



SURVIVORS

Donald Berkman



ANN ERIC

DONALD BERKMAN was born in Druysk, a shtetl in the Vilna Gubernia, now Belarus. Donald was an infant when his family was forced first into a small ghetto and then a larger one. Awaiting deportation to the Vilna Ghetto, Donald's mother, Sarah, begged her husband and other family members to go into hiding, but they refused. The rest of the family was sent to Vilna and were massacred at Ponar. Sarah hid her son and herself in a convent but had to flee again. Donald and Sarah then hid in the woods for two and a half years, until the Soviets liberated them in 1945. Returning to Druysk, Sarah married Michel (Cypuk) Chipkin who had two daughters. The family fled to Germany. They stayed four years there in displaced persons' camps until they immigrated to the United States in 1949. The family lived in St. Paul, Minnesota, for five years.

The family eventually settled in Oceanville, New Jersey. Donald went to local schools, and after graduating high school, to pharmacy school. He owned several pharmacies which he has since sold. He now owns a beach store in Brigantine, New Jersey. Don lives in Margate with his wife, Nanette. Donald and Nan have three children and grandchildren. Don has written his memoir *Two Voices*.

Ida Belchatowski



IDA BELCHATOWSKI was born in Pułtusk, Poland, one of seven children—three boys and three girls.

At age five, Ida and her entire family were expelled by the Nazis from their hometown, in late September of 1939. They walked and took trains on their journey to the U.S.S.R. Along the way the family slept in barns with the horses, cows, and chickens and staying temporarily—only steps ahead of the Nazis—in Bialystok, Poland, and Orša, White Russia. Eventually, in October of 1941, aided by the Soviets, they reached Magnitogorsk, an industrial city in Siberia—the end of a two-year journey. The family had journeyed over 1650 miles to reach safety.

In September 1950, Ida immigrated to the United States and settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On July 3, 1955, Ida married Max Jachet, a Holocaust survivor from Szczekociny, Poland. Ida and Max had three children: Steve, Karl, and Judy,

Ida and Max were married for 61 years, until Max passed away in 2017.

In 2017, Ida wrote her memoir, *Escaping the Nazis: 1650 Miles with Seven Children*. In her later years she moved to be near the beach and alk, Margate.

Bertha Borowick



LINDSI WARNER

BERTHA FRYDMAN BOROWICK was born in Sokółka, Poland, one of seven children—four boys and three girls. Her father, Elie Sholom, a shoemaker, had married Masha Fiege Zavinska, who died when Bertha was four years old. Her oldest sister, Chana, was like a mother to her. Her oldest brother, Yossel was next, followed by brother Simcha, sister Talba, brother Benjamin, and her youngest brother, Borush. The family lived in a 100 year old house that had belonged to her father's father's father.

When World War II began her family was sent to the Jewish ghetto from where she was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1942. Her number was 31565. While at Auschwitz, she met her husband, Moishe. In 1945, Bertha was transferred to Bergen- Belsen where she was liberated by the British in May 1945. After liberation, Bertha and Moishe were married and immigrated to the United States. They established a food market and butchers in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Moishe (Morris) was also in real estate. They prospered.

They were married for over fifty years when Moishe died. Bertha now lives in Atlantic City. Her family still resides in Pennsylvania. Bertha is working on a memoir.



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Inge Fixler



NATALIE WEISS

INGE LEWKOWITZ FIXLER

Born on October 24, 1932, in her grandparents' home in Neandertal, Germany. She lived with her family in the city of Düsseldorf. During the war her mother took Inge and her three siblings from farm to farm, living in lofts above the farm animals. In the beginning of 1945, Inge was with her mother and siblings in Neandertal where they lived in a cellar. While the rest had been living on farms, Inge's father was hiding in Düsseldorf in an underground bunker. After their liberation, soldiers brought her father back to Neandertal. Inge hadn't seen him in six years. She said as children, they never thought their life was bad.

In 1952, Inge immigrated to the U.S., living with her aunt and uncle who owned a chicken farm in Egg Harbor. There Inge worked in a factory making uniforms. She met her husband, Abraham, from Czechoslovakia in December 1952. Abraham's family had nine children; only three survived the war. They married in October 1953.

