

A study guide to accompany:

***An Unbroken Chain* by Henry A. Oertelt**  
**With Stephanie Oertelt-Samuels**

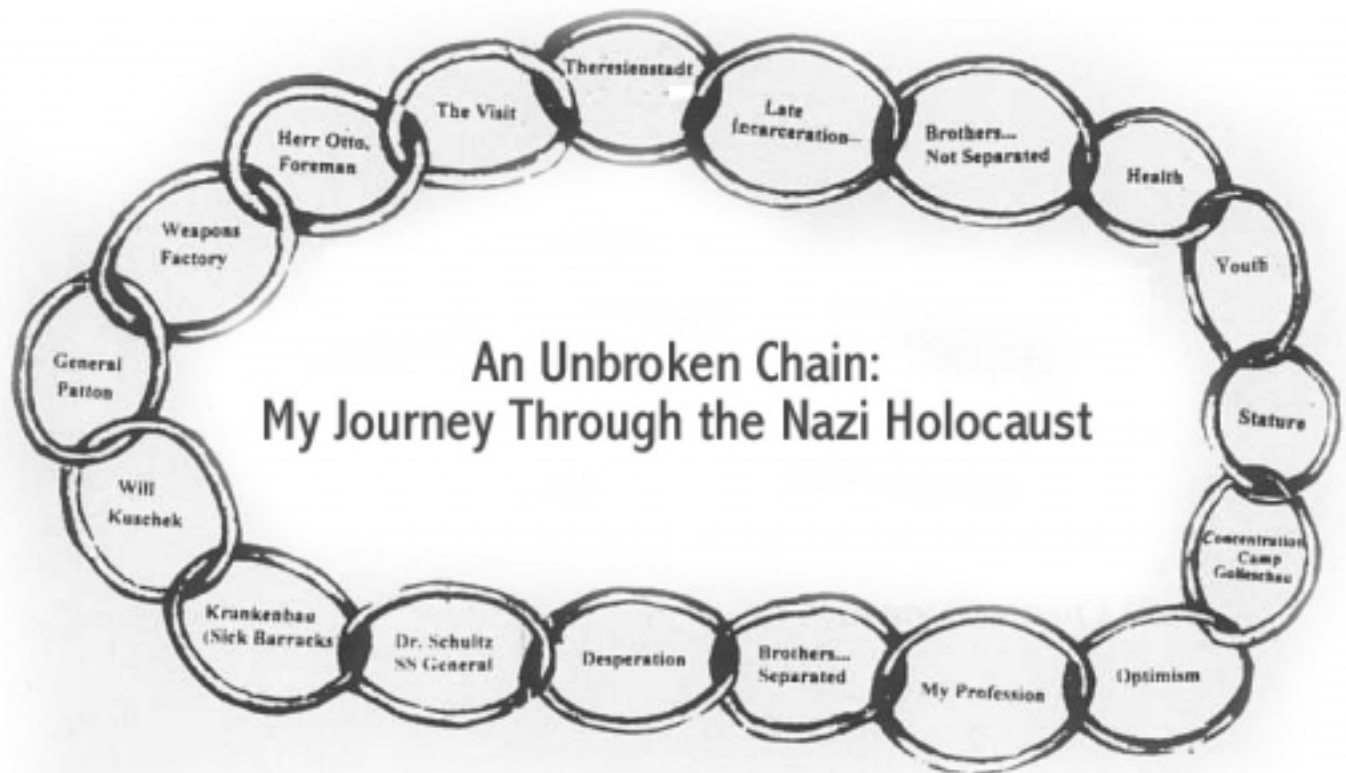
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*“If you absolutely have to hate...hate HATE!”*

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*“If you absolutely have to hate...hate HATE!”*



**The chain of life, depicting all 18 chapters, in order, can be used as a visual aid.**

***“If you absolutely have to hate...hate HATE!”***

## **Introduction**

In my lectures I always try to emphasize one very important fact: That it is important to recognize that the reality of the Holocaust, as well as every other action of genocide, past and present, is rooted in deep-seated hatred and bigotry.

I am grateful for the many letters and remarks that I have received over the years from young people and adults whose eyes are being opened to that reality. I am pleased that *An Unbroken Chain, My Journey Through the Nazi Holocaust* is now being used in universities, high schools and middle schools as a textbook.

The purpose of this accompanying study guide is to assist educators as they lead their students through the related discussions, projects and evaluations.

My sincere hope is that a Holocaust education program designed with activities found in this booklet, combined with the a reading of my personal story will lead students to achieve a deeper understanding of the dangers of remaining silent, indifferent, and apathetic. We all must be cognizant of the tragedy of the perpetuation of racism, violence and terrorism and understand that we can make a positive difference in this world.

I am grateful to the dedicated persons that have invested their precious time to design this study guide.

Henry A. Oertelt

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### **Pre-Reading**

1. What do you know about the Holocaust? What was it? What was the cause? How many people were affected? How does it still affect all people today?
2. What is the difference between prejudice and discrimination?
3. What are some experiences you have had with prejudice or discrimination?
4. When thinking about those examples, what role did you play? Were you the victim, the oppressor, the bystander, the witness, the survivor?
5. What is respect? How do people *show* respect? What does it *look* like? What are some behaviors that model respect? What do you get in return for showing respect?

### **Post-Reading**

1. How do you think this book might make a difference in today's world? How did it affect your view of humanity, of prejudice, of courage?
2. When you hear the word "courage," what adjectives come to mind? Give some examples of people in today's world whom you consider to be courageous. What have they done to show their courage?
3. Make your own personal identity molecule. What other roles do you take on? (student, daughter/son, captain, etc.) Do any of them overlap? What does this tell you about who you are?
4. With regard to Henry's "chain," discuss fate versus choice in his survival. Describe an example from the story to illustrate your point.
5. What does Henry's story add to your understanding of the Holocaust? If you have read other stories or seen films/documentaries about the Holocaust, what do you think *An Unbroken Chain* adds to the message?

