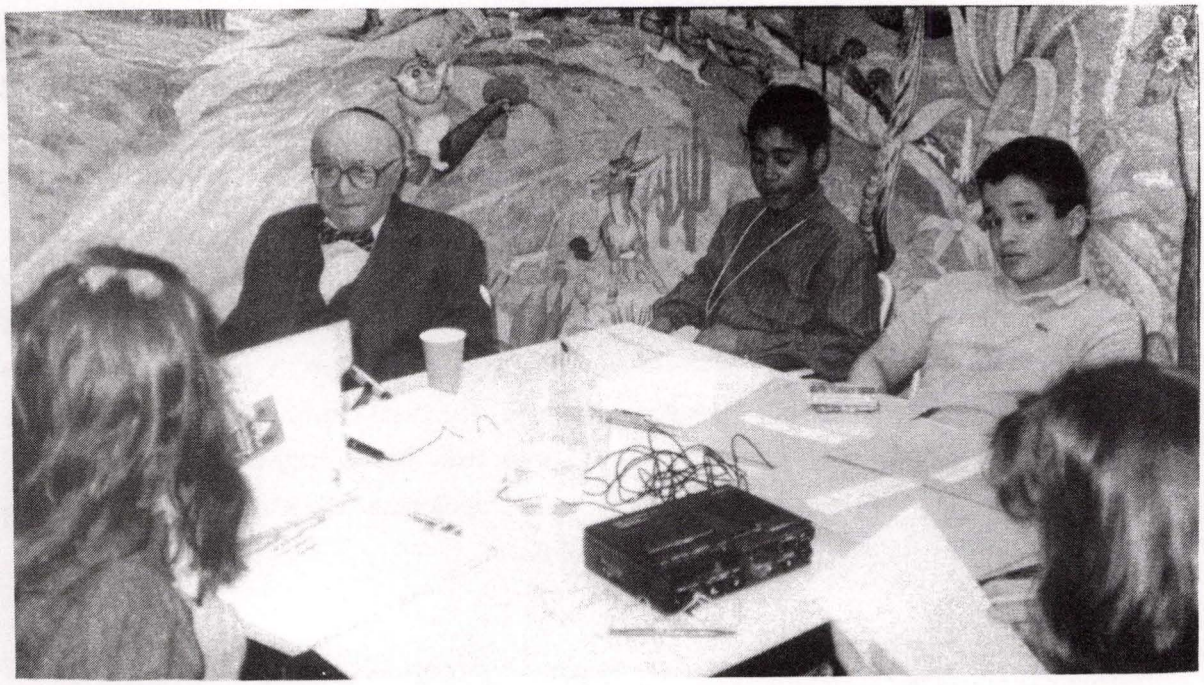
All of the 23 interviews have been abstracted by the youngsters (with careful editing by the oral historian) so that researchers can locate those interviews that may be of research value. These brief 80-word summaries give the most basic skeleton of the content of each interview. Some subjects also deposited documents (copies of deportation papers, passports, etc.) and photographs. The original interview tape is available for listening. In addition, a verbatum transcription of each interview has been made and is available for study by researchers who may apply in writing to the Yeshiva University Museum, 2520 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10033, for an appointment to examine the oral history collection on the German Jews of Washington Heights.

Interview Abstract #1, recorded 2/3/87, with Marianne Ettlinger Cohen (b. 1923) lived in Karlsruhe (198,014 pop. in 1950) Left Germany: 12/17/38 (via England) Arrived in America: October 3, 1940

Marianne Cohen was born June 3, 1923 in Karlsruhe, Germany. She and her family were very happy and comfortable. Three months after Hitler came to power, she was admitted to school with difficulty because she was Jewish. After living for five years under the Nazis, she and her family decided to leave Germany because of incidents that happened. She arrived in Washington Heights on October 3, 1940. It was very nice; there were a lot of German Jews here. She heard German spoken in the streets. Her brothers were working. She got a college scholarship and that's how she got through college. --Abstract by Eli Ifrach



Marianne Ettlinger Cohen



Justin Stern

Interview Abstract #2, recorded 2/10/87
with Justin Stern (b. 1908)
lived in Niederstetten (1,602 pop.)
Left Germany: 1933
Arrived in America: March 1945 (via France, Argentina)

Justin Stern was born on May 3, 1908 in Niederstetten, a small city in southern Germany. His life in Germany was very nice and comfortable. His father was a merchant and his mother was a housewife. In Germany he went to elementary, high school, and law school In 1933, when he was 25, he left Germany because Hitler came to power. He arrived in America in March of 1945 and lived in the South Bronx and then moved to Washington Heights. He learned about Washington Heights because it was known for being the center of German-Jewish life in New York. In America, he went to classes at the City University. He found good people all over the world. --Abstract by Shuli Bendheim

Interview Abstract #3, recorded 2/10/87
with Michael Cohn (b. 1924)
lived in Berlin (4,338,756 pop. in 1939)
Left Germany: 1934
Arrived in America: April 1934

Michael Cohn was born in Leipzig on October 1, 1924. His father was a salesman and printer. His mother was a housewife. They lived in an apartment in Berlin. He attended and was a member of the local synagogue, even though he wasn't Orthodox, and still isn't. Michael Cohn was nine years old when he left Berlin in 1934. His reasons for leaving were: harassment in school, boycotts of Jewish stores, and beatings. He chose America because his mother's four brothers were already in New York. His father started a printing business here. Michael continued his schooling in America. Eventually he became an anthropologist. --Abstract by Laura Fitch



Michael Cohn



Leni Bern

Interview Abstract #4 , recorded 2/24/87
with Fred Bern (b. 1917)
lived in Buchau (2,383 pop.)
Left Germany: March 1940
Arrived in America: March 1940

Fred Bern was born on April 13, 1917 in Buchau, Wurttemberg, Germany. He was an only child. His parents owned a store and sold glassware and porcelain. He left Germany because of the anti-semitism of Hitler. His parents did not come to America. He had trouble getting a visa, but was finally able to escape. He came to Washington Heights because relatives who lived there took him in. He went to evening school in New York. He enjoys America and hopes he doesn't have to go through the experience of Germany again. --Abstract by Aryeh Bak

Interview Abstract #5, recorded 2/24/87
with Leni Bern (b. 1912)
lived in Hannover (441,615 pop. in 1940)
Date of leaving Germany: March 1937
Arrived America: 1937

Leni Bern was born on June 19, 1912 in Hannover, Germany. She and her brother enjoyed many things. Their father often took them to entertainments. She attended a girls' school in Hannover. Later she was a kindergarden teacher in Germany. In March 1937 she left Germany. She had to leave her money behind. Upon arriving in America her first job was as a cook and her husband worked as a chauffeur. When her husband was sick, Leni sold for Fuller Brush in his place. --Abstract by Zachary Enfield

Interview Abstract #6, recorded 2/24/87
with Dr. Eric Stoerger (b. 1913)
lived Mannheim (294,957 pop. in 1939)
Left Germany: 1934
Arrived in America: 7/31/34

Eric Stoerger was born in Darmstadt, Germany, on October 5, 1913. He had a younger brother, Walter. His father was in the wholesale grain business. He lived in Friedberg until 1925 when his family moved to Mannheim where they joined the liberal synagogue. The year after Hitler's election, Eric, who had just completed his pre-med degree, was sent to live with relatives in Washington Heights. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Later he studied podiatry and opened a practice in Washington Heights. In 1952 he married his wife Margie. He has been active in religious and community life including the Aufbau-NewWorld Club for over 50 years. --Abstract by Michael Tillman



Dr. and Mrs. Eric Stoerger



Rabbi Jacob G. Wiener

Interview Abstract #7, recorded 3/10/87,
with Rabbi Jacob G. Wiener (b. 1917)
lived in Bremen (427,137) pop. in 1939)
Left Germany: 1939
Arrived in America: July,1939 (via Canada)

Jacob Wiener was born in 1917. He had a nice family life. His father owned a bicycle and repair shop in Bremen. He went to a public school in which he was the only Jew out of 700 and then to the Jewish Teachers Seminary in Wurzburg. He survived many racial incidents. His mother was killed on Kristallnacht. He left Germany in 1939, going first to Canada, then to Washington Heights to live with friends. He went to Yeshiva and to night school. Washington Heights had many more Jews then. In Germany he lived in fear. He is thankful that Washington Heights gave him and many more Jews the help they needed, and hopes it will continue. --Abstract by Dani Shanske

Interview Abstract #8, recorded 3/10/87
with Bert Adler (b. 1920)
lived in Wertheim (9,368 pop.)
Left Germany: 1936
Arrived in America: April 30, 1936