Inge and Abraham raised four daughters: Sylvia, Lori, Helene, and Audrey. Abraham passed away in 1993. Inge has nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Sophia Folis



SOPHIA FOLIS'S birth parents, (father's first name unknown) Fruchtman and Essira Fruchtman, left Poland in 1937, migrating to Grodek Jagiellonski, Ukraine. Sophia, whose birth name was Tzila Fruchtman, was born c. 1943. Her biological father and brother, Zysio, were abducted by the Nazis from the Ukraine c. 1943 and were never seen again. Sophia's mother hid her in smokestacks, among other places. Her mother then sought a safer place, so Wolodymyr Folis, a business friend, became Sophia's foster father and his wife, Julia, her foster mother. These foster parents who were in their 40s, Ukrainian, Catholic, could protect Sophia from Nazis.

In 1944, fearing the Soviet invasion, the Folises fled the Ukraine with Sophia. They traveled at night, hiding in the forest during the day because of the bombings. They ended up in Germany in 1945 at displaced persons camp. In 1949, they immigrated to the United States, where they had family.

Sophia met her babysitter, who had known her birthmother, and she told Sophia what had happened. Sophia only learned she was Jewish in 2008 and has been seeking any remnants of her family ever since.

George Geyer



GEORGE GEYER was born in Belgium in 1937. Belgium was occupied by the Germans in May of 1940. George's father was captured during a business trip and sent to a concentration camp where he died. His mother fled with George and his brother to France. They were caught and during the interrogation, when his mother insisted that they were not Jews, little George said in French that he was Jewish. Fortunately, the Gestapo could not understand his French. They then went into hiding: George, on a farm; his brother, in a monastery. To this day George can't bear to hear fireworks; they remind him of the sound of bombs.

After the war, George's mother, George, and his brother immigrated to the U.S., arriving at Ellis Island. George joined the U.S. Air Force, serving for six years. In 1964, George met his future wife, Roz, at a dance in North Jersey. They married in 1967—fifty years ago.

George and Roz had three children, two sons and a daughter. The older son died at age thirty-three from a brain tumor. Along with his memories of the Shoah, his son's death has deeply disturbed George.

Two of the bright spots in George's life are his grandchildren and the monthly Holocaust survivor luncheons.



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Nella Juffe



NELLA GELBERG JUFFE was raised in Chełm, Poland. The Gelberg family escaped to Lvov in 1939 when WWII began. In 1941 the Germans attacked Lvov. On their way to safety in the Ural Mountains, Nella, her mother, and sister were captured and put in a concentration camp, in Lgov, Ukraine. In 1945 they were liberated by the Soviets, and in 1946 with the help of the underground Jewish military organization, Haganah, they were smuggled to Czechoslovakia, then Austria, and finally to the American zone in Germany. They went to three DP Camps: Föhrenwald, Ulm, and Wasser-Altsinger. In Wasser- Altsinger DP camp, Nella met Leon Juffe whom she married in November of 1948. Their son, Samuel, was born in Germany.

In 1950, six weeks after Samuel was born, the family immigrated to the United States. In the U.S. with hard work and determination, they built a new life: they bought a chicken farm in Vineland in 1951 and later bought the Kentucky Hotel in Atlantic City. Off season, Nella worked in a clothing factory making Eisenhower jackets.

Nella and Leon prospered, raising four sons—Samuel, Michael, Irving, and Gene. They have seven grandchildren. Leon died in 2009; Nella lives in Margate. Her memoir is *Flower of Ice, Cobweb of Lace: Escape to the USSR*.

Sonia Kaplan



SONIA CHELEMSKA KAPLAN, born in Włodzimierz Volynski, Poland, was the oldest of four children of Rabbi Boruch Moshe and Gittel Hannah. In 1939, her city was occupied by the Soviets until 1941, when Germany attacked. Sonia and her family were moved to a ghetto where during periodic oblavas (raids) Jews were taken to the outskirts, shot, and buried in pits. Sonia managed to survive the final liquidation of the ghetto, escaping to a hiding place arranged by her mother; in less than two weeks, this family threw her out. A second Polish family hid her for three months. Then Sonia fled to the forest, joining Soviet partisans. Liberated in 1944, at fifteen, she was the only survivor of an extended family of eighty-six.

After liberation Sonia traveled to Salzburg, Austria, to a displaced persons' camp, where she met Kadish Kaplan, a survivor. Sonia and Kadish married in 1945 and immigrated to the United States in 1948. In 1954 the couple had a poultry farm in Mays Landing, New Jersey. Later Sonia was in the hotel business in Atlantic City.

Sonia has three children and is blessed with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Sonia is the subject of the film, *Broken Silence*, and the author of the memoir, *My Endless War: My Shattered Dreams*, published in 2004.