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## **Journal Questions and Reflections**

### **PROLOGUE/INTRODUCTION**

1. Why do you think Henry Oertelt wrote this book? What does writing this historical account mean to him? What does it mean to us?
2. Why do you think he uses the metaphor of an unbroken chain to frame his book?
3. Using what you know about WWII, how do you see Kristallnacht affecting him personally?
4. In what ways did he fight back?
5. Describe a time when you or someone else experienced discrimination because of religion, race, or gender. When and where did this happen? How did you feel? What did you do?

### **FIRST/SECOND/THIRD LINK**

1. What were the dangers of Henry not wearing the yellow star?
2. If he had been caught at the Weapons Factory, how might his story have changed?
3. What was his first impression of Herr Kaspar? What happened that changed Henry's mind about Herr Kaspar?
4. First impressions can be misleading. Describe a time when you changed your mind about a person after getting to know him or her better, or write about a time when you did not make a good first impression and someone else changed his or her mind about you after getting to know you better.
5. Why was Henry worried about his mother? How was he able to find her?
6. What happened to his girlfriend, Rita, and her family? Why do you think Rita did not try to escape? Describe how Henry and Sonja, Kurt's fiancée, escaped the SS.
7. Throughout his book, Henry describes the times ordinary people helped him, despite the risks to themselves. Write about a time when you risked your reputation or safety to help someone who was in a difficult situation, or describe a time when someone did this for you.

### **FOURTH LINK**

1. Why does Henry refer to Theresienstadt as a "two-faced concentration camp"?
2. Describe the ways in which he and other Jewish prisoners worked together as a community in an effort to survive the harsh conditions.
3. What did he discover about the education, age, and profession of many of the Jewish prisoners? Why did the Nazis place so many well educated artistic prisoners at Theresienstadt? What purpose would this serve the Nazis?
4. Describe the ways in which Hitler used propaganda to fool the public about the conditions in the concentration camp. What does Henry describe as the "ultimate cloak of deception"?
5. How do you see the "propaganda machine" at work in contemporary society? Think in terms of politics, government, advertising, music, and television programs/movies.

**FIFTH—TENTH LINK**

1. What went “wrong” with Henry’s affidavit?
2. In what ways did Henry and Kurt support each other during this difficult time?
3. Think of a time from your own life when having family members or good friends with you was crucial. What was the situation? What made their support critical for your well being, and how did they help you?
4. Explain how the dehumanization process reached its pinnacle. What steps did Henry and the others have to follow before they even got clothing?
5. While we may like to think of ourselves as consistently helping or supporting others, this is not always the case. As humans, we unfortunately have also taken on the role of oppressor or perpetrator, either knowingly or unknowingly. Write about a time when you hurt someone physically or emotionally. What was the circumstance? How old were you? How did you feel at the time? Looking back on this situation today, what are your thoughts and feelings about the way in which you behaved?

**ELEVENTH—EIGHTEENTH LINKS**

1. How did Henry and his brother continue to support one another in their life and death situations? Recall an incident in your life when positive thinking/optimism really made a difference.
2. Why do you think that Henry refers to his imprisonment at Flossenbürg as the worst of all?
3. Considering his love for and his dependence on his brother, why does Henry believe that their separation at Flossenbürg was an important part of their survival?
4. Summarize Henry’s act of desperation in the fourteenth link?
5. Henry found himself performing the same painful hair clipping ritual on the new inmates that he previously experienced. How do you think Henry felt about doing this? What was Henry’s wish for these newcomers? Describe a time in your life when you were forced to do something you did not want to do? How did this make you feel?
6. What simple act that most of us take for granted meant true freedom for Henry and Will? Why?
7. Identify the significance of the following for Henry:  
April 23, 1945    May 8, 1945    358<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment
8. What do you suppose, was Henry’s most cherished freedom? What is the one thing you most cherish about your freedom? Explain how your life would be different without that one thing?

**EPILOGUE**

1. Describe Henry’s “unexpected encounter” in the Soviet occupied part of Germany.
2. Explain Henry’s conflicting emotions of “vengeful satisfaction and painful sadness” upon reaching his hometown of Berlin. Although it is impossible to imagine his experience exactly, how do you think you might have felt at that moment, seeing your neighborhood in complete ruin?

3. How did Henry and his family end up in St. Paul, Minnesota? How did St. Paul and its residents reach out to Henry's family? What steps did Henry and Inge take to become part of the community?
4. What do you think Henry means when he writes, "I believe that it was both an act of resistance and triumph that most of the survivors so eagerly generated new families."
5. Why is his involvement in the synagogue so gratifying for him?
6. How do you think the *destruction* of his community, such as Kristallnacht prior to the war and bombings during the war, affected his future involvement in *building* a community in St. Paul and his synagogue?
7. Each of us plays different roles at different moments in our lives. We may tease someone, acting as an oppressor. Perhaps we have given aid to the elderly person on the bus, acting as a helper. Consider and give examples of your experiences within the realm of the following roles:
 

Victims	Oppressors	Bystanders	Witnesses
Helpers	Rescuers	Survivors	

What was the situation? How old were you? Reflecting back, how do you see yourself as a compilation of all you have experienced? From what you have read in *An Unbroken Chain*, how would you describe the people in Henry's life with regard to the above roles?
8. How do you think this book might make a difference in today's world? How did it affect your view of humanity, prejudice, and courage?

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## **Projects**

### **1. Propaganda:**

The goal of this project is to investigate the propaganda techniques that are used in our society today. Some possibilities might be to explore television, billboard, radio and magazine ads and their use of images, action, music, lighting, camera angles and language choice.

- Have students look through magazines targeting teens and track/tally the various forms of propaganda and their effectiveness. They may also log their television viewing and the types of images they see portrayed in ads as well as in the programs themselves. Discuss why this is so powerful and successful.
- Discern what audience the ads are targeting. How do you know this?
- What connections do you see between television news items and the commercials surrounding those segments? How much of the thirty minute slot is actually used for newsworthy information? For ads? For human-interest stories?
- List a few teen idols and why most teenagers idolize these particular people. Refer to this list again at the end of the unit. How does what students have learned since they made the list help them recognize the power of propaganda.
- List all the brand names people in the room are wearing. Why are people wearing this? What makes it fashionable in your peer group?
- Teachers may choose to use web sites, books, or articles on propaganda to try to narrow the scope for their particular class/age group. For example, “How Not To Be Bamboozled” is a short article outlining various propaganda techniques, especially those used in the political arena.
- Link to World War II in trying to help students understand why so many ordinary people were “bamboozled” by Hitler.