Bert Adler was born in Wertheim on November 1, 1920. His father had a butcher shop. His family belonged to a synagogue there. His mother had five sisters already living in Arkansas and Texas so he asked if he could come to live with them. On his way he stopped at Hot Springs, Arkansas for about a year, which was difficult because he was a greenhorn (foreigner). He got a job in St. Louis. When he went into the U.S. Army, he brought his parents to Washington Heights, a very nice community with many German Jewish people. He went to night school in order to learn English better. --Abstract by Niurka Zumeta

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Interview Abstract #9, recorded 3/10/87
with Lothar Brown (b. 1920) lived in Wustensachsen (2,000 pop. in 1934)
Left Germany: 1937
Arrived in America: March 1, 1937



Bert J. Adler

Lothar Brown was born in Wustensachsen-in-Roen on July 18, 1920. His father was in the cattle business, and so Lothar went to school and, in addition, had to work on the farm. They lived in a small village of 2,000 people. He belonged to a community synagogue, He left Germany in 1937 because Hitler came to power in 1933. Lothar's brother and mother came in 1936. Once here, his mother, a nurse, worked 20 hours a day to bring the other half of the family over. He attended a school and a synagogue and worked at any job he could get. He never gave up trying to have the same life that he had in Germany, but he found out that it was impossible. His life was never the same again. --Abstract by Sandra Schoenbach



Margot Stern

Interview Abstract #10, recorded 3/29/87
with Edgar Hirsch (b. 1920) lived in
Hamburg (1,711,877 pop. in 1939)
Left Germany: 1936
Arrived in America: 1939 (via Italy)

Edgar Hirsch was born in Hamburg on February 23, 1920. He had six brothers. His family was very religious and close-knit. His mother was a housewife, his father an important doctor in the field of cancer research in Germany. Edgar attended public school (1926-30) and private school from 1930 to 1935. He left Germany in 1935 because he was Jewish. The family went to Italy where his father died in 1938. Edgar came to America in early 1939. After he married in 1946, he made his home in Washington Heights, a small and peaceful community. --Abstract by Johathan Schwartz

Interview Abstract#11, recorded 3/29/87
with Margot Stern (b. 1921)
lived in Kehl (12,149 pop. in 1939)
Left Germany: 1941 (deported to Latvia)
Arrived in America: May 20, 1946

Margot Stern was born July 2, 1921 in Kehl, Germany. She had a good family life. Her father and grandfather were cattle dealers and she helped her mother at home. She attended public school and the School of Commerce in Kehl. Her family belonged to a Jewish community and attended a synagogue which was destroyed in 1938. She was deported to Riga, Latvia, on December 1, 1941. She came to America because none of her family or friends were left in Germany after the war. She arrived by ship on May 20, 1946 and was helped by her family here. She was married in 1950. In 1953 she moved to an apartment in Washington Heights. where she joined a German Jewish congregation. --Abstract by Doris Konig

Interview Abstract#12, recorded 3/29/87
with Hannah Neuhaus (b. 1921)
lived in Frankfurt (553,464 pop. in 1939)
Left Germany: 1935 (through Holland)
Arrived in America: October 28, 1939

Hannah J. Neuhaus was born on July 24, 1921 in Frankfurt-am-Main. Life was good in Germany until Hitler came to power. Her father was a newspaperman and her mother was a housewife. She herself was a student. She attended Yeshiva in Germany and continued her education in Amsterdam before coming to the United States in 1939. She first lived in Denver. She was married in 1942 and moved to Washington Heights in 1944. She found it a nice place to live. She attended evening school and college. Today she is a teacher-trainer. She feels Jews should never forget their heritage. --Abstract by Joanne Weiner

Interview Abstract#13, recorded 3/29/87
with Marion Turkel (b. 1932)
lived in Wittlich (6,994 pop. in 1945)
Left Germany: 1938
Arrived in America: November 1938

Marion Turkel, who was born in Frankfurt on January 4, 1932, actually lived in Wittlich. Her father owned his own business. She left Germany just before Kristallnacht. She had attended school briefly in Germany and when she arrived in Washington Heights in 1938, she attended P.S. 187 and then George Washington High School. She attended synagogue services at Audubon Hall. Her father was a salesman in America. Later on, her parents began a candy manufacturing business and made chocolate and marzipan. She comes from a large family. Her happiest memories from Germany were playing with neighbors and with her parents. She found it difficult to come from a small town to a very big city. --Abstract by Judy Gang



Hannah Neuhaus (on right)

Interview Abstract#14, recorded 3/29/87
with Julius Hirsch (b. 1903)
lived in Prenzlau (26,868 pop. in 1939)
Left Germany: 1939
Arrived in America:1940 (via England)

Julius Hirsch was born on August 20, 1903. His parents were traders of skins and hides. He lived as a child in Prenzlau. He had nine years of schooling. He read books about Jewish history. Family life was good as long as they were able to conduct their business. His family heard about Washington Heights from friends and relatives who were living here. He left Germany at age 36 and came to Washington Heights, which he says bore no comparison with Germany. He did not attend school in America. He learned by listening to people talk. In America, he was not confronted by anti-semitism and he was not confronted by Hitler's government. --Abstract by Doris Konig

Interview Abstract #15, recorded 4/7/87
with Dina Ullmann (b. 1911)
lived in Gross Krotzenburg (village)
Left Germany: 1938
Arrived in America: May 1938

Dina Ullmann was born in Germany in 1911. Her family were merchants. They came here in 1938, because there was nowhere else to go. They chose Washington Heights because relatives lived here. She made new friends and lived in a beautiful apartment. She had to find a job which permitted her to observe Shabbos. She attended an Orthodox school. In Germany she had been a kindergarten teacher, but her first job in America was as a cleaning lady. She had German-Jewish friends. In the beginning it was very hard to adjust. Relatives helped them. Her religious life was the same as it had been in Germany. She knew Bertha Pappenheim, who was a wonderful woman who opened housing for Jewish unwed mothers in Germany. --Abstract by Susie Shepper

Interview Abstract #16, recorded 4/7/87
with Selma Hirsch Goldschmidt (b. 1903)
lived in Berwangen (800 pop. circa 1930)
Left Germany: 1930
Arrived America: April 1930

Selma Goldschmidt was born on May 21, 1903 in a small town in Southern Germany. She grew up in her grandfather's large house. Her father was a cattle dealer. Selma attended public school for eight years. She left Germany at the age of 26 because one of her cousins who lived in New York sent her papers to come. She remembers Washington Heights at the opening of the George Washington Bridge and for many years thereafter. She was part of her local synagogue in Germany and joined a synagogue in Washington Heights. She met her husband there.
--Abstract by Dani Schoenberg

Interview Abstract #17, recorded 4/7/87,
with Martha Hirsch Strauss (b. 1907)
lived in Berwangen (village)
Left Germany: 1935
Arrived America: July 15, 1935

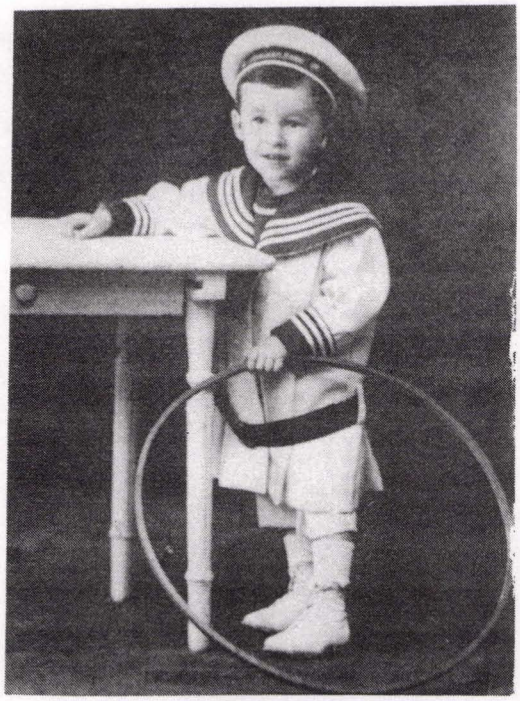
Martha Strauss was born in Germany on March 29, 1907 in a small town named Berwangen. Her father was a cattle dealer. She grew up in a family of seven children. They went to synagogue and the children enjoyed public school. They led a very happy life. Martha left Germany at the age of 28 when she began to sense a change in their lives. She arrived in Washington Heights in 1935; her sister Selma was already here. They both worked very hard to bring all the remaining family from Germany. Martha married in 1937. Her whole family lived in the same building very close and happy. She enjoyed her life here and was satisfied that she was able to help save her whole family .
--Abstract by Ali Moller



Family together,
in Washington Heights.
Courtesy of Martha Hirsch Strauss
and Selma Hirsch Goldschmidt.

