

# Jerry's Story



# Jerry's Story





## Jerry's Story

עֲלֵיהֶם לְבִנְיָנְכֶם סִפְרוּ וּבִנְיָנְכֶם לְבִנְיָהֶם לְדֹר אַחֵר

*“Tell your children about it, and your children to their children, and their children to another generation”<sup>1</sup>*

Dear Aviva, Daniel, Aaron, Frankie and Alex

This book is for you and for your descendants. This is the story of your beloved grandfather Jerry's early life, most of which you have never heard about, and about his later accomplishments.

You already know that Jerry was a child survivor of the Holocaust in the Second World War. He never said much to us about his childhood, about his teenage years and about his family in Poland. Jerry tried very hard to block it out and to live his life. In avoiding telling us about his past, Jerry wanted to protect us from the trauma that occurred to him, to his family and to millions of his fellow Jews in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. We know now, from the emerging science of epigenetics, that such history is never fully blocked from future generations.

While the tragedy of the Holocaust stayed with Jerry and informed his life in many ways, it did not completely define him. For 92 years, Jerry lived a rich and fulfilling life, with much celebration and love.

In 1982, Jerry's silence about the Holocaust ended. At Gary's request, Jerry made a public speech at a Holocaust Commemoration event in Saskatoon. He spoke to a full room of strangers about his early years, before, during and after the Second World War. Then, in the years that followed, Jerry spoke out frequently and eloquently about his war-time experiences. He was also formally interviewed and honoured several times related to his Holocaust experiences. Nevertheless, much of the story of Jerry's early life has been left untold.

We promised Jerry that we would continue to tell his story.

When he died on November 26, 2021, Jerry left behind a cache of war-time documents and treasured photos and personal artifacts from his past. Some of these things he had never shared with us.

In this book, we have focussed particularly on those aspects of Jerry's life that you didn't know about. We pieced together as best we could the story of Jerry's early life based on the little information he did share with us personally. In addition, we have gathered information and quoted directly from Jerry's handwritten testimonials, his formal videotaped interviews, recordings of his numerous public presentations and speeches made after 1982, documents

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<sup>1</sup> From the Tanakh - Nevi'im (Prophets) - Yoel (Joel) 1:3

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and artifacts found among his personal records, translations of the Polish inscriptions on his treasured post-war photos, and additional historical records about Jerry and his family that have never been seen by the family. All of these are included in this book.

In addition, we have digitized old audio and video recordings of Jerry's interviews and several of his many public presentations. We've included links so that you can actually see and hear Jerry telling his story.

Finally, to provide you with a broader historical context for Jerry's personal story, we have also included some additional background information about the Holocaust era, all drawn from credible sources.

As we are instructed in the Tanakh, please pass this book on to your own children.

September 19, 2024

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## Jerry's Story

### The Early Years

#### Jerry's early childhood in Lodz, Poland

Your grandfather, whom you knew as Jerry Kapelus, was born on May 30, 1929, to a Jewish family in Lodz, Poland (Fig 1). Jerry's birth name was *Jakob Efraim Kapelus*. His immediate family included his parents *Gershon* and *Esther*, and an older sister *Helen (Chaya)* and younger brother *David Leib*.

Jerry often joked with us that he had a middle name 'Fred' but nobody else called him 'Fred' and there was never any evidence of a middle name on his official and legal documents. Jerry never spoke about having had a middle name at birth. One of the great family stories is how Jerry first revealed this mysterious middle name to your grandmother Merna one evening at a clairvoyant's performance. We laughed about that story and never gave it much thought afterward.

Then, a search of historical records from Poland conducted after Jerry died, sometimes identified him as *Jakob Efraim* or *Efraim Kapelus* (Appendix Two). So, he was indeed born with a middle name and, we guess, 'Fred' was the anglicized version of his birth name. We wonder why he never told us that!

For purposes of consistency, we will refer to your grandfather as 'Jerry' throughout this book.

To us, Jerry only ever referred to his late parents as *Gershon* and *Esther*, their Hebrew names. These were the names he used wherever their names were engraved in memory, including the names we used on his own gravestone. Jerry never mentioned his parents' everyday or given names. However, we uncovered these names within Jerry's own documents and these names were confirmed through other historical records, in addition to his parents' birthdates. This is what we learned about his family.

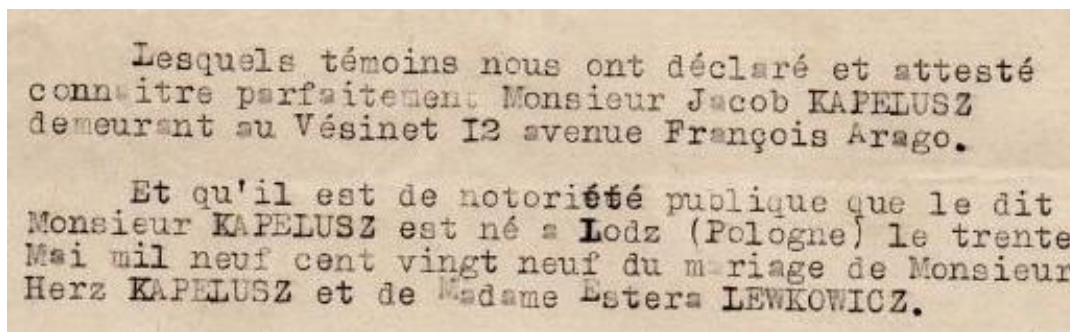


Fig 1: Excerpt from a reference letter for Jerry, Paris, 1946

Jerry's father *Gershon*, whose given name was *Herszel* (or *Hersz*) *Kapelusz*, was born in February 1889 (Appendix Two). We don't know *where* Herszel was born and we have no photos of him nor any of his family. Merna and Jerry's first-born child, Gary, was named Gershon in memory of Jerry's father. Herszel was a tailor and owned a men's wear store in Lodz.

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Jerry's mother *Esther's* given name was *Estera*. Her maiden name was *Lewkowicz*. Estera was born on May 16, 1892, in *Staszów*, Poland (Appendix Two). Merna and Jerry's third-born child, Elysa, was named in memory of Esther.

For many years, Jerry had just one photo of his mother, the date and origin unknown (Fig 2).



Fig 2: *Estera (Lewkowicz) Kapelusz* as a young girl (date unknown)

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While researching this book, we received from our relatives in Israel a photo of Esther as a young woman (Fig 3), an image that Jerry had never seen. The Hebrew label reads “*Esther, achot shel abba*” (*Esther, sister of our father*). As we will explain later, Esther's brother *Shlomo Lewkowicz*, Jerry's uncle, had emigrated from Poland to Holon, Palestine at some point before World War II.



Fig 3: Estera (Lewkowicz) Kapelusz as a young woman (date unknown)

Jerry's older sister *Helen*, whose Hebrew name was *Chaya*, was born March 15, 1919, according to historical records (Appendix Two). This photo of Helen as a young woman (Fig 4), sent by relatives in Israel and never before seen by Jerry, was taken in 1934 in *Wisniowa Gora, Lodz*. The Hebrew reads ‘*Bat shel Esther, achot shel abba*’ (*Daughter of Esther, sister of our father*).



Fig 4: Helen Kapelusz. Photo taken in 1934 in Wisniowa Gora, Lodz

## Jerry's Story

Elysa and Nazz's daughter, Alexandra Cara (Chaya), was named in memory of Helen.

Jerry's younger brother, *David Leib* (the same name in Hebrew), was born on July 21, 1930, according to historical records (Appendix Two). Gary and Carole's son Daniel (whose Hebrew name is *David*), was named in memory of David Leib.

Prior to the war, the Kapelusz family lived in an apartment at 9 *Podręczna Street* in Lodz (Fig 5).

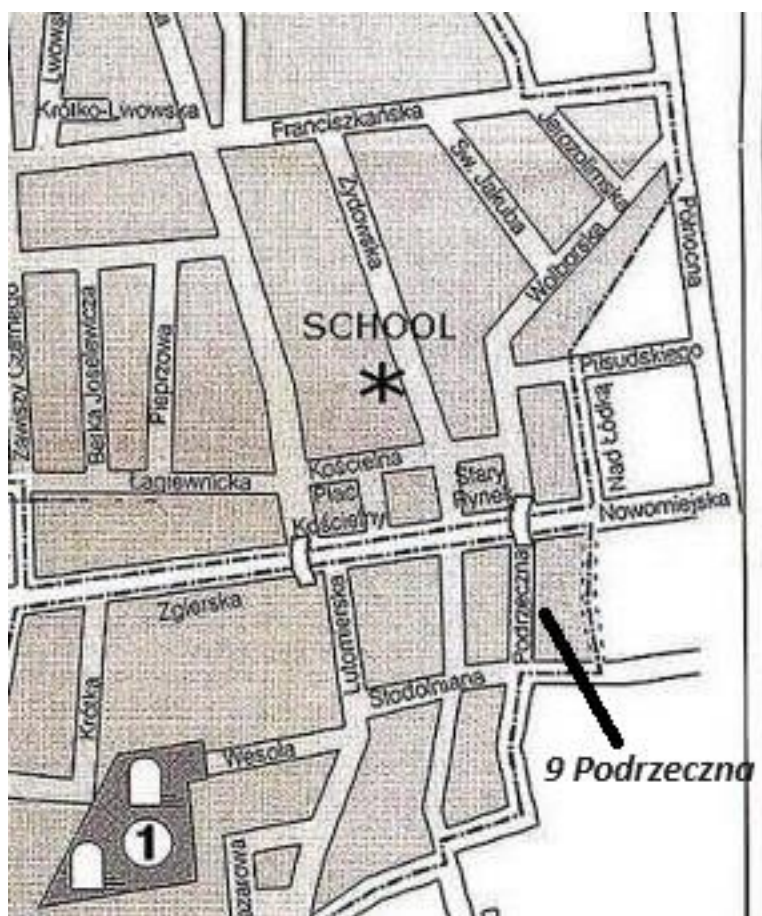


Fig 5: The Kapelusz apartment at 9 Podręczna Street

This street address was noted on the school listings for both Jerry and David (Fig 6).



# Jerry's Story

517		List of students - Lodz					
L.p.	Nazwisko i imię	Imię ojczyste	Adres	Klasa	Uwagi	Wzrost	
438	Flers Abramowicz	Isidore	Polna 23/10	III	g. 21. (chuder)		✓
439	Florkberg Israel	Josek	Al. Piłska 2/10	III	129/11		✓
440	Florkberg Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	III	129/11		✓
441	Florkberg Isidor	"	"	II	129/11		✓
442	Flers Isidor	Chaim	Al. Piłska 11/7	I	129/11		✓
443	Flers Isidor	Chaim	Al. Piłska 11/7	I	129/11		✓
444	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Brzozowska 16/6	VI	129/11		✓
445	Florkberg Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
446	Florkberg Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
447	Florkberg Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
448	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
449	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
450	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
451	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
452	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
453	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
454	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
455	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
456	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
457	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
458	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
459	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
460	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
461	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
462	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
463	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
464	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
465	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓
466	Flers Isidor	Isidor	Al. Piłska 23/10	VI	129/11		✓

Fig 6a: Jakob Kapelusz listing in the Lodz school records



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List of students - includes David Kapelus

288 10.8

R.p.	Kanisko i imie	Data mrocz	Imie opiekuna	Adres	So ktorej skolaj klasy napisano	Uwagi
268	Stark Szmul Haja	12.11.32	Stark Haja	Fr 60	126 I	710 ✓
9	Roses Baruch	5.10.32	Aran	Zajarka 42	-	- R21 ✓
270	Branawski Haneh	19.11.30	Aria Zyb	Jeros 8	-	- 1145 ✓
1	" Fajwel	15.11.32	"	"	-	- 1177 ✓
2	Grynbaum Lejb	10.1.29	Grynbaum Sucka	" 4	130 II	112 ✓
3	" Chaim	30.1.31	"	"	130 I	112 ✓
4	" Gerson	13.1.32	"	"	-	- 112 ✓
5	Zawlowicz Moshe	14.11.31	Jach "janki	Brer 19	114 II	710 ✓
6	Turczyński Dawid	8.1.32	Eljase	Trzy 8	114 I	719 ✓
7	Zalchewski Abram	32	Jankiel	Fr 15	127 I	710 ✓
8	Swierkowsky Ber	30	Jankiel	" 75	Uder	719 ✓
9	Frydlewski Abram	27	Dech	Baran 7	45 IV	R21 ✓
280	Senior Eljase	32	Nachum	Kutn. 2	Uder	I 710 ✓
1	Rasewski Dawid	8.1.32	Rasewski	Fr. 75	122 I	719 ✓
2	Pomeranc Eljase	3.11.32	Jankiel	Pigry 35	122 II	R21 ✓
3	Golberg Jach	18.11.30	Zawlowicz	Jolna 32	147 II	729 ✓
4	Wajsbawicz Eljase	11.11.27	Glencza	Pjwna 12	Tachk. V	R21 ✓
5	Najman Dawid	26.11.29	Jach	Piepr 14	131 III	729 ✓
6	" Szmul	5.2.31	"	"	Uder 3 I	719 ✓
7	Dobryński Chaim	30.11.32	Hersz Haudel	Zy. 11	116 I	710 ✓
8	Kapelus Dawid	21.7.30	Hersz	Podrz 9	136 II	729 ✓
9	Gryszka Jankiel	11.7.29	Naftali	Rybna 3	147 IV	R21 ✓
290	Gutman Chajme	28	Lejb	Piepr 20	125 II	710 ✓
1	Dymensztejn Ber	14.11.42	Jankiel	Trzew. 18	Kadem I	710 ✓
2	Abramowicz Jankiel	14.1.30	Swier	Ernan 112	Tachk. IV	729 ✓
3	Hersz Jasek	13.11.31	Abram	Zajarka 38	157 I	R21 ✓
4	Pass Jajzer	19.7.32	Szmul	Mlyn 22	-	- 729 ✓
5	Lewin Jankiel	32	Swier	Zyd 24	127 I	710 ✓
6	Hauser Jach	7.11.29	Jankiel	Zawisz 3	125 II	729 ✓
7	Ptaka Sulek	29	Gadel	Lipn 13	157 III	710 ✓
8	Zubochinski Najm	11.11.27	Abram	St. Rynok 7	114? VI	710 ✓
9	Opfenbach Szymon	29.12.27	Abram Jach	Podrz 12	Przyw VI	729 ✓
300	" Lejb	28.9.30	"	"	IV	729 ✓
301	Jankiewicz Szmul	19.2.29	Jaja	Fr. 42	150 III	729 ✓

<https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/wexner/cache/1711687958-1483421-RG-15.083M.0391.00000752.jpg>

Fig 6b: David Kapelus listing in the Lodz school records

## Jerry's Story

Jerry's father Herszel was a tailor, as were many of the Jews in Lodz. This city was an emerging textile centre in Poland. Herszel owned a men's wear store, with a tailor shop at the back. His profession was confirmed in German historical documents from the Lodz Ghetto, in which he was identified as a *schneider* (tailor). Jerry's mother Estera was identified as a *hausfrau* (housewife). His sister Chaya (Chaja) was described as a *handelsgehilfe* (clerk) while Jerry (Jakob Efraim) and David Leib were described as *schuelerin* (students) (Fig 7).

NAME	SEX	BIRTH DATE	OCCUPATION	GHETTO ADDRESS	NOTES
KAPELUSZ CHAJA	F	15/3/1919	HANDGEHILFE	AM BACH 9 11	GEST 19.11.41
KAPELUSZ CHAJA	F	/ /1919		AM BACH 9 11	
KAPELUSZ CHANA	F	1/1/1894	ARBEITERIN	REIGER 18 4	ALTERMIETER
KAPELUSZ CYPA	F	23/4/1903	WAESCHENAEBERIN	BRUNNEN 15 20	HOHENS A.G. TR 23/11
KAPELUSZ DAWID BER	M	13/ 6/1905	STRUMPFARB	NEUSTADT 29 8	NEUSTADT 21 AUSG TR 3
KAPELUSZ DAWID BER	M	7/ 6/1905	STRUMPFARB	NEUSTADT 29a 3	NEUSTADT 29 AUSG 20.2.42
KAPELUSZ DAWID LAJB	M	21/7/1930	SCHUELER	AM BACH 9 11	
KAPELUSZ DAWID LEJB	M	21/3/1930	SCHUELERIN	AM BACH 9 11	
KAPELUSZ EFRAIM	M	8/5/1906	SCHNEIDER	SULZF 10 17	POLNOCNA 12
KAPELUSZ ELI EFROIM	M	22/4/1941	KIND	AM BACH 25 6	DANZIGER 4 AM BACH 15
KAPELUSZ EMANUEL	M	/ /1882	SCHNEIDER	SULZF 10 17	ZACHODNIA 23 GEST 27.8.42
KAPELUSZ ESTER RUCHLA	F	23/ 3/1923	SCHNEIDER	KURZE 14 10	KELM 14
KAPELUSZ ESTERA	F	/ /1915	WASCHARBEITER	NEUSTADT 29 8	MITTEL 25 AUSG 24.3.42 TR 2
KAPELUSZ ESTERA	F	1/ 9/1917	NAEHERIN	OST 1/3 4	NAD LODZ 16 AUSG 15.3.42
KAPELUSZ ESTERA	F	16/5/1892	HAUSFRAU	AM BACH 9 11	
KAPELUSZ ETLA	F	/ /1911	HAUSFRAU	SULZF 10 17	POLNOCNA 12
KAPELUSZ FAJGA	F	/ /1935	KIND	HANSEATEN 33 12	KROTKA 14 AUSG 10.9.42
KAPELUSZ FAJGA	F	/ /1906		BLEICHER 18 14	ALEXHOF 63
KAPELUSZ FAJGA	F	/ /1910	SCHNEID	AM BACH 15 14	AM BACH 25
KAPELUSZ FAJGA	F	23/9/1911	HAUSFRAU	AM BACH 25 6	BASAR 7 AM BACH 15
KAPELUSZ FAJGA RUCHLA	F	9/4/1939		CRANACH 30 8	A.M.
KAPELUSZ FAJWEL	M	4/8/1941	KIND	SULZF 10 17	NEUGEBOREN
KAPELUSZ FALTYL	M	24/6/1924	SCHNEIDER	SPERLING 22 5	GNESENER 4 ZAM 26.1.42
KAPELUSZ FRAJDA	F	/ /1891	HAUSFRAU	NEUSTADT 29 8	MITTEL 25 AUSG 24.3.42 TR 2
KAPELUSZ FROIM	M	2/8/1909	SCHNEIDER	SPERLING 22 5	GNESENER 4 GEST 11.6.42
KAPELUSZ FROIM	M	8/5/1906	SCHNEIDER	SULZF 10 17	ZACHODNIA 23
KAPELUSZ GITLA	F	5/2/1926	SCHUELERIN	AM BACH 9 11	A.G.29.9.42
KAPELUSZ HERMEL	M	/ /1889		AM BACH 9 11	
KAPELUSZ HERSZ	M	/ /1916	SCHNEIDER	BLEICHER 6 23	KURTRZE 14
KAPELUSZ HERSZ	M	7/7/1916	SCHNEIDER	SPERLING 22 5	GNESENER 4 26.1.42
KAPELUSZ HERSZ LAJB	M	10/11/1907	KAUFMAN	SULZF 13 25	PL WOLNOSCI 10 AUSG TR 3
KAPELUSZ HERSZEL	M	30/2/1889	SCHNEIDER	AM BACH 9 11	
KAPELUSZ HIRSZ	M	17/ 2/1916	SCHNEIDER	KURZE 14 20	GEST 12.5.43
KAPELUSZ ICCHOK	M	1/5/1908	STRUMPFARB	CRANACH 16 14	REIGER 18 AG 3.7.44
KAPELUSZ ICCHOK SYMCHA	M	17/12/1910	SCHNEIDER	SULZF 10 17	ZACHODN 23
KAPELUSZ ICEK	M	21/3/1921		REIGER 18 4	ALTERMIETER
KAPELUSZ ICEK	M	21/3/1928		REIGER 18 4	ALTERMIETER
KAPELUSZ ICEK	M	/ /1925	SCHNEIDER	KURZE 14 20	KURZE 14
KAPELUSZ ICEK SYMCHA	M	17/3/1934	SCHUELER	SULZF 10 17	POLNOCNA 12
KAPELUSZ ICEK SYMCHA	F	17/12/1910	TUCHSCHNEIDER	SULZF 10 17	ZACHODNIA 23
KAPELUSZ IDES	F	/ /1933	KIND	HANSEATEN 33 12	KROTKA 14 AUSG 10.9.42
KAPELUSZ ISAK	M	2/ 7/1941	KIND NEUGEB	KREUZ 10 3	
KAPELUSZ JAKOB EFRAIM	M	30/3/1926	SCHUELER	AM BACH 9 11	
KAPELUSZ JIDEL	F	/ /1937		BLEICHER 18 14	LIMANOW 63 A.G.11.9.42
KAPELUSZ JOJNE	M	/ /1888	MAHLER	SCHLOSS 10 7	SALZ 7 AUSG TR 13
KAPELUSZ JOSEF ZAJNWEL	M	17/9/1937	KIND	SULZF 10 17	POLNOCNA 12
KAPELUSZ JOSEF ZAWEL	M	27/9/1937	KIND	SULZF 10 17	ZACHODNIA 23
KAPELUSZ JOSEK	M	/ /1921	STRUMPFARB	NEUSTADT 29 8	MITTEL 25 AUSG 24.3.42 TR 25
KAPELUSZ KIWA	M	11/8/1912	SCHNEIDER	AM BACH 25 6	BASAR 7 AM BACH 15
KAPELUSZ KIWA	M	11/7/1912	SCHNEIDER	AM BACH 25 6	BAZARNA 7
KAPELUSZ LAJZER DAWID	M	10/7/1927	ARBEITER	BRUNNEN 16 23	CRANACH 20 ABG 20.8.43 GNESE
KAPELUSZ LAJZER DAWID	M	12/ 4/1939	KIND	KURZE 14 10	KELM 14
KAPELUSZ MALKA CHANA	F	20/7/1909	HAUSFRAU	HOHENS 14 4	MITTEL 26 PRZ DO WARSZ 26.4.
KAPELUSZ MARJEM LAJA	F	4/11/1914	HAUSFRAU	CRANACH 30 8	HAMBURG 6
KAPELUSZ MENDEL MAJLECH	M	25/10/1923	ARBEITER	REIGER 18 4	ALTERMIETER
KAPELUSZ MENELA	M	/ /1882		SULZF 13 25	
KAPELUSZ MOHELE	M	10/3/1886	SCHNEIDER	SPERLING 22 5	GNESENER 4 ZAM 26.1.42
KAPELUSZ MOJSIE	M	/ /1924		SCHLOSSER 10 7	
KAPELUSZ MOJSZE	M	10/10/1924	SCHUELER	SCHLOSS 10 7	SALZ 7 AUSG TR 13
KAPELUSZ MORDKA	M	1/9/1907	SCHNEIDER	CRANACH 30 8	PFEFFER 15
KAPELUSZ MORDKA	M	/ /1907	SCHNEIDER	HANSEATEN 33 12	KROTKA 14 ABG 28.11.42 CRANA
KAPELUSZ MOSZEK	M	/ /1882	KAUFMAN	SULZF 13 25	PL WOLNOSCI 10 AUSG TR 3
KAPELUSZ MOSZEK RACHMIEL	M	/ /1937	KIND	HOHENS 15 14	PILSUD 4
KAPELUSZ NACHA	F	25/6/1921	SCHNEIDERIN	AM BACH 9 11	GEST 31.5.42
KAPELUSZ NACHMAN	M	11/11/1930		BRUNNEN 15 20	HOHENS A.G. TR 23/11

Fig 7: Kapelus family listing in the Lodz Ghetto (Am Bach St 9, Apartment 11)

## Jerry's Story

### Backgrounder

"Lodz was the second largest city in Poland at that time, with a population of about 665,000 of whom about 233,000 or 34% were Jews". (Source: *Yad Vashem*)<sup>2</sup>

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"Before the Holocaust, Jews were the largest minority in Poland. In Poland's major cities, Jews and Poles spoke each other's languages and interacted in markets and on the streets. Even the market towns, or shtetls, that have come to represent the lives of Jews in Eastern Europe were, to some extent, mixed communities. That did not mean that antisemitism did not impact the lives of Polish Jews, but Jews were part of Poland, and Polish culture was, in part, Jewish.

Jews had been living in Poland since at least the Middle Ages. When Crusaders moved through Europe in the thirteenth century, Jewish refugees sought safety in Poland. The 1264 Statute of Kalisz created legal protections for Jews that were extended by King Kazimierz Wielki, or Casimir the Great, in the early fourteenth century. With these protections, Jewish communities in Poland began to thrive. Scholars suggest that by the sixteenth century, 80 percent of all Jews worldwide lived in Poland, where they enjoyed relative autonomy and tolerance and developed a rich social and cultural life, including several significant Jewish religious movements, such as the Hasidim (a sect of Judaism with an emphasis on mysticism and prayer) and a Jewish reformation movement called the Haskalah.

The relatively peaceful existence of Polish Jewry was threatened toward the end of the eighteenth century when, in a series of diplomatic moves, Poland was partitioned between Russia, Prussia, and Austria. With Russia in control of vast areas of Poland, most Polish Jews found themselves living under Russian rule. Russia imposed geographic and professional restrictions on Jewish life, confining Jews to the Pale of Settlement (which was abolished legally in 1917, though this region continued to house the majority of European Jewry). In response, Jews fought alongside Polish fighters seeking independence during a series of uprisings throughout the nineteenth century.

Except for a small minority of well-off Jewish merchants, bankers, and factory owners, the majority of the Jews were poor and became even more so under Russia's control. They made a living as traders, as semi-skilled craftsmen in old and emerging industries (textiles, for example), and as shopkeepers. Few were farmers; many were destitute. For the most part, Jews lived in small towns known as shtetls. In tandem with cultural and intellectual changes, once the processes of industrialization and urbanization were under way, most Jews left the shtetl to live in larger urban centers such as Warsaw, Vilna, Krakow, and Lodz. By the 1920s, they made up between a quarter and half of the population in Poland's larger cities (in some smaller towns, they made as much as 90 percent).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/the-lodz-ghetto-historical-background.html>



## Jerry's Story

Those cities became the cultural, religious, and intellectual centers of world Jewry. There, Jews developed an extensive network of cultural and literary institutions and charities. Alongside competing religious trends, new political theories and ideologies gripped Polish Jews, including Zionism and socialism. These ideas and many others were discussed in thousands of newspapers, books, journals, and plays, written mostly in Yiddish.

After World War I, Poland became a democratic independent state with significant minority populations, including Ukrainians, Jews, Belorussians, Lithuanians, and ethnic Germans. However, increasing Polish nationalism made Poland a hostile place for many Jews. A series of pogroms and discriminatory laws were signs of growing antisemitism, while fewer and fewer opportunities to emigrate were available. One the eve of World War II, three and a half million Jews, or about ten percent of the population, lived in Poland, giving it the highest percentage of Jews in any European country". (Source: *Facinghistory.org*)<sup>3</sup>

While Jerry told us few details about his childhood, in his Holocaust-related interviews and presentations given later in life, he described what he remembered as a very happy childhood and a normal family life in his early years. Jerry had a large extended family with many aunts, uncles, and cousins and the family got together regularly for Shabbat and holidays.

Jerry recalled in one interview that his father had five brothers and two sisters but he did not recall their names. We know about two of his first cousins, *Kiva and Genek (Gershon) Kapelusz*, who were the sons of one of Herszel's brothers. Jerry also remembered one uncle, *Moshe*, after whom Merna and Jerry's second-born child, your uncle Stephen Martin (Shlomo Moshe), was named. We don't know if Moshe was from Jerry's father's or mother's side.

We know very little about Estera's family. According to Jerry's 1977 submission of testimony to the Yad Vashem Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority in Israel, Estera's mother was *Baila Lewkowicz* (Fig 8).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/jewish-life-poland-holocaust>

**YAD VASHEM**  
Martyrs' and Heroes'  
Remembrance  
Authority  
P.O.B. 84 Jerusalem, Israel

**דף-עד**  
**עדות בלאט**  
**A Page of Testimony**

**יד ושם**  
אינסטיטוט צום אנדענק  
פון אומקום און גבורה

<p><b>THE MARTYRS' AND HEROES' REMEMBRANCE LAW, 5713-1953</b> determines in article No. 2 that — The task of YAD VASHEM is to gather into the homeland material regarding all those members of the Jewish people who laid down their lives, who fought and rebelled against the Nazi enemy and his collaborators, and to perpetuate their memory and that of the communities, organisations, and institutions which were destroyed because they were Jewish.</p>	<p>דאס געזעץ צום אנדענק פון אומקום און גבורה — י"ד-ושם, תשי"ג 1953 שטעלט פֿעסט אין פֿאראגראף נומ' 2: די אויסגאבע פון י"ד-ושם איז איינצאמלען אין היימלאנד דעם אנדענק פון אלע יידן, וואס זענען געפאלן, האבן זיך מוסר נפש געווען, געקעמפט און זיך אנטקעגנגעשטעלט דעם נאציזשן שונא און זיינע ארדיטהעלפער, און זיי אלעמען, די קהילות, די ארגאניזאציעס און אינסטיטוציעס, וועלכע זענען חרוב געווארן צוליב זייער אנגעהערקייט צום יידישן פאלק — שטעלן א דענקמאל. (בשעת-בד' נומ' 132, י"ז אלול תשי"ג, 28.8.1953)</p>	
<p>בילד Photo</p>	<p>1. פאמיליע-נאמען * KAPELUSZ קאפולס</p>	
	<p>2. פארנאמען (פאמיליע-נאמען פאר דער חתונה) First Name (maiden name) ESTHER LEFKOVITZ</p>	
	<p>3. געבורטס-דאטע Date of birth 4. ארט פון געבורט (town, country) STASHOV POLAND 5. נאמען פון פאטער Name of father 6. נאמען פון מוטער Name of mother BAILA</p>	
	<p>7. נאמען פון מאן אדער פון פרוי און איר מיידלעך-פאמיליע Name of spouse (if a wife, add maiden name) GERSHON</p>	
<p>8. סטאבילער וואוינארט Place of residence before the war LODZ POLAND</p>	<p>9. וואוינערטער בעת דער מלחמה Places of residence during the war LODZ POLAND</p>	
<p>10. ארט, צייט און אומשטענדן פון טויט Circumstances of death (place, date, etc.) AUCHWITZ CAMP</p>	<p>I, the undersigned <u>J. Kapelus</u> residing at (full address) <u>37 COLONNADE RD. will. Ont.</u> relationship to deceased <u>SON</u> hereby declare that this testimony is correct to the best of my knowledge. דערקלער דערמיט, אז די עדות וואס איך האב דא איבערגעגעבן, מ'ט אלע פרטים, איז א ריכטיקע לויט מיין בעסטען וויסן. אונטערשריפט <u>J. Kapelus</u> Place and date <u>April 27th</u> ארט און דאטע</p>	
<p>..ונתתי להם בביתי ובחומותי יד ושם... אשר לא יכרת" ישעיהו נ"ה "..even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name...that shall not be cut off." Isaiah, LV, 5</p>		

\* ביטע אנשרייבן יעדן נאמען פון אומגעקומענעם אירף א באזונדער בלאט.  
\* Please inscribe the name of each victim of the Holocaust on a separate form.

Fig 8: Jerry's submission page of testimony about Esther Kapelus to Yad Vashem, 1977

## Jerry's Story

We also learned from our cousins in Israel that Estera had at least one brother, *Shlomo Salom Lewkowicz*, who had left Poland and moved to Holon, Palestine at some point before the Second World War. Jerry knew of his Uncle Shlomo and had wanted to join him after the war (Fig 9).

Wohin beabsichtigen Sie zu gehen, falls Sie aus der Haft entlassen werden?  
*If released from detention, where do you intend to go?*

to Palestine

Geben Sie die Namen und die Anschriften dieser vertrauenswürdiger Personen an, die in dem Orte wohnen, wohin Sie gehen wollen und die für Sie bürgen können:  
*Give names and addresses, if known, of these reliable persons living in the locality where you intend to go, who can vouch for you:*

1) Lewkowicz Sr. in Palestine

Gemeinsames Signal  
J. Kapelars

Fig 9: Uncle Shlomo Lewkowicz in Palestine is mentioned by Jerry in an exit interview with the US Army on May 8, 1945, prior to leaving Buchenwald concentration camp

In 1974, Jerry finally reconnected with his Uncle Shlomo, and Shlomo's daughters *Sarah* and *Chana* and their respective families, on his first visit to Holon and Israel (Fig 10).



Fig 10a: Uncle Shlomo Lewkowicz, wife and grandson Itzik in Holon, Israel (undated)

## Jerry's Story



Fig 10b: Jerry's first cousins Sarah and Chana Lewkowitz in Holon, Israel

Jerry's family spoke Yiddish and Polish at home in Lodz. As was the case for most Jews in Poland, they were fairly devout and observed most Jewish rituals such as keeping kosher. His father's store was always closed and his mother did not cook on Shabbat. Jerry remembered how the family would always buy new clothes for Passover.

Jerry's father was active in the local Zionist movement, through the organization *Yavneh Zion*. Jerry himself belonged to a Zionist youth organization as a child (it was either *Beitar* or *Poale Tzion*, Jerry couldn't quite remember), and he attended sports and Jewish cultural activities there.