**2. *Light from the Yellow Star: A lesson of Love from the Holocaust*** by Robert O. Fisch: “Even the stones weep.” Fisch tells his story, interwoven with artistic representations and quotes from gravestones in a Budapest memorial cemetery. “Retain humanity even in inhuman circumstances” is the message he hopes to leave with readers. Students create their own titled artistic representations, possibly displaying them in the school as a reminder of the Holocaust.

### **3. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*** edited by Hana Volavkova:

This book of poems and drawings created by children in Theresienstadt is a powerful first-person record of the Holocaust as seen from a child’s perspective. This book has been made into a play and has also been set to music. Using a variety of materials in the curriculum enhances the student’s understanding; therefore this variety of presentations works well.

- Students may write letters to these children of the past.
- They may research music used in the concentration camps and the effect it had on the prisoners.
- They may see or read the play, typing it into a study of drama. How does a stage version differ from text? Perhaps reading a work like *The Diary of Anne Frank* and seeing the play version would work here as well.

#### **4. Research/Investigate:**

This project is a more thorough investigation of a particular topic related to the Holocaust.

- Students may research hate groups of today. Define what a hate group is. Who belongs? Why? Students may research contemporary propaganda techniques, i.e. tobacco industry, and the effects on the target audience.
- Students may research a historical aspect of WWII such as concentration camps, Hitler, U.S. involvement, inventions, atom bomb, weaponry, battles, popular philosophy, famous writers, physicians, scientists, composers, athletes, performers, artists, religious leaders, other groups victimized by the Nazi regime, or personal family stories.
- Perhaps teachers can encourage students to go beyond the traditional book report and create videos, visual representations, original music, news reports, dramatic performances, feature stories, books, poems, magazines, biographies, or informational or persuasive speeches.

#### **5. Guest Speaker:**

Henry Oertelt is willing to share his story with students. What a marvelous chance to meet the author and personalize the story! Check with your local Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) for recommendations on other local speakers. First as well as second generation accounts do so much for impressing upon the students the historical as well as the personal aspect of the Holocaust.

#### **6. Other texts and films:**

(See Videography/Bibliography) These may offer further insight into the power of a youthful voice and a personal point of view.

#### **7. Winter Count Poem:**

Create a poem by year and season of the “links” in your life.

#### **8. Interview:**

Some students may wish to interview a grandparent or elder in the community who survived the Holocaust and make a booklet. Some may also wish to interview a non-Jewish grandparent about their thoughts on war. Compiling the projects into a book with supporting art and pictures could be quite meaningful. This should be offered as a choice rather than an assignment, however, for students would need extensive time to prepare valuable questions, and one must be certain that the person chosen for the interview is emotionally willing to relive the experience.

#### **9. Outside Reading Chat Room:**

Give students an age-appropriate list of fictional choices related to the Holocaust. Teachers must make sure they are historically accurate. Design a simple chat room for students to interact as they read. This works especially well if there is more than one section of a course. The teacher can designate specific questions they want students to address, making the students accountable for their reading as well. Their entries regarding the questions could then be graded. If the Chat Room does not fit

teachers' plans, students could also write letters to the teacher expressing their thoughts and feelings about what they are reading. This is a good opportunity for reader response as well as teacher feedback. They may also present a creative oral/visual report to the rest of the class. What new insights did they gain by reading a fictional piece? They must use specific textual examples.

#### **10. Book Reviews:**

Students could write book or poetry reviews of the selections they have read in or out of class. These could be included in the school newspaper.

#### **11. Mini-posters:**

Students make mini-posters (11"x17" paper) of various restrictive laws or decrees of the Holocaust. Have them write *brief* text on one-half of the poster and illustrate the other half. (A kitten next to the law that no Jews could own pets.) Post these throughout the school a few at a time until all are hanging. Discuss how the rules slowly added up to result in the murder of millions.

#### **13. Music:**

Study songs sung by prisoners as a form of spiritual resistance. Study the use of music by the Nazis in order to rouse national patriotism. Sing some of the songs from the musical version of *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*.

#### **14. Luggage identity:**

Give each student the name of a child from *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*. Perhaps the teacher could match them based on birth dates or common interests. Give the student her/his partner's date of arrival at Theresienstadt, how long the child's stay was, and the date of his/her death. The student should also receive the poem and drawing the child made. Students present these to the class after practicing them well. Each student should then create and design a box (suitcase) for his/her partner, including nametag and any other biographical information. This suitcase should be representative of the child, based on what information the student has. This will hopefully show how complex human life is and that it cannot merely be shown on a box. If room allows, stack the boxes together as a display/memorial for the duration of the unit or the year. Following this project, discuss how difficult it would be to represent themselves accurately in this way. If the students are keeping journals, it may be a good opportunity to have them try just that. Ask them to decorate their journal covers in such a way that would be representative of whom they are as a person. What would make it distinctively their identity?