Interview Abstract #18, recorded 2/2/87,
with Dr. Henry Regensteiner (b. 1923)
lived in Düsseldorf (541,410 pop. in 1939)
Left Germany: 1938
Arrived America: August 1938 (via Holland)

Henry Regensteiner was born on June 5, 1923 in Düsseldorf, Germany. His father was a physician and his mother an artist and musician. He went to public high school in Düsseldorf (1929-38) and Jewish high school in Cologne (1938). In 1938, Henry and his father came to America by way of Holland. Henry's mother, who stayed behind to look after her elderly parents, followed in the Spring of 1939. Henry attended a private school before enrolling at George Washington High School in New York City. Later, he became a college teacher. He is concerned about anti-semitism.
--Abstract by Nai Lian



Willi Gruenebaum, age 3

Interview Abstract #19, recorded 4/7/87
with Willi Gruenebaum (b. 1911)
lived Frankfurt (553, 464 pop. in 1939)
Left Germany: 1939
Arrived in America: Feburary 11, 1940

Willi Gruenebaum was born in Frankfurt in 1911. He lived in Germany for 27 years. He comes from a family of bakers, the trade for which he apprenticed. Later he followed that career. In Germany, he attended synagogue practically every day. His father, who started a bakery in 1910 in Frankfurt, was killed in World War I fighting for Germany. After Hitler came to power, events forced the family to leave Germany. Willi arrived in Washington Heights in 1940 with his wife and baby, and continued in the bakery business. --Abstract by Jeffery Stadtmauer

Abstract of Interview #20, recorded 4/28/87
with Dorothea Joseph (b.1904)
lived in Friedberg (13,743 pop.)
Left Germany: 1939
Arrived in America: 1939

Dorothea Joseph was born November, 1904 in Friedberg, Germany. Her father was a cattle dealer and her mother was a housewife. Life in Germany at that time was wonderful. There was a nice Jewish community. The schools were very good. She attended a girl's high school. There was one Orthodox congregation in her town. She left Germany in 1939 because of the circumstances with Hitler. She learned of Washington Heights from some friends who already lived there. She thought Washington Heights was beautiful when she arrived. She married in 1939, and for 30 years, took in boarders to earn extra money. She still thinks Germany was better than America, because she had a house there and didn't have to work. Here it has been much harder.--Abstract by Pninit Ivri

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Abstract of Interview #21, recorded 4/28/87
with Augusta Meyer Leeser (b. 1900)
resident of Westerstede(15,832 pop. in 1945)
Left Germany: After 1933
Arrived in America: Directly from Germany



Dorothea Joseph

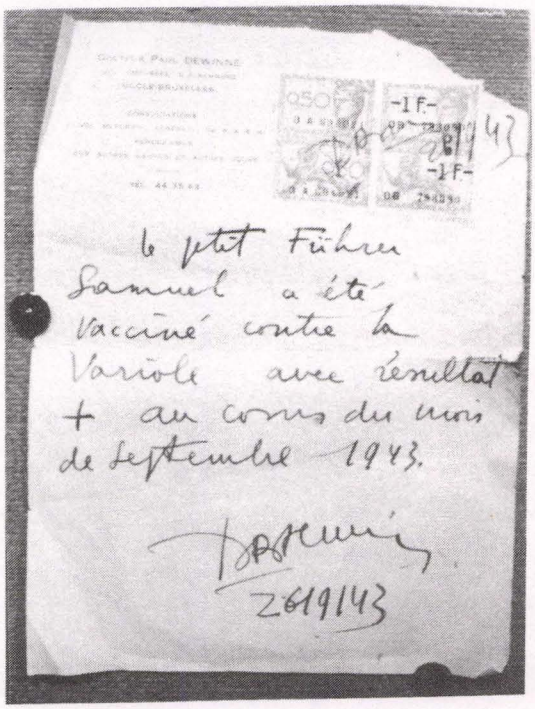
Augusta Meyer Leeser was born on August 12, 1900 in Westerstede. Her life was pleasant. She lived on a farm and she and her mother did all the housework. Her father was a cattle dealer. She attended school until she got married. She and her family left Germany the year Hitler took over. Her husband was taken to a concentration camp, but was released, and he came to America with Augusta and their daughter. The Leesers came to Washington Heights and lived with a cousin. Later Augusta went to work as a housekeeper. She attended night school to learn English. She and her family attended synagogue in Washington Heights. She was happy in Germany, but became accustomed to life in America. --Abstract by Lisa Dean

Interview Abstract#22, recorded 4/28/87
with Hedy Himmelstern (b. 1904)
resident of Beverongen (village)
Left Germany: 1941
Arrived in America: 1941 (via France, Spain)

Hedy Himmelstern lived in a small town, Beverongen. Her father, Alexander Himmelstern, owned a clothing dry goods business. Her mother, Bertha Stern, was a homemaker. She had four siblings, Julia, Elsa, Sell, and Claire. She attended Berden Lyceum, then Jewish public school, and then had nursing training in Berlin. Her fiance had died in the flu epidemic. In 1941, she and her family escaped from Germany. Hedy went to work in an orphan asylum in Far Rockaway. She and her family joined a synagogue in Washington Heights.--Abstract by Kimie Nakahata

Interview Abstract#23, recorded 5/12/87
with Abraham L. Fuhrer
(b. 1907 in Poland) lived in Cologne
Left Germany:10/28/38 (deported)
Arrived in America: 1948
(via Poland, Belgium, Switzerland)

Abraham Fuhrer was born in Poland on September 21, 1907 and moved to Antwerp, Belgium, and then to Cologne. His father was a merchant. He was always interested in Jewish literature. In 1938 he, and 15,000 other Jews who were living in Germany but were of Polish citizenship, were deported to Poland. He arrived in America in 1948. He is still very much concerned with German Jewish relations. --Abstract by Steven Manela



Vaccination Certificate needed to cross the German border for emigration. Courtesy A. Fuhrer

Introduction to the Students' Pages

Stefa Hasson

I have started this introduction to the students' reaction pages in four different ways and it remains a credit to my fellow consultants that the reader is spared a heavy philosophical analysis on the special features of adolescence or a lengthy discourse on the virtuous motivations of a teacher. Instead, what I will share with you is how a special program in the humanities became an important lesson in chemistry. This can be considered in three categories: The Rock in the Pool Effect; The Colt in the Meadow Factor; and On Being a Project's Central Nervous System. If, at the conclusion of this introduction these titles still mean nothing to the reader, please have the tolerance of accepting them as a necessary coded memory jolt for the writer

The Rock in the Pool Effect: Depending on our ages, we have all heard of, or are likely to hear of the symbolic rock thrown into a pool of water. The story demonstrates how an isolated incident (which may have at its start only 3 components--a rock, a thrower, and water) can achieve wider consequences as the ripples created radiate to greater distances. So too, a brief conversation with Rabbi Yonah Fuld and a seemingly simple phone call from Sylvia Herskowitz, Director of the Yeshiva University Museum, with the suggestion for a youth project to study the German Jews of Washington Heights turned into a human happening with an incredible radius. The initial ripples brought in a team of consultants whose own varied backgrounds (stretching from the nations of Europe to the

descendants of America's earliest colonists) ignited the original thought. With valuable endorsements from supporters in the community who saw the merits of the project, the idea won approval in Washington D.C. After that the project seemed to take on a life of its own. It reached out for and absorbed more and more people.

The four schools which participated in the project (SAR Academy, Eleanor Roosevelt Jr. High School, Kinneret Day School, David A. Stein Jr. High School) did so thanks to the recognition of principals, department chairmen, administrators, and teachers, who saw it to be a unique educational opportunity and made it available to their students.

The only criteria for accepting students into the program was interest expressed. In compiling an address file of participants, we once again saw that our radius had been greatly extended. Due to the nature of enrollment in the abovementioned schools, this community based study had actually attracted students who resided not only in the vicinity of Washington Heights but also in New Jersey, Westchester County, other areas of Manhattan, and the Riverdale, Kingsbridge, and Pelham Parkway sections of the Bronx. Whatever these children brought home from their weekly sessions was travelling even further because of their diverse ethnic backgrounds. In addition to the anticipated interest from the descendants of German as well as other European Jews, the project attracted children of more recent immigrants from Israel, China, Korea, Japan, Spanish and French speaking regions of Latin America, and possibly other areas not obviously identifiable (no actual census was taken). Together they intended to study yet another group of people - separated from all of them by the factor of time.

The interviewees learned of this project either on their own, through relatives or friends, or were recommended by local institutions such as the Fort Tryon Nursing Home. For the students in this project, they were living representatives of the German-Jewish culture. Their generous sharing of memories, photographs, papers, and artifacts sharpened our awareness and allowed us to document what happened to



Micrographic design by Kimie Nakahata

them as part of the twentieth century tragedy of German Jews who re-established themselves in Washington Heights.