Jerry began school at the age of six. He remembered being given a big party to celebrate starting school, which was the tradition. He recalled being a good student and enjoying school.

### Background

"In no other country were Jews, proportionally, such a huge minority as in Poland. Religiously, economically, and politically Jews varied a great deal. They were an urban and closed group which kept only economic contacts with the rest of the population. In the Polish state they had to struggle for equal rights. Antisemitism propagated by nationalists was very powerful. In the second half of the 1930s the Polish government adopted the nationalists' slogans and tried to restrict the Jews' economic activity.

An expression for the modernization of the Jews was the emergence, in the end of the nineteenth century, of a Jewish intelligentsia. Political parties were established and represented both the Polish state and Jewish national movements. Polish Jews created a rich trilingual culture in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Polish. The second Polish republic can be considered a golden era for Jewish culture in Poland". (Source: *JSTOR digital library*)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5703/shofar.29.3.4>



## Jerry's Story

Despite the relatively large population and proportion of Jews in Lodz at that time, Jerry remembered witnessing and experiencing the pain of Polish antisemitism throughout his early childhood, before, during and then after the war. He recalled in interviews that the Jewish children he knew did not normally associate with the Gentile children even though they attended the same public schools. In one incident that Jerry witnessed, at about the age of six or seven, his teacher scolded another Jewish student for bringing a lunch containing an onion. The teacher, who was a Pole, called the child a '*stinking Jew*' and told him to '*go back to Palestine*'. In response to such displays of antisemitism, Jerry's parents ultimately removed him from that school and enrolled him and his brother in a private Jewish parochial school until the war broke out. Regardless, Jerry had to walk through a Gentile neighbourhood to get to school and he remembered being regularly harassed by Polish children and called a '*dirty Jew*'.

Before the war, Jerry's family rented a summer cottage. They were sometimes harassed by the local farmers and their kids and there was no-one to help them. Even as a child, Jerry remembered witnessing random beatings of Jews in Lodz, particularly before Passover or around Easter. He also recalled being cautioned by his father that it was better to run than to fight as Jews would get no support, especially from the Polish police.

Even as a child, Jerry had also been aware of troubles for Jews in neighbouring Germany (Fig 11). He remembered that before the war Polish-born German Jews began arriving and that German-born Jews were resettled in Poland as well. These people told stories about the atrocities of the new Nazi regime, even before the start of the Second World War.



Fig 11: Map of Poland showing neighbouring countries

## Jerry's Story

Jerry recalled that even before the war, Poles increasingly refused to do business with Jews and signs were often placed outside Jewish-owned stores warning customers that the stores were owned by Jews and not to enter (Fig 12). He recalled Poles standing outside his father's store trying to discourage people from shopping there and that his father had to hire a Jewish 'security guard'.



*Fig 12: Historical photo of boycott of a Jewish store in Germany*

Jerry's family did have one opportunity to leave Poland before the war. One of his father's employees, who had already emigrated to the USA two years before the war, had pleaded with him to come to America. However, the family was settled in Poland and his father didn't want to upset the family and move to a strange land.

## Jerry's Story

### The Holocaust Years

#### Poland invaded by Germany, September 1, 1939

##### Backgrounder

“On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. To justify the action, Nazi propagandists accused Poland of persecuting ethnic Germans living in Poland. They also falsely claimed that Poland was planning, with its allies Great Britain and France, to encircle and dismember Germany. The SS, in collusion with the German military, staged a phony attack on a German radio station. The Germans falsely accused the Poles of this attack. Hitler then used the action to launch a “retaliatory” campaign against Poland.

Germany launched the unprovoked attack at dawn on September 1, 1939, with an advance force consisting of more than 2,000 tanks supported by nearly 900 bombers and over 400 fighter planes. In all, Germany deployed 60 divisions and nearly 1.5 million men in the invasion. From East Prussia and Germany in the north, and Silesia and Slovakia in the south, German units quickly broke through Polish defenses along the border and advanced on Warsaw in a massive encirclement attack.

Poland mobilized late, and political considerations forced its army into a disadvantageous deployment. The Polish army also lacked modern arms and equipment, had few armored and motorized units, and could deploy little more than 300 planes, most of which the Luftwaffe destroyed in the first few days of the invasion. Despite fighting tenaciously and inflicting serious casualties on the Germans, the Polish army was defeated within weeks. The world adopted a new term to describe Germany's successful war tactic: Blitzkrieg, or “lightning war.” The tactic consisted of staging a surprise attack with massive, concentrated forces of fast-moving armored units supported by overwhelming air power”. (Source: *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*)<sup>5</sup>

Once the Germans invaded Poland, life got much worse for Jews. Oppressive new rules were imposed on Jews. Jewish children, Jerry and his brother included, were no longer allowed to go to school. Jewish professionals were fired, and Jewish adults were not allowed to work. Jerry's father Herszel's store was taken over by the Nazis and given to a Pole. Herszel was no longer allowed to enter the store, nor to work and he lost his means of earning a living to support the family. Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David patch at all times, identifying them as Jews (Fig 13).

***“I remember clearly, as a child when the war began, watching the German army marching into Lodz. The Germans immediately imposed new rules on the Jews of Lodz. Like all other Jews, I was forced to wear a yellow star on the front and back of my clothing featuring the word ‘Jude’ or Jew, which even at a young age, I knew was degrading”. (Jerry)***

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<sup>5</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/invasion-of-poland-fall-1939>

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 13: Jews wearing Star of David badges in the Lodz Ghetto (Getty Images)*

Jerry recalled wondering, as a child, how the Germans always seemed to know where all the Jews lived in Lodz. The Germans, it turned out, had lists of Jewish names as well as help from the Poles in order to easily identify all the Jews. (see Fig 7).

## Jerry's Story

### The Lodz (Litzmannstadt) Ghetto

Jerry was just 10 years old, in grade six and still living on Podrzeczna Street in early 1940 when all Jews living in Lodz, about 160,000, were rounded up and forced to move into a ghetto created by the Nazis in the Lodz district of *Marysin*, which, Jerry recalled, *“was the worst, stinkiest part of the city”* (Fig 14).

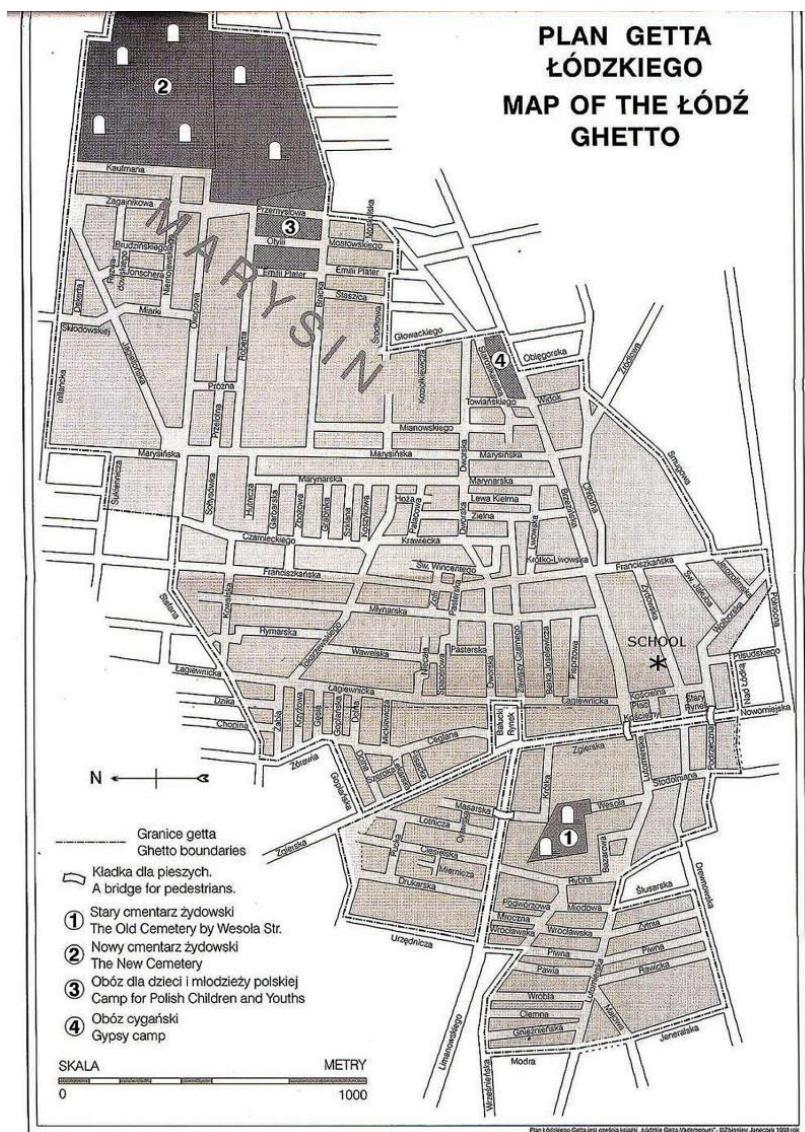


Fig 14: The Lodz Ghetto

## Jerry's Story

### Backgrounder

"German troops occupied Lodz on September 8, 1939. This was one week after Germany invaded Poland on September 1. Lodz was annexed to Germany as part of the Warthegau. The Germans renamed the city Litzmannstadt, after a German World War I general, Karl Litzmann.

In early February 1940, the Germans established a ghetto in the northeastern section of Lodz. About 160,000 Lodz Jews were forced into a small area.

The Germans isolated the ghetto from the rest of Lodz with barbed-wire fencing. German Order Policemen guarded the ghetto perimeter. Internal order in the ghetto was largely the responsibility of Jewish ghetto police. The ghetto area was divided into three parts by the intersection of two major roads. The intersection itself lay outside the ghetto. Bridges constructed over the two thoroughfares connected the three segments of the ghetto. Streetcars for the non-Jewish population of Lodz traversed the ghetto but were not permitted to stop within it". (Source: *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*)<sup>6</sup>

### Backgrounder

"The Lodz Ghetto, in the Polish city of Łódź, renamed Litzmannstadt by the Germans, was the second largest ghetto after Warsaw. More than 200,000 Jews lived there at some point after the ghetto was established in 1940. Only about 10,000 of them survived the war. The Lodz Ghetto existed for more than four years, longer than any other ghetto. In August 1944 it was "liquidated" by the Germans. Liquidation meant destroying the Jewish self-administration, sending most of the people in the ghetto to Auschwitz-Birkenau to be killed and dispersing the others to labour units. In January 1945, when the Soviet army liberated the city, only about 800 Jews remained alive in Lodz.

The Lodz Ghetto was unusual in the degree to which it was closed off from the world. Inmates worked inside the ghetto. Before the war, Lodz was known for its textile industry, and Jewish leaders in the ghetto built on that capacity in their strategy of "survival through work." Workshops and factories were set up inside the ghetto to make uniforms, mattresses and other things that were useful for the war effort or profitable to certain powerful Germans. Without the regular movement of people in and out of the ghetto, it was almost impossible to smuggle food or weapons, to convey news, or to get people out of the ghetto.

Another reason for the ghetto's isolation was demographic. Lodz was located in the part of conquered Poland that was incorporated into Germany, and Nazi leaders planned to transform it into a German city. To that end, SS race and resettlement authorities expelled Jews and Poles and brought in ethnic Germans from other territories. As a result, even Jews who had lived in Lodz all their lives had few if

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<sup>6</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lodz>



## Jerry's Story

any reliable contacts outside the ghetto. In contrast to Warsaw, where thousands of Jews escaped from the ghetto to the “Aryan” side of the city, or Kovno, where many Jewish children were smuggled out of the ghetto into the care of non-Jews, in Lodz, very few Jews survived outside.

The ghetto was established in a poor, industrial part of the city. There was no sewer system, minimal running water and heating, and terrible housing. In the crowded conditions, disease ran rampant and people struggled just to find a place to sleep. To make matters worse, the Germans crammed in 20,000 Jews from Germany, Czechoslovakia and Luxembourg, and 5,000 Roma rounded up in Austria”.  
(Source: *Art Gallery of Ontario*)<sup>7</sup>

The harsh realities of the Lodz (Litzmannstadt) Ghetto are reflected through a collection of over 3,000 printed photographs and negatives, the valiant work of Polish-Jewish photographer Henryk Ross, which were miraculously preserved during the war (Fig 15). Viewing these stark images, which depict lives of pain, struggle and tragedy along with occasional moments of celebration and joy, helps to provide a visual context for Jerry's personal story which follows.<sup>8,9</sup>



<sup>7</sup> <http://lodzghetto.ago.ca/dorisbergen?t:state:flow=6c889314-cbf4-4816-8886-f8af5971494e>

<sup>8</sup> <http://agolodzghetto.com/start?t:state:flow=68431716-f06e-467b-a9e4-bf14676582e6>

<sup>9</sup> Sutnik, Maia-Mari (ed) (2007) *Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross*, New Haven: Yale University Press

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 15: A few of the photographs of the Lodz Ghetto taken by Henryk Ross*



## Jerry's Story

As with other Jewish families, Jerry's family was allowed to bring to the ghetto only whatever they could carry. Families were assigned to small apartments and shared rooms. According to historical documents, Jerry's family was forced into apartment #11 in the ghetto on Block No A41, Am Bach Str 9 (Fig 16).

There was no running water or toilet in their apartment. Jerry's family used an outhouse and an outside water pump.

Interestingly, the same historical record also indicates that there were at least three other young people with last name *Kapelusz* registered as living in the same apartment (#11) with Jerry's family: *Nacha Kapelusz* (born June 25, 1921), *Gitla Kapelusz*, (born February 5, 1926) and *Symcha Israel Kapelusz* (born October 7, 1928). There are no other records of these young people. Perhaps they were Jerry's cousins who would have been forced to live in the same ghetto apartment. They were never mentioned to us by Jerry.

Jerry also never spoke about how and where the rest of the extended *Kapelusz* and *Lewkowicz* families lived in the ghetto or what became of them. While the official ghetto lists showed many other people with the family names *Kapelusz* and *Lewkowicz* living in the ghetto, we will never know who among them were relatives of Jerry.

There were only two other known survivors of our *Kapelusz* family, Jerry's first cousins *Genek* and *Kiva Kapelusz*, who were brothers and with whom Jerry later connected in his search for survivors.

Jerry remembered the ghetto as being ***“surrounded by barbed wire, and every 200-300 ft was an armed German guard so that no-one could get in or out”***. There was no communication with the outside world, and they had no idea what was going on outside the ghetto. He remembered that owning a radio was illegal. Even listening to a radio was thought to be risky, potentially a death sentence, he recalled. There was little food, no doctors nor medication. Even at a young age, Jerry was aware that Jews in the ghetto were dying of malnutrition and disease in the streets or in the factories.

Wohn. Nr. (residence #)		Name (surname)		Mädchenname oder Name des Mannes		Vorname (first name)		Geschlecht (gender)		Geburtsdatum (birthday)		Beruf (profession)		Frühere Adresse (previous address)		Karten Nr. (card #)		Bemerkungen (remarks)	
								m.		w.									
11	Kapelus	VA		✓	✓	Moritz		-	R	20.11.1899						025742		230	
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	16.11.1892						✓	8	231	geb. 11.11.92
"	"					Yakov		-	R	15.11.1899							9	232	geb. 11.11.92
"	"					Yakov		-	R	25.11.1891							50	233	geb. 25.11.91
"	"					Yakov		-	R	5.11.1892							51	234	geb. 5.11.92
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	20.11.1896							2	235	geb. 20.11.96
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	14.10.1897							3	236	geb. 14.10.97
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	21.11.1893							4	237	geb. 21.11.93
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	21.11.1895							5	238	geb. 21.11.95
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	12.11.1898							6	239	geb. 12.11.98
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	28.11.1915							7	240	geb. 28.11.15
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	25.11.1899							8	241	geb. 25.11.99
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1901							9	242	geb. 1901
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1902							60	243	geb. 1902
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1940							61	244	geb. 1940
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1918							62	245	geb. 1918
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1928							3	246	geb. 1928
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1943							4	247	geb. 1943
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1944							✓	5	geb. 1944
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1944							6	248	geb. 1944
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1920							7	249	geb. 1920
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1940							✓	69	geb. 1940
"	"	VA		✓	✓	Yakov		-	R	1901							70	250	geb. 1901

Fig 16a: Historical record showing that the Kapelus family lived at A41 Am Bach Str 9 in the Lodz Ghetto

## Jerry's Story

Am Bach Str Nr 9 - Registration book for a house. Includes apartment number, name, sex, date or year of birth, and age.  
https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/wexner/cache/1711755265-1283399-RG-15.883M.q207.00000594.jpg

Lauf. Nr.	Wohn. Nr.	NAME	Vorname	GESCHLECHT		Geburtsdatum	Alter
				M	W		
76	10 <sup>a</sup>	Magier	Mendel	1	—	1937	3 ✓
77	10 <sup>b</sup>	Goldberg	Cyprian	—	1	1910	30 ✓
78	"	"	Gitta	—	1	1881	59 ✓
79	"	Unikowska	Golda	—	1	1903	27 ✓
80	11	Kapelusz	Hermel	1	—	1889	57 ✓
1	"	"	Esdera	—	1	1892	48 ✓
2	"	"	Chaja	—	1	1919	21 ✓
3	"	"	Kasla	—	1	1921	19 ✓
4	"	"	Gitta	—	1	1926	14 ✓ +
85	"	"	Jakob Lyskin	1	—	1926	14 ✓
6	"	"	Amela Israel	1	—	1928	12 ✓
7	"	"	David Gjb	1	—	1930	10 ✓
8	11 <sup>a</sup>	Chmielnicka	Chewela	—	1	1895	45 ✓
9	"	"	Olana	—	1	1928	12 ✓ +
90	"	Rozennstajn	Kuciel	1	—	1909	31 ✓
1	"	"	Alise Bar	1	—	1919	21 ✓
2	"	"	Golda	—	1	1915	25 ✓
3	12	Gutgold	Jakob-Herrn	1	—	14.2.1888	52 ✓
4	"	"	Cylia	—	1	14.2.1888	52 ✓
95	"	Chhn	Katke	—	1	14.12.1913	27 ✓
6	"	Gutgold	Alfer-David	1	—	21.5.1885	55 ✓
7	"	"	Gitta	—	1	20.2.1900	40 ✓
8	"	"	Josef-Leonard	1	—	27.4.1900	24 ✓
99	13	Psdkowski	Chil	1	—	1894	46 ✓
100	"	"	Golda	—	1	1894	46 ✓

Fig 16b: Historical record showing that the Kapelusz family lived at A41 Am Bach Str 9 in the Lodz Ghetto

### Background

"Lodz was the center of the textile industry in prewar Poland. The Lodz ghetto thus became a major production center under the German occupation. As early as May 1940, the Germans established factories in the ghetto and used Jewish residents for forced labor. By July 1942, there were 74 workshops within the ghetto. The major factories produced textiles, especially uniforms, for the German military". (Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)<sup>10</sup>

*"Everyone living in the ghetto was put to work as a slave labourer. As I was over 10 years of age, I was put to work, usually 14 hours a day, in a leather factory. I made belts, knapsacks, ammunition packs and horse harnesses for the German army in return for a bowl of soup and piece of bread. If you didn't work hard, they took your ration away. My father worked in a uniform factory and my sister worked in mattress factory. My mother and brother stayed in the apartment". (Jerry)*

<sup>10</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lodz>



## Jerry's Story

Jerry recalled a fellow slave labourer being caught by a Jewish factory supervisor and a German guard for stealing some leather to make himself shoes at home. The worker was hung at the factory and all labourers, including the children, were required to watch. This was meant as a warning to others not to steal. Regardless, Jerry recalled that the workers continued to steal whenever they could *“as they felt there was nothing to lose”*.

Jerry was part of a small group of young Jews, including the daughter of one of the Jewish supervisors, who committed sabotage whenever they could by burning supplies and breaking needles to slow down production. Jerry was caught and beaten by the Jewish factory manager *Zeligman*, lost his soup ration and warned not to do it again or he would be reported to the Germans. However, he continued to participate in this act of defiance as he believed his life was no longer valued. He recalled that *“Life wasn’t that precious. As you watched people die, you become insensitive to it after a while”*.

### Backgrounder

“Lodz had another distinction: the first killing centre for gassing Jews was located nearby. Chelmno, called Kulmhof by the Germans, began operations in December 1941, and inmates of the Lodz Ghetto were its first victims. At Chelmno, killing was done in specially equipped gas vans rather than in fixed gas chambers.

Over the course of 1942, Germans removed around 70,000 people from the Lodz Ghetto and murdered them at Chelmno. At the time (and since) the raids and transports are often referred to as “deportations,” but the term is misleading, because victims were not deported to some other jurisdiction, only brought by truck or train about 50 km to the killing site. The most intense killing actions came in September 1942, when the Germans demanded that 20,000 people be removed from the ghetto. Thousands of children, sick, and elderly Jews were rounded up from hospitals, nursing homes, and orphanages, torn from their families, dragged from hiding places, and sent to Chelmno. Afterward the ghetto became effectively a labour camp”. (Source: *Art Gallery of Ontario*)<sup>11</sup>

‘Resettlement’ announcements (Fig 17) signed by the Jewish Council (Judenrat) Chair Chaim Rumkowski, were posted throughout the ghetto in 1942. The deportees were told that they would be “resettled” but could apply for an exemption. Deportees from the ghetto were in fact taken by train directly to Chelmno and murdered upon arrival.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <http://lodzghetto.ago.ca/dorisbergen?t:state:flow=6c889314-cbf4-4816-8886-f8af5971494e>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust/JG0194\\_img1.jpg](https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust/JG0194_img1.jpg)



Fig 17: Example of a ghetto deportation announcement, signed by Chaim Rumkowski, indicating the planned expulsion of Jews from the Litzmannstadt ghetto on May 4, 1942. Each person subject to 'relocation' would be allowed to bring up to 12.5 kg of luggage.

At night Jerry's family did not leave their apartment, for fear of being picked up by the Germans. Jerry was aware that Jewish cultural, educational, and religious activities were still going on within the ghetto but, to his recollection, his family did not participate in these. Still, somehow, life went on within the ghetto.



## Jerry's Story

The last, the very last,  
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.  
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing  
against a white stone...

Such, such a yellow  
Is carried lightly 'way up high.  
It went away I'm sure because it wished  
to kiss the world goodbye.

For seven weeks I've lived in here,  
Penned up inside this ghetto  
But I have found my people here.  
The dandelions call to me  
And the white chestnut candles in the court.  
Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.  
Butterflies don't live in here,  
In the ghetto.

*This poem was written in June 1942 by Pavel Friedmann, imprisoned at the Theresienstadt concentration camp. The poem was included in the book by Hana Volavkova<sup>13</sup>.*

In interviews, Jerry noted that there were also Jewish informers in the ghetto who kept the Germans aware of what was going on inside. As a result, those imprisoned in the ghetto were afraid to talk publicly or to organize for fear of being taken away by the Gestapo to be tortured or shot.

### Background

"During World War II, the Germans established Jewish councils, usually called Judenraete. These Jewish municipal administrations were required to ensure that Nazi orders and regulations were implemented. Jewish council members also sought to provide basic community services for ghettoized Jewish populations. Forced to implement Nazi policy, the Jewish councils remain a controversial and delicate subject. Jewish council chairmen had to decide whether to comply or refuse to comply with German demands to, for example, list names of Jews for deportation.

In Lodz, Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, who tried in vain to persuade the Nazis to reduce the number of Jewish deportees, urged ghetto residents to report for deportation as ordered. Rumkowski also adopted a policy of "rescue through labor,"

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<sup>13</sup> Volavková, Hana (1978) *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings And Poems From Terezín Concentration Camp, 1942-1944* Second Edition. New York: Schocken Books

## Jerry's Story

believing that if the Germans could exploit Jewish labor, deportation might be averted". (Source: *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*)<sup>14</sup>

*"I remember the start of roundups carried out by the Gestapo with the help of the Judenrat. Thousands of Jews were taken away on trucks and never seen again. During these roundups, those who could not walk were brutally thrown out the window to the trucks.*

*I remember, on several occasions, seeing the notorious Chaim Rumkowski, who as the Chair of the Judenrat who was in charge of distributing food, clothing, and the limited medical supplies. Rumkowski was considered by most Jews imprisoned in the ghetto to be a collaborator and traitor, as he handed over thousands of Jews as demanded each month by the Germans as they began to liquidate the ghetto. His rationale was that by giving up thousands of Jews, he was actually saving thousands of other Jewish lives. There was a rumor that Rumkowski was later identified and beaten to death in Auschwitz concentration camp by former prisoners of the Lodz ghetto". (Jerry)*

### Background

"Between September 1942 and May 1944, there were no major deportations from Lodz. During this period, the ghetto resembled a forced-labor camp.

In the spring of 1944, the Nazis decided to destroy the Lodz ghetto. By then, Lodz was the last remaining ghetto in German-occupied Poland, with a population of approximately 75,000 Jews in May 1944. In June and July 1944, the Germans resumed deportations from Lodz, and about 7,000 Jews were deported to Chelmno. The ghetto residents were told that they were being transferred to work camps in Germany. The Germans deported almost all of the surviving ghetto residents to the Auschwitz-Birkenau killing center in August 1944. A small group of 1,000–1,500 Jews remained behind in the Lodz ghetto. They were responsible for sorting the possessions of the deported and cleaning up". (Source: *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*)<sup>15</sup>

Jerry recalled the roundups, and Jews being forcibly taken away. No-one knew at the time that the Jews being taken away were heading to the gas chambers. Those left behind were informed by the Germans that the Jews were being transported to work elsewhere.

<sup>14</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-councils-judenraete>

<sup>15</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lodz>

## Jerry's Story

Handwritten letters were smuggled back into the ghetto, supposedly written by those taken away, attesting to their 'better living conditions working outside'. Looking back, Jerry asserted that these letters were fabricated by the Germans in order to minimize resistance, so that the Jews would be more willing to volunteer to be rounded up rather than be forced.

Jerry's small family was closed-knit, stayed together and helped each other until the very last minute. He was aware, however, that some Jewish families fought and stole food from each other in order to survive.

Despite this, Jerry made some good friends in the ghetto, people whom he could trust. One of those was *Abram Lipski*, a boy who was orphaned in the ghetto, who was cared for by Jerry's family, and for whom Jerry's father made a coat to keep him warm. Lipski somehow made his way to safety in England. Among Jerry's old photos, was one sent to him by Lipski from Manchester, England in 1946 (Fig 18). Jerry reconnected with Lipski and another Lodz ghetto friend, *Manny Langer*, many years later in Toronto.

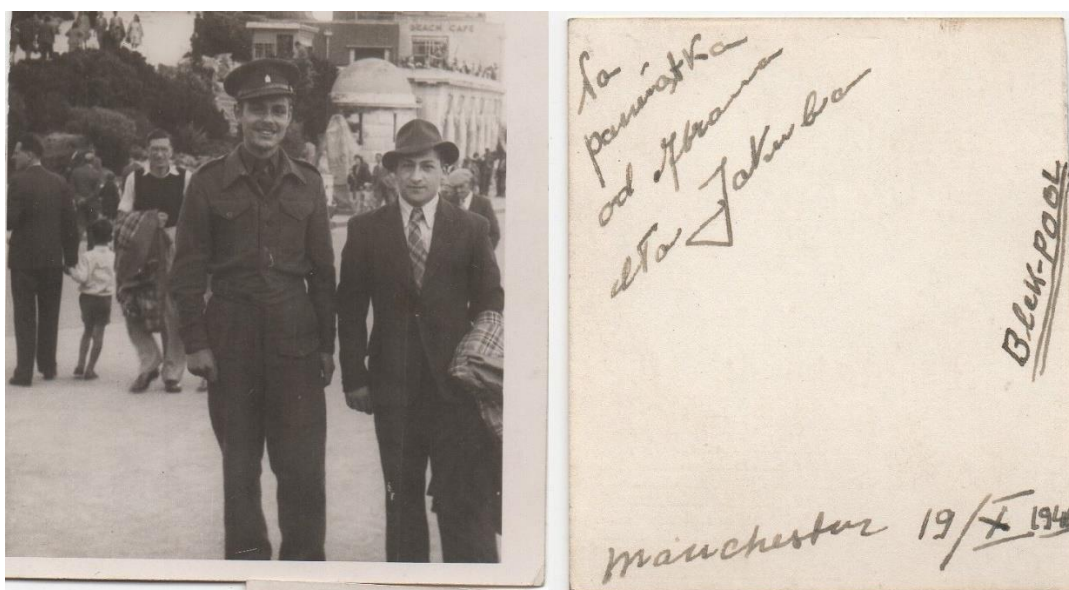


Fig 18: A photo of Abram Lipski sent to Jerry in 1946 from Manchester, England. The Polish inscription translated reads "For memory's sake from Abram to Jakob"

Looking back, Jerry later recalled that witnessing, at such a young age, other Jews dying all around him in the ghetto, along with the mass starvation and degradation, had desensitized him to death, and he **"had no feelings, I became like a zombie"**.

With conditions worsening, in the summer of 1944, after four years in the ghetto, and with the Russian army advancing, the Gestapo commander *Hans Biebow*<sup>16</sup> came to Jerry's factory and gave a memorable speech. He told the Jewish labourers that the enemy Russians were coming and that Jews working in the factories would be considered helpers of the Germans and would probably be killed by the Russians. Therefore, he explained, the ghetto needed to be

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hans-biebow>

## **Jerry's Story**

liquidated. After all their hard work, Biebow promised that the Germans would save the Jews by relocating them elsewhere by train. Jerry was fifteen years old at the time.

Jerry's father didn't believe Biebow's story and he tried to hide his family in the ghetto for another two weeks until the Germans and their dogs finally sniffed them out and forced them onto a cattle train. The family was allowed to take with them only a few clothes, but not much else.

## Jerry's Story

### Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp

Over the next three days, Jerry's family and thousands more Jews were transported south to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, near the Poland/Slovakia border, in a cramped and filthy cattle car train.

*"It was August 1944 and very hot. There were no windows in the train, just small openings in the wood sides. There were no toilets and people relieved themselves wherever they stood. I saw many people die on that train. Each person was given a hunk of bread and salami as they got on the train and told 'they were going to a better place'. Occasionally the train stopped and Polish farmers gave us some food" (Jerry).*

#### Backgrounder

"At first, selections of mass Jewish transports took place sporadically. Only after July 4, 1942, did selection take place regularly. Almost all the mass transports of Jews to Auschwitz after that date were subject to selection.

The third ramp was built from 1943 inside the Birkenau camp and went into operation in May 1944 in connection with the anticipated arrival of transports of Hungarian Jews. The railroad spur along this ramp ran as far as gas chambers and crematoria II and III. Aside from the 430 thousand Hungarian Jews, 67 thousand Jews from the Łódź ghetto and some of the transports from the ghetto in Terezin and from Slovakia were unloaded at this ramp. From this point on, mass selections of Jews took place inside the camp, before the eyes of thousands of prisoners. Transports of Poles from Warsaw during the Uprising there, sent to Auschwitz by way of the transit camp in Pruszków, were also unloaded here.

All three ramps also served as embarkation points for prisoners transferred from Auschwitz to sub-camps and other concentration camps.

The selection procedure carried out on the ramps was as follows: families were divided after leaving the train cars and all the people were lined up in two columns. The men and older boys were in one column, and the women and children of both sexes in the other. Next, the people were led to the camp doctors and other camp functionaries conducting selection. They judged the people standing before them on sight and, sometimes eliciting a brief declaration as to their age and occupation, decided whether they would live or die.

Age was one of the principal criteria for selection. As a rule, all children below 16 years of age (from 1944, below 14) and the elderly were sent to die. As a statistical average, about 20% of the people in transports were chosen for labor. They were led into the camp, registered as prisoners, and assigned the next numbers in the various series. Of the approximately 1.1 million Jews deported to Auschwitz, about



## Jerry's Story

200 thousand were chosen in this way. The remainder, about 900 thousand people, were killed in the gas chambers". (Source: *Auschwitz Museum*)<sup>17</sup>

After a horrible few days crammed within the cattle car, Jerry's family arrived at Auschwitz one morning, and upon leaving the train, they were immediately forced to line up, with women and children in one line, men and older boys in the other.

***"Waving his hand, a Nazi medical officer ordered us to enter a line either on the left, toward a big building labeled 'Bath House', (but which Jerry learned later was actually destined for the gas chamber) or on the right, which was to the actual bath house for slave labour." (Jerry)***

Jerry and his father were lined up with the other men and older boys directed to the right for slave labour. Their heads were shaved, they were forced to shower, then disinfected and given striped uniforms.

Jerry and his father remained together for several more days. By that point they were separated from the rest of the family, and Jerry never saw his mother, sister, and brother again. Jerry recalled the last words they shared together: ***"we'll meet again back in Lodz"***. There was a rumor that the war would soon be coming to an end and after working here, they would all return home.

### Background

"Auschwitz inmates were employed on huge farms, including the experimental agricultural station at Rajsko. They were also forced to work in coal mines, in stone quarries, in fisheries, and especially in armaments industries such as the SS-owned German Equipment Works (established in 1941). Periodically, prisoners underwent selection. If the SS judged them too weak or sick to continue working, they were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and killed.