Sara Katz



Born Serena Berkovitz in 1928 in Sevluš, Czechoslovakia, **SARA KATZ**, the youngest child, lived happily with her parents, Regina and Meyer, and seven siblings. Her father made orthopedic shoes, employing eight workers. In March of 1939, the Hungarians occupied Sevluš, closing the schools to Jews, so Sara's mother home-schooled her. In 1944, after the German occupation, Sara and her family were forced into the Sevluš Ghetto. In May of 1944, Sara and other family members were deported to Auschwitz- Birkenau in Poland. Sara worked there in C Lager. In November 1944, Sara, her two sisters, and sister-in-law were deported to Zittau, Germany, to work in an airplane factory. They were liberated in May 1945 by the Soviets. After liberation, Sara returned to her home in Sevluš but soon realized that "we didn't live there anymore."

The Haganah took Sara and other children to Pöcking DP camp in Germany and then to Genoa, Italy, where she met Joseph Katz whom she married. In December 1947, the group left Italy for Palestine. Sara and Joseph settled in Haifa in 1948, immigrating to the U.S. in 1961 with their two children, Rivka and David. Sara has been happy in the U.S., enjoying the peace and beauty of the country.



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Samuel Kaufman



SAMUEL KAUFMAN was born in Pruzhany, Poland (now Belarus), about 87 years ago. Unfortunately, he is not sure of his exact date of birth. Samuel was the third child of four, born to Ita and Leibush Kaufman. Samuel had a life like most children; he went to school and played with friends. He loved to play soccer.

Around 1941 – 1942, when Samuel was eleven years old, his whole life changed. His family was transported to Auschwitz- Birkenau. His mother and brother were selected for death; Sam and his father, for labor. Sam's job was to hand out and collect the tools used for digging ditches for water pipes. In January 1945, Samuel was evacuated to Mauthausen, then Melk and Eibenach where prisoners had to dig tunnels in the mountains. The American troops liberated Samuel on May 6, 1945.

Samuel discovered after the war that he was the only survivor of his immediate family. Samuel arrived in the United States two years after his liberation on August 3, 1947. He knew no one nor did he know the language or the geography. He only had \$2.00 given to him by the Children's Organization. He felt as if he had survived the concentration camps to live, prosper, and keep the memories of the past atrocities known. Samuel is a retired carpenter contractor who lives in Atlantic City and Aventura, Florida. His wife of 58 years, Elaine, died in 2007. He has three children, seven grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

Molly Kiejdan



From the age of three **MOLLY AVIDON** lived with her aunt and uncle in Vilna. Molly's early life was good, but in 1940, at fifteen, she said she grew up so fast that she felt eighty. Occupied by the Soviet Union, in June 1941, Germany bombed Vilna and ousted the Soviets, initiating a reign of terror against Vilna Jews.

The Nazis assigned Molly to work in vegetable gardens and on the railroads—in the frigid cold and suffocatingly hot weather. Then she was transferred to Army Vehicle Repair where she survived with her husband, Pinchus Kiejdan.

Liberated by the Soviets in 1944, Molly's trials were not over. In 1945, she gave birth to her son Michael without a doctor, electricity, or heat. After many more hardships in post-war Europe, the three immigrated to the

U.S. in 1949. Their pursuit of freedom brought them first to New York and then to Mays Landing, New Jersey, where they had five more children. Eventually Pinchus and Molly moved to Margate, New Jersey, where Pinchus's construction business prospered, and they contributed much to their community. Molly's memoir is *From the Vilna Ghetto to the U.S. and Liberty*.

Berl Lazarus



Born in Wedding, Germany, to Herta Baruch and Martin Lazarus, the infant **BERL LAZARUS** was in a hospital in Berlin. On June 16, 1943, Berl was taken from Berlin and transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp, where his mother had been deported on March 1, 1943. The day after his arrival, Berl was transferred to Terezin (Theresienstadt) in Czechoslovakia, where he lived for the next two and a half years before being sent to England in the fall of 1945. Herta and Martin were both murdered at Auschwitz in 1943.

In England Berl lived for a time at Bulldogs Bank; then at five years old, Berl was hospitalized with polio. After he recuperated, he was sent to an orphanage at Lingfield, attending the Smallberry Green School until he was fifteen, when he went to an agricultural training school.

In 1958, Berl was reunited with his mother's sister, his Aunt Ruth, and immigrated to the United States in 1960, living in Atlantic City with his aunt and her husband. Berl Lazarus became a U.S. citizen, serving with the U.S. Army in Vietnam.

Berl is married to Irena, and they have two children, Hanna and Martin. Berl was featured in a 1999 documentary, *The Children of Bulldogs Bank*. Berl has written his memoir, *Feathers, Smoke, and a Shattered Family*.