Putting this number of people together required at least one ripple in this pool to reach that category of persons called "angels" (known in museum language as docents) who respond to calls for assistance. Fortunately for us, Jeanette Sachs, Lucy Lang, and Lisa Messinger were willing to roll up their sleeves in a very real sense of the word (as you may see elsewhere in this brochure).

The Colt In the Meadow Factor: Adhering to the first bit of advice I mentioned, I will only state that in all probability you are well aware of the characteristics of American young people. The need for movement, the search for the new, the playful and sometimes excessive preoccupation with self are in sharp contrast with the enticements offered in this project. To look back before looking forward, to look at others as well as self, to sit quietly and listen, to write after a day of writing--these were some of the components of the oral history interview. In all honesty, it was harder to restrain some colts than others in this meadow, but PROUDLY, there are 15 hours of taped interviews, abstracts, written records of documents and effects, personal recollections and exchanges remembered and a tremendous sense of belonging, understanding, and sharing the same world.

On Being a Project's Central Nervous System: You may reasonably ask, on what basis does one assume such a title? It actually is a direct result of a second consultant's (Tabitha Kirin) saying "You are a central nervous system. You move, supply, and juggle. You have transported students from various schools, tied them into working with museum personnel, interviewees, architects, and photographers. Without this the project

could not flow."

As the only person I know to lay claim to such credentials I am prepared to state: As Central Nervous System one will be, at times: slightly nervous, just plain nervous, or very, very, nervous. Consider the following:

1) Snow is forecast and you only have to get four schools together at the same place at the designated time.

2) Everything is in session EXCEPT transportation, despite the accumulated snow.

3) Students who wear sneakers despite snow forecasts (this is a universal in all schools involved) and moan about cold toes.

4) A telephone call from Jeannette Ornstein advising of a possible strike at the University, to be determined 6AM Tuesday morning.

5) Worrying about how so many different people will interact. Do the generations and accents understand each other?

6) Communicating with four schools, consultants, and museum staff on no time.

7) Snacks and children, children and snacks.

8) Van drivers who sulk if you don't play trivia.

9) A brochure which has to be done before it can possibly be done.

As Central Nervous System one will feel terrific to hear:

1) Students who upon learning that there will be a voluntary wind-up work session respond by saying, "Oh yes, we are coming, we want to read every transcript." (A. Moller and S. Schoenbach)

2) Children who come to you as the project is ending asking: "Can we still join? Can we at least come once?" (R. Dreisinger, J. Muller)

3) Students who see you and ask " Will you do it again next year? I would so much like to participate?" (Seventh Grade, Kinneret Day School)

4) Students who identify " It's wonderful to see that even when you are in your eighties you have not lost your youth, and you will be treating your brother or sister the way you always did." (A. Bak and others)

5) Students who are hosting an Atlanta, Georgia school and request permission to bring their visitors to a session.

6) Students' creation of an archive containing original source material.

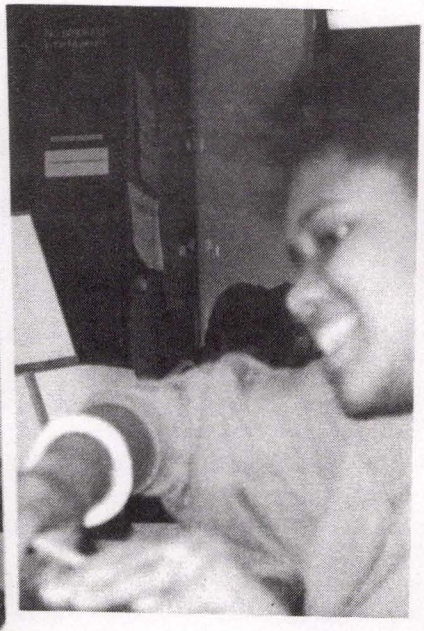
7) Sharing with students the undeniable evidence of the thread of human strength and resilience.

8) The student quotes which follow this introduction indicate that this rock in this pool will be moving the waters long after our final session.

What I had set out to do briefly has become a lengthy bit of reading and I still feel unfinished. In all fairness, however, it is time for the students to relay their own impressions.









Student Reactions

The interviewers were as nervous as the interviewees.

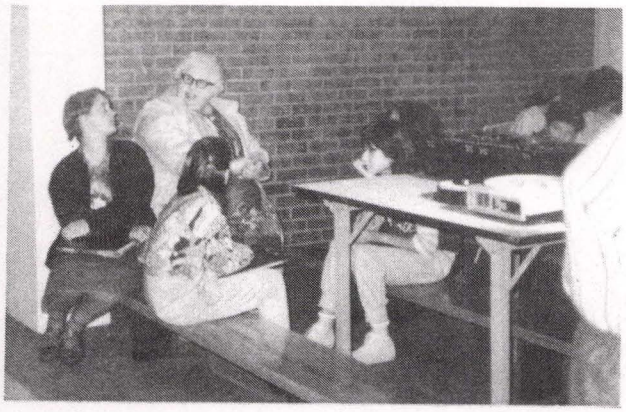
--Laura Fitch

The people who volunteered did so because they feel the obligation to share what happened with others. And telling their story makes them feel better.

--Laura Fitch



Drawing by Yonit Bisk



Their lives in Germany were so nice it was devastating to leave, and very scary to come to America

--Lisa Dean

We saw how they reacted when they reminisced about the "Old Country." We saw how they reacted when they talked about what they went through.

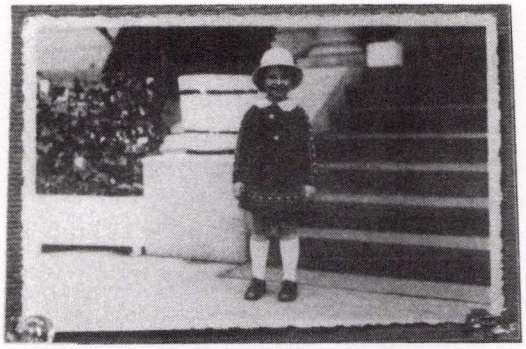
--Haya Phillips

The pictures were very significant. I think people should see what Germany was like before World War II.
--Matthew Hartstein

I think that they felt good that they could share something with a younger generation...the cups, photos, and books. I think those were very important.
--Ophira Boritzer

I feel obliged to them by hearing their stories. I feel like I've been there.
--Dina Korotkin

I learned from the interviews a variety of both bad and good!
--Alycia Gultz



Marion Turkel, 1934.

I think that I have learned lots about history being a witness.
--Ayal Chomsky



Warsaw, 1936-7
Courtesy A. Fuhrer

When I interviewed Rabbi Weiner and we had turned off the tape recorder and he said he was done then he said can I say one more thing--and he explained to us how his mother was murdered and the Nazis would not let them help her. --Ali Moller



Lothar Brown

I know how they felt,
how it was, what
happened, and I
have to pass it on.
--Pninit Ivri

I now feel how these people
were treated--knowing is one
thing but feeling is another.
--June Levine

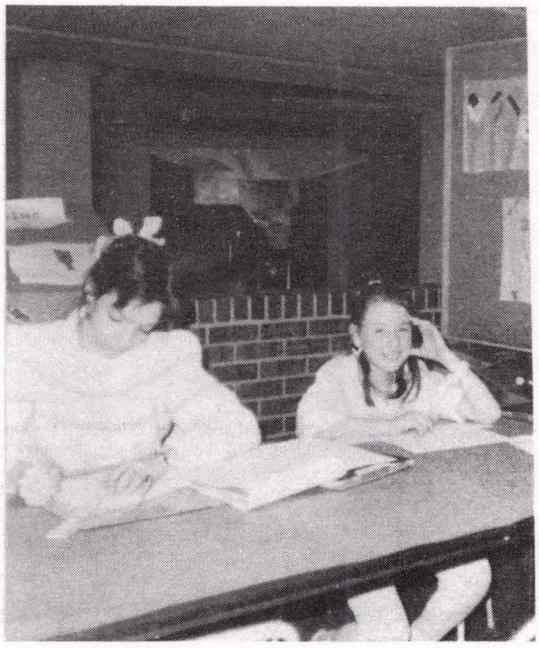
We can remember everything
that they said so that we should
never have to relive that.
--Jennifer Akpabla

I did hear these German
Jews' lives in Germany and in
the U.S. from them and not from
a book.
--Kimie Nakahata

I think they felt sad
because they were reminded
of the Holocaust.
--Michael Tillman

One lady said her happiest
moment was when she saw
the Statue of Liberty.