Prisoners selected for forced labor were registered and tattooed with identification numbers on their left arms in Auschwitz I. They were then assigned to forced labor at the main camp or elsewhere in the complex, including the subcamps". (Source: *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.auschwitz.org/en/history/auschwitz-and-shoah/the-unloading-ramps-and-selections/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/auschwitz>

## Jerry's Story

*“My father and I were sent to the bathhouse shower, our hair was cut off, our bodies disinfected, and we were given prison clothes (shirt, pants, shoes, hat, no socks, no underwear) and sent to wait in the barracks. There were four to six men to each two-tiered bunk, lying on uncomfortable straw mattresses.” (Jerry)*

Typical of Auschwitz prisoners, Jerry received a tattoo number. His tattoo was on the inside of his left forearm. Jerry's tattoo number was **B-7619**. This number became his only name for the remainder of the war (Fig 19a). The prisoner number was shown on numerous lists (Fig 19b).



*Fig 19a: The Auschwitz tattoo #B-7619 on the inside of Jerry's left arm.*

## Jerry's Story

Lists including names of Jews from Poland who were inmates of Auschwitz.

This document is also found in 'Polish Jews in KL Auschwitz - Name Lists', compiled by Stanisław Maczka  
<https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/wexner/cache/1711760529-2847517-416.pdf>

B-7585 Działowski Fajwel ur. 16.05.1927, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7586 Dziubak Josef ur. 14.08.1927, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7587 Diamant Samuel ur. 05.08.1927, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7588 Edelman Lajb ur. 23.07.1928, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7591 Fachler Josef ur. 06.02.1928, Bodzentyn, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7592 Ferleger Chaskiel ur. 16.05.1927, Koniecpol, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7593 Frydman Leon ur. 30.12.1930, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7594 Faktor Wolf, ost. inf. 27.09.1944, *HKB*  
B-7595 Finkelstein Dawid ur. 22.12.1926, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7596 Feder Israel ur. 03.09.1927, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7598 Fajflowicz Chaim ur. 03.03.1927, Ozorków, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7599 Goldblum Julek ur. 09.08.1927, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7600 Goldman Jehuda ur. 14.10.1927, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7602 Gutman Wolf ur. 01.04.1927, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7604 Graz Dawid ur. 16.07.1928, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7605 Hildesheim Beniek ur. 21.08.1929  
B-7606 Halpern Gabriel (PJ), ost. inf. 25.09.1944  
B-7607 Halpern Jerzy (PJ)  
B-7608 Herszlikowicz Arek ur. 13.09.1927, Sieradz, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7610 Hirschman Chaim ur. 07.10.1928, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7611 Herszkowicz Ignacy ur. 08.02.1928, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7612 Huszowicz Samuel ur. 14.05.1920, przeżył  
B-7614 Ickowicz Icek ur. 24.11.1926, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7615 Jakubowicz Hersch ur. 07.02.1926, Wieluń, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7616 Kura Jakob ur. 04.02.1926, Kalisz, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7617 Kolski Natan ur. 16.12.1928, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7619 Kapelusz Jakob ur. 30.03.1929, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7620 Kopel Aron, ost. inf. 07.11.1944, *HKB*  
B-7621 Kohn Motek ur. 01.05.1926, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7622 Kohn Jesek ur. 01.05.1927, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7623 Kutner Dawid ur. 25.04.1928, Konstantynów, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald  
B-7624 Kruzek [?] Majer lat 17, wyzwolony przez Sowietów  
B-7625 Klein Mojsze, ost. inf. 27.09.1944, *HKB*  
B-7626 Klein Mojsze ur. 09.03.1927, Łódź, ewakuowany 26.01.1945, Buchenwald

Fig 19b: List of Auschwitz prisoners ordered by tattoo number

## Jerry's Story

### Backgrounder

"Its symbolic meaning was clear to everyone: this is an indelible mark, you will never leave here; this is the mark with which slaves are branded and cattle sent to slaughter, and that is what you have become. You no longer have a name; this is your new name". (Source: *Primo Levi*)<sup>19</sup>

*"There were daily roll calls. Anyone who hadn't died overnight was required to show up and be accounted for. Men were selected from there to work. My father was sent to work in a mine. I never saw him again".  
(Jerry)*

The following undated poem was written for Jerry by one of the many hundreds of high school students who witnessed and were inspired by his Holocaust presentations in later years. This poem spoke to the horror of children being separated from their parents at Auschwitz, as Jerry experienced.

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<sup>19</sup> Levi, Primo (1986) *The Drowned and the Saved*, New York: Simon & Schuster (English edition)

## Jerry's Story

### Seperation

I get off the train with my father holding my left hand, my mother, my right.

We are then swallowed by swarms of soldiers.

Their hands prying at our bond of determination but we refuse to let go.

When we are together, we are stronger.

The soldier is screaming for us to let go but I just block him out of my head.

I hear people calling for one another after being separated, yelling their goodbyes.

I'm losing grip of my mother's hand. I am starting to doubt that I can hold on any longer.

My ears hurt from the yelling and my eyes are forming tears, but I'm not ready to give up.

My mother's hand continues to slip.

The soldier's cold, heartless barks boom down my spine.

My mother and I are holding on by our fingertips, she lets out a sob.

"Don't give up" I whisper to her. The soldier gives me a pathetic look and continues to yell.

They finally pulled her from my grips. I waived to them "She's sick!" "Don't hurt her!"

I silently cry as they take her away, knowing I may never see her again.

My father feels my pain and is determined not to let them take me away from him.

We must stick together no matter what challenges we may face.

They are pulling too hard and I can feel his hand slipping from mine.

"No!" I cry angrily "You promised never to leave me daddy! YOU PROMISED!"

The soldiers win the game of tug-o-war; we are no longer together and are overpowered.

I try to run back to my father, but no matter how hard I try to reach him, he seems a million miles away.

Just like the others I must face my fate.

He looks at me with the saddest eyes I have ever seen.

I know he felt as though he had failed me.

I could hear him sobbing as they took him away.

"DADDY!" I screamed still reaching for his hand; I couldn't believe this was happening.

They took everything! All because we were different...



## Jerry's Story

### Backgrounder

"A sub-camp in the depopulated village of Babice opened in the first half of May 1943. About 180 women were placed in the former school building, and an equal number of men in a nearby wooden barracks. The windows of the building occupied by the women were walled up or secured with barbed wire. Inside were sleeping rooms with bunk beds, offices for the SS men and female overseers, a first-aid room, a washroom, and a kitchen. Food was delivered from the Birkenau camp. Two barns, a stable, storage sheds, and a shed for harnesses were built inside the barbed-wire fence.

The women prisoners were employed caring for and milking cows, clamping potatoes, spreading manure, and weeding and earthing up cabbages and beets. The male prisoners groomed the horses, plowed, mowed hay, and harvested. When the army requisitioned some of the horses in the spring of 1944, women prisoners were harnessed to the plows with long ropes. The women's Kommando was liquidated and the women transferred to Birkenau in July; the men's Kommando remained in Babitz until January 1945". (Source: *Auschwitz Museum*)<sup>20</sup>

*"I was selected to work as a farm laborer in Babice (Babitz) for the next 7-8 months. I learned that the huge farm at Babice had been created by combining all the smaller Polish farms that had been taken away by the Nazis.*

*On the farm, about 65 men and boys slept in a single barrack, including Jews, Poles, criminals, and others. There, the slave labourers worked from sunrise to sunset and were given bread and soup. I believe that I survived here because I also had access to food and, whenever I could, I stole produce (potatoes, beets, whatever we were growing) that was meant for the soldiers stationed in Auschwitz, the German army and as feed meant for the cattle".*

*Each work group consisted of six slave-labourers with a guard, and most German SS guards were brutal. There was a specific guard, whose name was 'Shtortzer', who was actually a decent person, who let us eat and steal as much food as we wanted, and who never hurt us. One time, we were all caught when a potato fell out of a fellow worker's pocket. We were all lashed and beaten publicly and warned we would be shot next time. Despite the beating, we did not give up Shtortzer, who had allowed the theft.*

*Another time, the group stole and drank a can of milk, which we did often, but this time we were caught with an empty can. We were lined up and*

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.auschwitz.org/en/history/auschwitz-sub-camps/babitz/>

## Jerry's Story

*questioned but nobody owned up to it and for some reason we were not killed.*

*We were given no winter clothes. We washed with cold water from the pump outside. If someone became sick, there was no treatment, so they were taken away and never seen again.*

*There were Jewish slave-labourers who identified, beat and killed some of the former Jewish ghetto policemen who were now among us.*

*At night we reminisced about our families and wondered when we would die, as we had no hope for the future. Many times, I felt like walking to the wire fence and electrocuting myself. Although I had grown up in an observant household, by this point I had lost all faith in god or observance. I saw though that there were some Jews among this group who still believed in god". (Jerry)*

Jerry remembered seeing at a distance the smoke coming from the chimneys in Auschwitz and noticing an odd smell in the air but, at the time, he didn't know what that was. As he was taken away to the work farm soon after arriving in Auschwitz, he never himself witnessed Jews entering the gas chambers or the ovens.

*"Many times, I felt like just going over to the wires, to the fence, to touch it and electrocute myself. I just didn't have the guts to do it". (Jerry)*

Jerry remained a slave-labourer on the farm in Babice until it was closed in Dec 1944.

## Jerry's Story

### Buchenwald Concentration Camp

#### Backgrounder

"In mid-January 1945, as Soviet forces approached the Auschwitz concentration camp complex, the SS began evacuating Auschwitz and its subcamps.

SS units forced nearly 60,000 prisoners to march west from the Auschwitz camp system. Thousands had been killed in the camps in the days before these death marches began". (Source: *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*)<sup>21</sup>

In January 1945, with the Russian army advancing, the Germans decided to liquidate Auschwitz. Jerry remembered hearing noises, shells, and bullets firing at a distance from Auschwitz, but didn't realize they were from the approaching Russian army. He was 15 and a half years of age at the time.

Jerry's work group was rounded up to be evacuated on January 26, 1945. They were to be sent to another concentration camp, Buchenwald, but there were not enough trains. As a result, Jerry and hundreds of others were forced into the infamous 'death march' by foot to Buchenwald, in Weimar, Germany.

*"I walked for four days and three nights in cold winter weather, wearing a hat, a uniform and wooden shoes I was among a small group of boys who helped each other as needed in order to keep moving. We were not given food, but occasionally a farmer would throw food at us. We mostly survived by eating snow. Those who couldn't walk were shot on sight. Many of those who marched simply died and were left on the road. Those of us who survived the death march were shipped to Buchenwald when a cattle train was found for the final day of travel, and with the Germans riding along side in their cars and on horseback". (Jerry)*

When they arrived at Buchenwald concentration camp, Jerry was assigned to a barrack<sup>22</sup> and given a new uniform. He remembered being given soup but couldn't swallow anything and his hands and feet were frozen. Jerry's new uniform number was **119807**.

*"That was my identity. That was my name". (Jerry)*

Jerry managed to save the strip of material with his uniform prisoner number after liberation (Fig 20).

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<sup>21</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/auschwitz>

<sup>22</sup> <https://fotoarchiv.buchenwald.de/home>

## Jerry's Story

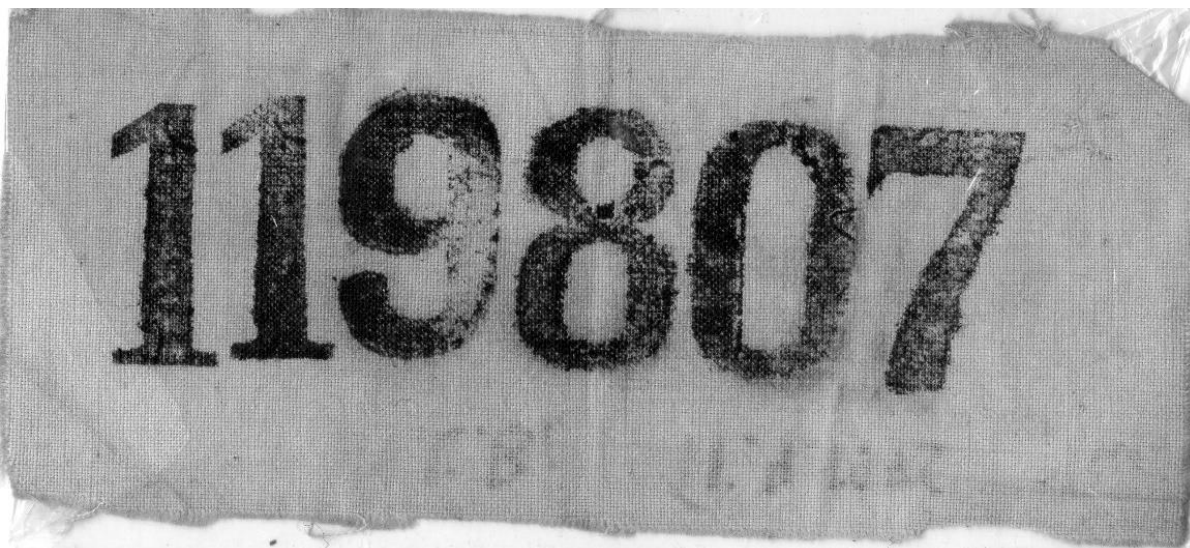


Fig 20a: A strip of material torn from Jerry's uniform at Buchenwald showing his prisoner number 119807

*P-Jude* *P. Jude*  
*8 769*

**Konzentrationslager** Art der Haft: \_\_\_\_\_ Gef.-Nr.: 119807

---

Name und Vorname: Kapelusz Jakob ✓

geb.: 30.5.29 zu: Lodz.

Wohnort: Lodz. Ambachstr. 9.

Beruf: Schneider Rel.: mas

Staatsangehörigkeit: Pole Stand: led

Name der Eltern: \_\_\_\_\_ Rasse: \_\_\_\_\_

Wohnort: unbekannt

Name der Ehefrau: \_\_\_\_\_ Rasse: \_\_\_\_\_

Wohnort: \_\_\_\_\_

Kinder: \_\_\_\_\_ Alleiniger Ernährer der Familie oder der Eltern: 23.1.45

Vorbildung: \_\_\_\_\_ 23.1.45 KJ. Anschwitz  
49370

Militärdienstzeit: \_\_\_\_\_ von — bis \_\_\_\_\_

Kriegsdienstzeit: \_\_\_\_\_ von — bis Jakob Kapellus

Größe: \_\_\_\_\_ Nase: \_\_\_\_\_ Haare: \_\_\_\_\_ Gestalt: \_\_\_\_\_

Mund: \_\_\_\_\_ Bart: \_\_\_\_\_ Gesicht: \_\_\_\_\_ Ohren: \_\_\_\_\_

Sprache: \_\_\_\_\_ Augen: \_\_\_\_\_ Zähne: \_\_\_\_\_

Fig 20b: Buchenwald Concentration Camp intake ledger showing Jerry's tattoo and prisoner numbers

## Jerry's Story

Jerry did not talk specifically about which barrack he was assigned to in Buchenwald. It is possible that he was housed with 600 other Jewish children and youth in the infamous *Barrack 66* (*Kinderblock 66*)<sup>23</sup>.

*“The barracks had 3 tiers, and “we were packed like sardines”. Each prisoner was given a blanket which he had to protect from being stolen. We slept in our striped uniforms.*

*I did not have real work in Buchenwald. We sat around waiting to die or be sent elsewhere, with no hope. As did others, I volunteered for odd manual labour tasks such as gathering dead German civilian bodies after Allied bombings in the local area, always with the hope of finding some food under the ruins.*

*People would die over night in the barracks, and I considered them lucky. Every morning, they would take out the dead bodies and the remaining prisoners stood for roll call by number, and remained there until everyone, either dead or alive, was accounted for”. (Jerry)*

Jerry recalled that there were also many non-Jewish prisoners at Buchenwald including political prisoners, criminals, and homosexuals. They all talked amongst themselves. He remembered that the prisoners were distinguished by different coloured triangle-shaped badges sewn on their uniforms – the Jews wore a yellow triangle, the homosexuals wore a mauve triangle, and the political prisoners wore a red triangle. Jerry recalled a fellow prisoner, who was actually a Catholic German officer, who was imprisoned as a Jew because his grandfather was Jewish, but who still kept a cross over his bunk.

Jerry remembered the horrific story of a Russian prisoner who was celebrated for his beautiful skin tattoos. The camp commandant's wife reportedly loved those tattoos and ordered a lampshade to be made of this man's skin. Jerry was given a photo of this infamous lampshade by one of the US soldiers at the time of his liberation (Fig 21). Later, it was discovered that cutting tattooed skin from Jewish corpses to fashion macabre gifts was popular among the German officers at Buchenwald and these objects were later preserved as war crimes evidence<sup>24</sup>.

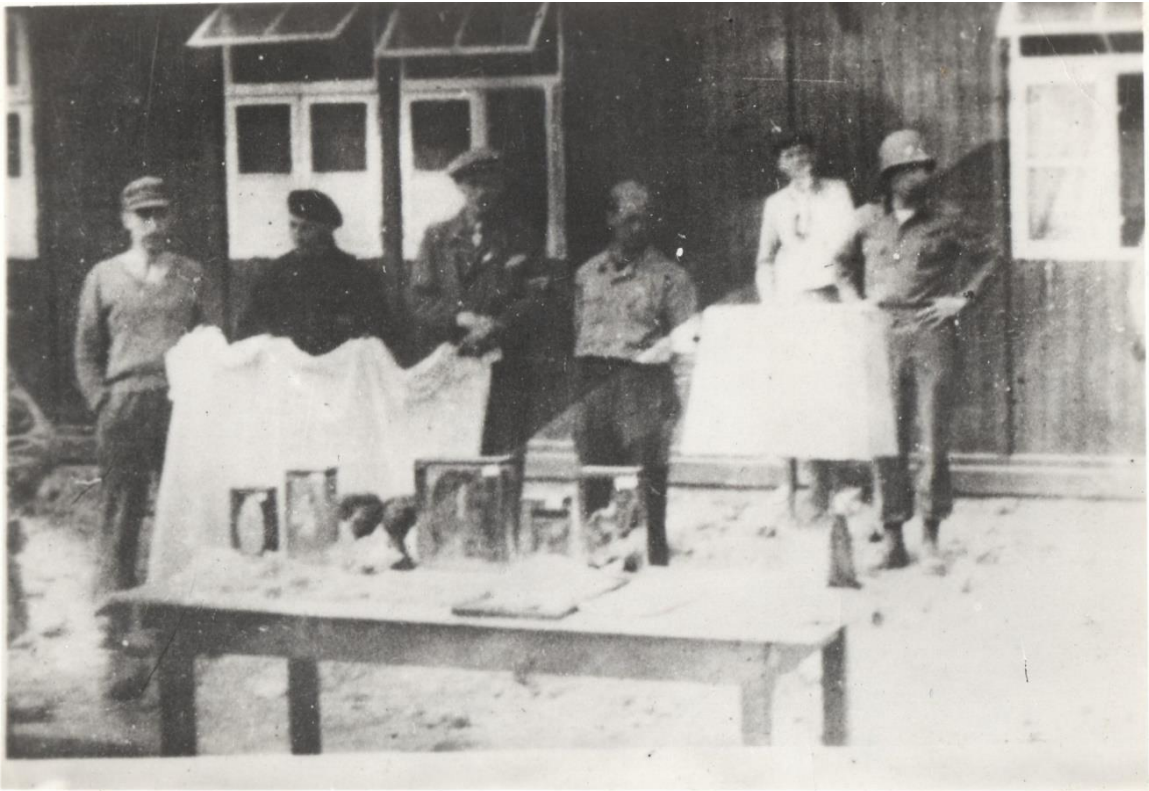
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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/block-66-at-buchenwald>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.buchenwald.de/en/geschichte/themen/dossiers/menschliche-ueberreste>



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 21: The infamous Buchenwald 'tattoo lampshade'*

## Jerry's Story

### Liberation from Buchenwald, April 1945

#### Backgrounder

"In early April 1945, as US forces approached, the Germans began to evacuate some 28,000 prisoners from the Buchenwald main camp and an additional several thousand prisoners from the subcamps of Buchenwald. About a third of these prisoners died from exhaustion en route or shortly after arrival, or were shot by the SS. The underground resistance organization in Buchenwald, whose members held key administrative posts in the camp, saved many lives. They obstructed Nazi orders and delayed the evacuation.

On April 11, 1945, in expectation of liberation, prisoners took control of the camp. Later that afternoon, US forces entered Buchenwald. Soldiers from the 6th Armored Division, part of the Third Army, found more than 21,000 people in the camp". (Source: *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*)<sup>25</sup>

*"That morning it was beautiful, but oddly very quiet. Although I didn't know about them at the time, there was some sort of organized underground group with smuggled weapons (maybe they were former Russian soldiers or non-Jewish POWs?) who opened fire on the German SS guards and captured and executed many of them before the Americans arrived.*

*It took about a day before the Americans entered into the camp (first the scout, then the rest of the soldiers), and by that point the SS were either gone or killed. Many German soldiers tried to hide among and dress as prisoners, but they were obvious and stood out because they weren't starved and shaved like the actual prisoners. These Germans were outed and beaten to death by the mob. I did not take part in that as I was too weak to walk. I weighed maybe 70 pounds". (Jerry)*

Jerry managed to tear off a *May Day* commemorative badge from a German guard's uniform (Fig 22). He never indicated whether the soldier was alive at the time. Jerry kept that badge among his personal possessions.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-event/holocaust/1942-1945/us-forces-liberate-buchenwald>

## Jerry's Story



Fig 22: A May Day commemorative badge torn from a German guard's uniform

*“The inmates had taken over the camp office and received a call from the camp commander which alerted them that the Germans had actually mined the camp with the intention of blowing it up. The captured Germans who were not already executed were put to work digging up and gathering up the mines. That is ultimately what saved about 10,000 prisoners still in the camp. Once the mines were removed, Jews were able to leave the boundaries of the camp and some took immediate revenge on the local Germans.*

*Seeing the Americans liberating the camp was unbelievable. Some of the prisoners were not convinced that this wasn't a trick by the Germans, that is, until one American soldier spoke to them in Yiddish.*

*About a thousand surviving Jewish children, aged eight to eighteen, had no home to return to. They moved into the barracks where the German SS soldiers had been living and remained there for another few months. It took a long time for these children to be able to digest regular food given to them by the American soldiers”. (Jerry)*

The Jewish children, malnourished and sick, remained in the abandoned German soldier's barracks at Buchenwald for several more weeks while the American soldiers fed and cared for them and the authorities determined what to do with them. Unlike the political prisoners at Buchenwald who could return to their homes, these Jewish children were now orphans, homeless and, for some, stateless. Their families had been murdered. Their homes and former lives were destroyed. Ultimately, it was OSE, (Oevre de Secours aux Enfants), a French

## Jerry's Story

Jewish child welfare organization, which arranged for these children to be brought to safety in France, Switzerland and England. These kids came to be known as the *Buchenwald Boys* or '*Buchenwaldiens*'.

### Backgrounder

"On 11 April 1945, the Buchenwald concentration camp was liberated by the US Army. Some 21,000 prisoners were released, of whom 4,000 were Jewish. The Jewish inmates included approximately 1,000 children, some of them just four years old. Among the liberators were US Army Chaplains Robert Marcus and Herschel Schacter, who arrived one or two days later.

In Block 66, the liberators discovered several hundred Jewish children from Poland, Hungary, Romania and Czechoslovakia. All were boys, who had survived against all the odds with the help of the international underground in Buchenwald, some of whose members were Jewish. The children were in shocking physical and mental condition. A message was sent to the OSE offices in Geneva: 'We have found approximately one thousand Jewish children in Buchenwald. Please organize evacuation without delay'.

Members of the OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants) organized the evacuation of these children, known as the "Buchenwald Boys" and their passage to France, Switzerland and England.

At Buchenwald, the US Army provided the children with medical care, food and clothing. When the camp was liberated, they discovered a storehouse filled with German uniforms, and they gave these to the children to wear instead of the oversized striped camp garb. Many of the children wanted to immigrate to Eretz Israel (Mandatory Palestine), but due to British Mandate policies, which effectively closed the gates of Eretz Israel to Jews, they had no choice but to accept the OSE's offer and to travel to France, Switzerland or England.

On 2 June, the train left Buchenwald on its way to France carrying some 500 children and teenagers. The children stormed the train for fear that it would leave without them. They were accompanied by Rabbi Marcus and by OSE personnel. Dr. Ravel, one of the escorts, relates: "They wore striped pyjamas or Hitler Youth uniforms, and they looked like a rabble". When the train stopped en route, the children disembarked and pilfered whatever they could. They only stopped when they were told that they had reached France". (Source: *Yad Vashem*)<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/childrens-survivors-homes/ecouis.asp>



## Jerry's Story

Later, while living in Paris, Jerry noticed an exhibition including an iconic photo of the children leaving Buchenwald (Fig 23). He recognized himself in this picture and asked for a copy. This photo, along with another photo of the Buchenwald boys on a train headed to Paris (Fig 24), are now ubiquitous, found in virtually every Holocaust photo collection worldwide.



Fig 23: Jewish children leaving Buchenwald Concentration Camp June 8, 1945 (Jerry in red circle)



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 24: Jewish boys from Buchenwald heading by train to Paris*

As with all the prisoners at Buchenwald, Jerry was interviewed by an American soldier to complete the standard 'exit questionnaire'. These interviews were conducted in order to assess the survivors' needs and to identify any potential Nazis or Nazi sympathizers hiding amongst the prisoners, which was common. The questionnaire, completed on May 8, 1945, documents that Jerry was imprisoned at Auschwitz for 5 months and then at Buchenwald for 4 months and that he intended to join his uncle *S. Lewkowicz* in Palestine. (Fig 25).

119802

MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY  
FRAGENBogen FÜR INSASSEN DER KONZENTRATIONSLAGER  
CONCENTRATION CAMP INMATES QUESTIONNAIRE

119802

NAME des Konzentrationslagers  
Name of Concentration Camp Conc. Camp Buchenwald Datum  
Date 8.5.1945

Ort  
Location Weimar-Buchenwald

Name des Lagerinsassen  
Name of Inmate Kapelusz Yahob  
Vorname  
First Name Nachname  
Last Name

Geschlecht  
Sex male Geburtsdatum  
Date of Birth 30.5.1929

Staatsangehörigkeit  
Nationality polish Glaubensbekenntnis  
Religion mosaic

Wohnungsanschrift  
Home Address Lodz Podmorska Street 9 Poland

Beruf  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Datum der Verhaftung  
Date of Arrest 8.9.1944 Durch Wen  
By whom 44

Ort der Verhaftung  
Place of Arrest Lodz Poland

Grund für Verhaftung  
Reason for Arrest as Jew

Anklage erhoben  
Charges Made \_\_\_\_\_

Erkennendes Gericht  
Court Trying Case \_\_\_\_\_

Stimmen der Richter  
Names of Judges \_\_\_\_\_

Urteil  
Sentence \_\_\_\_\_

Wo in Haft gewesen und wie lange  
Place of Detention Giving Dates Conc. camp Auschwitz 5 months  
Conc. camp Buchenwald 4 months

Einschlüssen betreffend die Haft, ins besonders etwaige grausame Behandlung und Zeit derselben Gründe hierfür und die Namen der Täter, falls bekannt:  
Give particulars of confinement including any inhuman treatment with date, reason and name of perpetrators, if known:

Beziehungen, die Sie während der Haft hatten:  
Persons held during confinement:

Haben Sie jemals der NSDAP, deren Gliederungen, angeschlossenen Verbänden oder anderen Organisationen angehört?  
Have you ever belonged to the Nazi Party or any of its affiliated or subordinate organization?

Falls ja, geben Sie die Organisationen, die Zeit der Mitgliedschaft und die von Ihnen bekleideten Ämter an  
If so, list Organizations, dates of membership and positions held:

# Jerry's Story

Geben Sie Tatsachen an, die Ihre etwaige Gegnerschaft gegen die Nationalsozialisten erkennen lassen, sowie dienstfertige Tätigkeiten:  
List any facts indicating anti-Nazi attitude or activities:

Geben Sie Ihre Beschäftigung durch Regierungs- und NSDAP Behörden einschließlich der Art der Beschäftigung und wie Sie diese Anstellung erhalten haben:  
List any employment by governmental or Nazi Party agencies, giving nature of duties and method of appointment:

Waren Sie vom Militärdienst zurückgestellt?  
Were you deferred from military service?

Wann?  
When?

Warum?  
Why?

Sind Sie jemals wegen einer strafbaren Handlung verurteilt worden?  
Were you ever convicted of any criminal offense?

Falls ja, geben Sie hier in jedem einzelnen Fall Datum, Gericht, Urteil, die strafbare Handlung und das Datum der Haftentlassung:  
If so, give date, court, sentence, offense and date of release in each case:

Wohin beabsichtigen Sie zu gehen, falls Sie aus der Haft entlassen werden?  
If released from detention, where do you intend to go?

to Palestine

Geben Sie die Namen und die Anschriften dreier vertrauenswürdiger Personen an, die in dem Orte wohnen, wohin Sie gehen wollen und die für Sie bürgen können:  
Give names and addresses of three reliable persons living in the locality where you intend to go, who can vouch for you:

1) Leukovitz St. in Palestine

Gezeichnet  
Signed

Release

Entscheidung des Ausschusses  
Decision of the Board

Endgültige Verfügung betreffend den Lagerauslass  
Final disposal of inmate

Gezeichnet  
Signed

Vorsitzender des Ausschusses  
Presiding Officer of Board

12. 8. 1945

Rang  
Rank

Waffenart  
Branch

NAME  
NAME

Allen B. Mitchell

Col.

GIG

T. A. Tarasowski

Rank

Capt.

Branch

Inf. ( GIG )

Leonard H. Rosenbaum

Rank

Capt.

Branch

Inf. ( GIG )

Cyrus J. Sturges Jr.

Rank

1st Lt.