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Morris Markowski



SHEILA MCCLODY-NUSS

MORRIS MARKOWSKI, of Warsaw, Poland, was the firstborn of Esther Rachel and Abraham Markowski. He has two sisters, Nancy and Eva, and a brother, Edmond. Abraham was in the rag business; Esther Rachel worked with her father in the restaurant business.

In 1938, Morris's father and mother moved to France. The Markowskis made their home in Paris, until the Germans invaded in 1942. When the Jewish men of Morris's town were told to report to the police station, Abraham gathered his family and crossed the mountains into Spain. The refugees were arrested by the Spanish army; Abraham and Esther Rachel were interned in separate concentration camps. Young Morris was sent to a monastery. After several months, Esther Rachel was released. Morris and his mother then lived in Barcelona, and later, Abraham was released, joining his family. In mid-March of 1944, Morris Markowski's family traveled to Canada via Philadelphia. From Philadelphia, the immigrants went to Toronto.

Morris Markowski lived in Canada for forty-seven years, making his living buying and selling scrap. During a trip to New York City, Morris met his future wife, Brenda. He and Brenda married in 1987. The Markowskis live in Absecon Shores, New Jersey.

Laura Oberlender



Born in Tuchin, Poland (now Ukraine), **LAURA (LYUBOV) OBERLENDER** was the younger daughter of Isaak and Pirl Khomut. After the Germans occupied their town in 1941, the family was forced to give up its dream home and move into the Tuchin ghetto. The people who took the family's home offered to keep her older sister Hanna. After a short time, a local farmer, Pavlo, offered to hide them. Laura and her mother went into hiding on the farm. When the ghetto was set on fire by the Tuchin Jews, her father escaped and joined his family. First they hid in the attic, then in a tall haystack, and finally under the hay in the hayloft. They knew when the Germans came because the farmer's dog, Brisko, would bark and snarl. The scariest time was when a group of retreating German soldiers stayed in the same barn on top of the hay the three were under. The family was liberated on January 16, 1944. They found out that Hanna was murdered when the people became scared and threw her out.

In 1949, the family immigrated to the United States—to Philadelphia. Later Laura moved to Atlantic City. Laura's memoir *The Girl in the Haystack*, was published.

Betty Simon



SHEILA MCCLODY-NUSS

BETTY LIFSHIN SIMON, was the youngest of eleven children of Jacob and Rachel Lifshin of Kazian, White Russia (Belarus). In 1939, the Nazis moved the family into a ghetto. Jacob wanted to save his daughters' lives; therefore, in 1941, Jacob contacted a Catholic man, Voyzche Gintaiv. Betty and her sister escaped, and Gintaiv hid them in his barn. A week later, Gintaiv returned to the ghetto and was murdered. After the murder, Betty's brothers took their sisters and Gintaiv's daughters into the forest; another of the brothers brought Jacob. The Lifshins hid in the forest for two and a half years.

When the war ended, Betty and her sister went to Austria to join their brothers. In 1948, in a displaced person's camp, Betty met Richard Simon, who was immigrating to the United States. Betty also immigrated to the U.S.

Richard reunited with his family in Baltimore. Betty and Richard married in 1950. For a time, they operated a chicken farm in Pleasantville, New Jersey, with his brother Sidney and wife, Rosalie. However, Richard was unhappy with the farm and went into real estate in which he prospered.

Betty and Richard had five children, Marsha, Jacob, Simon, Renee, and Valerie, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Richard died in 2005. Betty Simon currently lives in Ventnor, New Jersey.



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Rosalie Simon



ANN ERIC

ROSALIE LEBOVIC SIMON was born in Teresva, Czechoslovakia, one of six children. Rosalie's father, Israel, was a wholesale importer of fruits. Her mother, Regina, kept a kosher home. In 1944 the Germans occupied the town. On the sixth day of Passover in 1944, the family was taken to the Mátészalka Ghetto, and then in May 1944, deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where Rosalie, only twelve years old, was selected to go to the gas chambers. Running to her sisters' line, Rosalie lived and survived two other selections with the help of her four sisters and a lot of luck. She was sent with her sisters to Geislingen labor Camp in Germany and later to Allach, a sub-camp of Dachau. Liberated in May of 1945, the family, with their father who had survived Buchenwald Concentration Camp, settled in Ústi Nad Labem, before immigrating to the U.S. in November of 1949.