..It strikes me as strange
because to me the statue
means liberty and freedom
but it isn't my happiest
memory
--Joanne Weiner



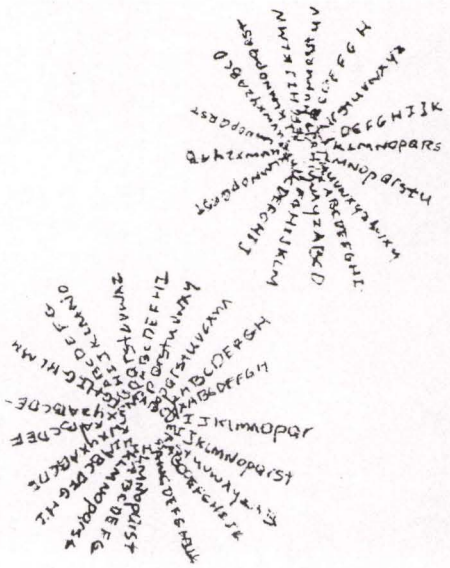
I learned that there is much
more to survivors than just
one usual story. Each one
had different incidents and
things that they told us about.
--Ophira Boritzer

RECORDING THE ELDERLY:
A LIFE LONG EXPERIENCE

Today I would like to share with you,
My experiences at Y.U;
To interview, to meet, and record,
Those elderly individuals whom history has restored;
In good health in Washington Heights,
For us to greet on Tuesday nights;
What a joy to hear them tell and relate,
Our thirst for stories they could not satiate;
Their tales of their lives, of both good and bad,
At times made us joyful, at times made us sad;
What a lovely experience to sit at the side,
Of one whose "Joie de vivre"
and faith is quite alive;
Thanks to all of you who made it happen,
Every moment a joy, every moment a
Kiddush Hashem. *

--Sandra Schoenbach

* Hebrew sanctification of God's name



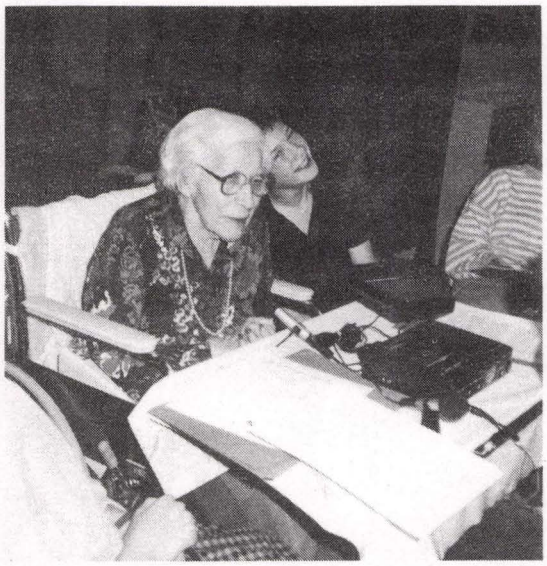
A person said that they
might go back to Germany
for a visit, but they
would never live there again.
--Sima Narvaez

I don't think we owe them
anything--but our interest
in what they have to say.
--Shuli Bendheim

I think that it was very
important for people to see
the Death Certificates to
prove to people who doubt
that Holocaust really existed.
--Dani Schoenberg

By listening to the interviews,
I learned a few perspectives on
German life before the actual
happening of the Holocaust, and
how and why people settled in
the Washington Heights area.
--Steven Manela

I got so involved with Dr. & Mrs. Stoerger that they invited me to their house for dinner and after to go to synagogue--Alycia Gultz



Hedy Himmelstein

Thank them (the interviewees)
from the bottom of our hearts.
--Sandra Schoenbach

The wind hits my face
And the tears sting my cheeks
As the boat leaves the shore,
I am leaving my home.
I am starting a new life
In a place to which I have never been.

Here I am in my new apartment
in my new town
in my new country
This is my new life.

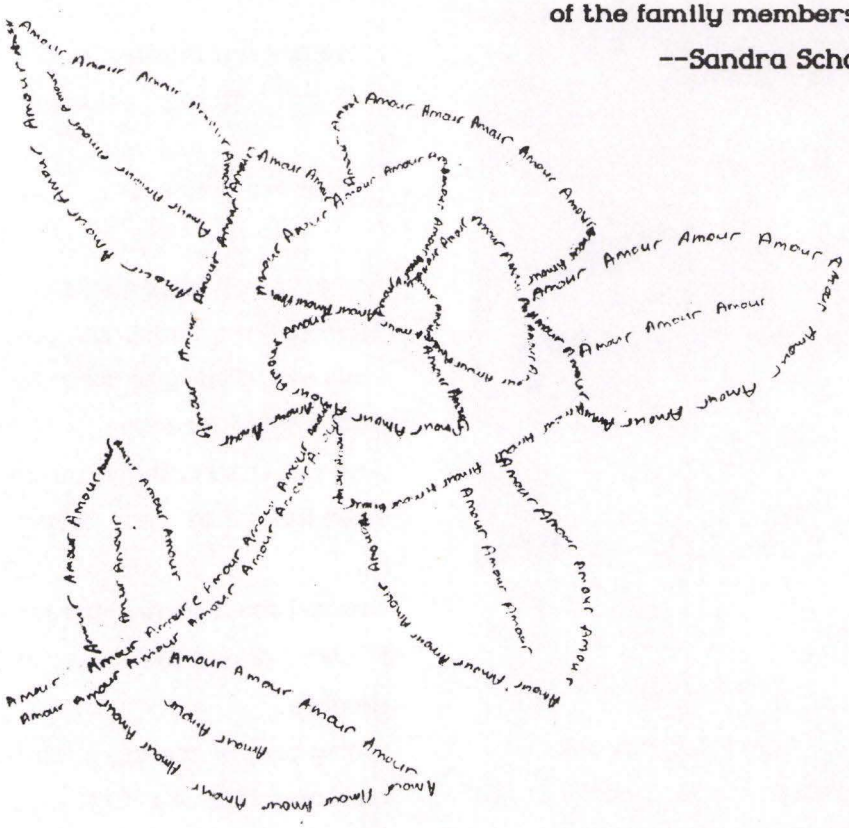
Sometimes it gets so hard
They call me "lousy refugee"
I left everything to come to
This land of freedom
And yet they call me names
With hatred in their voices.

Today I am a grown-up American citizen
I own a small shop in Washington Heights
Many people are my friends
I am no longer a refugee,
This is my home. --Laura Fitch

I have a lot of things
which mean a lot to me.
--Niurka Zumeta

People had to work much
harder for food than we
do today. People had very
tough lives such as being
forced to leave Germany
because of Hitler.

People were separated
from their families while
trying to bring the rest
of the family members over.
--Sandra Schoenbach



How suddenly you were
a person and then you were
not--with no friends.
--June Levine

One interviewee's mother
was killed in Kristallnacht,
and the Nazis wrote died
instead of shot..(Death
Certificate)...Falsification
of Document!
--Judy Gang

I think getting people
interviewed was hard.
--Anat Raviv



Verifying transcripts

These people's lives
were shared with us
even though it hurt them to
repeat it....I know things I
never knew before in times
before me or maybe even
my parents times.
--Niurka Zumeta

The whole experience
will stick in my mind.
I will never forget it.
Lothar Brown started
tearing.
--S. Schoenbach

The Yeshiva University Museum program was for me a very special experience. It has shown me many things that I am thankful for. Not only did I learn the facts about the German Jews of Washington Heights, but I learned about the feelings of these people. I found out what really happened in their lives, how strong they were, how hard they worked and how much pain they went through. In interviewing the German Jews I feel as if I became a link in helping to save their memories so that they will never be forgotten.
--Ali Moller

The two sisters who were
each other's best friends....
--Aryeh Bak

I learned how they used to
live and how their lives
changed in America.
--Yonit Bisk

I think that they felt good
for all the old knowledge that
they will have shared, to be put
in a book in all libraries all
over the world, for future
references.
--Sima Narvaez



Samuel and Rosa Gruenebaum, circa 1880
Courtesy Willi Gruenebaum

Their information is
important...they know lots
of information that we
don't know, so we
interviewed them so they
could share their
knowledge with us.
--Nai Lian

I always thought that we
should concentrate on
the present, forget the past.
But now I know always
to remember these years
and never forget.
--Alycia Gultz