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## Videography

*Anne Frank Remembered*

*The Courage to Care*

*Witness to the Holocaust*

### Anti-Semitism

- *The Longest Hatred*
- *Shadow on the Cross*
- *The Cross and the Star: Jews, Christians, and the Holocaust*

### The Third Reich

- *Triumph of the Will*
- *Olympia*
- *Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth*
- *The Democrat and the Dictator (Bill Moyers' Walk Through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century)*
- *Mein Kampf*
- *Hitler: The Whole Story*
- *Camera of My Family: Four Generations in Germany 1845-1945*
- *Now...After All These Years*
- *Kristallnacht: The Journey from 1938-1988*

### Resistance

- *Weapons of the Spirit*
- *The Sorrow and the Pity*
- *White Rose*
- *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*
- *The Eighty-first Blow / The Last Sea / Flames in the Ashes*
- *In Our Own Hands*

### Rescue

- *Anne Frank Remembered*
- *The Hiding Place*
- *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*
- *The Courage to Care*
- *Schindler's List*
- *The Assisi Underground*
- *The Other Side of Faith*
- *A Debt to Honor*
- *Treason or Honor*

### Bystander

- *The Hangman*
- *Ambulance*

### Ghettos

- *The Warsaw Ghetto*
- *Birthday from Hell*
- *Lodz Ghetto*

### Camps

- *Triumph of Memory*
- *Architecture of Doom*
- *Auschwitz: If You Cried You Died*
- *Kitty: A Return to Auschwitz*
- *One Survivor Remembers*
- *The Holocaust* (1993)

#### Theresienstadt

- *The Führer Gives the Jews a City*
- *Terezin Diary*
- *Theresienstadt: Gateway to Auschwitz*

The annotated videography in *Teaching About the Holocaust* from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is an excellent resource for films.

### **Art Resources**

*Art in the Third Reich* (Berthold Hinz)

*Art of the Holocaust* (Janet Blatter and Sybil Milton)

*Art of the Third Reich* (Peter Adams)

*The Artists of Terezin: Illustrations by the Inmates of Terezin* (Gerald Green)

*The Chimneys: Selected Poems*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux

*Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany* (Stephanie Barron)

*Heckling Hitler: Caricatures of the Third Reich* (Zbynek Zeman)

*I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp 1942-1944* (Hana Volavkova and the USHMM)

*The Living Witness: Art in the Concentration Camps and Ghettos* (Mary Costanza)

*Yes, We Sang: Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps*. New York: Holocaust Library, 1985.

*Seeing Through "Paradise": Artists and the Terezin Concentration Camp. Exhibition Catalogue* (Massachusetts College of Art)

*We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, the Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezin* (Marie Rut Krizkova, Kurt Juri Kotouc, and Zdenek Ornest)

### **Annotated Bibliography**

#### **Middle School:**

#### **History**

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Altshuler, David A. *Hitler's War Against the Jews--the Holocaust: A Young Reader's Version of the War Against the Jews 1933-1945*. West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1978.

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### **Memoir**

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Friedman, Philip. *Their Brothers' Keepers*. New York: Crown, 1957.

Gies, Miep and Allison L. Gold. *Anne Frank Remembered*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988.

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## Timeline

### 1933

- January 30* -Adolph Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany.  
 -Factories producing heavy war equipment were reopened.
- March 22* -First concentration camp, Dachau, was opened in Munich.
- April 1* -Nazis staged a boycott of Jewish shops and businesses.

### 1934

- January 13* -Henry's Bar Mitzvah took place at Ahavas Achim Synagogue, Berlin.

### 1935

- Henry was removed from public school.  
 -He began his apprenticeship as designer and builder of fine furniture.

### 1936

- March 7* -Hitler took over the 100 kilometer demilitarized Rhineland zone.

### 1937

- January* -Jews were banned from many professional occupations.

### 1938

- March 13* -Austria was annexed by Germany.
- August 17* -Nazis required Jewish women to add Sara and men to add Israel to name on all legal documents.
- September 29* -Nazi troops took over Sudetenland, part of Czechoslovakia.
- November 9/10* -Kristallnacht (Night of broken glass or Pogrom of November 9)

### 1939

- September 1* -Nazi troops invaded Poland, and WW2 began.
- September* -German Jews were ordered into slave labor.
- September* -German Jews were forbidden to be outdoors after 8 p.m. in winter and 9 p.m. in summer.
- September* -Henry completed his apprenticeship.
- September 23* -Jews were forbidden to own radios and record players.  
 -Jews were not allowed to frequent any public places

### 1941

- September 1* -German Jews began wearing required Yellow Stars.
- December/Jan.* -Henry worked at the tar-roofing job.

**1942**

- April 20* -German Jews were banned from using public transportation.  
*August* -Henry started working at Reinholdt's Woodwork Factory.  
*September 18* -Ration cards were required for food but Jews received only 50% of the normal allotment.

**1943**

- February* -The flight from Herr Kaspar's woodworking area.  
*Early spring* -Most of Henry's family and friends were seized and sent to the camps.  
 -His mother, Else, was picked up and later released from a holding center.  
 -Sonja moved into in Henry's family apartment after her parents are taken.  
 -Henry was ordered to give up his bike.  
 -Visit to Rita's apartment.  
*April 6* -The Clandestine dinner with Richard Föllmer at Hotel Adlon.  
*March 19* -Nazis declared Berlin to be Judenfrei (cleansed of Jews).  
*June 14* -Sonja received a warning that the SS will seize the family.  
*June 16* -SS picked up Henry's family.  
 -They were transported to Concentration Camp Theresienstadt (Terezin).  
 -Henry works in furniture shop.  
*In August* -Hitler occupied Denmark  
*In October* -Danish Underground transported over 7,000 Danish Jews to safety in Sweden by sea.  
 -Danish delegation visited the 500 Danish subjects imprisoned in Terezin.

**1944**

- In June* -Red Cross delegation visited Theresienstadt. The Nazis carefully prepared the camp and the Jewish inmates to give the world a falsely favorable report.  
*Early October* -Henry was transported to Concentration Camp Auschwitz.  
*Weeks later* -He was transported to Concentration Camp Golleschau.  
 -He constructed a mahogany desk at the barrel factory.

**1945**

- January* -Nazi forces began retreating through Poland toward Germany.  
 -A swollen area developed under Henry's left arm.  
*January 18* -He was forced on a three-day Death March from Golleschau to Gleiwitz...  
 was transported for two days in an open railroad car...  
 was imprisoned in Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen ...  
 was imprisoned in airplane factory (Heinckel Werke)...  
 survived two more days transport in another open train car.  
*Early February* -Henry arrived at Concentration Camp Flossenbürg.  
*February 20* -He and brother Kurt were separated.  
 -Henry stood before Dr. Schmitz, SS General.  
*Late February* -He met Will Kuscheck.