Branch

Inf. ( GIG )

Name

Rank

Branch

Fig 25: Jerry's interview questionnaire as completed by a US soldier on May 8, 1945, prior to leaving Buchenwald concentration camp

## Jerry's Story

### The OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants) orphanage in Paris

#### Backgrounder

The Buchenwald children were a group of approximately 1000 Jewish child survivors found by American troops when they liberated the Buchenwald concentration camp on April 11, 1945. Most of the children were originally from Poland, though others came from Hungary, Slovenia and Ruthenia. Unsure of what to do with the child survivors, American army chaplains, Rabbi Herschel Schacter and Rabbi Robert Marcus, contacted the offices of the OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants), the Jewish children's relief organization in Geneva. They arranged to send 427 of the children to France, 280 to Switzerland and 250 to England. [Vivette Samuels reverses the figures for England and Switzerland in her monograph, "Sauver les Enfants."] On June 2, 1945 OSE representatives arrived in Buchenwald, and together with Rabbi Marcus escorted the transport of children to France. Rabbi Schacter accompanied the second transport to Switzerland. Because of the difficulty in finding clothing for the children, the boys were clad in Hitler Youth uniforms. This created a problem, for when the train crossed into France, it was greeted by an angry populace who assumed the train was carrying Nazi youth. Thereafter the words "KZ Buchenwald orphans" were painted on the outside of the train to avoid confusion. On June 6, 1945 the French transport arrived at the Andelys station and the orphans were taken to a children's home in Ecouis (Eure). The home had been set up to accommodate young children, but in fact only 30 of the boys were below the age of 13. This was only one of the many problems faced by the OSE personnel, who were not prepared to handle a large group of demanding, rebellious teenagers who were full of anger for what they had experienced. At Ecouis the boys were given medical care, counseling and schooling until more permanent accommodations could be found. Most of the children remained only four to eight weeks at Ecouis before being moved elsewhere, and the home was closed in August 1945. Among the first to leave were a group of 173 children who had family in Palestine. They were given immigration certificates and departed from Marseilles in July aboard the British vessel, the RMS Mataroa. The remaining boys at Ecouis were soon transferred to other residences and homes. Some of the older ones were sent to the Foyer d'Etudiants located on the rue Rollin in Paris, where they boarded while attending vocational training courses or working at jobs in the city. Others were sent to the Chateau de Boucicaut home in Fontenay-aux-Roses (Hauts-de-Seine). Many of the boys came from religiously observant homes. Since the OSE could not obtain kosher food for everyone, they divided the children into religious and non-religious groups. Dr. Charly Merzbach offered OSE the use of his estate, the Chateau d'Ambloy (Loir-et-Cher) for the summer, and between 90 and 100 boys chose to go there in order to receive kosher food and live in a religious environment. In October 1945 the children and staff of Ambloy were relocated to the Chateau de Vaucelles in Taverny (Val d'Oise). About 50 of the non-religious boys were taken to the Villa Concordiale in Le Vesinet (Yvelines) near Paris that housed an equal number of French Jewish orphans. In the summer they went to the Foyer de Champigny in Champigny-sur-Marne (Val-de-Marne). In all the homes attended by the Buchenwald children vocational training as well as regular classroom instruction was offered. At the same time OSE social workers

## Jerry's Story

made every effort to locate surviving relatives, succeeding in about half the cases. By the end of 1948 all of the Buchenwald children who had come to France had left the OSE fold and begun new lives for themselves. (Source: *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*)<sup>27</sup>

*“The Jewish children liberated from Buchenwald were divided up among the allied nations: some to England, some to Switzerland, about 450 of the youngest and healthiest to France. I was sent with a large group of orphans to the OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants) orphanage, first in Equis, Paris” (Jerry) (Fig 26).*

- 4 -

ORPHAN CHILDREN FROM BUCHENWALD NOW IN PARIS

ENFANTS VENUS D'ALLEMAGNE - CONVOI DU 8 JUIN 1945  
à Ecouis (Eure)

Paris List N° II62 A.

x	I48	JAKUBOWICZ	David	12/6/28		Pol.
x	I49	JAKUBOWICZ	Mendel	10/4/26	Piotrkow	"
x	I50	JANOWSKI	Rachmil	11/1/28	Idmusa	"
	I51	JEGER	Berko	7/6/28	Rona de Sus	Roun.
	I52	JEGER	Dezso	28/12/28	Saluta	"
x	I53	JELINOWICZ	Abram	24/12/29	Pebianice	Pol.
	I54	JNDIG	Jonas	8/9/28	Dese	Roun.
	I55	JUDKOVITS	Alek	8/6/28	Oradéa	"
x	I56	JUDGER	Tobias	27/10/28	Caroi Marci	"
	I57	JUROWITZ	Georg	26/5/28	Oroswardon	"
	I58	KAEZMARKE	Léo	1/1/29	Bydgoszer	Pol.
	I59	KAMAN	Jeno	16/5/28	Ermihalyfalwa	Roun.
	I60	ISKOWITS	Henrich	9/4/28	Botiz	Roun.
	I61	KAMANT	Hermann	10/10/29	Visoul de Sus	"
	I62	KALIKSZTAJN	Kelman	4/1/28	Strzemieszyc	Pol.
	I63	KALIKSZTAJN	Heniek	9/6/31	"	"
	I64	KAMINSKI	Abel	13/4/28	"	"
	I65	KAPELUSZ	Jakob	30/5/29	Lodz	"
	I66	KALLUS	Ludwig	13/6/29	Sulestova	Tché.
	I67	KAMINSKI	Kovla	23/4/26	Bendszin	Pol.
	I68	KAMINSKI	Aron	19/10/28	Strzemieszyc	"
	I69	KANE	Pajwen	12/12/23	Tlock	"
x	I70	KASSIERER	Bela	3/5/28	Szalika	Tché.
x	I71	KASZOWITZ	Pal	3/5/28	Nagykaroly	Roun.
x	I72	KATZ	Andor	15/9/29	Monkacevo	Tché.
	I73	KAUFMAN	Mojzesh	17/11/30	Liget	Roun.
	I74	KALANOWSKI	Chaim	1/5/29		Pol.
	I75	KESTEMBERG	Jehuda	8/4/29	Warschau	Pol.
	I76	KILSZTOK	Mayer	2/12/23	Bendzin	"
x	I77	KINSTLICHT	Josef	27/9/28		"
x	KLAJUZALER	Pajwel		13/9/28	Nowyager	"

Fig 26: List of orphans moved from Buchenwald to OSE in Equis, Paris on June 8, 1945

<sup>27</sup> <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1136584>



## Jerry's Story

### Backgrounder

“Many had suffered a total loss of identity. They did not remember their names, having been addressed only by their numbers or nicknames...They looked like bandits, suspicious and mute. Their heads were shorn; all dressed the same, with faces still swollen from hunger and not a smile to be seen. Their eyes bespoke sadness and suspicion. They were apathetic toward the outside world. They likened the supervisors to guards and were terror stricken at the sight of doctors who reminded them of Mengele, the man who, upon their arrival in Auschwitz, had sent the weak ones to gas chambers, the able-bodied to slave labour”. (Source: Hemmendinger and Krell)<sup>28</sup>

*“In Paris, we were later split into four homes in Le Vesinet, which is a suburb of Paris. The orthodox kids (including Ellie Wiesel and Rabbi Israel Lau, both of whom I knew) were in one house, the others were split into three other homes, and each home had a teacher living with them. I was well treated and educated by OSE, which became the ‘family’ for all the children”.*

*“Life started to feel more normal during this time of stability. I went back to school at OSE making up for all the education after grade 4 that I had lost during the war years. I learned to speak French, English, and studied math, and other subjects. As well, some of these children relearned their civil manners, as they had become very wild kids”. (Jerry)*

While living at Le Vesinet, Jerry attended classes to make up for the formal education that had been denied him between 1939 and 1945. He became fluent in French. OSE also provided the older students with vocational training in a range of professions (Fig 27). Jerry trained in dental mechanics and later identified himself as a *dental mechanic* in his application for immigration to America. Among Jerry's private possessions we found the original bronze mortar and pestle that he had used during his dental mechanics training. He had never shown this to us.

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<sup>28</sup> Hemmendinger, Judith and Krell, Robert (2000) *The Children of Buchenwald*, Jerusalem: Geffen

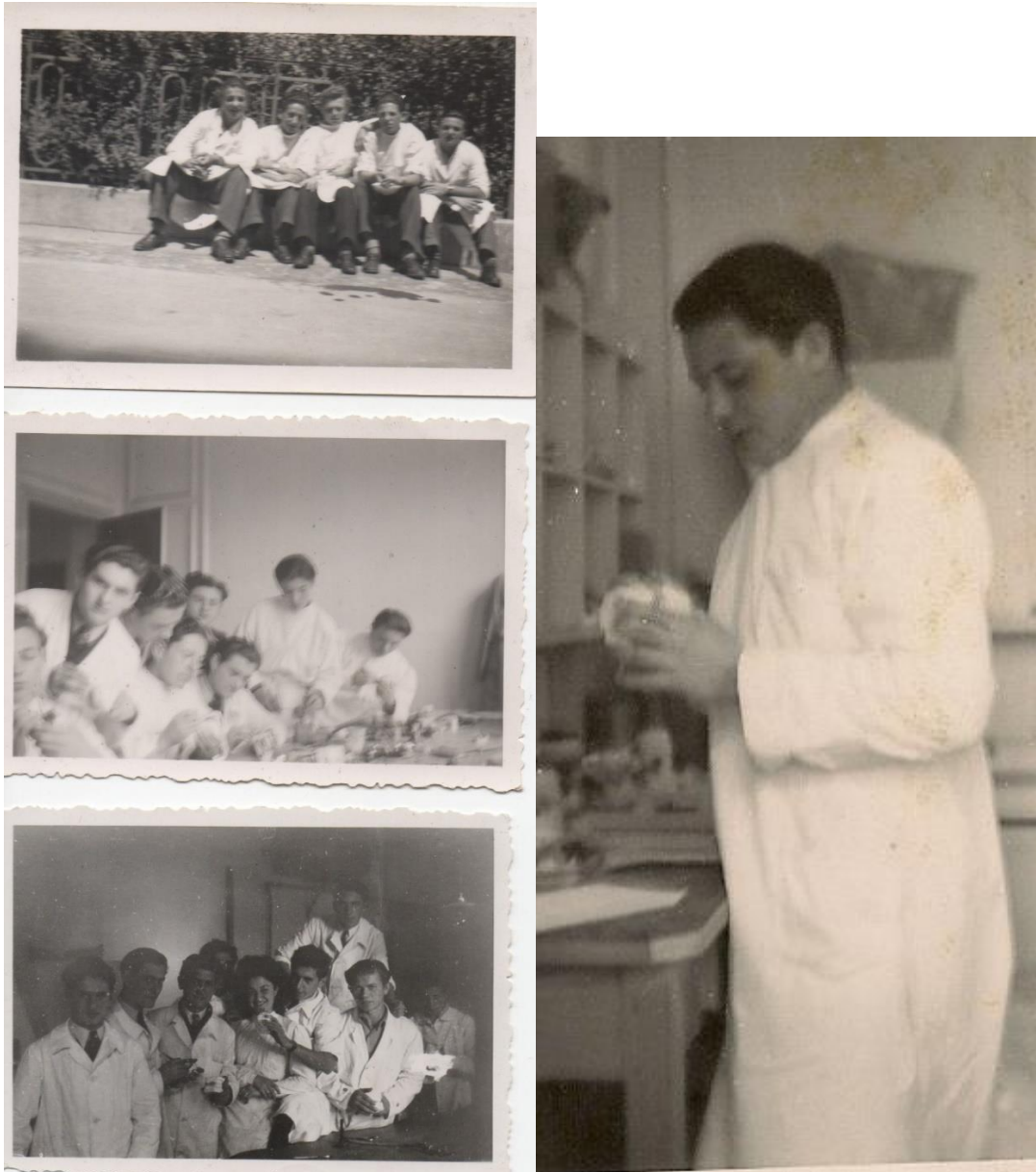
## Jerry's Story



Fig 27a: The range of vocational training at OSE. (from an OSE newsletter, dated 1946 - English translation by the American Committee of OSE)<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Booklet, OSE Activities in France (RG 494, Folder 46). American Committee of OSE. 1946. [https://digipres.cjh.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE2969576](https://digipres.cjh.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE2969576)

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 27b: Jerry and colleagues studying dental technology in Paris, 1946*

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 27c: The bronze mortar and pestle Jerry used in dental mechanics training*


During this time at Le Vesinet, Jerry also became a member of the *Association des Anciens Déportés Juifs* (Fig 28), a mutual aid organization for Jews formed after the war and an affiliate of the *Fédération Nationale Des Déportés et Internés, Résistants et Patriotes*. The latter organization was created in 1945 to support the hundreds of thousands of victims and French resistance fighters in the war<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> [https://francearchives.gouv.fr/fr/authorityrecord/Fran\\_NP\\_052431](https://francearchives.gouv.fr/fr/authorityrecord/Fran_NP_052431)



## Jerry's Story



N° 739

Délivrée le: *4 octobre*

Nom *KAPEK*

Prénom *Jakob*

Adresse *Aulou la Ferrière*

Né le *30 5 1929*

à *Loch*

Nationalité *Polonaise*

Profession *ouvrier*

Signature du Titulaire: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature du Président: \_\_\_\_\_

**ASSOCIATION des ANCIENS  
DEPORTES JUIFS**

9, Rue Guy-Patin, 9 - PARIS - X<sup>e</sup>

Affiliée de la FÉDÉRATION NATIONALE  
des INTERNÉS et DÉPORTÉS POLITIQUES

**CARTE  
d'ADHÉRENT**

**- 1945 -**

**COTISATIONS**

JANVIER	FÉVRIER	MARS
AVRIL	MAI	JUIN
JUILLET	AOUT	SEPTEMBRE
OCTOBRE	NOVEMBRE	DÉCEMBRE

Fig 28: Jerry's Federation Membership card dated 1945



## Jerry's Story

At OSE, Jerry was also involved in various social activities and was very active in sports (Figs 29, 30).

62, Rue Spontini  
PARIS - XVI\*

Le Président :

O.S.E.  
ANNÉE 1946  
N° 368

MEMBRE ACTIF

Nom : KAPÉLUSZ  
Prénoms : Jakob  
Adresse : 12 av. François Arago  
Section : LE VESINET

Signature

COLEGE AUX ENFANTS DE JOIE

JANVIER

FEVRIER

MARS

AVRIL

MAI

JUIN

JUILLET

AOÛT

SEPTEMBRE

OCTOBRE

NOVEMBRE

DECEMBRE

Fig 29: Jerry's OSE Membership card dated 1946

## Jerry's Story





## Jerry's Story



*Fig 30: In his time at OSE, Jerry was very athletic*

Jerry made many life-long friends during these two years at OSE (Fig 31) and, later in life, he enjoyed reconnecting with them at OSE and Buchenwald reunions held around the world (we will describe this in a later section). Reclaiming some of the missing joy from their teenage years, these boys went on excursions all around France, and sometimes in the company of girls, who were also Jewish child survivors housed elsewhere by OSE (Fig 32). Among the following photos are those with descriptions excerpted from the book by Hemmendinger and Krell.

*Top row: Joseph  
Fachler, Leon  
Friedman, Jakob  
Kapelusz, Joseph  
Dziubak  
Front: Visitor from  
Girls' home, Idel  
Goldblum*



*Top row : Joseph  
Fachler, Leon  
Friedman, Nathan  
Laufer, Jakob  
Kapelusz.  
Front: Herch Simon,  
Ludwig Herskovitz,  
Idel Goldblum  
(George Goldbloom),  
Marek Lozinski*

*December 1946: Top  
Row: Jakob Kapelusz  
(Jerry Kapelus)  
Salomon Majer (Joe  
Majer), Max Kozuch,  
Fajwen Kaner (Philip  
Kanner)  
Front Row: Wolf  
Vogel (Willy Fogel)  
Elias Balter (Eddy  
Balter) Theodor Lowy  
(Bubby Levy)*





## Jerry's Story

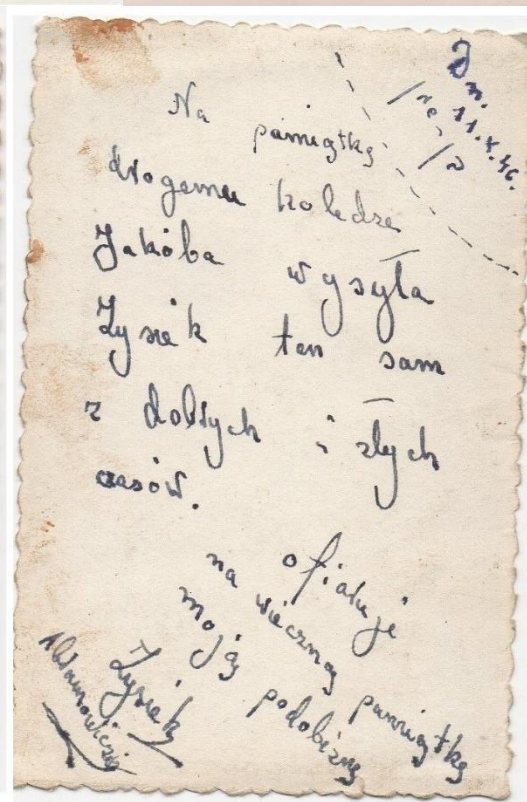


*The home at Le Vésinet*





## Jerry's Story



"For memories sake to my dear friend Jakob, from  
Zysiek, who shared with you the good times and the  
bad times. I offer my likeness for memories sake"  
October 11, 1946

## Jerry's Story



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 31: Jerry's many friends at OSE*



## Jerry's Story



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 32: Jerry's many adventures while living in France*

Throughout his life, Jerry retained a close personal tie to the OSE organization. He owed his life to them. In later years, Jerry donated generously and regularly to OSE in support of the vital Jewish social services they continued to provide to needy children in France.

During his two years in Paris, Jerry also began to search for his family, as did all the survivors. He sent letters and spoke to any survivors he met, always asking about the fate of his family. He managed, despite the destroyed infrastructure across Europe, to find his way back to Poland and to the family's original home at 9 *Podrzeczna* Street in Lodz. He discovered Poles were now living in their apartment.

He learned from another survivor that there was a man named *Gershon Kapelusz* who had survived and was now living somewhere in Germany. Jerry thought that this might be his



## Jerry's Story

father. He smuggled himself into Germany and by foot, by bike and whatever other transportation he could find in this destroyed land, he went from village to village, speaking to survivors, and looking for Gershon. After about six weeks of searching, he successfully found Gershon living in Landsberg, Germany. However, this turned out to be his first cousin Genek, the son of his father's brother. Jerry also learned that Genek's older brother Kiva was still alive and living in Germany as well (Fig 33). In all the years that followed, Jerry never stopped looking for his lost relatives, checking phone books and searching for the name Kapelusz in every city he visited.



*Fig 33: Jerry's first cousins Genek and Kiva Kapelusz*

Genek had found a wife, *Miriam*, and they quickly had a daughter, *Ruth*, in a Displaced Persons camp<sup>31</sup> in Germany (Fig 34). Another of Jerry's first cousins, *Irene Anshelewitz*, married *Joe Schwadron* in the DP camp and there they also had a daughter, *Rachelle*. Irene's mother *Rachel Kapelusz Anshelewitz* was Jerry's aunt, a sister of Jerry's father.

---

<sup>31</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/displaced-persons>

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 34a: First cousin Genek, with Miriam and Ruth Kapelusz, German DP camp*



*Fig 34b: First cousins Kiva Kapelusz, Genek and Miriam Kapelusz, Irene's father Jacob Anshelewitz, first cousin Irene (Kapelusz Anshelewitz Schwadron), and her husband Joe Schwadron, Germany*

Ultimately, through the 1948 *Displaced Persons Act* signed into law by US President Harry Truman<sup>32</sup>, Genek and Irene and their new families were able to immigrate to the USA to start new lives. Memorial plaques for the Kapelusz/Anshelevitz families were established in Miami Beach, Florida and Metairie, Louisiana (Fig 35).



*Fig 35a: Memorial tile for Rachel Kapelusz Anshelewitz, Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial*

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.trumanlibraryinstitute.org/the-displaced-persons-act-of-1948/>

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 35b: Memorial plaque for the Kapelus/Anshelevitz families dated Aug 28, 1944, installed at Congregation Gates of Prayer synagogue in Metairie, Louisiana*

Jerry's cousin Kiva Kapelus had lost his first wife and daughter to the Nazis. He was a tailor by profession and emigrated to Montreal where he married his second wife Ruth, had another daughter, Paula, and started a new life there. We believe that Kiva was among the thousand Jewish tailors brought to Canada from the German Displaced Persons camps to fill vacant jobs in the garment industry through the 'Garment Workers Scheme', a joint project of the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Garment Workers union (which came to be known as the 'Tailor Project')<sup>33</sup>.

### Backgrounder

"Beginning in 1948 and lasting for several years, the Tailor Project managed to bring 2,000 labourers into the country, to work in the rapidly growing needle trades. Half of them were Jews who were plucked from European DP camps.

Most settled in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg, and even though a good number weren't really tailors – all they had to do was sew a button to be accepted – they began new lives in their new homes". (Source: *The Canadian Jewish News*)<sup>34</sup>

OSE's objective was to find living relatives and new homes for all the children in OSE's care (Fig 36). The names of all known Jewish Holocaust survivors were also being published by the Jewish Agency in newspapers across the world in hopes of connecting them to living relatives. By the end of 1948, the boys of Buchenwald had scattered around the world, some emigrating to Palestine, some to Australia, some to America, and many more who remained in Europe.

<sup>33</sup> <https://tailorproject.ca/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://thecjn.ca/news/finding-canadas-post-war-jewish-tailors/>

## Jerry's Story

**OSE-FRANCE**

N° 1113

NDM B A V I S E R 1

Famille REND

Date de naissance 12 Septembre 1928

Lieu de naissance Barchin (Allemagne)

Mariage d'origine } épouse d'orig.  
Mariage actuel } Aliénation

ATTACHES FAMILIALES A L'ETRANGER

Père Palestinien

Degré de Parenté demi-frère et sœur

Père	Adresse actuelle	Mère
Nom Rabinovitch	Enfance d'origine	Nom Rabinovitch
Prénoms Rabinovitch	"La Chénierie", St. J. d'Al-	Prénoms Yvonne
né le 3.7.1889	en-Comblains (Hte. Sev.)	né le 22.7.1902
à Jœuf (Belgique)	et. 11.45: Barchin d'Alf.	à en Allemagne
Dernière adresse connue	"La Forge", Place d'Alf.	Dernière adresse connue
32, rue de la Rivière	de Barchin.	
Praxelles (Belgique)	Pontenay-aux-Jourds (Seine)	
Adresse actuelle		Adresse actuelle
Départ le 31.10.1942		Départ de Barchin
par le 16.11.1942		le 4.5.1942
et mort en déportation		Mariage

FEMMES ET FILLES

1. Nom	né le 15.3.1921	à Barchin	Adresse 128 Rue. Tol. 2400. Jœuf.
2. Zelen	né le 11.1.1923	à "	Adresse Inf. 2400. Jœuf.
3. "	né le "	à "	Adresse c/o. Barchin, Barchin
"	né le "	à "	Adresse Barchin (Palestine)
"	né le "	à "	Adresse "
"	né le "	à "	Adresse "
"	né le "	à "	Adresse "

Prov. Rnd. Rend. NATIONAL (nd Rend. 113 Rue. Tol. 2400. Jœuf. 1113)

acte de naissance  
certificat N° 2424 du Comité Intergouvernemental

Two brothers meet again.

Immediately after the Liberation, our "Family Regrouping Service" undertook the very difficult task of trying to find in France, as well as abroad, and all over the world, traces of our children's families, of their either close, or distant relatives. These efforts were facilitated by a very complete file that had been compiled during the occupation period and now enabled hundreds of children to find members of their family in all countries.

Fig 36a: OSE's 'Family Regrouping Service'

An unknown uncle of Jerry's, *Abraham Heyman*, who had moved to New York in 1907, saw Jerry's name on a survivors list in 1945 and sent him a letter via OSE. Abraham wanted to confirm that Jerry was in fact his relative. He indicated that he and his wife Lillie would be willing to sponsor Jerry to come to America along with the additional financial support of another relative, *Meyer Kuznik*, also of New York (Fig 37). We were not able to establish how Abraham and Lillie Heyman or Meyer Kuznik were actually related to Jerry or what became of them, but we acknowledge their generosity in bringing Jerry to America.



## Jerry's Story

Honorable American Consul,  
Paris,  
France,

Honorable American Consul,

We are respectfully submitting herewith affidavits in behalf of our nephew, JACOB KAPELUSZ, at present residing in France and whom we are very eager to bring to United States for permanent residence.

May we point out to you, Honorable Sir, that the above mentioned is the lone survivor of our family in Poland. We trust you are well acquainted with the tragedy that befell our peoples in the central European countries and the fate of most of them, so that, in our case, when we learned that this young boy survived all the tortures and torment and the living hell of his parents and other relatives, we are most eager to bring him to our home and to endeavor to do for him what any and every young person is entitled to in the way of a home in peace and serenity and an opportunity to grow up in a normal healthy atmosphere into a normal life.

We are loyal and law abiding American citizens; we enjoy a moderate income and we have managed to invest most of our savings in United States Government War Bonds. With this reserve cash capital we will be in a position to care for our nephew untill such time as he will become self supporting.

Together with other interested persons, in the welfare of our nephew, additional affidavit of Mr. Meyer Kuznik is herewith attached, we assure you, Honorable Consul, and the concerned United States authorities, that at no time will we allow our relative to become a charge upon the public of any American community.

Trusting you will grant our most fervent request and grant our nephew the permission to proceed to us at an early date, we are, dear Sir,

Respectfully yours,

*Abraham Heyman*

*Lillie Heyman*

146-11 119th Ave.,  
Jamaica, L.I., N.Y.

Fig 37a: Letter of support from Abraham and Lillie Heyman for Jerry's immigration to America, 1945



# Jerry's Story

**United States of America** **UNITED STATES LINES**  
**Affidavit of Support**

County of NEW YORK } S.S. Prepaid Ticket No. \_\_\_\_\_  
State of NEW YORK }

I, WE, ABRAHAM & LILLIE HEYMAN residing at 146-11 119th AVENUE  
JAMAICA, L.I., N.Y. (Name) (Street Address)

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ being duly sworn depose and say:

1. (a) That I was born a citizen of the United States on: \_\_\_\_\_ In the \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
City of \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ County of \_\_\_\_\_  
State of \_\_\_\_\_

(b) That I was naturalized a citizen of the United States on: \_\_\_\_\_ In the \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
City of \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ County of \_\_\_\_\_  
State of \_\_\_\_\_

(c) That I declared my intention of becoming a citizen of the United States on: \_\_\_\_\_ In the \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
City of \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ County of \_\_\_\_\_  
State of \_\_\_\_\_

2. That I am 57 years of age and have resided in the United States since 1907

3. That the undermentioned alien(s) desire(s) to come to the United States because we wish to give him a home  
(State reasons fully)

4. That the financial status of the alien(s) is dependant  
(State whether or not the applicant is dependent on you for support)

5. That my regular occupation is MACHINIST INTERNATIONAL Mutoscope Corp.  
44-01 11STREET, LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y. (Name and address of firm)  
My average weekly earnings amount to \$42.00

6. My other assets are as follows:  
(a) Bank account \$822.98 (b) Insurance: Total cash surrender value of policy (ies) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) Real Estate \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Yearly income from rentals of Real Estate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and that the encumbrance on said property, if any, amounts to \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) Stocks and bonds \$ U.S. WAR BONDS, maturity value \$2,850.00

7. That my present dependents consist of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Names and ages)

8. That it is my intention and desire to have my relatives whose names appear below, at present residing at:  
c/o OSE, 62 Rue SPONTINI, PARIS 16 (Give complete address)

come and remain with me in the United States until such time as they may become self-supporting.

Name of Alien(s)	Sex	Date of Birth	Country of Birth	Occupation	Relationship to Deponent
JACOB KAPELUSZ	M	1929	POLAND	NONE	NEPHEW

REMARKS: \_\_\_\_\_

That I am willing and able to receive, maintain, support and be responsible for the alien(s) mentioned above while they remain in the United States, and hereby assume such obligations, guaranteeing that none of them will at any time become a burden on the United States or on any State, County, City, Village or Municipality of the United States; and that any who are under sixteen years of age will be sent to day school at least until they are sixteen years old and will not be put to work unsuited to their years.

That the above mentioned relatives are in good health and physical condition and are mentally sound, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

That I am and always have been a law-abiding resident and have not at any time been threatened with or arrested for any crime or misdemeanor, that I do not belong to nor am I in anywise connected with any group or organization whose principles are contrary to organized government, nor do the above mentioned relatives, to the best of my knowledge and belief, belong to any such organization, nor have they ever been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude.

**Deponent Further States,** That this affidavit is made by him for the purpose of inducing the American Consul to issue visas to the above mentioned relatives and the Immigration Authorities to admit said relatives into the United States.

Abraham Heyman Lillie Heyman  
(Signature of Deponent)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Notary Public, in and for said County, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of December A.D. 194 5  
Malpasas  
Notary Public

NOTARY PUBLIC  
N.Y. Co. Clk's No. 201, Reg. No. 192-R-7  
Kings Co. Clk's No. 79, Reg. No. 206-R-7  
Commission expires March 30, 1947

My Commission expires \_\_\_\_\_

M-5458-25M-3-40-ORIGINAL

Fig 37b: Affidavit of Support from Abraham and Lillie Heyman, 1945



# Jerry's Story

**United States of America** **UNITED STATES LINES**  
**Affidavit of Support**

County of NEW YORK State of NEW YORK S.S. Prepaid Ticket No. \_\_\_\_\_

I, MEYER KUZNIK (Name) residing at 118-05 SUTPHIN BLVD. (Street Address)  
JAMAICA, L.I., N.Y. (City) (State) being duly sworn depose and say:

1. (a) That I was born a citizen of the United States on: \_\_\_\_\_ In the \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ In the \_\_\_\_\_  
City of \_\_\_\_\_ (City) (County) number \_\_\_\_\_  
County of \_\_\_\_\_ (State) of my certificate being \_\_\_\_\_  
State of \_\_\_\_\_ issued by \_\_\_\_\_ (Court) issued by \_\_\_\_\_ (Court)

(b) That I was naturalized a citizen of the United States on: \_\_\_\_\_ In the \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ In the \_\_\_\_\_  
City of \_\_\_\_\_ (City) (County) number \_\_\_\_\_  
County of \_\_\_\_\_ (State) of my certificate being \_\_\_\_\_  
State of \_\_\_\_\_ issued by \_\_\_\_\_ (Court) issued by \_\_\_\_\_ (Court)

(c) That I declared my intention of becoming a citizen of the United States on: \_\_\_\_\_ In the \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ In the \_\_\_\_\_  
City of \_\_\_\_\_ (City) (County) number \_\_\_\_\_  
County of \_\_\_\_\_ (State) of my certificate being \_\_\_\_\_  
State of \_\_\_\_\_ issued by \_\_\_\_\_ (Court) issued by \_\_\_\_\_ (Court)

2. That I am 49 years of age and have resided in the United States since 1915

3. That the undermentioned alien(s) desire(s) to come to the United States because we wish to give him a home  
(State reasons fully)

4. That the financial status of the alien(s) is dependant  
(State whether or not the applicant is dependent on you for support)

5. That my regular occupation is Grocery Business for myself (Name and address of firm)  
118-05 SUTPHIN BLD., JAMAICA, L.I., N.Y. My average weekly earnings amount to \$ 50.00

6. My other assets are as follows:  
(a) Bank account \$ 6,000.00 (b) Insurance: Total cash surrender value of policy (ies) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) Real Estate \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Yearly income from rentals of Real Estate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and that the encumbrance on said property, if any, amounts to \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) Stocks and bonds \$ U.S. WAR BONDS, maturity value \$2,600.00

7. That my present dependents consist of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Names and ages)

8. That it is my intention and desire to have my relatives whose names appear below, at present residing at:  
c/o OSE, 62 Rue SPONTINI, PARIS 18  
(Give complete address)

come and remain with me in the United States until such time as they may become self-supporting.

Name of Alien(s)	Sex	Date of Birth	Country of Birth	Occupation	Relationship to Deponent
JACOB KAPELUSZ	M	1929	POLAND		COUSIN

REMARKS: \_\_\_\_\_

That I am willing and able to receive, maintain, support and be responsible for the alien(s) mentioned above while they remain in the United States, and hereby assume such obligations, guaranteeing that none of them will at any time become a burden on the United States or on any State, County, City, Village or Municipality of the United States; and that any who are under sixteen years of age will be sent to day school at least until they are sixteen years old and will not be put to work unsuited to their years.

That the above mentioned relatives are in good health and physical condition and are mentally sound, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

That I am and always have been a law-abiding resident and have not at any time been threatened with or arrested for any crime or misdemeanor, that I do not belong to nor am I in anywise connected with any group or organization whose principles are contrary to organized government, nor do the above mentioned relatives, to the best of my knowledge and belief, belong to any such organization, nor have they ever been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude.

**Deponent Further States,** That this affidavit is made by him for the purpose of inducing the American Consul to issue visas to the above mentioned relatives and the Immigration Authorities to admit said relatives into the United States.

Meyer Kuznik  
(Signature of Deponent)

**SAMUEL LEBEN (Notary Public)**  
Queens Co. Clk's No. 1183 Exp. No. 195-L-  
Kings Co. Clk's No. 122 Exp. No. 214-L-6  
Commission Expires March 30, 1946

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Notary Public, in and for said County, this 10 day of Dec A.D. 1945  
Samuel Leben  
Notary Public

My Commission expires 3-30-46

M-5458-25M-3-40-ORIGINAL

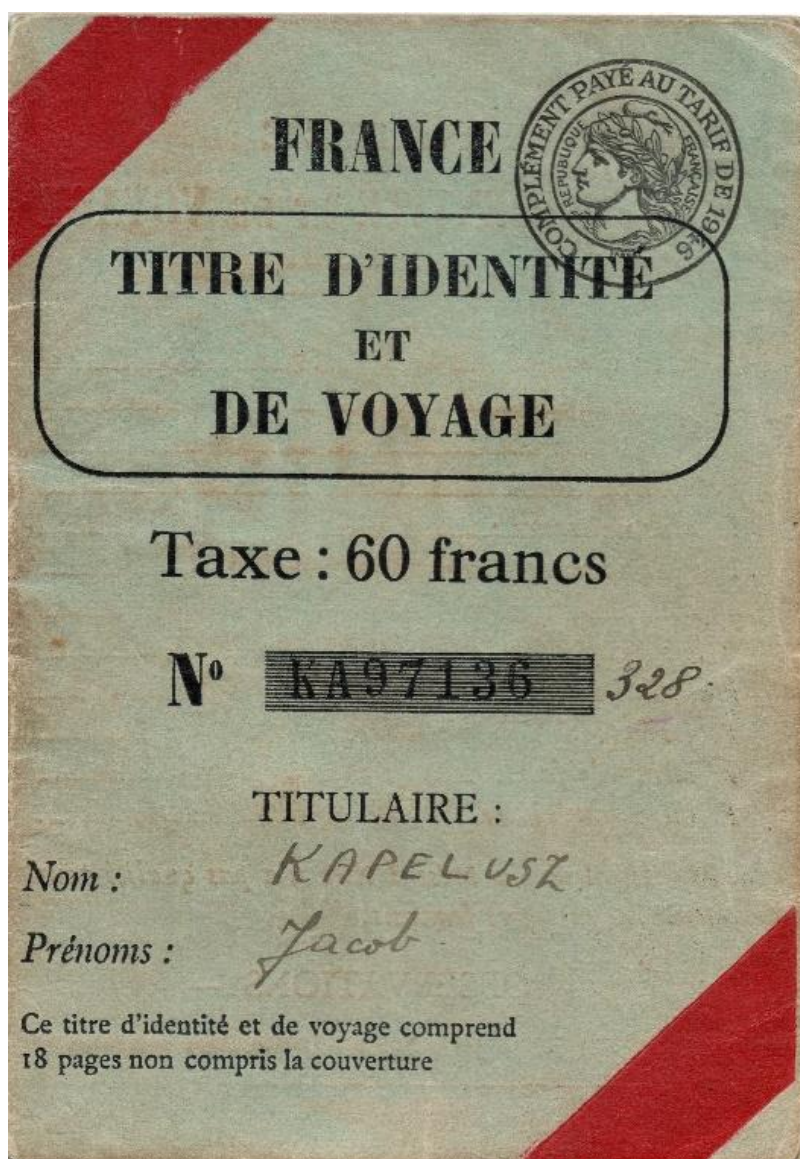
Fig 37c: Affidavit of Support from Meyer Kuznik, 1945

## Jerry's Story

### Coming to America!


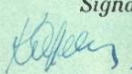
Although Uncle Heyman promised Jerry that if he didn't like New York, he would help him go to Palestine, Jerry was never interested in going to America. He was already involved in a Zionist group at OSE and he had plans, as did many of his friends, to go to Palestine and to fight for the Jewish homeland. As mentioned earlier, Jerry already knew of his maternal uncle *Shlomo Lewkowicz* in Holon and planned to go there.