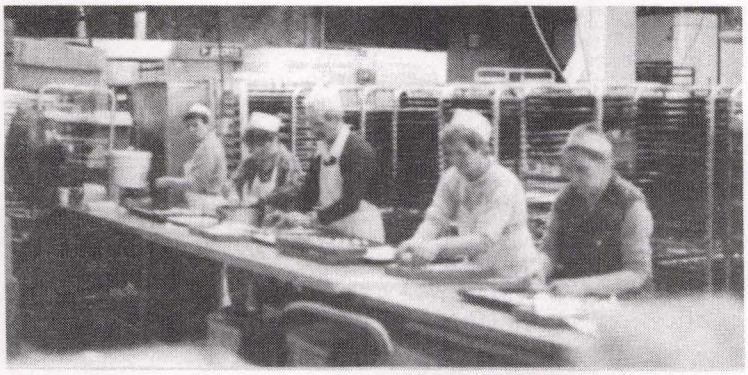
Bus Tour of Washington Heights



Walking up Bennett Ave.
after the bus broke down



Upstairs in the "Breuer"
Synagogue



The Sova Assembly Line

Inside the Sova Bakery



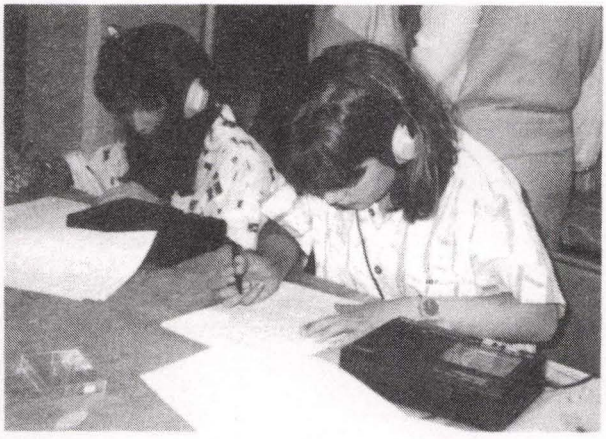
Oral History Interviews















At Fort Tryon Nursing Home, interviewing Augusta Meyer Leeser

Synagogue Model Building Workshop



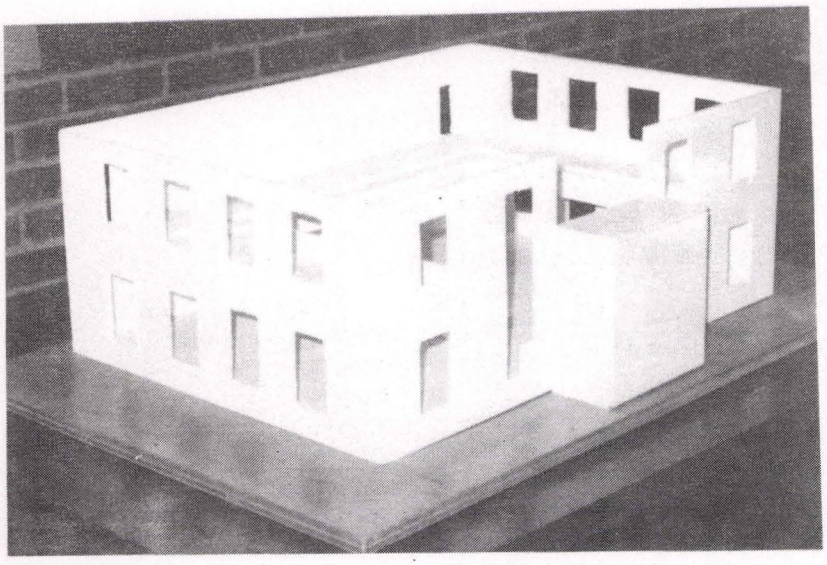


Building a model of a typical German Jewish synagogue based on a visit to Congregation K'hal Adath Yeshurun Breuer's synagogue...

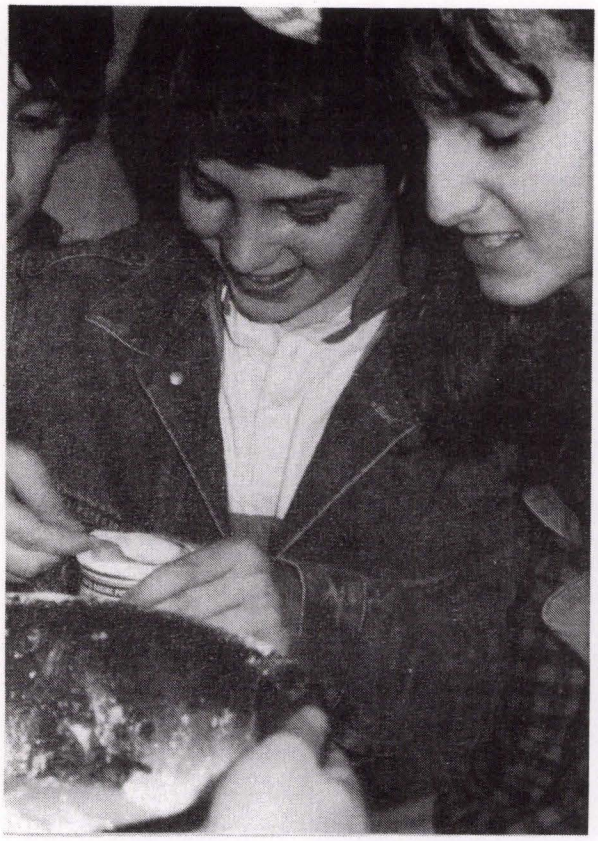


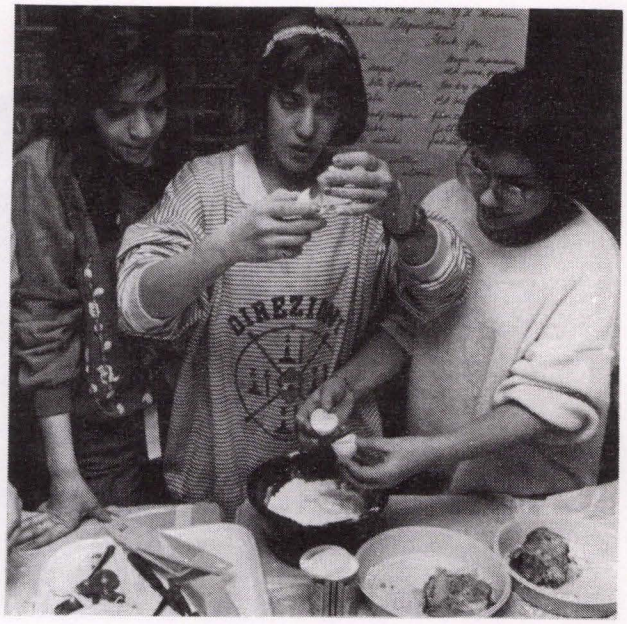
Under the direction of Architect Daniel Hammerman and his assistants Susan Hinkson and Robert Trick