- April 16* -Will saved him from a departing Death March.  
*April 20* -Henry barely survived another 2-½ day Death March from Flossenbürg.  
*April 23* -General Patton's 3rd Army liberated him at Gleiwitz.  
*April 23* -This day would have been his mother, Else's 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday.  
*May 8* -Germany surrendered!  
*May 24* -Henry was issued Holocaust survivor's papers.  
 -He began his 400-mile trek home.  
*End of June* -He arrived in Berlin.  
*September* -He learned that Kurt and Sonja survived.  
 -He traveled to Munich to visit them.  
*November* -Henry took Inge on their first date to see Macbeth.

**1946**

- September 25* -They were married.

**1948**

- July 15* -Daughter Stephanie was born.

**1949**

- January* -They made preparations to immigrate.  
*September 1* -They boarded the General Ballou at Bremerhaven, Germany.  
*September 11* -The family disembarked at New York Harbor.  
 -Arrived by train in St. Paul.  
 -They take citizenship classes at the International Institute of St. Paul.

**1954**

- Nov. 11* -They are proudly sworn in as citizens on Armistice Day (Veteran's day).

**1955**

- October 8* -Son, David is born.

**1999**

- Henry visits Auschwitz 50 years later.

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## Glossary

**Allies:** During World War II, the group of nations including the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and the Free French, who joined in the war against Germany and other Axis countries.

**Annexation of Austria:** By Germany, March 13, 1938 (*Anschluss*).

**Anti-Jewish directives:** Laws that excluded Jews from participation in the mainstream of German life. All Jewish students were dismissed from extra-curricular school activities and ultimately from school.

**Antisemitism:** Opposition to and discrimination against Jews.

**Aryan Master Race:** In Nazi racial theory, a person of pure German "blood." The Germans felt that they were superior because they traced their roots back to the Aryans. They said that Aryans are blond haired, blue-eyed white people. The term "non-Aryan" was used to designate Jews, part-Jews and others of supposedly inferior racial stock.

**Auschwitz –Birkenau (Auschwitz II):** An extermination center; part of a complex consisting of concentration, extermination, and labor camps in Poland (Upper Silesia). Auschwitz I was the main camp. Auschwitz III (Monowitz) was the I.G. Farben labor camp, also known as Buna. In addition, there were numerous subsidiary camps.

**Axis:** Germany, Italy, and Japan, signatories to a pact signed in Berlin on September 27, 1940, to divide the world into their spheres of respective political interest. They were later joined by Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia.

**Bar-Mitzvah /Bat-Mitzvah:** A term referring to a religious "coming of age" in Judaism, when a Jewish boy or girl turns thirteen. On this day, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads the congregation in the service and rightfully enters the congregation as an "equal" member.

**Blitzkrieg:** Meaning "lightning war," Hitler's offensive tactic using a combination of armored attack and air assault.

**Bystander:** One who is present at some event without participating in it.

**Camp Owendigo:** A camp, which was sponsored by the Red Feather/Community Chest, on Carvers Lake in St. Paul, Minnesota.

**Cantor:** The clergyman who is the leader of chanted prayers in a Jewish service.

**Chai:** The Hebrew word for 18 and life: also the number of links in Henry's book.

**Chamberlain, Neville (1869-1940):** British Prime Minister, 1937-1940. He concluded the Munich Agreement in 1938 with Adolf Hitler, which he mistakenly believed would bring "peace in our time."

**Chancellor:** Chief (prime) minister of Germany.

**Collaboration:** Cooperation between citizens of a country and its occupiers.

**Concentration camp (*Konzentrationslager, KZ*):** Concentration camps were prisons used without regard to accepted norms of arrest and detention. They were an essential part of Nazi systematic oppression. Initially (1933-36), they were used primarily for political prisoners. Later concentration camps were expanded and non-political prisoners--Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, and Poles--were also incarcerated. They faced death, disease, starvation, crowded and unsanitary conditions and torture.

**Dachau:** Nazi concentration camp in southern Germany. Erected in 1933, this was the first Nazi concentration camp, used mainly to incarcerate German political prisoners until late 1938. Later, large numbers of Jews, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and other supposed enemies of the state and anti-social elements were sent there as well. Nazi doctors and scientists used many prisoners at Dachau as guinea pigs for experiments.

**DDT powder:** The chemical name of a powerful insecticide sprayed on concentration camp inmates in an attempt to control the spread of diseases, lice, bed, bugs and other vermin.

**Death camps:** Nazi concentration camps primarily in the east where Jews and other victims were murdered as part of "Hitler's Final Solution".

**Death marches:** At the end of the war when it became obvious that the German army was trapped between the Soviets to the East and the advancing allied troops from the West, the Nazis forced weak and dying inmates to brutally march over long distances under intolerable conditions. This was another way victims of the Third Reich were killed. The prisoners, guarded heavily, in order to prevent liberation, were treated brutally or were shot when unable to walk. In this way prisoners were transferred from one death camp to another.

**Dehumanization:** The Nazi policy of denying Jews basic civil rights such as practicing religion, education, and adequate housing.

**Elijah:** An oratorio, written by German composer, pianist, musical conductor, and teacher, Felix Mendelssohn, (1809-1847).

**Flossenbürg:** A concentration camp established May 3, 1938 near Flossenbürg , Germany. Prisoners worked in the granite quarry, armaments factories and aircraft factories. On April 20, 1945, 16,000 prisoners were removed in a **death march**. The survivors, less than half, were liberated on April 23, 1945 by Patton's Third Army.

**Führer:** Leader. Adolf Hitler's chosen title in Nazi Germany.

**Gannacker:** A satellite camp of Flossenbürg.

**Gas chambers:** Large chambers in which people were executed by poison gas, built and used in Nazi death camps.

**Gestapo:** Acronym for *Geheime Staatspolizei*, meaning Secret State Police. Organized in 1933, the Gestapo used brutal methods to investigate and suppress resistance to Nazi rule within Germany. After 1939, the Gestapo expanded its operations into Nazi-occupied Europe.