However, Jerry was ultimately persuaded by Heyman as well as his friends and the staff at OSE to take advantage of this rare opportunity to go to New York and the promise of starting a new life in America. So, with the assistance of OSE staff, Jerry was able to obtain his papers including a permit to travel to America (Fig 38).





# Jerry's Story

FRANCE	SIGNALEMENT	Photographie du titulaire et, le cas échéant, photographies des enfants qui l'accompagnent.
<b>TITRE D'IDENTITÉ ET DE VOYAGE</b>	Taille : _____	
N° <u>328</u>	Cheveux : _____	
Nom du titulaire : <u>KAPELUSZ</u>	Sourcils : _____	
Prénoms : <u>Jacob</u>	Front : _____	
Lieu de naissance : <u>Sady</u>	Yeux : _____	
Date de naissance : <u>30-5-1939</u>	Nez : _____	
Né de : _____	Bouche : _____	
et de : _____	Barbe : _____	
Nationalité : <u>d'origine polonaise</u>	Menton : _____	
Profession : <u>ouvrier</u>	Visage : <u>voir photographies</u>	
Résidence de fait : <u>12 rue J. Quaghe</u>	Teint : _____	Signature du titulaire. 
Résidence antérieure : <u>Le Valinet</u>	Signes particuliers : _____	
Le détenteur du présent titre n'a pas qualité pour obtenir un passeport français.		
<b>OBSERVATIONS</b> —		
<b>Accompagné de</b> (nombre) <u>      </u> <b>enfants :</b>		
Nom	Prénoms	Date de naissance
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

- 4 -	- 5 -	- 6 -								
<b>PAYS pour lesquels le présent titre est délivré :</b> <u>USA</u>	<b>Prorogations de Validité</b>	<b>40 FRANCS</b> <b>Visas</b>								
<b>VALIDABLE DU</b> <u>12-12-1946</u> <b>AU</b> <u>12-12-1948</u> Sauf renouvellement.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Emplacement du</td> <td>Durée de validité prorogée</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Timbre mobile spécial</td> <td>du</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>au</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Cachet</td> </tr> </table>	Emplacement du	Durée de validité prorogée	Timbre mobile spécial	du		au		Cachet	<b>Préfecture de Seine-et-Oise</b> <b>KAPELUSZ Jacob</b> <b>Visa de SORTIE N° 328</b> Le passage à la frontière devra avoir lieu avant le <u>12-12-1947</u> Bon pour la sortie de France par <u>ports ouverts</u> à destination : <u>USA</u> Autorisation de M. <u>      </u>
Emplacement du	Durée de validité prorogée									
Timbre mobile spécial	du									
	au									
	Cachet									
<b>Délivré à</b> <u>Versailles</u> <b>Date, le</b> <u>12-12-1946</u> <b>Le Préfet</b> (signature et cachet) Pour le Préfet et par délégation Directeur de la Police Générale	<b>Fait à</b> _____ <b>le</b> _____ <b>Le Préfet</b> (ou le Consul de France s'il y a lieu)	<b>Recu la somme de</b> <u>100</u> <b>Fait à</b> <u>Versailles</u> <b>le</b> <u>12-12-1946</u> Pour le Préfet et par délégation Le Directeur de la Police Générale								



# Jerry's Story

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## Visas

*Reproduire dans chaque visa le nom du détenteur du titre.*

Immigration Visa  
Quota: 1662  
Dated: 6 January 1947  
Issued to: Robert M. Taylor  
American Consul at Paris, France  
Consul of the United States of America

*Polish non pref quota immig. visa*

- 8 -

## Visas

*Reproduire dans chaque visa le nom du détenteur du titre.*

BANQUE de FRANCE - PARIS  
Service bancaire étranger  
Devises  
N° 05/74  
N° 80412  
PARIS, le 11 FEV. 1947

- 9 -

## Visas

*Reproduire dans chaque visa le nom du détenteur du titre.*

Gezien voor doorreis door Nederland, zonder oponthoud naar *Amerika*  
Binnenkomst in Nederland uiterlijk 30 dagen na ondergestelden datum.  
Paris 14 Februari 1947  
Ambassadeur General  
L. Boet.

- 10 -

## Visas

*Reproduire dans chaque visa le nom du détenteur du titre.*

VISA DE TRANSIT  
Nom: *Kapelus J.*  
Nationalité: *Polonaise*  
Visé sous le n° 1662 à l'Ambassade de Belgique à Paris pour permettre au titulaire du présent passeport d'effectuer un voyage de transit par la Belgique en dehors le délai d'un mois à dater du jour de la délivrance de ce visa.  
AVIS IMPORTANT: Il est interdit au bénéficiaire de rétrograder ultérieurement en Belgique ou à l'étranger.  
14 FEV 1947  
Pour l'Ambassadeur  
L'Agent de Chancellerie délégué  
*Parageb*

- 11 -

## Visas

*Reproduire dans chaque visa le nom du détenteur du titre.*

COMMISSARIAT SPECIAL  
EMBARQUE  
28 FEV 1947  
BORDEAUX  
*ma la sortie*  
*trump*

- 12 -

## Visas

*Reproduire dans chaque visa le nom du détenteur du titre.*

ADMITTED PERMANENT at New York, N. Y.  
MAR 15 1947  
*6931*  
*J. Boet*  
(Immigrant Inspector)  
CANADA IMMIGRATION  
LI  
OCT 25 1950  
CPS  
TORONTO, ONT.  
CD 1-36531

Fig 38a: Jerry's French Identity and Travel Card, issued December 12, 1946



# Jerry's Story

XK 12709

L'an mil neuf cent quarante six.  
 Le *vingt trois Décembre*

Par devant nous Pierre BARBERY Juge de paix  
 des cantons de saint-Germain-en-Laye et de Maisons-  
 Laffitte arrondissement de Versailles et département  
 de seine et oise assisté de *M*e Jacques PRAQUIN Greffier.

ONT COMPARU.

1° Monsieur Mangred Reingwetz d'Professeur demeurant  
 au Vésinet 12 avenue François Arago.

2° Monsieur Schiff Hans Professeur demeurant même  
 adresse.

3° Mademoiselle Hedwig Bisengger assistante sociale  
 demeurant même adresse.

Lesquels témoins nous ont déclaré et attesté  
 connaître parfaitement Monsieur Jacob KAPELUSZ  
 demeurant au Vésinet 12 avenue François Arago.

Et qu'il est de notoriété publique que le dit  
 Monsieur KAPELUSZ est né à Lodz (Pologne) le trente  
 Mai mil neuf cent vingt neuf du mariage de Monsieur  
 Herz KAPELUSZ et de Madame Estera LEWKOWICZ.

Et qu'il est à leur connaissance personnelle  
 que le dit Monsieur KAPELUSZ ne peut en raison des  
 circonstances actuelles obtenir des autorités civiles  
 POLONAISES LA délivrance de son acte de naissance qui  
 lui est nécessaire.

Sur quels faits que les dits témoins nous ont  
 certifiés sincères et véritables nous avons délivré  
 le présent acte de notoriété pour suppléer à l'acte  
 de naissance du dit Monsieur KAPELUSZ qui lui est  
 nécessaire.

Et lecture faite les témoins ont signé avec  
 nous et le Greffier.

*M. R.*  
*M. S.*  
*H. E.*  
*A.*

*M. Schiff*  
*H. Bisengger*  
*P. Barbary*

100/

CHAMBRE A ST GERMAIN EN LAYE (600000)  
 26 DEC 1946 20 h 20  
 Recu: *cert. pairs*

REPUBLICQUE FRANÇAISE  
 101  
 20

Fig 38b Letter of attestation for Jerry from OSE teachers, dated Dec 23, 1946

## Jerry's Story

**OSE**  
**O E U V R E   D E   S E C O U R S   A U X   E N F A N T S**

DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE: 62, RUE SPONTINI  
**PARIS (XVI<sup>e</sup>)**

Téléphone:  
PASSY 99-88  
- 18-76  
- 14-93

Adresse Télégraphique:  
**OSENFANTS - PARIS**

LE 24 FÉVRIER 1947

SERVICE DU  
REGROUPEMENT FAMILIAL

EMI-RW

A T T E S T A T I O N

La Direction Centrale de l'Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants "OSE" certifie par la présente être en possession de la carte d'identité d'étranger n° 46-4856365 délivrée le 29 Janvier 1947 par la Préfecture de Seine et Oise au jeune

KAPELUSZ Jacob, né le 30 Mai 1929 à Lodz (Pologne)

apatride d'origine polonaise, domicilié actuellement dans notre maison d'enfants, 12 Rue François Arago, LE VESINET ( S.&O.).

La validité de cette carte a été prorogée jusqu'au 9 Juin 1947 et nous certifions que cette pièce nous est nécessaires pour faire les démarches en vue de la prolongation de son visa de sortie de France, apposé sur son passeport.

Fait à Paris le 24 Février 1947

O.S.E. DIRECTION CENTRALE  
Service Regroupement Familial  
*La Directrice,*  
*R. Wahsberg*

Fig 38c: OSE letter of attestation on behalf of Jerry, dated February 24, 1947



## Jerry's Story

MINISTÈRE  
DES FINANCES.

Prohibition ou réglementation de l'exportation des capitaux,  
des opérations de change et du commerce de l'or.

Monnaie n° 1.

OFFICE DES CHANGES.

### DÉCLARATION À LA SORTIE DU TERRITOIRE FRANÇAIS (PAR LES PERSONNES RÉSIDANT EN FRANCE).

Je, soussigné, KAPELUSZ Jacob,  
(nom et prénoms)  
résidence habituelle: 12, avenue François Arago LE VESINET  
passport n° 97136/328, nationalité: apatride  
déclare, sous les peines prévues par la loi, exporter les moyens de paiement, valeurs mobilières,  
titres de propriété et de créance, et tous les valeurs mobilières énumérés ci-dessous conformément  
à l'autorisation de l'Office des Changes et n'être pas porteur de matières d'or (lingots, barres  
et pièces de monnaie).

NUMÉRIQUE.	MONTANT EN CHIFFRES.	MONTANT EN LETTRES.	MONNAIES PROCURÉES PAR L'OFFICE DES CHANGES.
Francs français.	<u>100</u>	<u>cent franc</u>	
Monnaies étrangères.	<u>50</u>	<u>cinquante MAB</u>	

Autres moyens de paiement (chèques, lettres de crédit, traites, effets, etc.,  
libellés en monnaies française ou étrangères).

DESCRIPTION.	MONTANT EN CHIFFRES.	MONTANT EN LETTRES.	MONTANT DES DEVISES procurees PAR L'OFFICE DES CHANGES.

Valeurs mobilières, coupons de valeurs mobilières  
et titres de propriété ou de créance.

Description détaillée :

A BORDEAUX le 28 FEVRIER 1947  
*Jacob Kapelusz* Signature :

CADRE RÉSERVÉ  
AU SERVICE DES DOUANES.  
Nous, soussigné, employé des  
Douanes, déclarons avoir procédé à  
la vérification des énonciations ci-  
contre et être reconnu.

BORDEAUX - CARNOT  
28 FEV 1947

2 wls

BORDEAUX - CARNOT  
28 FEV 1947

Signature :

Cachet  
du Bureau  
des Douanes.

Série G. n° 1. — J. S. 517166-45.

Toute infraction à la réglementation du Contrôle des Changes est passible d'une amende de 1.000 francs à 3.000.000 de francs qui  
peut être élevée au montant de la somme sur laquelle a porté la fraude ou la tentative de fraude s'il est supérieur au maximum  
prévu, et d'un emprisonnement de 1 mois à 5 ans ou de l'une de ces deux peines seulement. En cas de récidive, la peine d'emprisonnement  
peut être portée à dix ans.

Fig 38d: Jerry's authorization to leave France, dated February 28, 1947

Jerry bid goodbye to his friends and the OSE staff and headed to the French port of Bordeaux. He set sail for America on March 1, 1947, aboard the liberty ship, SS George Bancroft (Fig 39). Jerry was bound for New York City to start a new life there.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION  
Form No. 1-10-48  
List 3

## LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES

ALL ALIENS arriving at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular possessions of the United States, and all aliens arriving at a port of said insular possessions from a foreign port, a port of continental United States, or a port of said insular possessions.

March 1, 1947

S. S. Passengers sailing from

No. on List	HEAD-TAX STATUS (This column to be used for use of officials only)	NAME IN FULL		Age Yrs. Mos.	Sex	Married or single	Calling or occupation	Able to—		Nationality, Country of birth, or subject	Race or people	Place of birth		Immigration Visa, Permit Visa, or Entry Permit (Indicate date and place of issue, and date and place of expiration, if any)	Issued		Date concerning expiration of visa, permit, or entry permit, if any (This column to be used by officials only)	*Last permanent residence	
		Family name	Given name					Read	Write			Country	City or town, State, Province or District		Country	Place		Date	Country
1	TRANSIT MC 10410	HEAD TAX PAID 6-20-47. HARRIS	Hour 1	35	M	S	Student	Yes	French	French	French	Paris	IV. 1044	Paris	1945	Paris	1945	Paris	Paris
2		SMITH	Louis	47	M	S	Artist	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do
3		ELKINDMAN	Joseph	14	M	S	Student	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	Lille
4		LOUISON	Jean	41	M	S	Teacher	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	St Etienne
5		LOUISON	Vital	41	M	S	Teacher	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do
6	TRANSIT MC 10410	HEAD TAX PAID 4-16-48. LOUIS	Paul	41	M	S	Teacher	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do
7		FLAZAS-MARTINEZ	Luis	31	M	S	Student	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do
8		TAVENAU	Guy	17	M	S	Student	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do
9		LOUT.	Joseph	19	M	S	Student	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do
10		KAPLUSE	Jacob	17	M	S	Student	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do
11		CHAPPEK	Abraham	16	M	S	Student	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do	do
12																			
13																			

Total passengers 13  
U. S. citizens 1  
Alien 12

\* Permanent residence within the meaning of this manifest shall be actual or intended residence of one year or more.  
† List of names will be found on the back of this sheet.



...ates, or a sort of another insular possession, in whatever class they travel, MUST be fully listed and the master or commanding officer of each vessel carrying such passengers must upon arrival deliver lists thereof to the immigrant inspector

Arriving at Port of US. PORT New York, March, 19<sup>47</sup>

[illegible][illegible]

Line US Jones  
 Owners US 549  
 Local Agents US Jones

# Jerry's Story

New York, Passenger Lists, 18201957 for Jacob Kapelus

## New York, Passenger Lists, 18201957 for Jacob Kapelus

### Record Index

Name:  
Arrival Date: 15  
Birth Date: 1930  
Birth Location: Poland  
Birth Location Other: Iodz  
Age: 17  
Gender: Male  
Ethnicity/ Nationality: Polish  
Place of Origin:  
Friend's Name:  
Port of Departure: Bordeaux, France  
Destination:  
Port of Arrival: New York, New York  
Airline:  
Ship Name: George Bancroft  
: George Bancroft  
: Jacob Kapelus Mar 1947  
New York, New York  
Bordeaux, France Male  
George Bancroft

### Source Information

Record Url: <http://search.ancestry.com/cgibin/sse.dll?indiv=1&db=nypl&h=3022146419>  
Source Citation: Year: 1947; Arrival: New York, New York; Microfilm Serial: T715, 18971957; Microfilm Roll: Roll 7303; Line: 10; Page Number: 41  
Source Information: Ancestry.com. New York, Passenger Lists, 18201957 [database online]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.  
Original data: Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 18201897. Microfilm Publication M 237, 675 rolls. NAI: 6256867. Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36. National Archives at Washington, D.C. Passenger and Crew Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 18971957. Microfilm Publication T 715, 8892 rolls. NAI: 300346. Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service; National Archives at Washington, D.C. Supplemental Manifests of Alien Passengers and Crew Members Who Arrived on Vessels at New York, New York, Who Were Inspected for Admission, and Related Index, compiled 18871952. Microfilm Publication A3461, 21 rolls. NAI: 3887372. RG 85, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 17872004; Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Index to Alien Crewmen Who Were Discharged or Who Deserted at New York, New York, May 1917Nov. 1957. Microfilm Publication A3417. NAI: 4497925. National Archives at Washington, D.C. Passenger Lists, 19621972, and Crew Lists, 19431972, of Vessels Arriving at Oswego, New York. Microfilm Publication A3426. NAI: 4441521. National Archives at Washington, D.C.

Fig 39a: Ship manifest for SS George Bancroft, March 1, 1947

*Port of Call*  
United States of America War Shipping Administration  
Owner & Sole Employer  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
U. S. Lines Co., General Agents 1 Broadway, New York City  
Form D-5  
**MUSTER CARD**  
1 March, 1947 194  
Article #.....  
Name **KAPELUSZ, Jacob**  
Rating:.....  
Fire and Emergency Station:  
**STAND BY BOAT STATION**  
Abandon Ship - - Boat Station  
# 4  
*A. A. Mandell*  
CHIEF OFFICER

Fig 39b: Jerry's ship muster card for SS George Bancroft, March 1, 1947

## Jerry's Story





## Jerry's Story



*Fig 39c: Jerry at Bordeaux and aboard the SS George Bancroft*



## Jerry's Story

### Starting his new life in New York

Arriving in New York City on March 15, 1947 (Fig 40), Jerry legally declared his intention to stay in the USA on June 20, 1947 (Fig 41). On the form, he described his profession as a 'Dental Mechanic' but, as far as we know, he never worked in this profession. Perhaps they didn't acknowledge his qualifications from Paris. He never talked about it.

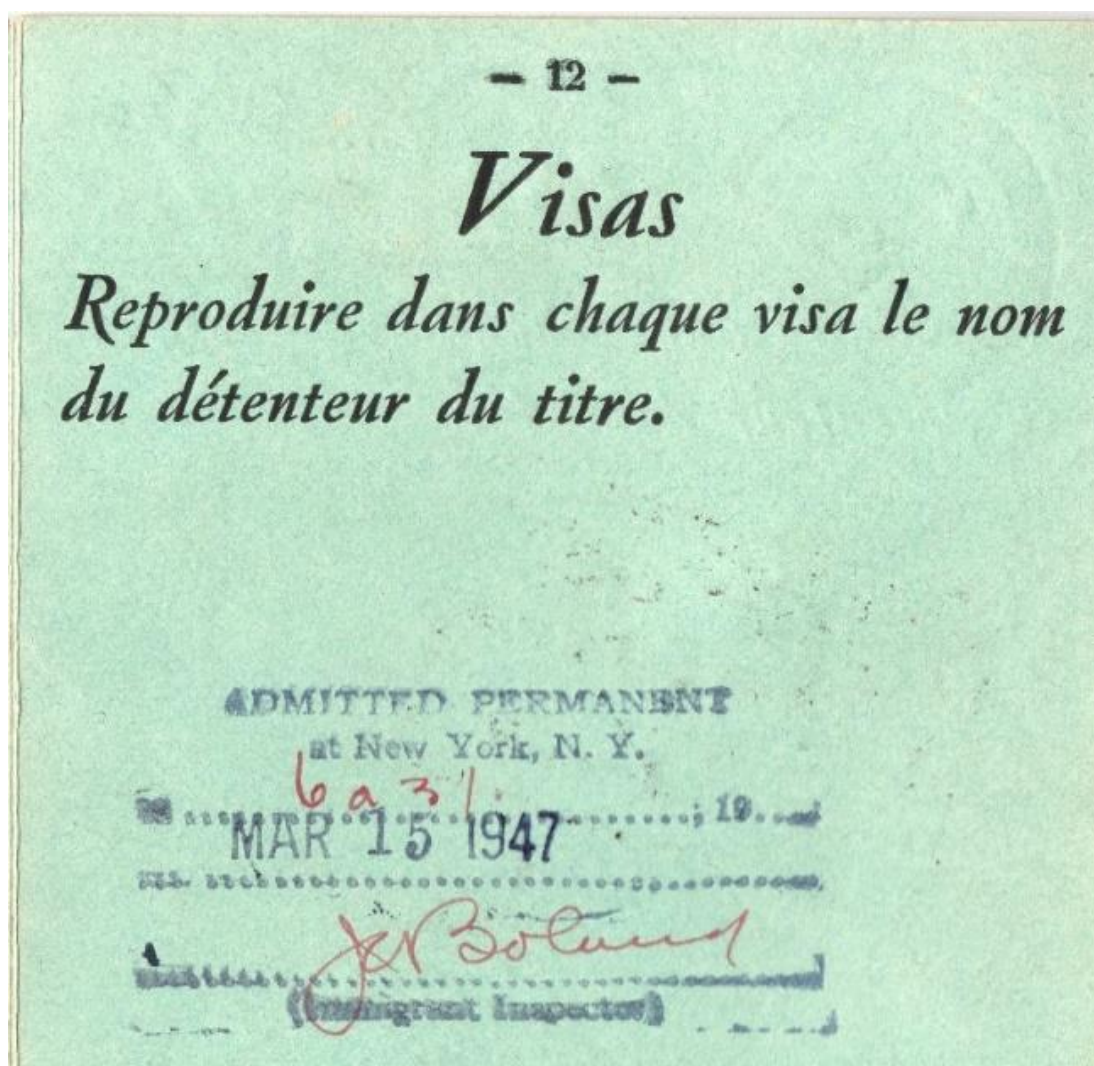


Fig 40: Visa stamp upon arrival in New York, March 15, 1947

**TRIPPLICATE**  
(To be given to declarant when originally issued; to be made a part of the petition for naturalization when petition is filed; and to be retained as a part of the petition in the records of the court)

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### DECLARATION OF INTENTION

(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)


No. **74669**

STATE OF NEW YORK } In the SUPR EME Court  
COUNTY OF QUEENS } ss. of QUEENS COUNTY at JAMAICA N.Y.

(1) My full, true, and correct name is JACOB KAPELUSZ  
(2) My present place of residence is 146 11 119 Stn Jamaica Cts Cw NY  
(3) My occupation is Dental mechanic (4) I am 18 years old. (5) I was born on May 30, 1929  
in Lodz, Poland (6) My personal description is as follows: Sex male  
color wht, complexion med, color of eyes brn, color of hair brn, height 5 feet 5 inches, weight 142 pounds,  
visible distinctive marks Tattoo on left arm-B-7619, race wht, present nationality Polish  
(7) I am not married; the name of my wife or husband is \_\_\_\_\_; we were married on \_\_\_\_\_  
at \_\_\_\_\_; he or she was born at \_\_\_\_\_  
on \_\_\_\_\_ and entered the United States at \_\_\_\_\_  
for permanent residence in the United States, and now resides at \_\_\_\_\_  
(8) I have no children; and the name, sex, date and place of birth, and present place of residence of each of said children who is living, are as follows:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(9) My last place of foreign residence was Paris France  
Bordeaux, France  
NYC NY  
at March 13, 1947 on the SS George Bangreft  
(10) I emigrated to the United States from \_\_\_\_\_  
(11) My lawful entry for permanent residence in the United States was \_\_\_\_\_  
under the name of Jacob Kapelus  
on \_\_\_\_\_, on the \_\_\_\_\_  
(12) Since my lawful entry for permanent residence I have not been absent from the United States, for a period or periods of 6 months or longer, as follows:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DEPARTED FROM THE UNITED STATES: \_\_\_\_\_ RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES: \_\_\_\_\_

PORT	DATE (Month, day, year)	VESSEL OR OTHER MEANS OF CONVEYANCE	PORT	DATE (Month, day, year)	VESSEL OR OTHER MEANS OF CONVEYANCE

(13) I have not heretofore made declaration of intention: No. \_\_\_\_\_, on \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_  
(14) It is my intention in good faith to become a citizen of the United States and to reside permanently therein. (15) I will, before being admitted to citizenship, renounce absolutely and forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which at the time of admission to citizenship I may be a subject or citizen. (16) I am not an anarchist, nor a believer in the unlawful damage, injury, or destruction of property, or sabotage; nor a disbeliever in or opposed to organized government; nor a member of or affiliated with any organization or body of persons teaching disbelief in or opposition to organized government. (17) I certify that the photograph affixed to the duplicate and triplicate hereof is a likeness of me and was signed by me.  
I do swear (affirm) that the statements I have made and the intentions I have expressed in this declaration of intention subscribed by me are true to the best of my knowledge and belief: SO HELP ME GOD.



Jacob Kapelus  
Subscribed and sworn to (affirmed) before me in the form of oath shown above in the office of the  
Clerk of said Court, at Jamaica NY  
this 20th day of June, anno Domini 1947. I hereby certify that  
Certification No. 0300-k-64023 the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization,  
showing the lawful entry for permanent residence of the declarant above named on the date stated in  
this declaration of intention, has been received by me, and that the photograph affixed to the duplicate  
and triplicate hereof is a likeness of the declarant.

(SEAL) \_\_\_\_\_  
By PAUL LIVOTI  
Clerk of the SUPREME Court.  
By LOUISE A VOLPE Deputy Clerk.  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE  
(Edition of 11-1-41)

Fig 41: Declaration of intention, June 20, 1947



## Jerry's Story

Jerry lived for some time with his uncle and aunt, Abraham and Lillie Heyman, at 146 11 119 St, Jamaica, Queens Co, New York. In a subsequent letter to OSE, Jerry wrote this about his New York relatives (Fig 42):

*"I am very happy because my family here is not rich. They are simple workers. They understand me and push me towards studies".*

Notre ami Kapelus du Vésinet, par contre, nous écrit de New-York: "Je suis très content parce que ma famille d'ici n'est pas riche. Ce sont de simples ouvriers. Ils me comprennent et me poussent vers les études". Quelques anciens de Taverny et de Versailles

Fig 42: Excerpt from OSE newsletter including news about former 'jeunes Buchenwaldiens' after emigrating abroad

Jerry received a *US Alien Registration Number* and a *social security number*. Soon after that, he received a *Selective Service System number*, thus making him eligible to be drafted into the US army (Fig 43).

Fig 43a: Jerry's US Social Security Number

Fig 43b: Jerry's Alien Reception Receipt Card

## Jerry's Story

*Handwritten: Jacob Kapelus*

**SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM  
REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that in accordance with the Selective Service Proclamation of the President of the United States

**JACOB** **KAPELUSZ**  
(First name) (Middle name) (Last name)

**196-11-119** **AM. N.Y.**  
(Place of residence—Identical with item 2 of Registration Card)

**May 30/29** **LOOZ - POLAND**  
(Date of birth) (Place of birth)

has been duly registered this **15** day of **Sept.**, **1941**

*Rudolph Jones*  
(Signature of Registrar)

Registrar for Local Board  
(Number) (City or County) (State)

The law requires you to have this card in your possession at all times for identification and to advise your Local Board of change of address

SSS Form No. 1 Form approved. Budget Bureau No. 33-B100. 16-55461-1

**DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT**

Color of eyes **Brown** Color of hair **Brown**

Complexion **Fair** Height (Approx.) **5' 4"** in.

Weight (Approx.) **132** Race **wh**

Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification

16-55461-1

Fig 43c: Jerry's Selective Service System registration certificate

In recalling his first impressions of New York, Jerry commented in an interview that New York was huge, that he didn't like it, and that he missed all his friends and the OSE staff in Paris. However, Jerry already knew several others who had also come to New York: his first cousin *Irene* and her husband Joe Schwadron from Poland and a few other survivors from Buchenwald and OSE. When he was able to earn enough, Jerry took an apartment with one of these friends, *Nat Isenberg* (originally *Nuchim Ajzenberg* of *Starachovice, Poland*) (Fig 44).



## Jerry's Story



Fig 44: Jerry and Nat Isenberg (in white tank top) in their NYC apartment

Jerry found work in a number of factories. Among these were included a one-day unsuccessful stint as a cutter in a clothing factory (despite his assurances to the boss that he knew how to cut cloth, he had no idea what he was doing and was fired on the very first day), a shipping job at 'Rusam Neckware' in Bronx, New York and an unspecified job at the Van Heusen shirt factory (Fig 45).

DISABILITY BENEFITS LAW	
STATE OF NEW YORK	
<b>EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION CARD</b>	
For use by employee when filing a claim for Disability Benefits for off-the-job injury or sickness.	
DISABILITY BENEFITS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY:	
Name	RUSAM NECKWEAR CO. INC.
Address	829 E. 134 <sup>th</sup> ST. BRONX 54 NY
EMPLOYER U.I. NUMBER	23-84653
BY INSURING WITH:	
Lumber Mut. Cas. Ins. Co. of New York	
260 FOURTH AVENUE	
NEW YORK 10, N. Y.	
DB-125 (6-50)	

Fig 45a: Employer Identification Card – Rusam Neckware

## Jerry's Story



Fig 45b: Jerry working at the Van Heusen shirt factory in New York

According to official documents, by 1948, he had started using the anglicized name *Jerry Kapelus* (although some official government documents, even years later, still identified him as *Jacob Kapelus*).

In addition to working, Jerry enrolled at the *Jamaica Vocational evening elementary school* in Queens, New York. He was determined to improve his English and to upgrade for high school level classes. Jerry received his evening elementary education certificate in January 1948 (Fig 46). He went on to complete evening high school level courses during 1949 and 1950 and proudly obtained high grades (Fig 47).

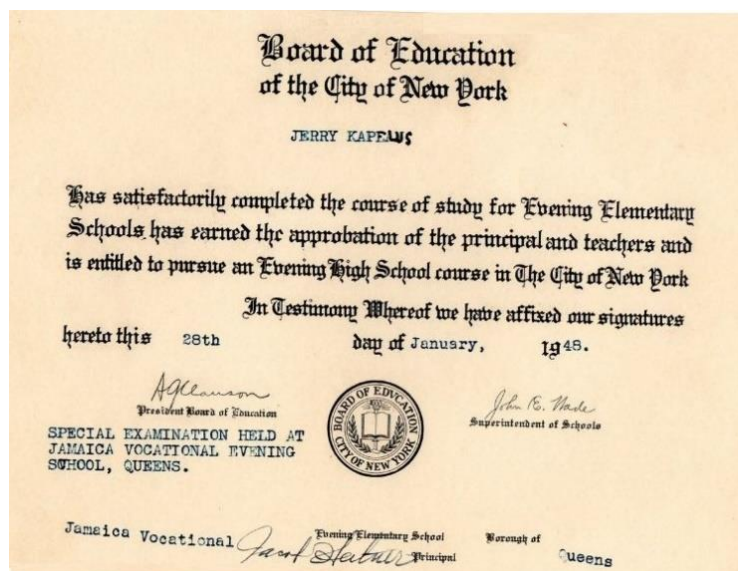


Fig 46: Jerry's Evening Elementary Education Certificate, January 1948

## Jerry's Story

77-8925-65M-1-49 265

**STUDENT'S REPORT CARD**

KAPELUS JERRY 6-19-50  
 (PRINT) LAST NAME FIRST NAME DATE TERM ENDS  
 536 W. 111 St Manhattan 25  
 ADDRESS BOROUGH POSTAL ZONE

SUBJECT	GRADE OF SUBJECT	CLASS MARK	REGENTS MARK	TEACHER
W. History	I	95		Shan
Am. History	II	65		Shan
W. History	II	85		Shan
Economics	I	85		Shan

77-8925-7531-2-47 43

**STUDENT'S REPORT CARD**

KAPELUS JERRY 6/30/49  
 (PRINT) LAST NAME FIRST NAME DATE TERM ENDS  
 536 W. 111 St N.Y. 25  
 ADDRESS BOROUGH POSTAL ZONE

SUBJECT	GRADE OF SUBJECT	CLASS MARK	REGENTS MARK	TEACHER
Gen. Science	I	95		B. B. B.
English	6	85		Janigan

77-8925-7531-2-47 43

**STUDENT'S REPORT CARD**

KAPELUS JERRY 1/50  
 (PRINT) LAST NAME FIRST NAME DATE TERM ENDS  
 ADDRESS BOROUGH POSTAL ZONE

SUBJECT	GRADE OF SUBJECT	CLASS MARK	REGENTS MARK	TEACHER
French	6	75		Allegre
A. Hist.	I	70		Shan
Alg.	I & II	80		Shan
English	7	75		Shan

**EVENING HIGH SCHOOL**

KAPELUS JERRY 9-21  
 (PRINT) LAST NAME FIRST NAME TODAY'S DATE

MON. & WED. CLASSES			TUES. & THURS. CLASSES		
Subject & Grade	Rm	Teacher	Subject & Grade	Rm	Teacher
French 6949	Allegre	1	Alg. 1-2548	B. B. B.	
A. H. 1 648	Shan	2	Eng. 7 57	Shan	
		3			

All classes must meet on several Friday nights. The school calendar will designate the specific Friday nights.  
 On the first night of attendance in each class obtain the teacher's signature in the proper space above. Carry this program with you as a means of identification while in school.  
 Read the school regulations on the back of this card. 6:20

**EVENING HIGH SCHOOL**

KAPELUS JERRY 4/27/1950  
 (PRINT) LAST NAME FIRST NAME TODAY'S DATE

MON. & WED. CLASSES			TUES. & THURS. CLASSES		
Subject & Grade	Rm	Teacher	Subject & Grade	Rm	Teacher
W. H. I	603	Shan	1		
A. H. II	514		2		
W. H. II	549		3		

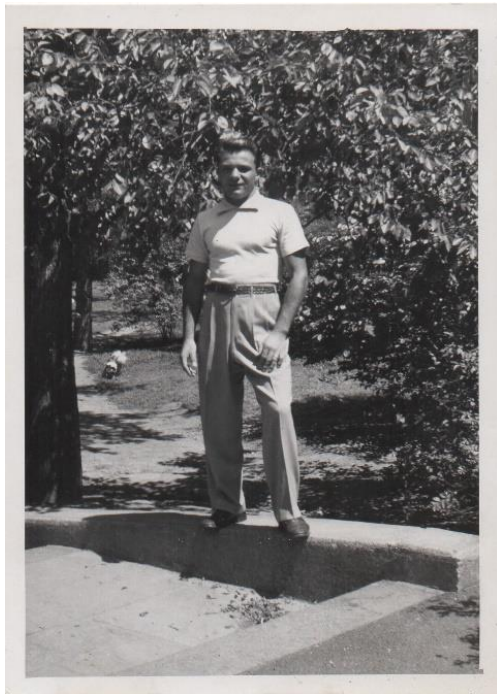
All classes must meet on several Friday nights. The school calendar will designate the specific Friday nights.  
 On the first night of attendance in each class obtain the teacher's signature in the proper space above. Carry this program with you as a means of identification while in school.  
 Read the school regulations on the back of this card.