Rosalie and her family lived in Baltimore, Maryland, where she met Sidney Simon in English class. They married two years later. After leaving Baltimore, Rosalie and Sidney moved to Egg Harbor Township, to the poultry farm. In the 50s the couple moved to Margate. The couple have three children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Rosalie published her memoir, *Girl in a Striped Dress*, in 2015.

Rose Steinberg



SHEILA MCCLOY-NUSS

ROSE STEINBERG was born in Hungary. She was thirteen years old when the Germans occupied Hungary. In April 1944, the Gestapo and the Hungarian police sealed the door of their home and forced them into a ghetto. Six weeks later, at the beginning of June, Rose and her family were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. There Rose and her mother were separated. She never saw her mother again, nor did she ever see her aunts, uncles, and cousins again. After being processed at Auschwitz-Birkenau—shaved and given a grey and blue striped uniform, Rose was sent to Riga labor camp where she removed graphite from dead batteries. After a few months, Rose was moved to Stutthof where the dead were piled on top of the snow. She only survived because she got food several times from the kitchen. In late April the SS ordered them to board barges and boats; they drifted on a barge for about a week without food or water. When they reached land, the SS shot everyone who could not get up. Rose will never forget how red the water was. The few survivors had to walk to Neustadt-Holstein. Anyone who couldn't walk was shot. In Neustadt, Rose was liberated by British troops.

Rose lives in Margate with her husband, Isadore.

Doris Weiss



DORIS WEISS was born in Łódź, Poland, which was occupied by the Germans on September 14, 1939. On May 1, 1940, the Łódź ghetto was sealed. Ghetto residents worked in textile and munition factories. As payment, the Nazis delivered food to the ghetto—never enough and often spoiled. In 1942, many were deported to the Chełmno death camp. On August 4, 1944, a final liquidation transport, including Doris and her mother, was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. From Auschwitz, Doris was sent to Bergen-Belsen, in Germany. The camp was unable to accommodate the influx of thousands of prisoners; therefore, basic services collapsed, leading to a typhus epidemic. On April 15, 1945, the British liberated Belsen.

In July 1945, the Red Cross took 6,000 former inmates, Doris among them, to Sweden for rehabilitation. After recovering her health, on February 28, 1948, Doris immigrated to the U.S. where her uncle, her father's brother, and her aunt were living. Her mother and father also immigrated to the U.S.

In 1948, Doris met Murray Weiss also a survivor of Auschwitz. They met at a dance on Delancey Street on the Eastside. Before moving to the Margate area, they had lived in Brooklyn for sixty-five years. On April 16, they had been married sixty-seven years.



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Murray Weiss



MURRAY WEISS was born in the Carpathian region. Between 1938 and 1940 most of the territory was gradually annexed by Hungary. Anti-Jewish persecutions were initiated in 1939; laws were passed banning Jews from going to school or from operating their businesses. Jews of military age were drafted into labor battalions and sent to the Eastern front, where most perished. After March 19, 1944, when the murder of Hungarian Jews began, the Hungarian Fascist regime and the German Nazis collaborated in setting up ghettos in Mukacheve, Uzhgorod, Khust, Vinogradov, and Beregovo in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, followed by deportations to Auschwitz- Birkenau.

Murray was one of the Jews deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. After liberation he reunited with his father at their home in the Carpathians. Murray also spent time in a DP camp. He immigrated to the U.S. in 1947, settling in New York City. Murray met Doris at a dance on Delancey Street on the Eastside. The two married on April 16, 1950. They lived in Brooklyn for sixty-five years moving to the Margate area in 2015. Doris and Murray celebrated their sixty-seventh anniversary this year.

Ruth Zinman



RUTH ZINMAN, a child during World War II, was born in Oradea, Transylvania, in western Romania; her mother was a dentist; her father, a doctor. At the border enroute to Russia, her family was caught by the police and spent a night in a Bucharest jail. Ruth and her mother were released the next day, but her mother was forced to send Ruth to Hungary to stay with her cousins, so she could work and raise money to bail out Ruth's father. After finding that the cousins were to be deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, she sent Ruth back to Transylvania to stay with a peasant family. Ruth's mother retrieved her, and the family was reunited for a short time. While her parents were working illegally, providing medical and dental care, her father was conscripted by the Romanian army.

After the war, Ruth's family moved to Israel where Ruth met David, an American tourist. They married in 1962, and she immigrated to the United States a year later. They had three children and grandchildren. Ruth has been teaching Hebrew in various schools since 1965. She now lives in Ventnor and continues teaching and educating young people. Her goal is to raise pride and awareness of the Jewish heritage and history in the younger generations. Ruth is also a writer and often has articles in local newspapers.