Food Day



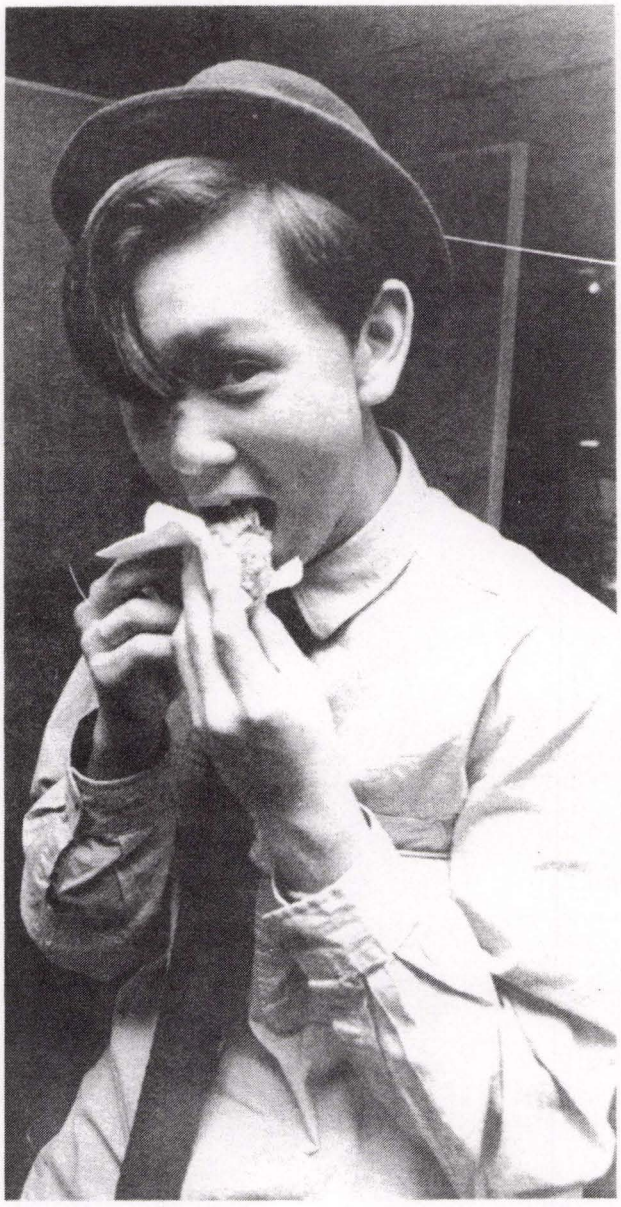




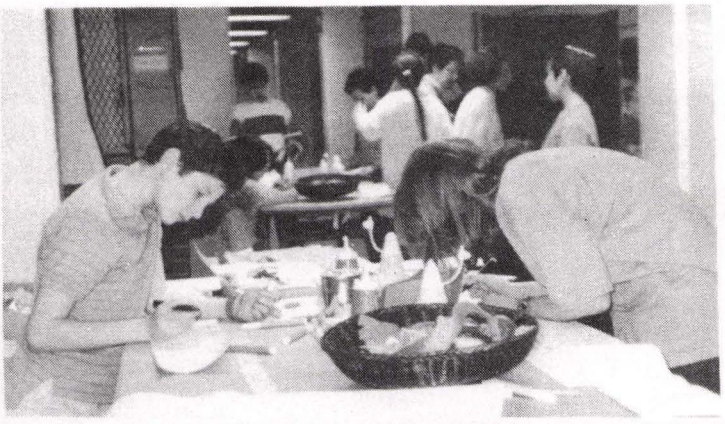




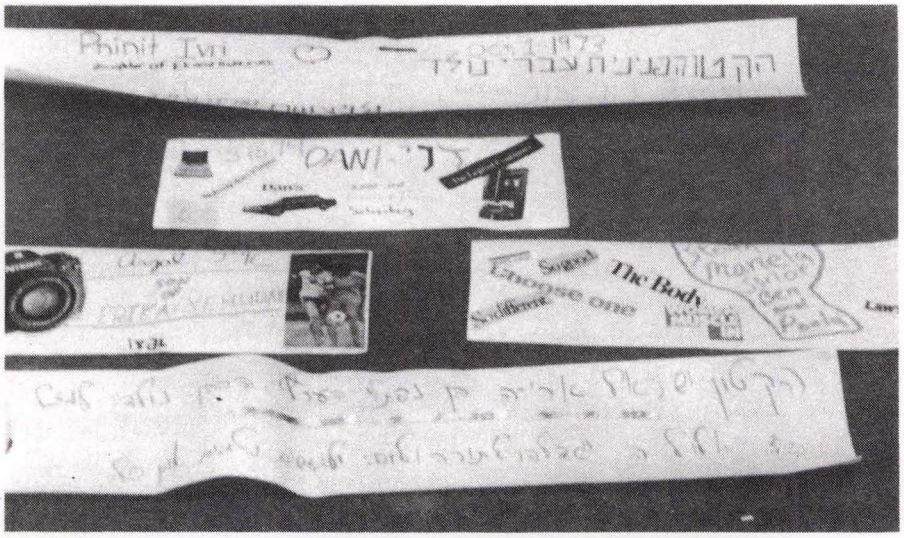
Led by Jesse Boone of Gruenebaum's Bakery, students prepared strudel. Lucy Lang showed them how to make Haman dough boys and Jeannette Ornstein helped them cook Gruenkern soup.

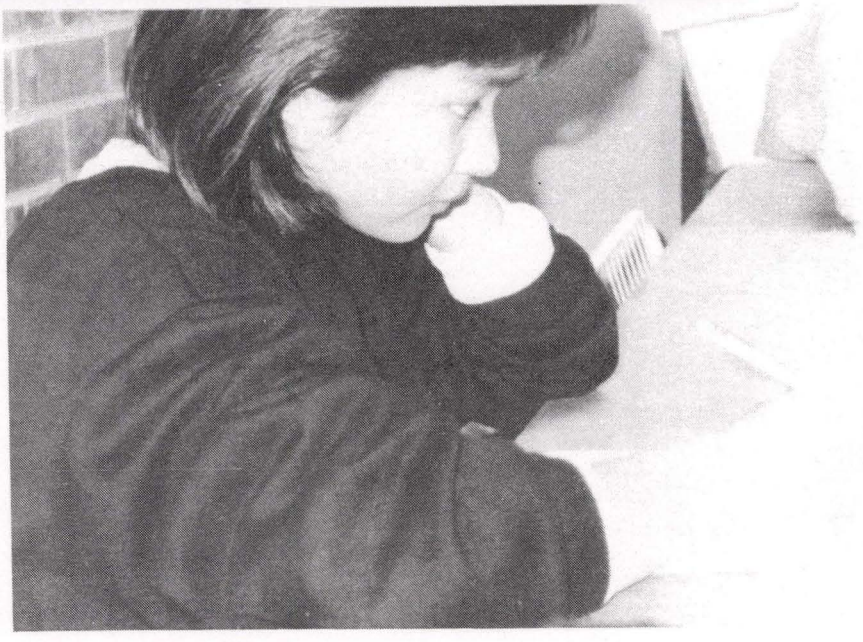


Finished slices of strudel were donated by Gruenebaum's Bakers and immediately consumed!



Wimpel and Micrography Workshops





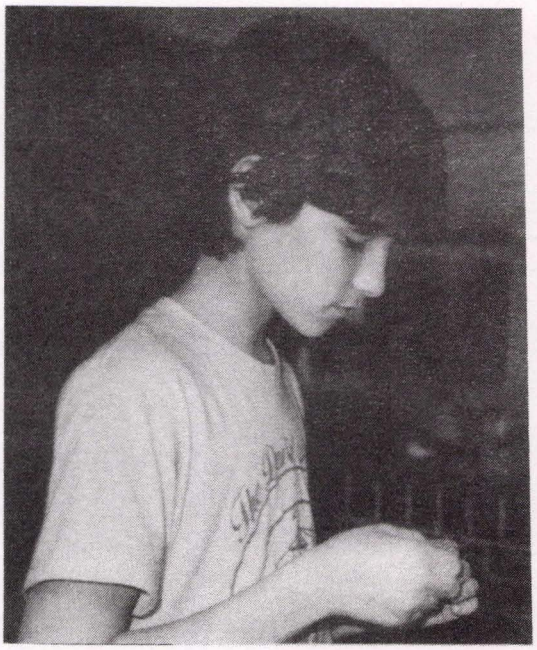
Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear Fuzzy Wuzzy had no hair Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't fuzzy was he, one day Gypsy was a

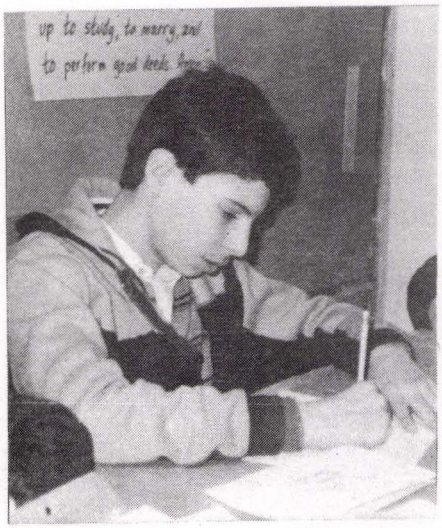
on the mind of a pimple this is

was thinking: Despite the pimple the acne was nothing he can

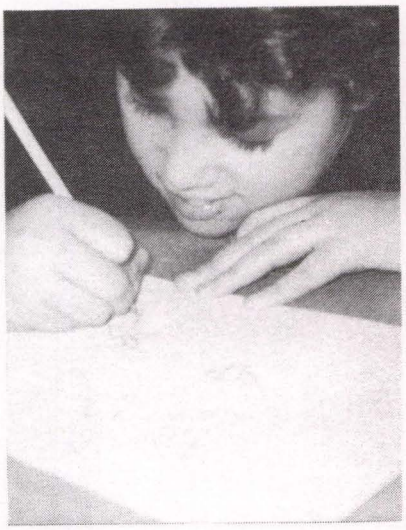
Once upon a time there was a princess and a princess she was very pretty and she had no problems except for one little thing. Along came a prince and spoke "The first thing you learn about micrography is to

Once upon a time there was a princess and a princess she was very pretty and she had no problems except for one little thing. Along came a prince and spoke "The first thing you learn about micrography is to





Once upon a time there was a princess and she was fifty feet tall. The doors are red violet



small fast hand writing. Oh. This is the best forget what I was saying I can't think of the rest.