Fig 47: Jerry's New York City evening high school report cards, 1949-1950

We don't know much else about Jerry's life in New York to that point but based on his photo album, he was clearly a smart dresser, seemed to have gained many friends, and had quite an active social life. Jerry said to us many times over the years that he had loved living in New York City (Fig 48).



## Jerry's Story



## Jerry's Story



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 48: Jerry loved living in NYC*



## Jerry's Story

Among the treasures we uncovered among Jerry's papers was a photo of him attending the *Societe Culinaire Philanthropique Eighty-Second Annual Charity Ball* at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City on Jan 17, 1948 (Fig 49). Other than the fact that Jerry had learned to speak French in Paris, he never mentioned any link to that organization or having attended that event. Perhaps he was someone's date? He certainly never demonstrated to us any ability or interest in cooking but, of course, he looked great!



*Fig 49: The Societe Culinaire Philanthropique Eighty-Second Annual Charity Ball, Hotel Pennsylvania, NY, Jan 17, 1948 (Jerry is shown by a red circle in the middle of the crowd)*

Jerry was preparing to go to college in New York when he received a notice of induction (Army draft) from the US Selective Service in 1950 (Fig 50). This occurred around the beginning of the US war in Korea, which meant the possibility that Jerry, having been given a '1A classification' by the US Selective Service, might be going to war for the US Army.

Jerry knew of other Buchenwald Boys, such as his old friend Joe Magier, who had already been drafted into the US Army (Fig 51). However, for Jerry it was clear that he had seen enough killing by that point in his life and he didn't want to be involved in yet another war. Jerry was determined to get away as soon as possible.

## Jerry's Story

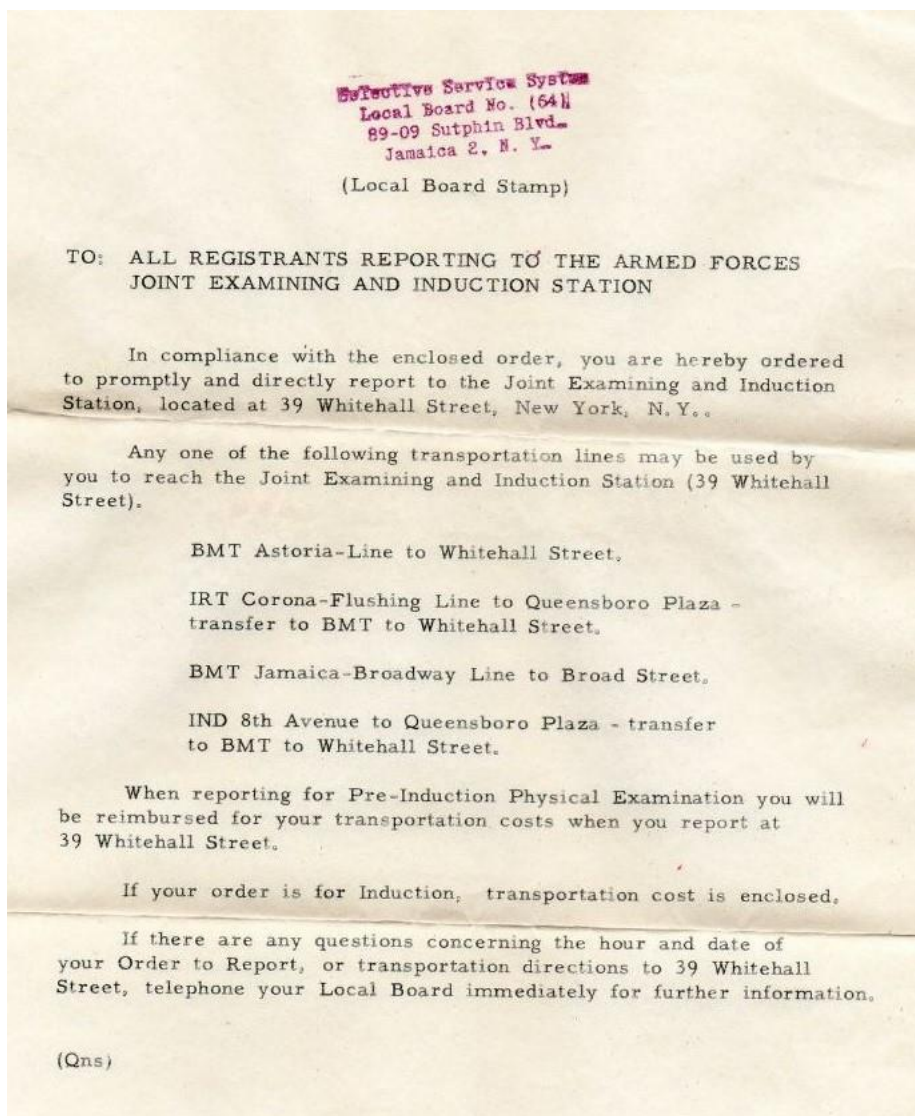


Fig 50: Generic US Selective Service System, Notice of induction, undated

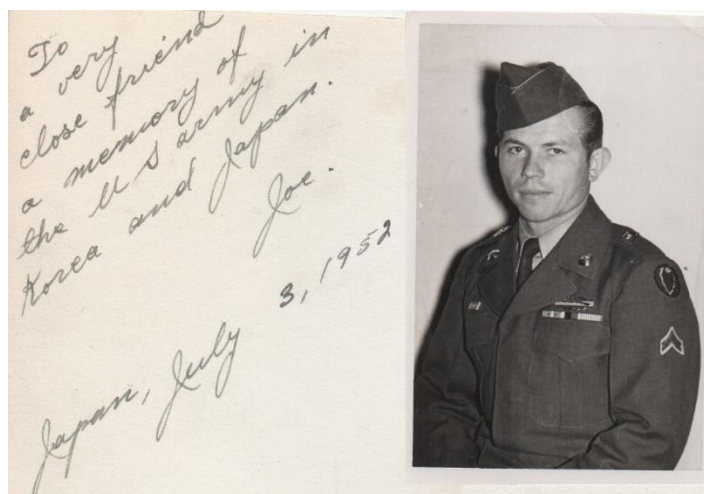


Fig 51: Fellow Buchenwald Boy Joe Magier in his US Army uniform

## Jerry's Story

### Coming to Canada (and not because he wanted to!)

Jerry's New York roommate Nat Isenberg had an uncle, also named *Nachum Isenberg* (known within the family as '*Old Man Isenberg*'), the head of a large family living in Toronto, Canada. Jerry decided to head there.

So, after three and a half years and a great new life while living in New York, Jerry successfully crossed the border into Canada on Oct 25, 1950 (Fig 52). He headed directly to the Isenberg family's house at 444 Manning Avenue in Toronto, in the heart of Toronto's downtown Jewish neighbourhood at the time. Only Nat Isenberg knew where Jerry had gone.



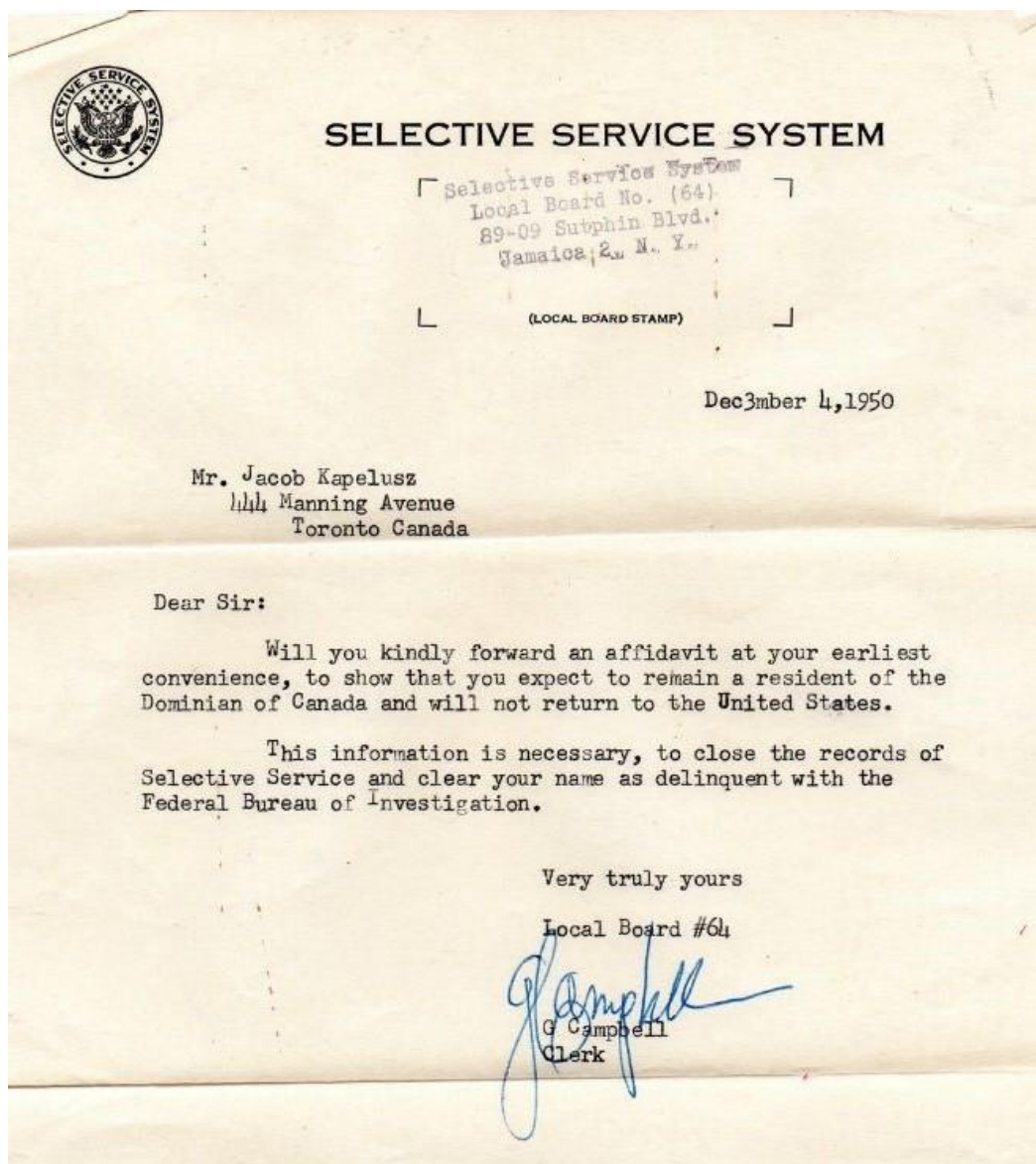
Fig 52: Visa stamp showing Jerry's first entry into Canada, October 25, 1950

Having come to Canada, Jerry could no longer cross the border back into the USA as he was now considered a 'draft evader'.

Somehow, after about six weeks, the US Selective Service discovered where Jerry was living. They sent a letter to him at the address on Manning Avenue, requesting that he present paperwork confirming his intent to stay in Canada (Fig 53).



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 53: Letter from Selective Service, December 4, 1950*

Over the next few years, Jerry established himself in Toronto. By 1954, he was gainfully employed, married to Merna and had his first child on the way. He had also applied for Canadian citizenship. However, letters continued to be sent by the US Selective Service, always courteous, but demanding that Jerry return to the USA to be inducted or he would be considered 'delinquent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation' and could be fined and jailed (Fig 54).

## Jerry's Story

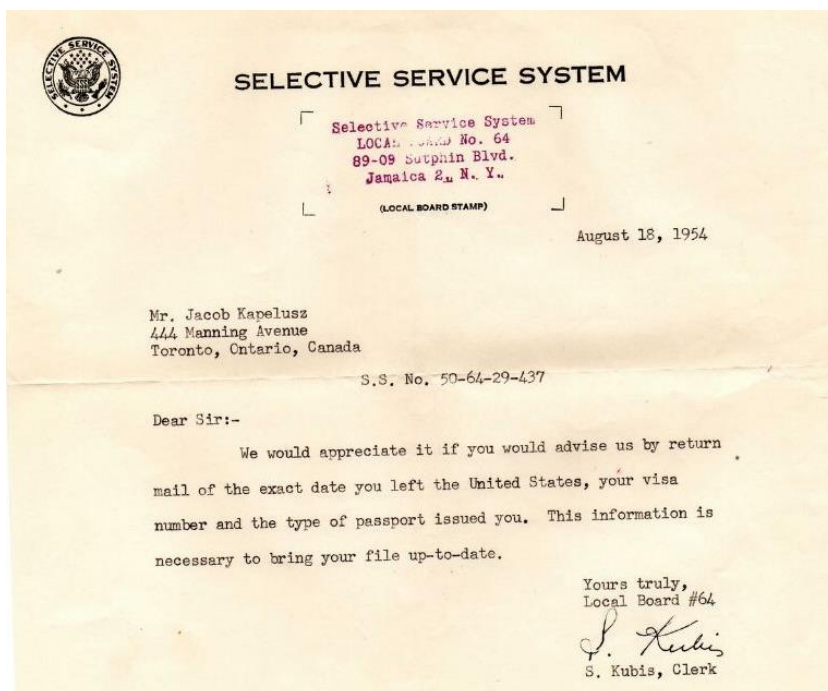


Fig 54a: Letter from Selective Service, August 18, 1954

Selective Service System

Selective Service System  
Local Board No. (64)  
89-09 Sutphin Blvd.  
Jamaica 2, N. Y.

(LOCAL BOARD STAMP)

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Mr. Jacob Kapelus  
444 Manning Avenue,  
Toronto, Ontario,  
Canada

10-81824-8

**NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL**

Appeal from classification by local board may be taken by filing written notice of appeal with local board within one of the following periods after the date of mailing of this notice, whichever is applicable: 10 DAYS, if both you and local board are located in the continental United States or in the same Territory or possession of the United States; 30 DAYS, if you are located in the continental United States and local board is located in a Territory or possession of the United States; 30 DAYS, if you are located in a Territory or possession of the United States and local board is located in the continental United States or in another such Territory or possession; 30 DAYS, if you are located in Canada, Cuba, or Mexico; 60 DAYS, if you are located in a foreign country other than Canada, Cuba, or Mexico. Upon your written request filed with the local board, the appeal may be submitted to the appeal board having jurisdiction over the area in which you are currently residing or, if you are claiming occupational deferment, to the appeal board having jurisdiction over the area in which is located your principal place of employment.

If this classification is by a local board, you may, within 10 days after the mailing of this notice, file a written request for a personal appearance before the local board (unless this classification has been determined upon such personal appearance). Following such personal appearance you may file a written request for an appeal from the local board's classification within the applicable period mentioned in the preceding paragraph after the date of the mailing of the new notice of classification.

If an appeal has been taken and you are classified by the appeal board in either Class I-A, Class I-A-O, or Class I-O, and one or more members of the appeal board dissented from such classification, you may file a written notice of appeal to the President with your local board within 10 DAYS after the mailing of this notice.

**NOTICE OF CLASSIFICATION**

Approval not required

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM  
JACOB KAPELUSZ

(First name) (Middle name) (Last name)

Selective Service No. 50 64 29 437 has been classified in Class 1A (Until 19.....) by ☒ Local Board. ☐ Appeal Board, by vote of ..... to ..... ☐ President

Sept. 23, 1954

(Date of mailing) (Date of classification) (Signature of local board member)

The law requires you, subject to heavy penalty for violation, to carry this notice, in addition to your Registration Certificate, on your person at all times—to exhibit it upon request to authorized officials—to surrender it, upon entering the armed forces, to your commanding officer.

For advice, see your Government appeal agent.

The law requires you: (1) To keep in touch with your local board; (2) to notify it of any change of address; (3) to notify it of any fact which might change your classification; (4) to comply with the instructions on the notice of classification part of this form.

SSS Form No. 110 (Revised 4-16-54)

10-81824-10 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Fig 54b: Card from Selective Service, September 23, 1954




# Jerry's Story

Approval of Budget Bureau not required.

**Selective Service System**  
**Local Board No. (64)**  
**89-09 Sutphin Blvd.**  
**Jamaica 2, N. Y.**

(LOCAL BOARD STAMP)



**SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM**

**Order to Report for**  
**Armed Forces Physical Examination**

November 10th, 1954  
(Date of mailing)

To JACOB KAPELUSZ

(First name) (Middle name) (Last name)

444 Manning Avenue

(Street and number)

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

(City) (State)

50 64 29 437

(Selective Service Number)

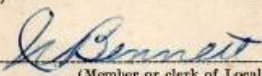
You are hereby directed to report for Armed Forces Physical Examination to the ~~Local Board nearest~~  
~~showing~~

JOINT EXAMINING AND INDUCTION STATION, 39 WHITEHALL STREET, N.Y.C.

(Place of reporting)

at 7:30 A. m., on the 23rd of November, 1954.

(Hour of reporting) (Day) (Month)

  
(Member or clerk of Local Board)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

**TO ALL REGISTRANTS:**

When you report for Armed Forces Physical Examination you will be forwarded to an Armed Forces Examining Station where you will be given a complete physical examination to determine whether you are physically qualified for service. Upon completion of your physical examination, you will be returned to this Local Board. You will be furnished transportation and meals and lodging when necessary. Following your Armed Forces Physical Examination your Local Board will mail you a certificate issued by the commanding officer of the station showing whether or not you are acceptable for service.

If you are employed, you should advise your employer of this order and inform him that the examination is merely to determine your acceptability for service. It is not an order to report for induction or an order to perform civilian work.

If you are so far from your own Local Board that reporting in compliance with this order will be a hardship and you desire to report to the Local Board in the area in which you are now located, take this Order and go immediately to that Local Board and make written request for transfer for Armed Forces Physical Examination.

**TO CLASS I-A AND I-A-O REGISTRANTS:**

If you fail to report for Armed Forces Physical Examination as directed, you will be delinquent and will be immediately ordered to report for induction into the Armed Forces. You will also be subject to fine and imprisonment under the provisions of the Universal Military Training and Service Act, as amended.

**TO CLASS I-O REGISTRANTS:**

The Armed Forces Physical Examination is given for the purpose of determining your acceptability for service. If you are found acceptable, you will be available, in lieu of induction, to be ordered to perform civilian work contributing to the maintenance of the national health, safety or interest. If you fail to report for or to submit to the Armed Forces Physical Examination, you will be deemed to be available to be ordered to perform civilian work in the same manner as if you had taken the Armed Forces Physical Examination and had been found acceptable.

SSS Form No. 223 (Revised 3-18-52) (Supplies of original printing shall be used until exhausted except for I-O Registrants) GPO 16-37970-5

Fig 54c: Letter from Selective Service, November 10, 1954



## Jerry's Story

Jerry informed the US Selective Service of his status in Canada in a well-written letter in November 1954 (Fig 55).

Jacob Kapelus,  
444 Manning Ave.,  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

November 15th, 1954

Selective Service System,  
Local Board (64),  
89-09 Sutphin Blvd.,  
Jamaica 2, N.Y.

Dear Sirs,-      Selective Service Number- 50-64-29-437.

This will acknowledge receipt of your order dated November 10th, 1954 for me to be present at the Joint Examining office at 39 Whitehall st. N.Y.C., on November 23rd, 1954.

In this connection I wish to advise that under date of December 4th, 1950 I received from your office a request to produce evidence of my permanent residence in Canada. I have forwarded information that I had accepted permanent residence in Canada under date of October 25th, 1950, and received from your office the enclosed card as reply. Since my landing in Canada I was married at Toronto on June 27th, 1954, and my wife is now expecting to give birth.

Since I have assumed permanent residence in Canada under date of October 25th, 1950, I have been residing permanently in Canada with my wife. When admitted to Canada the Department of Immigration in Canada has returned my border crossing card allowing me to re-enter U. S. A. I have notified U.S. Authorities at the time I assumed residence in Canada, and returned my Border crossing card. I, therefore, will appreciate receipt from your office of advice as to revoking your order for me to appear for the required examination. Within one year I will obtain my Canadian Citizenship. I have resided continuously in Canada for over four years, and lost my residence in U.S.A.

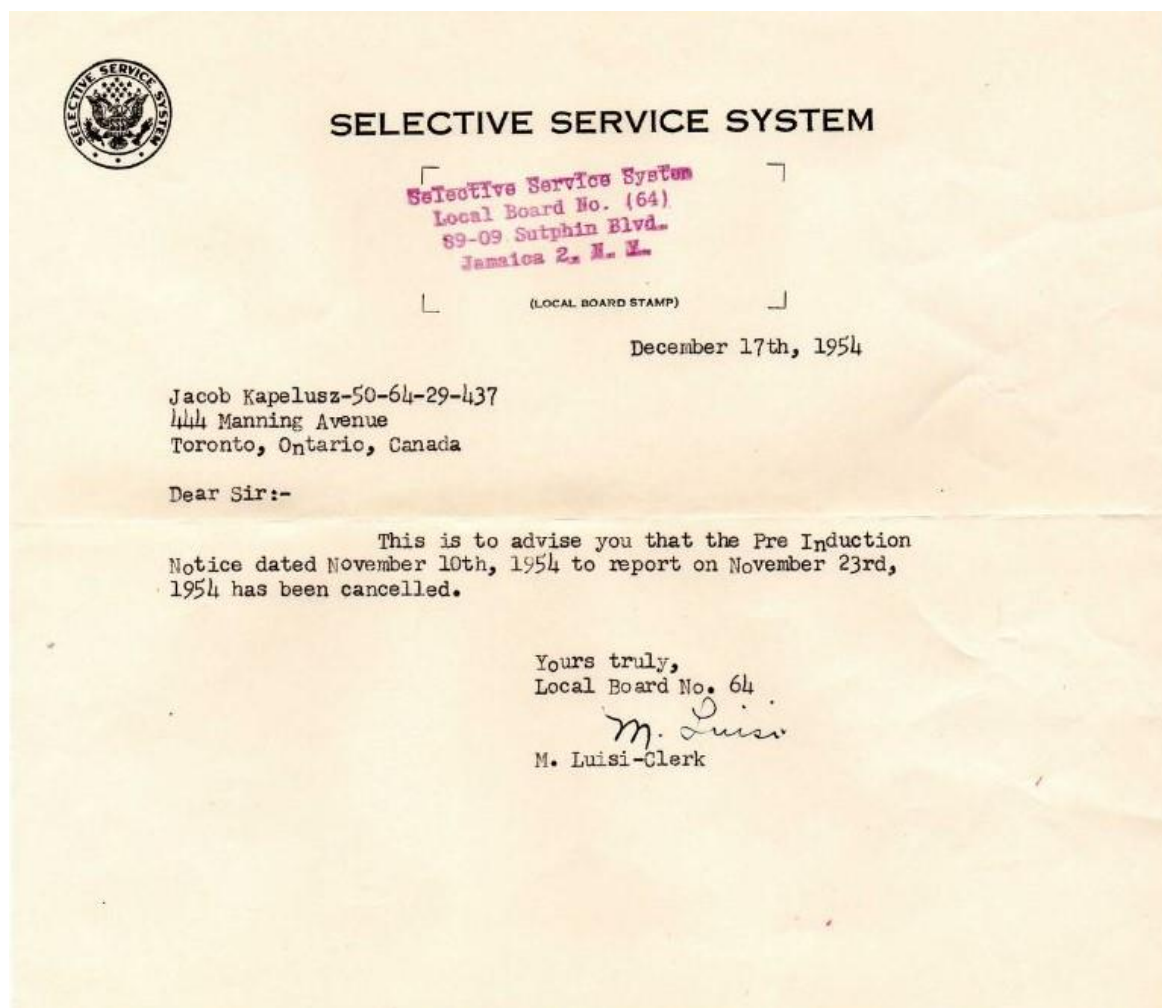
Thanking you in anticipation for your kind reply,  
I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Fig 55: Jerry's letter to the US Selective Service, November 15, 1954

## Jerry's Story

Jerry's induction status was finally considered settled in a follow-up letter from the US government on December 17, 1954 (Fig 56). From that point forward, he was able to cross the border and visit the USA without concern.



*Fig 56: Final letter of discharge from the US Selective Service, December 17, 1954*

## Jerry's Story

### Making a new life in Canada

In Toronto, Jerry became part of the large Isenberg family and he roomed with them for several more years. After having lived in large cosmopolitan cities like Paris and New York, Jerry initially found Toronto *"boring"*.

He didn't immediately connect to the official Jewish community.

*"I always looked after myself. I didn't need any help from the community and never asked for any help". (Jerry)*

However, Jerry joined the YMHA (Young Men's Hebrew Association) at Spadina Ave and Bloor St, made new friends and attended many social functions there. During that time, Jerry worked for *Budget Household*, briefly went into business with Nat's cousin *Carl Isenberg* (another Polish survivor), first selling door to door and then opening a store together before Jerry eventually went out on his own.

### Meeting Merna

Jerry first met Merna Davidson on a double date in 1952. She was five years younger than Jerry. Merna too had recently immigrated to Toronto from her home in Manchester, England with her parents Harold and Fanny (Fay) Davidson (Fig 57).

Form I-415  
TREASURY DEPARTMENT  
UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE

Form approved.  
Budget Bureau No. 43-R019-3.

MANIFEST No. 120

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE  
(Rev. 1-6-48)

MANIFEST OF IN-BOUND PASSENGERS (ALIENS)

Class CABIN from SOUTHAMPTON 19th NOV. 1948

TRANSIT.

on "QUEEN ELIZABETH" arriving at port of NEW YORK. 6TH DEC. 1948

LINE No.	FAMILY NAME—GIVEN NAME DESTINATION IN UNITED STATES	AGE (Years)	SEX (F-M)	MAR- RIED OR SINGLE	TRAVEL Doc. No. NATIONALITY	NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION OF PIECES OF BAGGAGE	HEAD TAX COL- LECTED	THIS COLUMN FOR USE OF MASTER, BURGEON, AND U. S. OFFICERS
✓ 1	DAVIDSON Harold IN TRANSIT TO CANADA	38	M	M	V 175407 BRITAIN	2 S/C 2 H.P.	NO	EXEMPT
✓ 2	DAVIDSON Fanny IN TRANSIT TO CANADA	39	F	M	V 175408 BRITAIN	-	NO	EXEMPT
✓ 3	DAVIDSON Merna IN TRANSIT TO CANADA	14	F	S	V 175409 BRITAIN	-	NO	EXEMPT

Fig 57a: Harold, Fanny (Fay) and Merna Davidson in transit to Canada via New York, 1948



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 57b: Merna Davidson (centre of photo) arriving at the port of New York, 1948*

According to Merna, they were each with other people when they first met but Jerry asked for her phone number and he followed up. They began dating formally after that (Fig (58)).

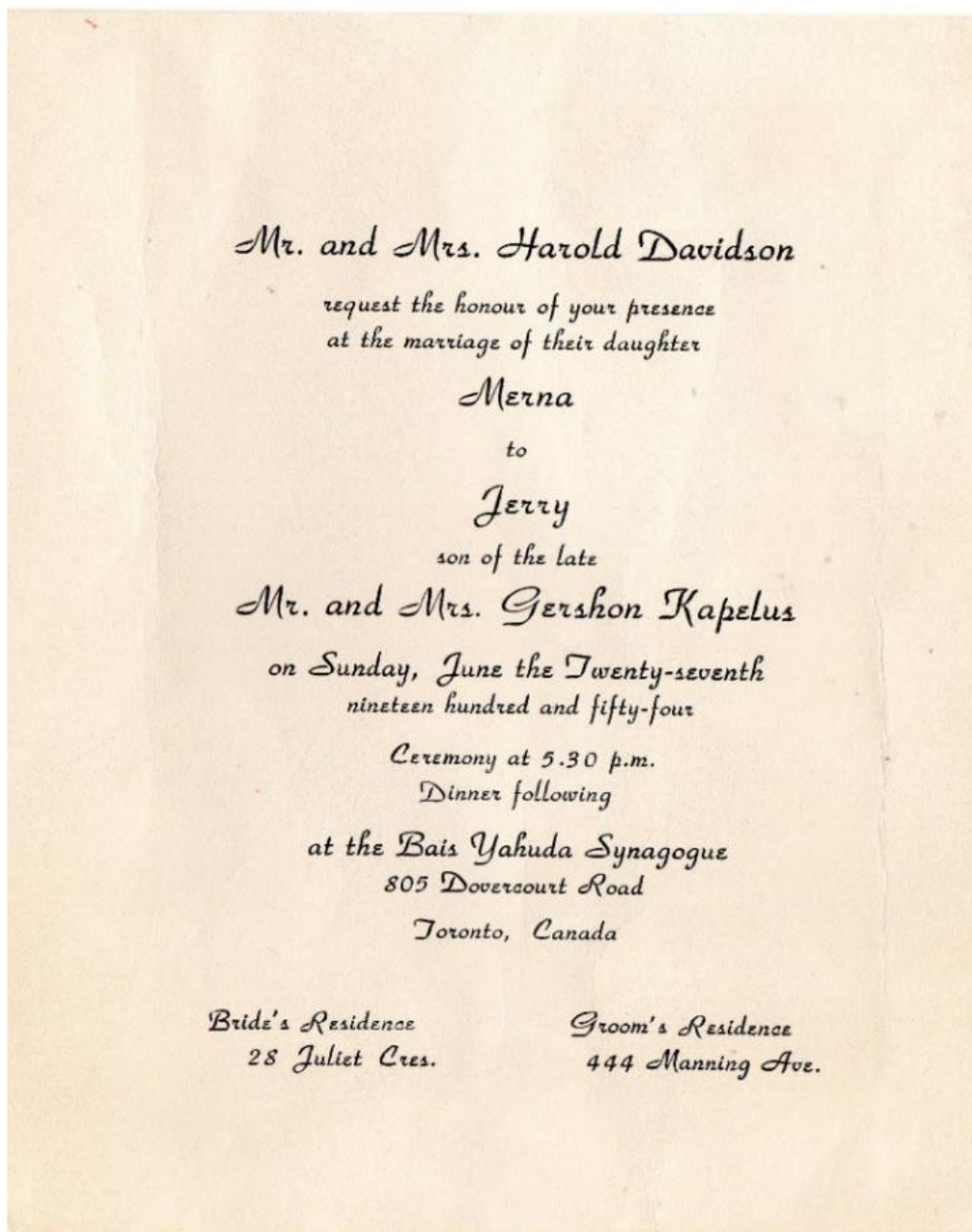
## Jerry's Story



*Fig 58: Merna and Jerry dating*

By 1953, Jerry and Merna were engaged. Jerry, at the age of 24, was still living with the Isenberg family. Merna, 19 years old at the time, was living with her parents at 28 Juliet Crescent, well outside of the small downtown Jewish community.

Merna and Jerry were married on June 27, 1954, at Bais Yehuda Synagogue on Dovercourt Road in Toronto (Fig 59). Jerry's best man was his first cousin Kiva Kapelus. Two of his ushers were childhood friends from Poland. Another usher was his best friend Normie Sharpe.