**Ghettos:** A compulsory "Jewish Quarter." Ghettos were usually established in the poor sections of a city, where most of the Jews from the city and surrounding areas were subsequently forced to reside. Often surrounded by barbed wire or walls, the ghettos were sealed. Established mostly in Eastern Europe (e.g., Lodz, Warsaw, Vilna, Riga, or Minsk), the ghettos were characterized by

overcrowding, malnutrition, and heavy labor. All were eventually dissolved, and the Jews were transported to death camps.

**Goebbels, Paul Joseph (1897-1945):** Reichs Propaganda Director and Reichs Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda.

**Gypsies:** A collective term for Romani and Sinti; a nomadic people, living in every country of Europe. Alternately welcomed and persecuted since the fifteenth century, they were considered enemies of the state by the Nazis and persecuted relentlessly. Approximately 500,000 Gypsies are believed to have perished in the gas chambers.

**Head counts:** A tool for torture in concentration camps requiring inmates to stand at attention in rows for long periods of time.

**Head exchange:** After the war, the means by which a person was granted permission to move from one military sector of Berlin to another. It was necessary to find someone living in another sector with whom to trade residency.

**Heil Hitler:** Official Nazi Salute

**Hitler, Adolf (1889-1945):** Nazi party leader, or Führer, 1919-1945. German Chancellor, 1933-1945.

**Holocaust:** The systematic planned extermination of about six million European Jews and millions of others by the Nazis between 1933-1945.

**International Institute of St. Paul:** A comprehensive social service agency that prepares newcomers to learn English and to become citizens.

**International Red Cross:** A relief organization working to restore hope and dignity to the world's vulnerable people. Brings emergency relief to disaster victims.

**Jewish Community and Relations Council (JCRC):** A social action organization that fights antisemitism, promoting tolerance and religious freedom.

**Jewish Family Services:** Has provided comprehensive family services to the SW area of St. Paul since 1910.

**Jewish Joint Distribution Committee:** A Jewish service organization that has aided Jews in distress overseas since 1914. At the end of the war it assisted 'displaced persons' to immigrate to the US.

**Judaism:** The monotheistic Jewish religion, based on the precepts of the Old Testament.

**Judenrat:** Council of Jewish "elders" established on Nazi orders in an occupied area.

**Kapo (Capo):** A murderous overseer, an inmate in the concentration camp, appointed by the SS.

**Krankenbau:** The barrack for the sick

**K-rations:** US Army field rations. The K-ration contained three thousand calories and was designed to be light in weight, to be carried in the soldier's pack, and to be consumed only under emergency conditions when no other food was available.

**Kristallnacht:** Also known as *The Night of the Broken Glass* or *The Pogrom of November 9, 1938*. On this night, throughout Austria and Germany, almost 200 synagogues were destroyed, over 8,000 Jewish shops were ransacked and looted, 36 Jews were killed and 30,000 Jews were rounded up to concentration camps.

**Mauthausen:** The concentration camp to which Sonja was transported from Theresienstadt.

**Mein Kampf:** Meaning "My Struggle," this book was the ideological base for the Nazi Party's racist beliefs and murderous practices. Published in 1925, this work detailed Hitler's radical ideas of German nationalism, antisemitism, anti-Bolshevism, and Social Darwinism that advocated survival of the fittest.

**Michlinge:** Those of mixed blood (see Nuremberg Laws).

**Muselman:** A derogatory German term meaning "Muslim," widely used by concentration camp guards to refer to inmates who were on the verge of death from starvation, exhaustion, and despair. A person who had reached the Muselman stage had little, if any, chance for survival and usually died within weeks.

**Nuremberg Laws:** Hitler announced The Nuremberg Laws at the Nuremberg Party conference, defining "Jew" and systematizing and regulating discrimination and persecution. The "Reich Citizenship Law" deprived all Jews of their citizenship, and the "Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor" made marriages and extra-marital sexual relationships between Jews and Germans punishable by imprisonment. .

**Oppressor:** One who keeps others down by the cruel or unjust use of authority.

**Partisans:** Irregular forces which use guerrilla tactics when operating in enemy-occupied territory. During the Holocaust, they operated secretly in their efforts to oppose the Nazi forces.

**Perpetrators:** Those who do something that is morally wrong or criminal.

**Pogrom:** An organized and often officially encouraged massacre of or attack on Jews. The word is derived from two Russian words that mean, "thunder."

**Prejudice:** A judgment or opinion formed before the facts are known. In most cases, these opinions are founded on suspicion, intolerance, and the irrational hatred of other races, religions, creeds, or nationalities.

**Propaganda:** False or partly false information used by a government or political party intended to sway the opinions of the population.

**Rabbi:** Leader of a Jewish congregation.

**Rescuer:** One who frees from danger, imprisonment, evil.

**Resistance:** Opposition, both passive and/or active occurring against the Nazis in some concentration camps, ghettos and communities by groups of partisan fighters.

**SA (*Sturmabteilung*):** Also known as "Brown Shirts," they were the Nazi party's main instrument for undermining democracy and facilitating Adolf Hitler's rise to power. The SA was the predominant terrorizing arm of the Nazi party.

**Sachsenhausen:** A concentration camp outside of Berlin, opened in 1936, also called *Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg*. It was one of the major German Nazi concentration camps for north Germany.

**Sealing off doors:** Once occupants themselves were seized, this was the Nazi's method of closing down Jewish homes and confiscating all that was inside.

**Six million, The:** The collective name for Jews murdered during the Holocaust.

**SS (*Schutzstaffel*):** Guard detachments originally formed in 1925 as Hitler's black-uniformed personal guard. The basis of the Nazi police state and the major instrument of racial terror in the concentration camps and occupied Europe.

**Star of David:** A six-pointed star that is a symbol of Judaism.

**Sudetenland:** Formerly Austrian German-speaking territories in Bohemia which were incorporated into Czechoslovakia after World War I.

**Swastika (*Hakenkreuz*):** An ancient symbol appropriated by the Nazis as their emblem.

**Synagogue:** Jewish house of worship.

**Tallis (Tallith):** Jewish prayer shawl with fringes on four sides. These fringes represent the four corners of the world and symbolize God's omnipresence.