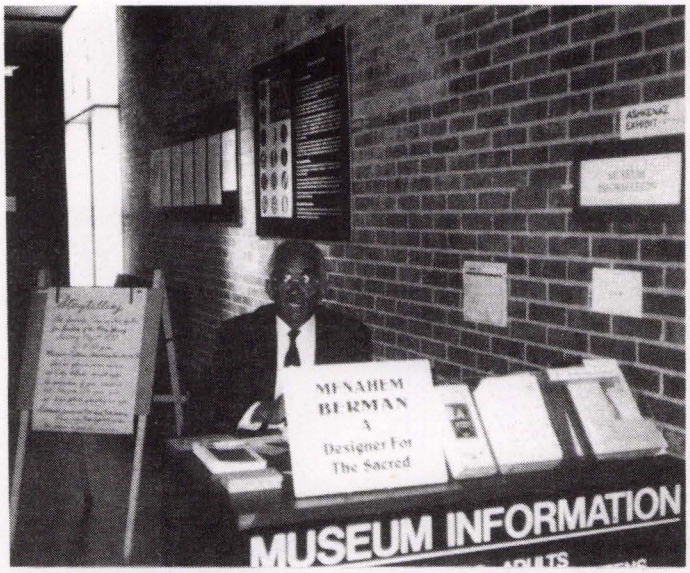
Visit to Mikveh



Rabbi Hoffman explains the Ritualarium (Mikveh)



At Home in the Museum





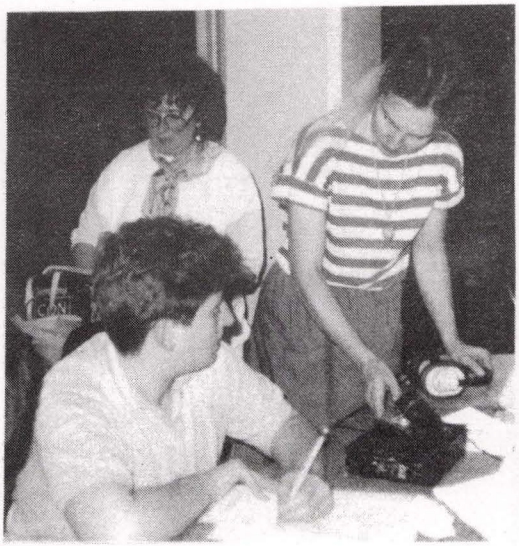




Debriefing









PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

Winter 1987

Session #	Date	Planned Activities
1	Jan. 13	Orientation, Meeting the Staff, Guided tour of Museum's Ashkenaz Exhibit as motivator
2	Jan. 20	Overview. "Ashkenaz Puppet Show," Sample "Oral History" interview with Michael Cohn by Tabitha Kirin
3	Jan. 27	Bus Tour of Washington Heights Neighborhood including stops at Sova Bakery and Adath Yeshuron
4	Feb. 3	Oral History Interviewing/Model Building "Breuer's" synagogue
5	Feb. 10	Oral History Interviewing (reversed participants) continuation of Model Building with Daniel Hammerman, Robert Trick, Susan Hinkson
6	Feb. 24	Oral History Interviewing/group visit to Mikveh
7	Mar. 3	Food Day: Strudel with Jesse Boone Haman Dough Boys with Lucy Lang
8	Mar. 10	Oral History Interviewing/Wimpel Workshop led by Jeannette Ornstein
9	Mar. 17	Micrography/Slide Show/Workshops led by Jeannette Ornstein
10	Mar. 24	Bruno Stern's Family Slide Show, presented by his wife Lessel Stern. Followed by discussion
11	Mar. 29	Sunday Session of Oral History Interviews
12	Apr. 7	Oral History Interviewing /Whimpel Workshop (videotaped by District 6)
13	Apr. 28	Oral History Interviewing (at Fort Tryon Nursing Home/Model Building
14	May 5	"German Literature, Music & Games" Lecture by Michael Cohn/ Debriefing Session led by Stefa Hasson
15	May 12	Oral History Interviewing/Creation of Oral History Archive/Abstract Writing Exhibit Labels/Debriefing continued/ Model Refining
16	May 19	Archival Labelling and Sorting/ Creation of Map (cities and towns in Germany where interviewees lived)/ Writing project responses/Synagogue Model completion/reviewing & verifying transcripts against tapes
17	May 26	Wind-up Activities/Assemblying material--photography, documents, quotes/Letter Writing, Archival Completion
18	May 31	Closing reception & Exhibit Opening "History Revealed" Presentation of Brochure

Acknowledgements

This project could not have been accomplished without the assistance and cooperation of many people. We acknowledge the help of the principals and staffs of our participating schools in reaching the children:

Rabbi Yonah Fuld, Principal, and his associates Audrey Schurgin, Rabbi Joel Cohn; and Rabbi Sheldon Schwartz of the SAR Academy, for helping us to be flexible and function smoothly. To Lillian Levine for her willingness to serve as a message clearance center and to Rivka Ivri for her clerical assistance.

Howard Gross, Principal, Phyllis Williams and especially Bob Shafran of Eleanor Roosevelt Jr. H.S. for their assistance and cooperation in helping us to implement this program.

Norman Kaufman, Principal, Joseph Imperial, Assistant Principal, of David A. Stein Jr. High School for helping us reach their students, and particularly Harvey Losak who served as a valuable liaison in communicating with students.

Asher Abramovitz, Principal, Kinneret Day School for cooperating with us and especially Harold Levine for being a "facilitator par excellence".

Classic Coach and the drivers — who always got us there!

In order to process the information it was necessary to translate a number of documents from German to English. For this service we relied on the expert help of Horst Schultz and Irmgarde Lukmann. We are also grateful to Barbara Fasciani for transcribing our documents.

For assistance and advice in arranging our specialized workshops we are grateful to: Dean Egon Brenner, Yeshiva University, Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Erlbach, Shira Seplowitz, Rabbi Avrohom Hoffman of K'hal Adath Yeshurun. Selma Twersky, Fort Tryon Nursing Home for giving us access to and valuable advice for interviews at the home. Honey Gruenebaum Banin for arranging the baking segment of our Food Day and for giving us a wonderful experience under the direction of Jesse Boone.

Although most of the photographs were taken by the children, we are indebted to Norman Goldberg, head of Yeshiva University's Photography Department for additional photographs. Before our cameras arrived, Paul Basker of the museum staff served as interim photographer.

We would like to thank Sova Bakery for hosting our visit to a modern bakery and generously fortifying us for the remainder of the tour that day with delicious samples.

We are grateful to Gruenebaum's Bakery for instructing us in the preparation of strudel and providing us with already completed samples for immediate consumption. We are especially appreciative to Randi Glickberg and Fairway for their generous donations of food and drink for each session.

A complete list of project supporters, staff, consultants and participants can be found on the inside front cover and on the back cover.

We want to thank Jordy Torrent video/cameraman of District Six, Board of Education, N.Y.C. for his fine work in producing the videotape of this project.

(This publication was produced by Stefa Hasson, Tabitha Kirin, and Sylvia Herskowitz.)

Project Participants

CONSULTANT STAFF:

Stefa Hasson, *Project Coordinator*
Tabitha Kirin, *Oral Historian*
Michael Cohn, *Anthropologist*
Daniel Hammerman, *Architect*
Jeannette Ornstein, *Project Supervisor*
Sylvia A. Herskowitz, *Project Director*

DOCENTS:

Lucy Lang
Jeanette Sachs
Lisa Messinger

INTERVIEWEES:

Bert J. Adler
Fred Bern
Leni Bern
Lothar Brown
Marianne Ettlinger Cohen
Michael Cohn
Abraham L. Fuhrer
Selma Hirsch Goldschmidt
Willi B. Gruenebaum
Hedy Himmelstern
Edgar Hirsch
Julius Hirsch
Dorothea Joseph
Augusta Meyer Leeser
Hannah Neuhaus
Dr. Henry Regensteiner
Justin Stern
Margot Stern
Dr. Eric Stoerger
Martha Strauss
Marion Erman Turkel
Dina Ullmann
Rabbi Jacob G. Wiener

STUDENTS:

Jennifer Akpabla
Boaz Amidor
Aryeh Bak
Shuli Bendheim
Sarah Betancourt
Yonit Bisk
Ophira Boritzer
Jonathan Carpio
Ayal Chomsky
Lisa Dean
Zachary Enfield
Laura Fitch
Judy Gang
Osiris Garcia
Alycia Gultz
Matthew Hartstein
Eli Ifrach
Pninit Ivri
Yee-Jin Kim
Doris Konig
Dina Korotkin
June Levine
Nai Lian
Steven Manela
Brigine Marte
Alexandra Moller
Kimie Nakahata
Sima Narvaez
Sheri Ornitz
Haya Phillips
Anat Raviv
Sandra Schoenbach
Dani Schoenberg
Franklin Suarez
Jonathan Schwartz
Dani Shanske
Susie Shepper
Jeffrey Stadtmauer
Michael Tillman
Joanne Weiner
Niurka Zumeta