*Fig 59a: Merna and Jerry's wedding invitation*



# Certificate of Marriage

**This is to Certify that, on the** TWENTY-SEVENTH  
**day of** JUNE **A.D. 19**54**, at** TORONTO  
**in the Province of Ontario, I solemnized the Marriage of**  
JERRY KAPELUS **and**  
MERNA DAVIDSON **under Marriage Licence**  
**No. R 71442 issued on the** NINTH **day of** JUNE **A.D. 19**54

**Witnesses:**

[Signature]  
[Signature]

Rabbi Bernard Rosensweig  
 (Signature of person solemnizing the marriage - If Judge or Magistrate, so indicate).  
324 KORTWEG  
 (address)  
HEBREW (Denomination) 11869 (Registration Certificate Number)

ב אהב בשבת 27/6/54 לחדש 110

שנת חמשת אלפים ושמעון מאות  
 1954 27/6/54  
 לברית עולם למען שאנו מניין כאן  
 אמריקא הצפונית איך החתן, 27/6/54  
 בר 27/6/54  
 אמר זה להרא  
 המבונה 27/6/54  
 המבונה 27/6/54  
 היה לי לאנתי כרת משה וישראל ואנא אפלה ואוקיר ואיוח  
 ואפרנס יתיכי ליכי כחלכות גוברין ויהודאן דפלחין ומקורין וזנין  
 ומפרנסין לנשותיהן בקיששא ויהבנא ליכי מוהר 1200  
 כסף וזוי 1200 דהוי ליכי 1200 ומוזניי וכסותי  
 וסיפוקי ומיעל לותיכי כאורח כל ארעא וצביאות מר  
 1200 דהוי ליכי 1200 דא וותיכי לי לאנתי וזנין נדוניא  
 והנעלה דיה מבי 1200 בין בכסף בין בזהב בין בחבשיטין  
 במאי דלבושא בשימשי דירה ובשימשי דערסא הכך קבד  
 עריו 27/6/54 חתן דנין 1200 וקוקים כסף צרוף  
 וצבי 27/6/54 חתן דנין וותיכי כה מן ידיה עד  
 1200 וקוקים כסף צרוף אחרים כנען סך הכל 1200  
 וקוקים כסף צרוף וכך אמר 27/6/54 חתן דנין  
 אחריות שטר כתובתא דא נדוניא דין ותוספתא דא קבדית ער  
 ועד ידתי בתראי דהתפרע מן כד שפר ארג נכסין וקנינין דאית  
 לי תחת כל שמיא דקנאי ודעתיד אנא למקנא נכסין דאית  
 דהון אחריות ודית דהון אחריות כלהון יהון אחראין וערבאין  
 לפדות מנהון שטר כתובתא דא נדוניא דין ותוספתא דא מנאי  
 ואפידו מן נדימא דעל כתפאי בתי ובמותי מן יומא דנין  
 ודעס ואחריות וחמר שטר כתובתא דא נדוניא דין ותוספתא  
 דא קבד עריו 27/6/54 חתן דנין כחומר כד שטרי  
 כתובות ותוספות דנהגין בבנת ישראל העשוין בחקין חבשיטין  
 וכרונם כדרכה דלא כאסמכתא ודלא כמופסי דשטרי וקנינא  
 מן 27/6/54 בר 27/6/54 חתן דנין למרת  
 דא 27/6/54 כת 27/6/54  
 על כד מה דכתוב ומפורש לעיל במנא דכשר למקנא כיה  
 והכל שריר וקים  
 נאום 27/6/54 ונאום 27/6/54  
 נאום 27/6/54 ונאום 27/6/54

**This Certificate Witnesseth that**

On the FIRST day of the week, the TWENTY-SIXTH  
 day of the month JUNE in the year 5714  
 corresponding to the TWENTY-SEVENTH  
 of JUNE 19 54, the holy Covenant  
 of Marriage was entered into at TORONTO  
 between the  
 Bridegroom JERRY KAPELUS  
 and his Bride MERNA DAVIDSON

The said Bridegroom made the following  
 declaration to his Bride:

"Be thou my wife according to the law of Moses and  
 Israel. I faithfully promise that I will be a true husband  
 unto thee. I will honor and cherish thee, protect and sup-  
 port thee, and provide all that is necessary for thy due sus-  
 tenance, even as it becometh a Jewish husband to do. I also  
 take upon myself all such further obligations for thy main-  
 tenance, during thy life-time, as are prescribed by our  
 religious statute."

And the said Bride has plighted her troth unto him, in  
 affection and in sincerity, and has thus taken upon herself  
 the fulfillment of all the duties incumbent upon a Jewish  
 wife.

This Covenant of Marriage was duly executed and  
 witnessed this day, according to the usage of Israel.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Bridegroom

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Bride

Bernard Rosensweig  
 Rabbi

Rev. M. Snyder  
 Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Witness

Fig 59b: Merna and Jerry's marriage certificate and ketubah

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 59c: Merna and Jerry's wedding photos*



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 59d: Merna and Jerry with her parents Fay and Harold Davidson*



*Fig 59e: Merna and Jerry's wedding party*



## Jerry's Story



Fig 59f: Merna and Jerry's honeymoon in the Laurentian Mountains, Quebec

At first, Merna and Jerry lived as a married couple with Merna's parents on Juliet Crescent. Jerry operated his new clothing and housewares business, *Atlas House Furnishings*, from that house and later, from the Davidson's new home at 475 Rustic Road (Fig 60).

**THE REGISTRY OFFICE  
FOR THE REGISTRY DIVISION OF TORONTO**

**I Certify**, that in the Registry Office for the Registry Division of Toronto, there has been filed by.....  
**Jerry Kapelus.**

as required by the Partnership Registration Act, Chapter 271, R.S.O. 1950, and amendments thereto, a declaration that he carries on business at the said city of Toronto under the name, style or firm of.....**Atlas House Furnishings.**

That such declaration is dated.....**5th May**.....**1954.**

and was registered on.....**5th May**.....19 **54.**, as number.....**96663**.....C.P.

Dated at Toronto, this.....**Fifth**.....day of.....**May**....., 19 **54.**

Form 18 Deputy Registrar.

Fig 60a: Jerry's business, *Atlas House Furnishings*, was registered in Toronto on May 5, 1954

## Jerry's Story

rd  
 h  
 , 9  
 ron

--Max opr Dom Luggage r 740 Manning av  
 --Steven wtr Royal York Hotel h 516 Eglinton av  
 east  
 --Z Paul studt U of T r 516 Eglinton av e  
 Kapelus Jerry (Atlas House Furnishings) h 28  
 Juliet cres (York Twp)  
 Kapferer Horst r 100 Bellevue av  
 Kaphalakos Geo sec-treas Mojabo Coffee Co Ltd  
 h 1, 19 Relmar rd (Fst H)

Fig 60b: Jerry and Atlas House Furnishings listed on Juliet Cres in 1956 Toronto phone directory

east  
 --Z Paul studt r 516 Eglinton av e  
 Kapeluk Tony carp r 89 Robinson  
 Kapelus Gerry slsmn Atlas House Furnishing r  
 475 Rustic rd (Nth Y)  
 Kapes Susan Mrs h 1450 Bloor w  
 Kapferer Rainer r 475 Brunswick av  
 lle  
 Kaphalakos Geo sec-treas Mojabo Coffee Co Ltd  
 h 19 Relmar rd (Fst H)

Fig 60c: Jerry and Atlas House Furnishings listed on Rustic Road in 1957 Toronto phone directory



Fig 60d: Jerry standing in front of the Davidson's new house at 475 Rustic Road, Aug 1956



## Jerry's Story

Jerry received his Canadian citizenship papers on July 11, 1956 (Fig 61). Interestingly, Merna's citizenship certificate, granted in 1962, displayed her married name as 'Kapelusz'.



Fig 61a: Jerry's Certificate of Canadian citizenship July 11, 1956



Fig 61b: Merna's Certificate of Canadian citizenship Feb 22, 1962



## Jerry's Story

In 1957, Merna and Jerry were able to purchase their first house at 55 Langholm Drive, in a new Toronto subdivision located in Downsview, west of Keele St and just north of the new Highway 401 (Fig 62). In that home, and then about a decade later in a much larger house at 37 Colonnade Road in Willowdale (Fig 63), Merna and Jerry raised their three children, Gary (born June 7, 1955), Stephen (born September 25, 1958) and Elysa (born July 27, 1964) and shared a wonderful life together.



Fig 62a: Merna and Jerry's first house at 55 Langholm Drive, Toronto

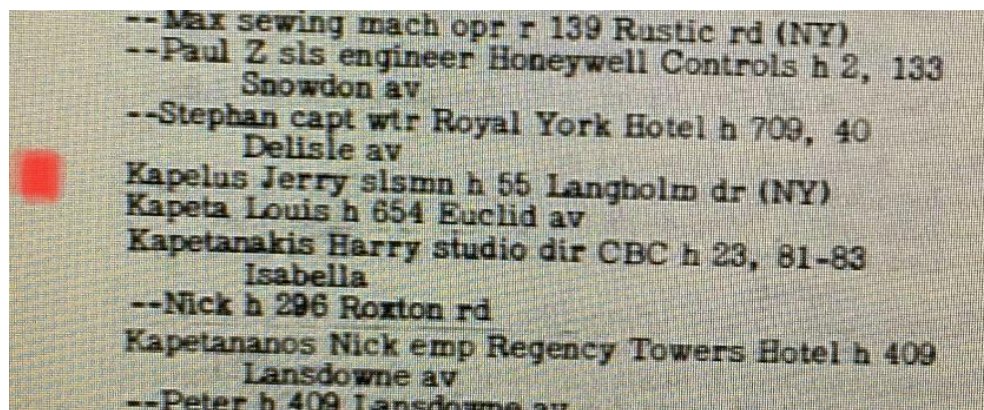


Fig 62b: Jerry listed on Langholm Drive in 1960 Toronto phone directory

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 63: The second Kapelus family home at 37 Colonnade Road in Willowdale*

Jerry continued to operate his successful housewares business and working for himself for many years. During the 1970s, Merna and Jerry also bought and operated a commercial building including a street level dress store located at 1916 Queen St East in downtown Toronto. They named the store *Elysa K Fashions* in honour of their daughter and youngest child (Fig 64).



*Fig 64a: Elysa K Fashions, 1916 Queen St E*

## Jerry's Story

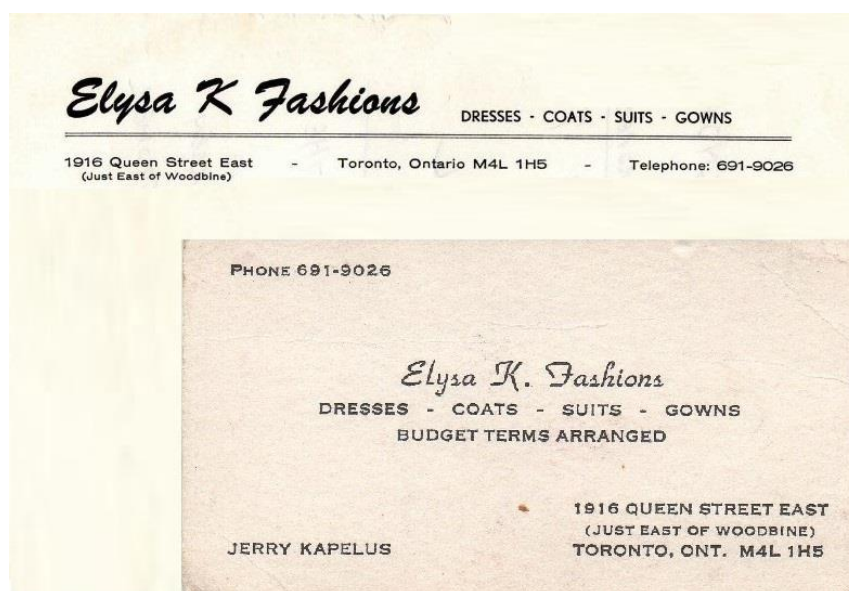


Fig 64b: Letterhead and business card for Elysa K Fashions

Ironically, the dress store was located in ‘The Beaches’, an iconic part of east Toronto in which Jews had been threatened and barred from using the beaches during the 1920s and 1930s<sup>35</sup>. However, there had been many Jewish shop-owners along Queen St since that time and a small synagogue on Kenilworth Ave (very near the site of Elysa K Fashions) had been built to support their religious needs. Thankfully, by the time Jerry purchased this property, society had evolved from those shameful days of blatant antisemitism in Toronto.

Around 1980, a friend Mort Corrin managed to convince Jerry to adapt his incredible ‘people skills’ and business acumen to selling life insurance for London Life (Fig 65). Jerry quickly learned the insurance business and was very successful in this new role, his first time as an employee since his factory worker days in New York City.

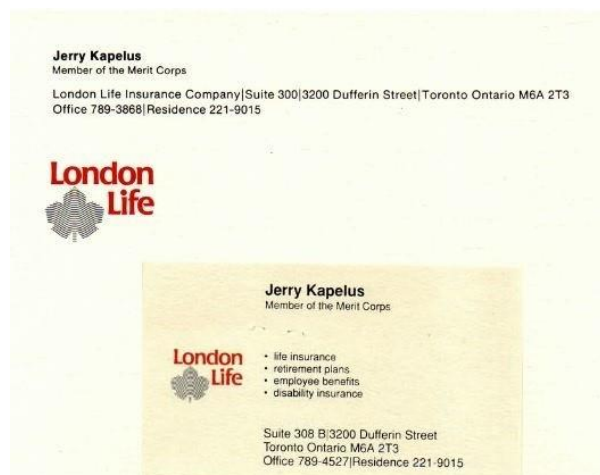


Fig 65: Jerry's letterhead and business card at London Life

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.blogto.com/city/2013/07/that\\_time\\_anti-semitism\\_blighted\\_toronto/](https://www.blogto.com/city/2013/07/that_time_anti-semitism_blighted_toronto/)



## Jerry's Story

In recognition of his excellent work in insurance sales, Jerry won a *National Quality Award* in 1982 (Fig 66). He enjoyed both the work and the new-found camaraderie with other salespersons and the office staff. He particularly looked forward to the annual fishing weekend with his colleagues (where Gary, as Jerry's guest one year, noticed that no actual fishing took place). Jerry and Merna socialized with some of his London Life co-workers and he enjoyed playing golf with them after he retired in the early 1990s, using the new set of golf clubs that he had received from them as a retirement gift (Fig 67).



Fig 66: Jerry's National Quality Award at London Life 1982



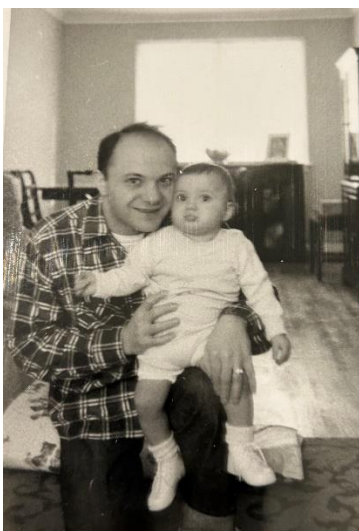
Fig 67: Jerry's retirement gift from his colleagues at London Life

## Jerry's Story

### A life well lived

There is so much living, loving and enjoyment to describe in the many decades of Jerry's life in Canada. A wonderful 67 years of marriage to Merna, until his death in 2021 at the age of 92. After tragically losing his parents and siblings, Jerry had started his own family and then bought his first house barely ten years after his childhood liberation from the concentration camps.

He celebrated the births, the milestones and the accomplishments of his three children (Fig 68).



*Fig 68a: First child, Gary Joel, born in 1955*



*Fig 68b: Second child, Stephen Martin, born in 1958*



*Fig 68c: Third child, Elysa Ginette Renee, born 1964*



*Fig 68d: Celebrating Gary's Bar Mitzvah, 1968*



*Fig 68e: Celebrating Stephen's Bar Mitzvah, 1971*

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 68f: Celebrating Gary and Carole's wedding, 1979*



*Fig 68g: Celebrating Elysa and Nazz's wedding, 1990*

When Aviva Michal Kapelus was born in 1981, Jerry was absolutely thrilled to become a grandfather. He traveled with Merna and Elysa to Saskatoon to meet her. Aviva's arrival also signified the beginning of the next generation of the Kapelus family, which was an important personal milestone for Jerry.

Ultimately, Jerry was 'Grandpa' or 'Zadie' to five beloved grandchildren: Aviva (born in 1981), Daniel (born in 1983), Aaron (born in 1986), Frankie (born in 1992), and Alexandra (born in 1995). Oh, how he loved to spend time with his grandkids and they in turn loved him! (Fig 69).



*Fig 69a: Jerry with Aviva*



*Fig 69b: Jerry with Daniel*



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 69c: Jerry with Aaron*



*Fig 69d: Jerry with Frankie*



*Fig 69e: Jerry and Alex*



*Fig 69f: Jerry with his five grandchildren*

Of particular importance to Jerry was being able to join in the celebration of the Jewish holidays and of his grandchildren's Jewish ritual milestones (Fig 70).



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 70: Jerry played an important role in the family's celebration of Jewish holidays and rituals*

A generation later, Jerry was particularly proud to welcome and to celebrate the births of his great grandchildren, who carried forward the Kapelus family's genes into a new generation and who brought him so much pride and joy: Jude Benny Rezmovitz, his first great grandchild (born in 2012), Zoya Shireen Kapelus (born in 2015), Elle Febe Rezmovitz (born in 2015), Zane Adam Kapelus (born in 2017), Oliver Albert Kapelus (born in 2020) and Zara Noureen Kapelus (born in 2020). Oh, how he loved being with those great grandkids and they loved him! (Fig 71).



*Fig 71a: Jerry with Jude Rezmovitz*



*Fig 71b: Jerry with Zoya Kapelus*



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 71c: Jerry and Merna with Elle Rezmovitz*



*Fig 71d: Jerry with Zane Kapelus*

Sadly, because of the isolation restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic and then his increasing frailty starting in 2020, Jerry never had the opportunity to meet his two youngest great grandchildren, Oliver and Zara.



*Fig 71e: Oliver Kapelus*



*Fig 71f: Zara Kapelus*



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 71g: Jerry with some of the girls*



*Fig 71h: The great grandkids loved him! (on the occasion of Jerry's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday)*

## Jerry's Story

Jerry lived and enjoyed a rich and interesting life. He pursued lifelong learning through continuing adult education. He attended a variety of classes over the years reflecting his broad areas of interest ranging from Yiddish, French and public speaking to history, psychology and current events. He enjoyed skating and cross-country skiing, alone and with the kids, and later playing golf with his new friends. He was very proud of his self-sufficiency as an independent businessman and his successful late career move to London Life.

Jerry enjoyed, with Merna, their many friends, leisurely walks in Unionville and visiting flea markets. They had a very active social life and hosted many parties at home in Toronto and in Florida (Fig 72).



*Fig 72: Merna and Jerry hosted a LOT of parties*



## Jerry's Story

Jerry looked forward to and enjoyed the many exciting cruises and international travel tours they planned. He was always on the search for the local shul wherever they went (Fig 73).





## Jerry's Story



*Fig 73: Merna and Jerry travelled extensively*

## Jerry's Story

In 2008, while they were on a winter vacation in Florida, Jerry surprised Merna by purchasing a beautiful condo in Century Village, Boca Raton. He looked forward each Fall to driving with Merna down US Interstate 75 to Florida and spending a warm winter at Century Village with some of their closest friends. He did not miss the snow. Jerry spoke with great pride about Century Village and the wide range of activities in which he participated at the club house. Oh, how he loved that place! (Fig 74).



*Fig 74: Enjoying their winter home in Boca Raton, Florida*

## Jerry's Story

Given Jerry's unique childhood experiences, we want to focus the remainder of this book on a few important connections to his Jewish roots and to his Holocaust past.

Looking back, Jerry said that he experienced and observed antisemitism when he arrived in Canada in 1950. However, he felt it didn't affect his ability to make a living as he was self-employed for most of his career. As well, many of those working in the Toronto '*shmatte business*' and the clothing wholesalers on Spadina Avenue in those early years were Jews.

Jerry considered himself very independent and was always proud that he hadn't needed to rely on anyone as he succeeded in life and raised a family. He stated in an interview that he had little to do with the organized Jewish community, that he didn't believe in god and, and that, despite his religious upbringing, he had no faith, given the atrocities he had witnessed. Despite this, Jerry said he always felt very Jewish and it was important to him that his kids should have a Jewish upbringing.

In his younger years in Toronto, Jerry was a member of the *Farband Labour Zionist Organization* and the *Beth Am Synagogue* on Keele Street, where we celebrated both Gary's and Stephen's bar mitzvahs. He attended annual High Holiday services throughout his life. We remember with a smile how every year on the High Holidays, Jerry would check out of shul early in order to 'visit a sick friend'. As the sole provider for the family and with no backup, he must have felt a heavy obligation and responsibility to support us, even on the High Holidays!



## Jerry's Story

### Remembering and honouring those who died in the Holocaust

We accompanied Jerry for many years to the *Yad Vashem Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah* community Holocaust commemoration. This annual event was held at the Holocaust memorial site at Earl Bales Park in Toronto. Each year, with great emotion and pride, Jerry joined other Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivors in singing 'Zog nit keyn mol' (i.e. Never Say). This song, also known as the *Hymn of the Partisans*, is considered the anthem of Holocaust survivors and is sung around the world at Holocaust memorial services.<sup>36</sup>

Following his own death in 2021, Jerry's memory was honoured at this same ceremony on April 27, 2022 (Fig 75).



<https://youtu.be/kaiYD4LDchU>

Fig 75: Listen to the Yom HaShoah memorial tribute to Jerry on April 27, 2022

Other than his own memories, Jerry had little factual information about what became of his parents and siblings. Regardless, he ensured that their names and memories were permanently enshrined wherever it was possible.

In 1977, Jerry registered the names of his immediate family, with the limited information he had, in the *Hall of Names* at *Yad Vashem* in Jerusalem (Fig 76). We have since updated that submission with new information gathered in creating this book.

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<sup>36</sup> <https://yiddishsongs.org/zog-nit-keyn-mol/>

**יד ושם**  
מוזיאון תולדות עם ישראל  
בין אומות העולם

\* *Please inscribe the name of each victim of the Holocaust on a separate form.*

\* ביטע אנצורייבן יעדן נאמען פון אומגעקומענעם אויף א באזונדער בלאט.  
 \* Please inscribe the name of each victim of the Holocaust on a separate form.

\* *Please inscribe the name of each victim of the Holocaust on a separate form.*

\* כִּסֵּס אֶמְרֵיכָם יִפְדּוּ נַפְשָׁם מִן הַחַיִּימוֹת וְיִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת הַחַיִּימוֹת וְיִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת הַחַיִּימוֹת וְיִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת הַחַיִּימוֹת

133



## Jerry's Story

### Backgrounder

“Hall of Names: No cemeteries, no headstones, no traces were left to mark the loss of the six million Holocaust victims. The Hall of Names at Yad Vashem is the Jewish People's memorial to each Jew murdered in the Holocaust – a place where they are commemorated for generations to come.

Yad Vashem, with the support of Jewish communities and organizations around the world, is leading the historic mission to memorialize Jewish victims of the Holocaust by collecting “Pages of Testimony” – special one-page forms designed to restore the personal identity and brief life stories of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis and their accomplices. Submitted by survivors, remaining family members or friends and acquaintances in commemoration of Jews who perished in the Holocaust, Pages of Testimony document the names, biographical details and, when available, photographs, of each individual victim. The first 800,000 names on Pages of Testimony were collected during the 1950's, with ongoing global outreach efforts to identify the unnamed victims of the Shoah so they will always be remembered”. Source: *Yad Vashem*<sup>37</sup>

At the *Canadian Society for Yad Vashem* Holocaust memorial site at Earl Bales Park in Toronto, Jerry ensured that the names of his immediate family were inscribed on the *Wall of Remembrance* (Fig 77).



<sup>37</sup> <https://www.yadvashem.org/archive/hall-of-names.html>



Fig 77: The Kapeluszc family names inscribed on the Wall of Remembrance at Earl Bales Park



## Jerry's Story

When it opened in 1993, Jerry submitted the names of his immediate family for the records of the *US Holocaust Museum* in Washington, DC (*Appendix Two*).

Jerry also memorialized his family at the *Toronto Holocaust Centre* (Fig 78), which later became the reflective *Memorial Space* at the new *Toronto Holocaust Museum*.



Fig 78a: The Kapelusz family names inscribed on the remembrance wall at the original *Toronto Holocaust Centre*

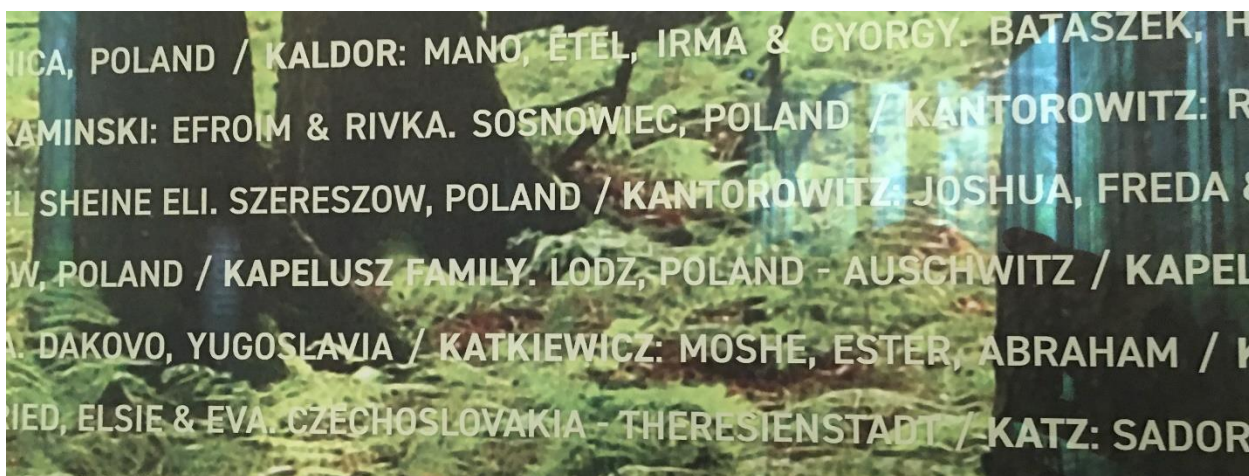
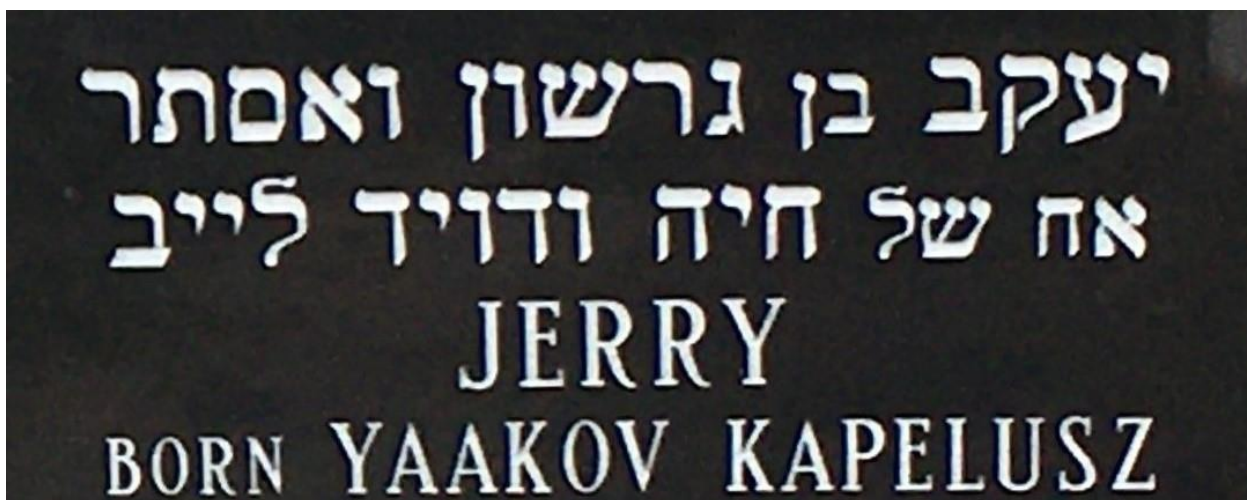


Fig 78b: The Kapelusz family names inscribed on the remembrance wall at the new *Toronto Holocaust Museum*

We also gave Jerry's father, mother, sister and brother a final and permanent resting place by engraving all of their names on Jerry's own memorial stone (Fig 79). The gravesite is located in Pardes Chaim Cemetery in Richmond Hill, Section JJ, Row H, Plot #24.





*Fig 79: Jerry's memorial stone inscription includes his immediate family, who were never properly buried. The Hebrew inscription reads: "Yaakov, son of Gershon and Esther, brother of Chaya and David Leib"*

## Jerry's Story

### Jerry's love of Israel

Jerry was always a strong supporter of the State of Israel. He began purchasing Israel Bonds and was honoured for doing this even as a young man with limited means (Fig 80).

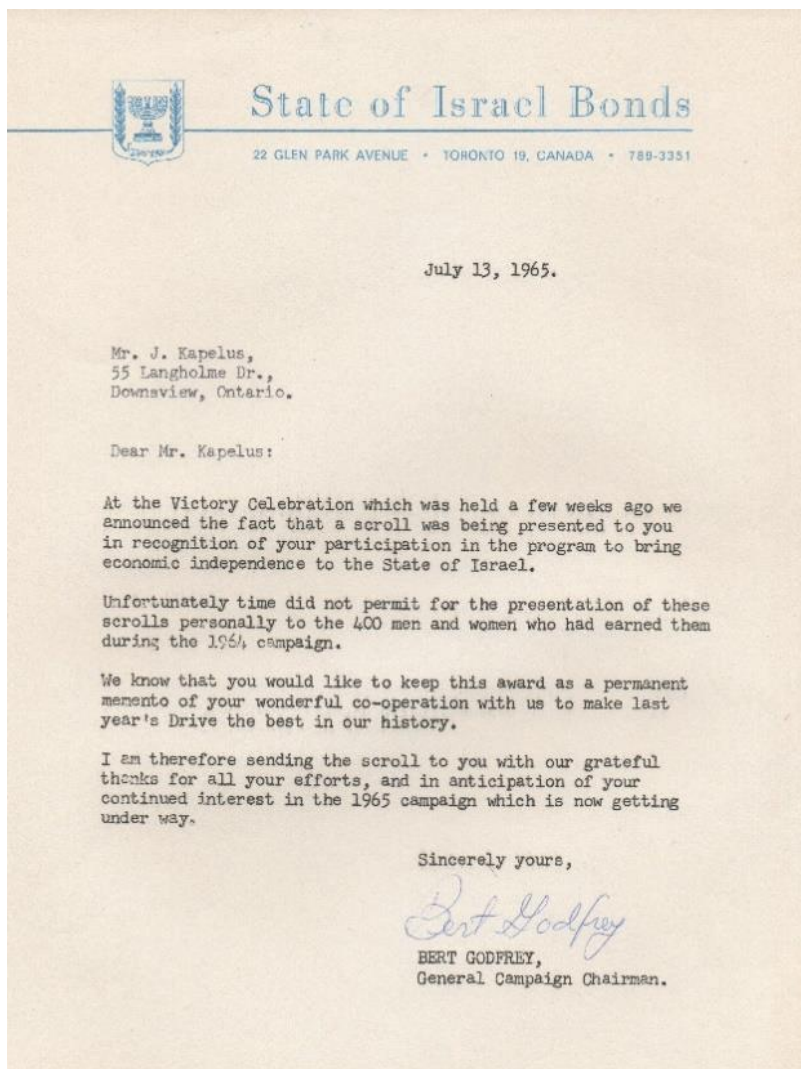


Fig 80: Recognition from State of Israel Bonds, 1965

Merna and Jerry first traveled to Israel in 1974 to visit Gary, who was living on a kibbutz there at the time. They met Jerry's uncle *Shlomo Lewkowicz* and cousins, reconnected with several of Jerry's Holocaust survivor friends who had emigrated to Palestine, toured the country and had a wonderful time. At Yad Vashem, Jerry recorded the names and lit a candle in memory of his immediate family (Fig 81). They visited Israel again in 1995 for a Buchenwald survivor's reunion.

## Jerry's Story



Fig 81: Jerry at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem



## Jerry's Story

### SAR-EL

In the Fall of 1993, Jerry returned on his own to Israel as a volunteer with the **SAR-EL** project, providing much-needed civilian assistance at an Israel Defence Force (IDF) base. Wearing the iconic green IDF uniform, Jerry was finally able to realize his childhood dream (Fig 82). Merna recalled how Jerry returned triumphantly from this mission with a sense of pride and fulfillment. Jerry maintained a detailed written diary of this adventure, describing the wonderful people he met, the work he completed, and the amazing sights he took in as he toured with his new friends around Israel on his days off (Appendix Three).



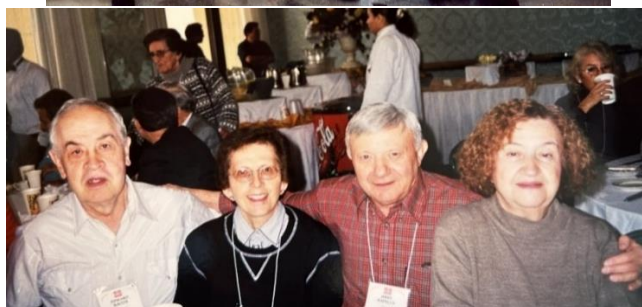
Fig 82: Jerry as a SAR-EL volunteer in October/November, 1993

## Jerry's Story

### The Buchenwald Boys

Jerry shared with us that, as a result of the Holocaust, he was a more cautious person, couldn't stand seeing wasted food, and was always concerned about security. He had nightmares about being chased by Germans in the early days but not so much later in his life.