***The Creation:*** An oratorio by Joseph Hayden (1732-1809).

**The Nazi (National Socialist German Workers') Party:** The *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, made use of mass rallies and demonstrations to further its platform of militaristic, racial, antisemitic and nationalistic propaganda.

***Theresienstadt (Terezín):*** A Nazi concentration camp located in Czechoslovakia. Created in late 1941 as a "model Jewish settlement" to deceive the outside world, including International Red Cross investigators, as to its treatment of the Jews. Conditions in Terezín were difficult to murderous, and most Jews held there were later killed in death camps. Theresienstadt is the German name for the town; Terezín is the Czech name.

**Torah:** A scroll containing the five books of Moses, the basis of Judaism.

**Transports:** The Reichsbahn, the rail system under Hitler, used its vast European network to transport some three million Jews to their deaths in 12 extermination camps. While the Nazis tried to hide their plans for the Jews in Germany and Western Europe by packing people into passenger wagons, such appearances were dispensed with in Eastern Europe, where Jews were loaded onto cattle and freight cars.

**Treaty of Versailles:** Germany and the Allies signed a peace treaty at the end of World War I. The United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy negotiated the treaty at the Peace Conference held in Versailles beginning on January 18, 1919. The treaty created the Covenant of the League of Nations, outlined Germany's disarmament, exacted massive reparation payments from Germany, and forced Germany to cede large tracts of territory to various European nation-states.

**Underground:** Organized group acting in secrecy to oppose government, or during war, to resist occupying enemy forces.

**Untermenschen:** Subhuman

**Victims:** Targets, prey, wounded, or casualties.

**Witnesses:** The survivors, liberators, rescuers and bystanders of the Holocaust.

**Yellow Star:** Nazis used the *Star of David* to separate and terrorize the Jewish people by requiring them to wear them on their outermost garments.

**Yellow triangle:** Identification for Jews used in many concentration camps.

**Zyklon B:** Hydrogen cyanide, a poisonous pesticide gas was originally developed as a fumigation agent to remove pesticides. In October 1941, it was used experimentally on Soviet prisoners of war. The success of these experiments had devastating consequences for millions of Jews who were gassed in the Nazi death camps.

***“If you absolutely have to hate... hate HATE!”***

**FAMILIES: RESISTANCE AND**  
**TRIUMPH**  
**A CHORAL READING**

*By*

**Stephanie Oertelt-Samuels**

*and*

**CHAIM**

(Children of Holocaust Survivors Association in Minnesota)

**Prepared for the Annual Holocaust Commemoration**

**April 19, 2001/26 Nissan 5761**

First performed by:

Anat Bar-Cohen, Sabina Cohen, Ruth Elias, Gloria Fredkove,  
Micki Naiman, Mort Naiman, Vivian Neiger,  
Stephanie Oertelt-Samuels, Paul Samuels, Vicky Sektor, and Eva  
Yehouda.

## Introduction

**Vicky:** We are CHAIM. We are the sons and daughters of the Holocaust. We stand before you, the children that are the miracles. We are those that were not supposed to be.

**Mort:** For you, our parents, the creation of your families was yet another act of resistance and triumph. For us, your children, our births have brought to the world your victories.

**Vicky:** When we were born, often the first gifts we received were our Hebrew names. They were the names of your loved ones who were murdered in the Holocaust.

**I am Eva ...** My Hebrew name is Leah, I was named to honor the memory of my grandmother who was murdered in Auschwitz.

**I am Vivian ...** My Jewish name is Esther in memory of my aunt who was shot in the street by the Nazis.

**I am Stephanie...** I was given my name to honor my father's cousin who was murdered at Auschwitz.

**I am Anat ...** I was named for my paternal grandmother Chana, murdered in Auschwitz on the day she arrived with my father and grandfather.

(COUNT TO 2)

**All:** This is the Jewish way to remember!  
(COUNT TO 2)

### Triangle Sounds

**Mort:** *The lives of our loved ones were twisted in ways that no one had ever expected. Our families heard screams where songs should be sung. Carefree childhood moments were stomped into the ground.*

(COUNT TO 2)

### Triangle Sounds

#### II.

**Vicky:** DURING THE WAR...

**Vivian:** -my parents were branded.

**Gloria:** -Star of David

**Eva:** -tattoo

**Sabina:** -numbers

**Ruth:** -armband

**Sabina:** -my family was in the resistance.

**Anat:** -my parents were in the concentration camps.

**Vivian:** -Auschwitz

**Micki:** -Mauthausen  
**Ruth:** -Buchenwald  
**Gloria:** -Bergen-Belsen  
**Eva:** -Ravensbruck  
**Sabina:** -Stutthof

**Micki:** -my father fought in the Polish army.  
**Vivian:** -my uncle was a decorated German military hero in WWI.  
**Ruth:** -my parents were in hiding.  
**Anat:** -my mother hid people in her home.  
**Sabina:** -my father was crammed in a boxcar for 8 days.  
**Eva:** -my parents lived in the ghetto.  
**Sabina:** -Warsaw  
**Vivian:** -Lodz  
**Micki:** -Vilna  
**Steffi:** -Kovno

**Ruth:** -my father helped others to escape.

**Steffi:** -my parents suffered.

**Gloria:** -my mother was forced to wear the yellow star.

**Eva:** -my grandmother and father road the trolley car throughout the night during Kristallnacht.

(COUNT TO 2)

**ALL:** -Our parents watched in horror while their families were killed.

(COUNT TO 2)

### *Triangle Sounds*

### III.

**Vicky:** Many saw their families and friends murdered at the hands of the perpetrators, suffering the tragic losses of their loved ones again and again. Each survivor has a unique set of events... a gripping saga culminating in their liberations. Each were among the few that were able to overcome the atrocities of:

**Mort:** -Incarcerations  
 -Deportations  
 -Heartbreaking separations  
 -Narrow escapes

(COUNT TO 2)

**ALL:** -They asked, why was I the one chosen to live?

(COUNT TO 2)

### *Triangle Sounds*

**Vicky:** MY PARENTS...

**Micki:** -wanted to leave the ashes.

**Anat:** -wanted to forget.

**Eva:** -hunger

**Ruth:** -smell

**Vivian:** -sounds  
**Steffi:** -smoke  
**Gloria:** -cold  
**Sabina:** -filth

**Eva:** -didn't want to talk about it.  
**Ruth:** -wanted to bare witness  
**Gloria:** -wanted to come to America.  
**Sabina:** -continued to hide their identity.  
**Steffi:** -were still scared.  
**Vivian:** -wanted to start new lives.  
**Micki:** -found friends to replace lost family.  
**Anat:** -didn't want me to suffer.  
(COUNT TO 2)  
**ALL:** -They were never the same.  
(COUNT TO 2)

**Triangle Sounds**

IV.

**Steffi:** I AM one of those Holocaust survivors' kids, a child of the Diaspora. I belonged to one of the many families that had just arrived in St. Paul from Germany and Poland. We were all new then, the green ones, often the only ones left in the family. When I was really little the kids on my block had names like Laibelle or Zemmy or Yossele and I heard Polish and German all around me. And nobody had any relatives, so we had to be each other's relatives. But, when I got bigger, we moved away from Yossele's street and we never saw them anymore and we began celebrating Thanksgiving with the next-door neighbors named Sweeney. My family was alone...English was hard for Mom..it was our second language..we spoke our own language, we were so different.  
(COUNT TO 2)

**Triangle Sounds**

**Mort:** I was so full of questions. Why couldn't Mom and Dad explain things to me? Why was I afraid to ask?  
Mom, What DID happen to our family? Why are we the only ones?"  
**Vicky:** Sha Kind, (*There, there, child* ), just eat your dinner."  
(COUNT TO 2)

**Triangle Sounds**

**Vicky:** -AS A CHILD...  
**Ruth:** -I didn't understand.  
**Eva:** -I regretted not having my grandparents.  
**Vivian:** -I said to Daddy, "Why do you have a telephone number on -your arm?"  
**Steffi:** -I said, "Mommy, Why do you cry so much on Yom Kippur?"  
**Gloria:** -I cried into my pillow for my grandmother who was killed in Auschwitz.

- Sabina:** -I couldn't trust that the world was a safe place.  
**Micki:** -I knew that my dad had a mission in life.  
**Anat:** -I didn't know that my parents had an accent.  
**Eva:** -I didn't want my mother to suffer any more.  
**Ruth:** -I wanted to please my parents.  
(COUNT TO 2)  
**ALL:** -I always felt that there was something different about me.  
(COUNT TO 2)

**Triangle Sounds**

V.

**Vicky:** **WHEN I WAS GROWING UP...**

- Vivian:** -The less they said the more I wondered.  
**Steffi:** -I wondered why my parents were so overprotective.  
**Sabina:** -strict  
**Gloria:** -old-fashioned  
**Micki:** -worried  
**Vivian:** -anxious

- Sabina:** -I wondered why dad waited until I was 17 to tell me about the Holocaust?  
**Gloria:** -I felt a great sadness.  
**Micki:** -I was in awe of their fortitude.  
**Anat:** -I was angry at the Nazis for what they had done.  
**Eva:** -I discovered my Judaism.  
**Ruth:** -I wondered how they could still believe in God?  
**Vivian:** -I wondered why the Nazis hated us so much?  
**Steffi:** -I kept asking how could it have happened?  
**Gloria:** -I questioned why the world turned its back on us?  
**Sabina:** -I wondered how my parents survived.  
**Micki:** -I valued their skills and wisdom.  
**Anat:** -I wanted to learn more.  
-I was awakened by the screams from their nightmares.  
**Eva:** -I heard enough.  
**Ruth:** -I remembered hearing the stories of the old country.  
**Steffi:** -I thought why would someone want to hurt my gentle father.  
**Vivian:** -There was always an undercurrent of loss at our family gatherings.  
**Gloria:** -I never understood why mother reacted that way.  
(COUNT TO 2)  
**All:** -Why was there always so much fear?  
(COUNT TO 2)

*Triangle Sounds*

## VI.

**Vicky:** We are no longer children, but we will always be your children.  
(COUNT TO 2)

*Triangle Sounds*

**Vicky:**           **AND TODAY...**

**Sabina:**           -I thank you for your tales of courage and spiritual strength.

**Micki:**           -I can better understand what it means to be a survivor.

**Anat:**           -I have come to understand why you have these fears.

**Eva:**           -I wonder why some of your fears have not left you.

**Ruth:**           -I know how my life has been affected.

**Vivian:**          -I can pass on your story.

**Steffi:**          -I must respect your silence.

**Gloria:**          -I need to tell you how much I love you.

**Sabina:**          -Before it is too late I need to hear your stories.

**Micki:**          -Just because it wasn't discussed, it still impacted me.

**Anat:**           -I admire your courage in telling your stories.

**Eva:**            -We need the world to remember.

(COUNT TO 2)

**ALL:**            -There are fewer survivors every year.

(COUNT TO 2)

*Triangle Sounds*

## VII:

**INTRODUCTION TO THE PLEDGE...**

**Vicky:**           Tonight we gather to Honor those who survived and to remember the six million who perished.

(COUNT TO 2)

**Triangle Sounds (6 times, slowly and deliberately)**

**Mort:**           We, the children of Survivors are here to let the world know that we will never forget! And to tell our parents that their stories of survival will never die.

It is now our turn to keep the light burning.

We are the keepers of the flame.

We are the children of the Holocaust.

We will never forget.

**THE PLEDGE**

WE DEDICATE THIS PLEDGE TO OUR PARENTS AND  
TO ALL, WHO SUFFERED AND SURVIVED.

TO OUR FAMILIES WHO PERISHED IN THE  
FLAMES.

WE TAKE THIS OATH, WE VOW, WE SHALL NEVER  
LET THE SACRED MEMORY OF THE PERISHED SIX MILLION  
BE SCORNED OR ERASED.

WE TAKE THIS OATH, VISION BECOMES WORD,  
TO BE HANDED DOWN  
FROM FATHER TO SON,  
FROM MOTHER TO DAUGHTER,  
FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