Jerry noted in interviews that his closest friends in Toronto were not survivors, and that he mostly avoided socializing with survivors in order to avoid reliving that life. However, Jerry did maintain a lifelong connection to a network of survivor friends in Toronto, Montreal and around the world. He traveled with Merna to Israel, Washington and Miami to attend organized get-togethers with survivors from Buchenwald and OSE every few years and he greatly enjoyed reminiscing with his old friends (Fig 83). This amazing group of men also became the subjects of a 2002 documentary film, *The Boys of Buchenwald*, by Paperny Films<sup>38</sup>.



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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1483854/>

## Jerry's Story



Jerry with best friend Szaja Chaskiel at reunion in Israel, 1995



Yom Hashoah

# Buchenwald survivors gather to commemorate liberation

By CYNTHIA GASNER  
Special to The CJN

**TORONTO** — Hugging and kissing, eyes overflowing with tears of joy and sadness, some 500 men and women gathered last month in Tel Aviv to commemorate the 50th anniversary of their liberation from Buchenwald.

They were the Children of Buchenwald, the few who marched out of the gates of Buchenwald concentration camp after being liberated by the Americans.

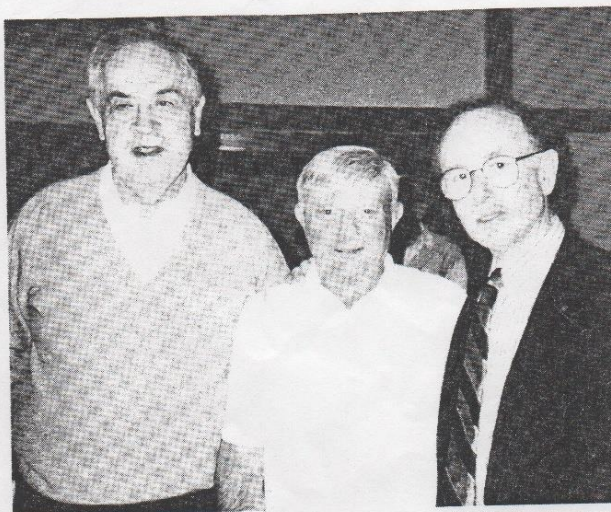
Jerry Kapelus of Toronto, Eddy Balter of Montreal, and Robbie Wiseman of Vancouver were reunited with those who, as orphans, had become their family members half a century ago.

Kapelus was 10 when the war broke out. He, his sister, brother and parents were put into the Lodz Ghetto where he was sent to work in a leather factory. When the ghetto was liquidated in 1944, the 35,000 surviving Jews were sent to Auschwitz.

At the selection point, he was separated from his family, never to see them again. He told *The CJN* that although they could see the smoking chimneys, the Germans were so convincing in their lies that the survivors did not believe the rumors about what happened to their fellow Jews.

In January 1945, Kapelus was sent to Buchenwald. On April 11, 1945, he woke to find they had been liberated.

Kapelus and 450 others went to



Three Canadians (from left) Eddy Balter of Montreal, Jerry Kapelus of Toronto and Robbie Wiseman of Vancouver are seen in Tel Aviv at the convention commemorating the liberation of the Children of Buchenwald.

orphanages in France. Among those at his orphanage were Elie Weisel and the present Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, who spoke at the convention.

The Tel Aviv reunion brought together 200 survivors from the Diaspora with 300 who live in Israel.

Kapelus, who went to the reunion with his wife Merna, said he shared stories and memories with those who were in Auschwitz and those who had been sent to France. "There was a lot of talking," he said, a recent phenomenon.

Kapelus, who has three children

and four grandchildren, says "to this day, I still don't understand it — it is a nightmare." Despite the pain of remembering, Kapelus goes to schools and speaks to the students about the Holocaust.

At the Children of Buchenwald gathering, Israeli and other community leaders participated in the services and programs, including former Israeli president Haim Herzog and Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo.

"We hope to meet in 10 years and have even made arrangements for a reunion in 50 years," Kapelus smiled.



KAPELUS JERRY  
(CAN)

כנס עולמי של "ילדי בוכנוולד"  
A Convention of the  
"Children of Buchenwald"



## Jerry's Story



Joseph Dziubak, George Goldbloom, Jerry Kappelus



Merna and Jerry Kappelus



Group of 1995 Reunion

Back Row: 1. Mark Korzuch (Argentina) 2. Unidentified  
3. Henry Dymant (Paris) 4. Robbie Watsman (Vancouver)  
Second Row: 5. Jacque Finkelstein (Paris) 6. George Goldbloom (Miami)  
7. Willy Fogel (Paris) 8. Unidentified 9. Unidentified David Perlmutter.  
Third Row: 11. Arie Rosenberg (NY), Jerry Kappelus (Toronto)  
Joe Oziobak (Miami) 14. Simon Michalowicz (Australia) 15. Chaim Finkelstein.



Fig 83: Attending gatherings of Holocaust survivors from Buchenwald and OSE

## Jerry's Story

In particular, Jerry enjoyed personally reconnecting with *Rabbi Israel Meir Lau*, at an event in Toronto, later at a Buchenwald Boys reunion in Miami, and then again in Israel (Fig 84). Lau (known as *Lulek* to his Buchenwald friends) was among the youngest children to survive the Buchenwald concentration camp, emigrated with his brother and others to Palestine, and ultimately rose to become the Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel. An amazing story and man.

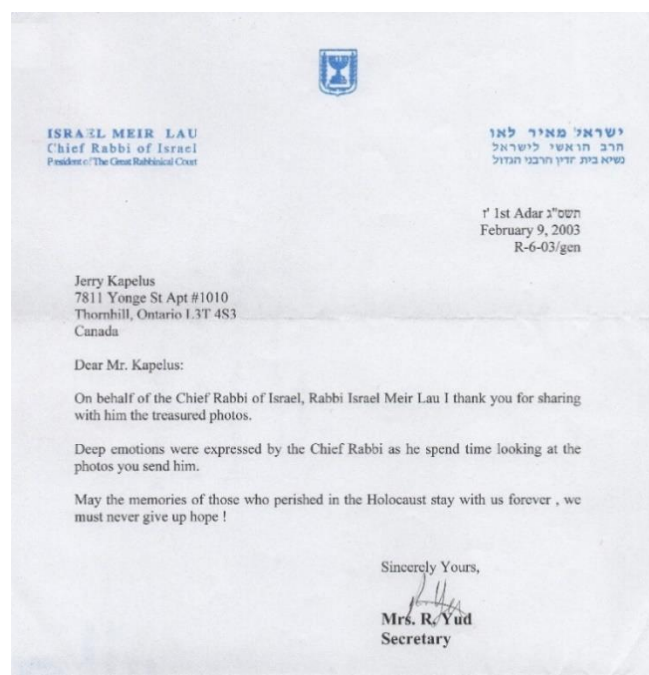


Fig 84: Jerry and Israel Meir (Lulek) Lau



## Jerry's Story

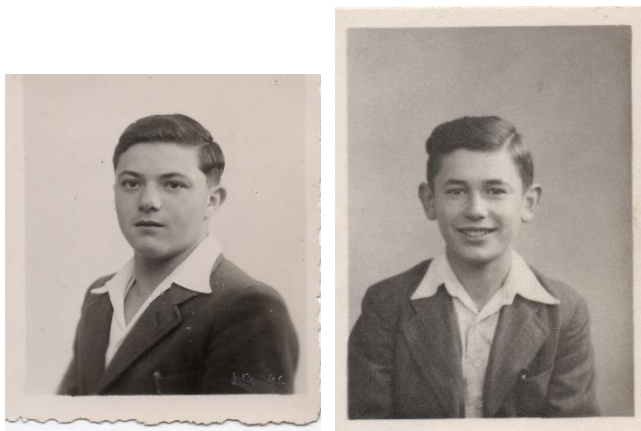
### Talking about the Holocaust

Jerry maintained that he did his best to avoid telling Merna, his children, his friends, or anyone else about his experiences before and during the Holocaust, at least until they started asking. He had always said that he wanted to distance himself from it, to protect his family from the story, *“to allow my children to grow up normally”*.

However, Jerry was angered and started to speak out and to tell parts of his story in the early 1980s *“to educate the world because at the time, Ernst Zundel<sup>39</sup> in Toronto and James Keegstra<sup>40</sup> in Alberta and others were teaching and publicly denying that the Holocaust had occurred”*. To fight back against the neo-Nazis, white supremacists and Holocaust deniers, Jerry broke his silence knowing that *“in a few years there wouldn't be any survivors as eyewitnesses left to tell the story and to ensure it would never happen again”*, and therefore he considered this his duty.

### Jerry's first speech in Saskatoon

Jerry's first public testimonial was at a Holocaust Remembrance Day presentation in April 1982 at Congregation Agudas Israel in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (where Gary and Carole were living at the time). At Gary's request, Jerry and his fellow Buchenwald survivor and former Saskatoon Jewish community resident, Robbie (Romek) Waisman, came to Saskatoon to tell their stories publicly, both for the first time (Fig 85). As they spoke, the room was silent. Their personal stories and their messages of hope were simply riveting.



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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/07/world/europe/ernst-zundel-canada-germany-holocaust-denial.html>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/keegstra-case>

## Jerry's Story



Fig 85a: Jerry and Robbie (Romek) Waisman speaking in Saskatoon, April 1982



Jerry in Saskatoon 1982

<https://youtu.be/jkvHKeFv1U>

Fig 85b: Watch and listen to the audio recording of Jerry's first Holocaust speech in Saskatoon, April 18, 1982

Jerry concluded his first public speech about the Holocaust with these solemn words:

***“I think we’ve learned our lesson. We hope that it will never happen again. We must be sure that it never happens again. We must fight antisemitism and bigotry wherever and whenever it raises its ugly head.”***  
***(Jerry)***

Looking back, Jerry described this first speaking event as ***“terrifying, sad, brought back a lot of bad memories but it had to be done”***. Recounting, even briefly, their personal Holocaust stories to strangers awakened something in both men. They went on to become public

## Jerry's Story

speakers, Robbie in Vancouver and Jerry in Toronto. Robbie later published his incredible story as a memoir many years later in the book *'Boy From Buchenwald'*.<sup>41</sup>

The following year, Jerry and Gary traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the *First American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Their Descendants*<sup>42</sup>. Thousands of survivors and their children gathered to celebrate their freedom, to reconnect and to continue their search for missing relatives and old friends. Jerry met with many survivors whom he had last seen in Paris almost forty years earlier (Fig 86). Also at that event, on April 3, 1983, then American President Ronald Reagan announced plans for a new US Holocaust Museum to be built adjacent to the National Mall in Washington, D.C.<sup>43</sup>



<sup>41</sup> Waisman, Robbie (2021) *Boy From Buchenwald: The True Story of a Holocaust Survivor* Bloomsbury: New York, NY

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/american-gathering-of-jewish-holocaust-survivors>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/remarks-american-gathering-jewish-holocaust-survivors>



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 86: Attending the First American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Their Descendants, April 1983, Washington, D.C.*

With an acknowledgement that “no amount of money can make good the destruction of human life and cultural values,” or “atone for the systematic annihilation of the Jewish people”<sup>44</sup>,

<sup>44</sup> Conference on Jewish material claims against Germany [www.claimscon.org](http://www.claimscon.org)

## Jerry's Story

over the years, Jerry applied for, and in some cases received, small payments from various Holocaust survivor reparation programs from the German government. Despite this, he always described these reparation payments as *“blood money”*. In completing a 2013 application for a new reparation payment program, Jerry wrote in his bio that *“It is a very difficult and painful for me to bring back all the memories from 68 years. I want to forget them”* (Fig 87).



Fig 87a: Jerry's initial Holocaust reparation payment received from the German government in 1958



## Jerry's Story

IN 1939 the germans occupied Lodz and ~~into~~ formed a ghetto when all the jews ~~were~~ had to move in. My family + I were taken from our home and had to move into the ghetto. under difficult conditions we settled in the ghetto. at age 12 I had to work in a leather factory. where we made leather ~~supplies~~ supplies for the German army. I had little food and was allways hungry. After 4 years in the ghetto ~~we~~ <sup>1944</sup> I was deported in cattle trains to Auschwitz where I was forced to work on a farm <sup>as slave laborer</sup> in Babice, outside Auschwitz. ~~from~~ in Jan 1945 I was forced to go on the death march to Buchenwald ~~we~~ I marched for days in the cold weather until I reached Buchenwald where I was liberated by the American army on Apr. 11/45. It is very difficult and painfull <sup>for me</sup> to bring back all the memories from 68 years. I want to forget them

Fig 87b: A rough draft of Jerry's handwritten bio for a 2013 application for German reparation payments

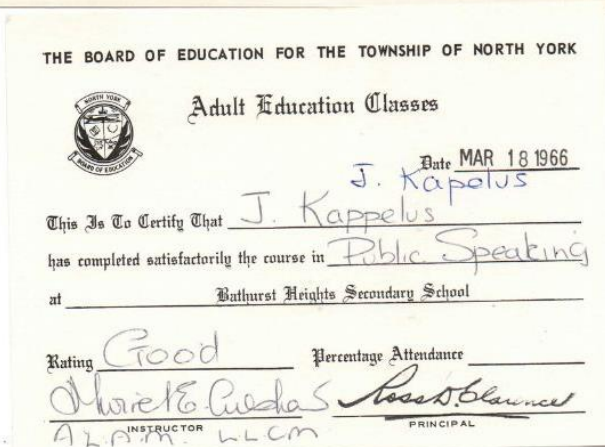
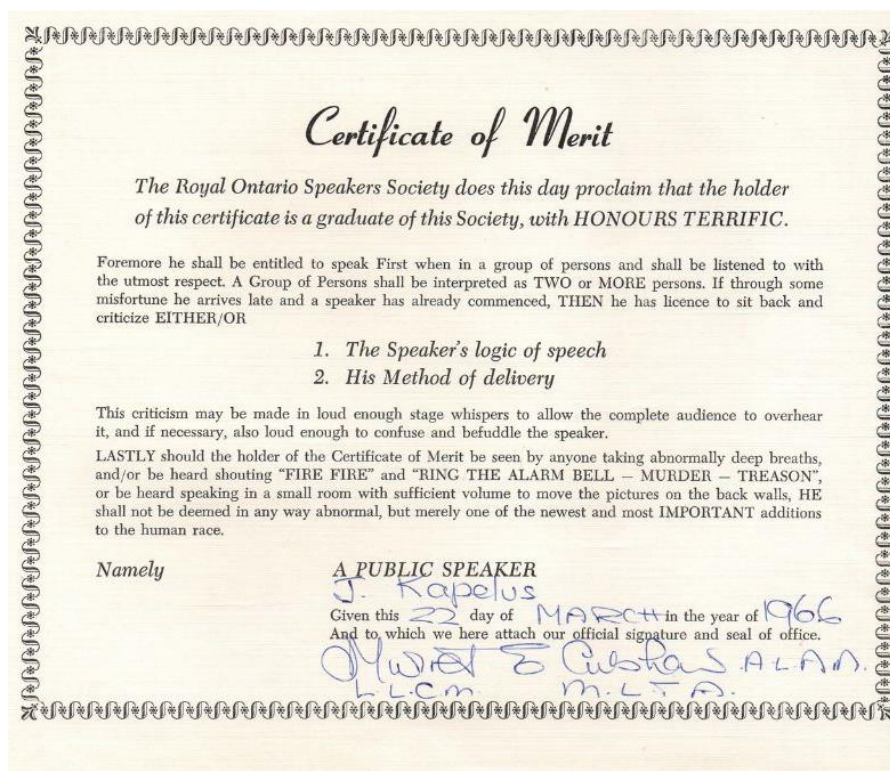


## Jerry's Story

### Jerry as a public speaker

Following his first public presentation in Saskatoon, Jerry went on to volunteer for over two decades as a 'Holocaust Survivor Speaker' working with the Toronto Holocaust Centre. He presented his personal story to both large and small audiences, to elementary and high school students and to adults. He spoke at schools, libraries and theatres throughout the Greater Toronto area and at the Toronto Holocaust Centre.

To improve his own presentation skills, Jerry continued to seek out additional training in public speaking (Fig 88).



## Jerry's Story

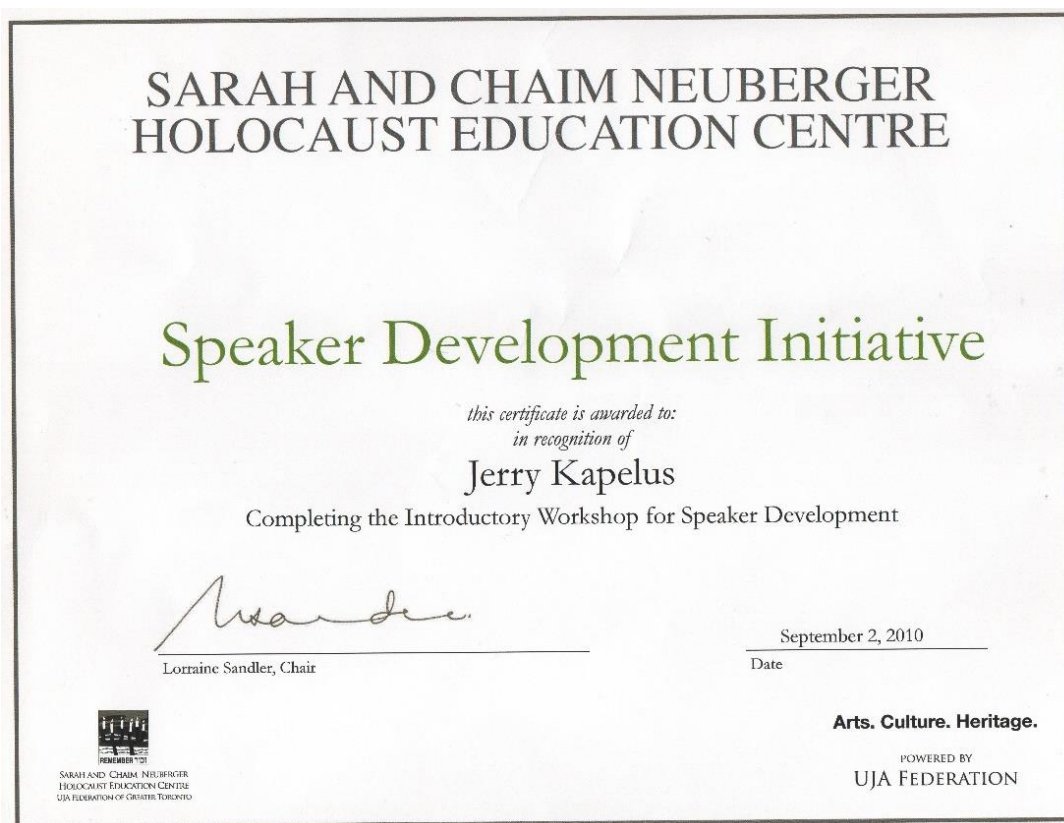


Fig 88: Jerry's certificates of achievement in public speaking training spanned over 40 years

To support his in-person presentations, Jerry documented whatever facts and feelings he could remember from his past and he prepared very thorough typed or handwritten background notes (Appendix Four). However, Jerry always spoke to his audience directly, without referring to his notes. He included photographs and other artifacts to supplement his story (Appendix Five). Among these items were a photo of the blue Auschwitz tattoo on his left forearm, photographs of the Buchenwald and other concentration camps, the actual strip of material torn from his striped Buchenwald prisoner uniform showing his prisoner number, the *May Day* commemorative badge which Jerry had torn from a German guard's uniform, and a replica yellow Star of David, similar to those forcibly worn by Jerry and all Jews in the Holocaust ghettos of Europe.

Jerry participated for many years in the annual *Toronto Holocaust Education Week* survivor speakers series and the annual Holocaust education event hosted by the *Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE)* (Fig 89).



## Jerry's Story

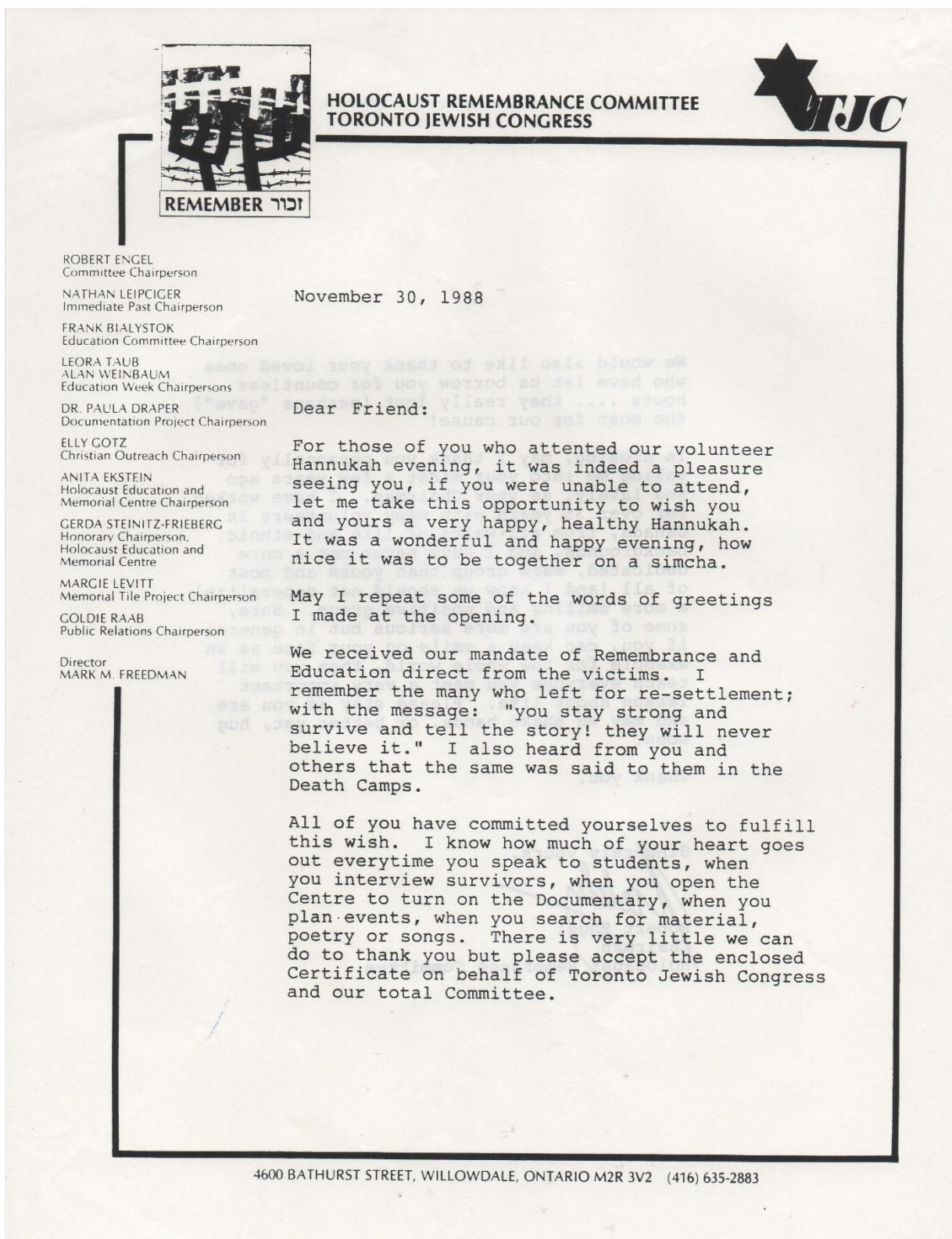


Fig 89a: Letter of appreciation from the Toronto Jewish Congress, 1988



## Jerry's Story



Fig 89b: Certificate of appreciation for Jerry's participation as a survivor speaker, 1988

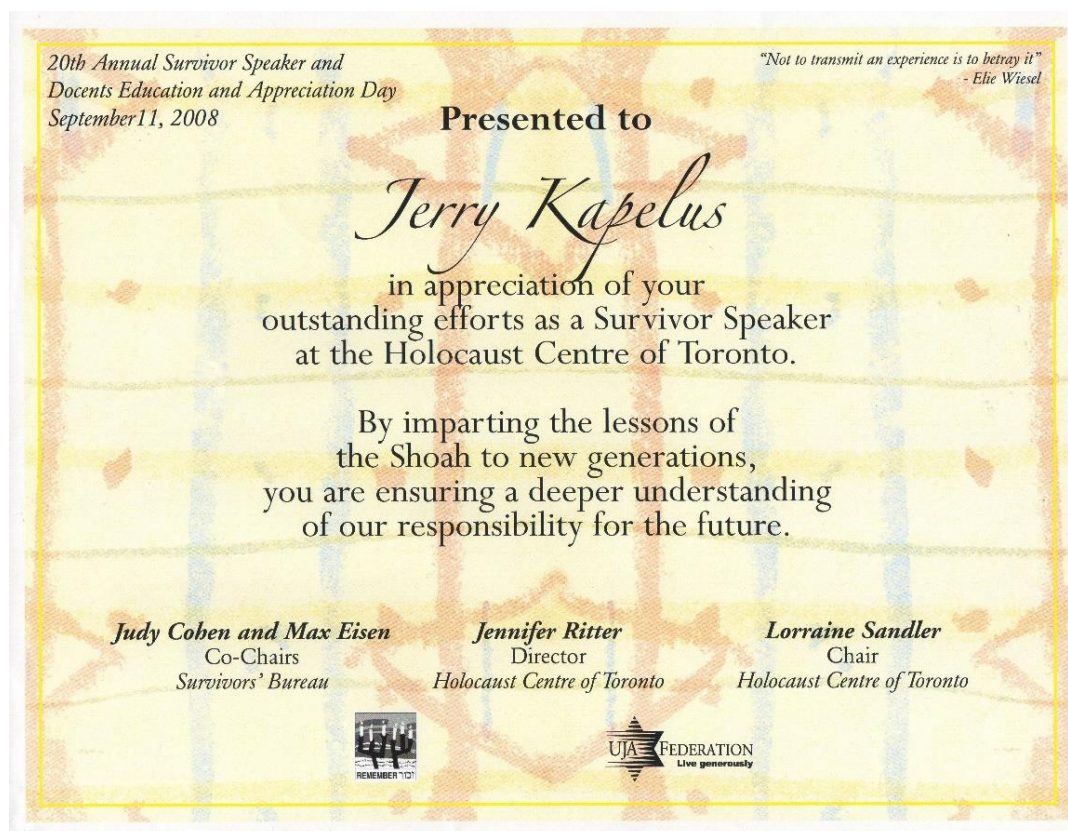


Fig 89c: Certificate of appreciation for Jerry's participation as a survivor speaker, 2008



April 1983

Sponsored by CJC

# Holocaust seminar held for students

TORONTO —

The third annual student seminar on the Holocaust, sponsored by the Holocaust Remembrance Committee of Canadian Jewish Congress, was held recently at the Ontario Institute

for Studies in Education. Education chairperson for the HRC, Alan Bardikoff, called the seminar "a great success."

"You can usually judge how successful a student event was by counting how many

stayed for the whole day. Not one student left. We were very gratified," Bardikoff told The CJC.

When the seminar was first held three years ago, 100 students from across Ontario participated. This year 400

students attended, and over 800 had to be turned away because of lack of space. Most of those who attended — and they came from as far away as Belleville — were not Jewish.

The day was divided into three sections. The morning was taken up with the showing of the BBC film *Genocide*, a chronicle of the Holocaust. A seminar presentation then followed, where university professors, rabbis and community volunteers spoke to groups of students about such topics as the roots of anti-semitism, ghetto life, the church response to the Holocaust, and the concentration camps.

"They covered all kinds of topics in these sessions. I think even the opportunity for the kids to meet with one another, and break down barriers in their own stereotypes, was good. It gave them a chance to deal with racism and anti-semitism in their own community . . . sometimes even in their own classroom," said Bardikoff.

The highlight of the day for the students, in Bardikoff's opinion, was the afternoon session with a survivor.

"In the afternoon, 20 survivors came in to talk to the students in small groups. They were fascinated — hanging on to every word. You could see in their faces how interested and involved they were," said Bardikoff.

Bardikoff commented that it was encouraging to find that many of the students had a larger degree of knowledge of the Holocaust than ever before.

"It was important for the students to see that the survivors were no different from themselves, that only their experiences set them apart, and that it could

have happened anywhere. It was a universal lesson in the commonalities of experience," said Bardikoff.



Participants at Holocaust seminar included, from left, Howard Chandler, Ann Moynihan and Jerry Kapelus. [Ben Lechtman photo]



## Jerry's Story

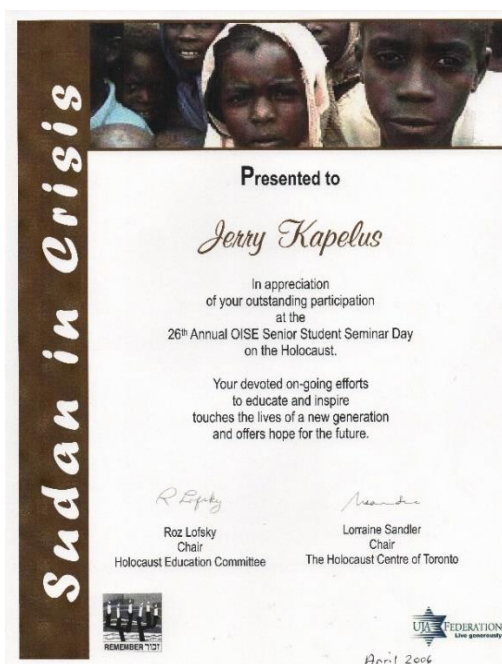


Fig 89d: Jerry presenting at the annual Holocaust education event at OISE, 1983-2006

Jerry was always very proud to be invited by his grand-daughters Aviva (at Thornlea Secondary School) and later Alex (at Langstaff Secondary School) to speak at their high schools (Fig 90).

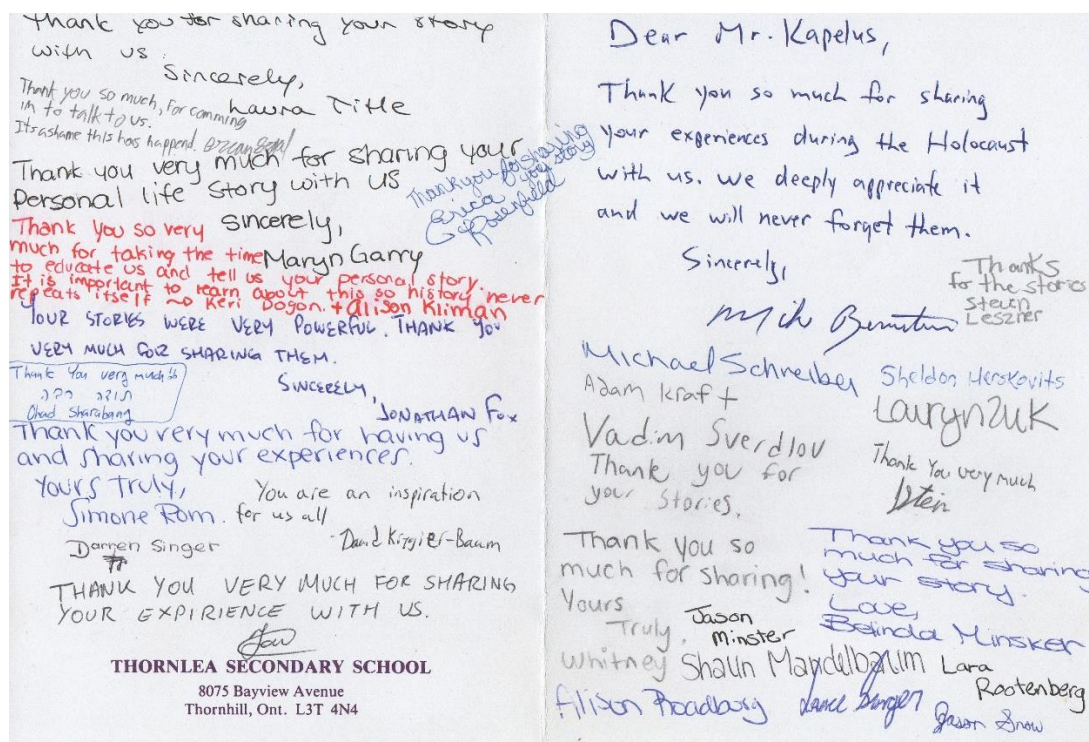


Fig 90: A thank you note to Jerry from students at Thornlea SS



## Jerry's Story

### Jerry speaks to students at Sir Ernest MacMillan Sr Public School in 2002

In her role as a public-school teacher in Toronto, Elysa invited Jerry to speak to her older elementary school students on several occasions. He was always warmly welcomed and his personal story had a profound impact on these students (Fig 91).



*Fig 91a: Jerry speaking to Elysa's students at Sir Ernest MacMillan Sr Public School in 2002*



Jerry speaking to Elysa's class 2002

<https://youtu.be/7b32IZGTykg>

*Fig 91b: Listen to the audio recording of Jerry speaking to Elysa's students at Sir Ernest MacMillan Sr PS in 2002 (note: this audio recording is of poor quality)*

## Jerry's Story

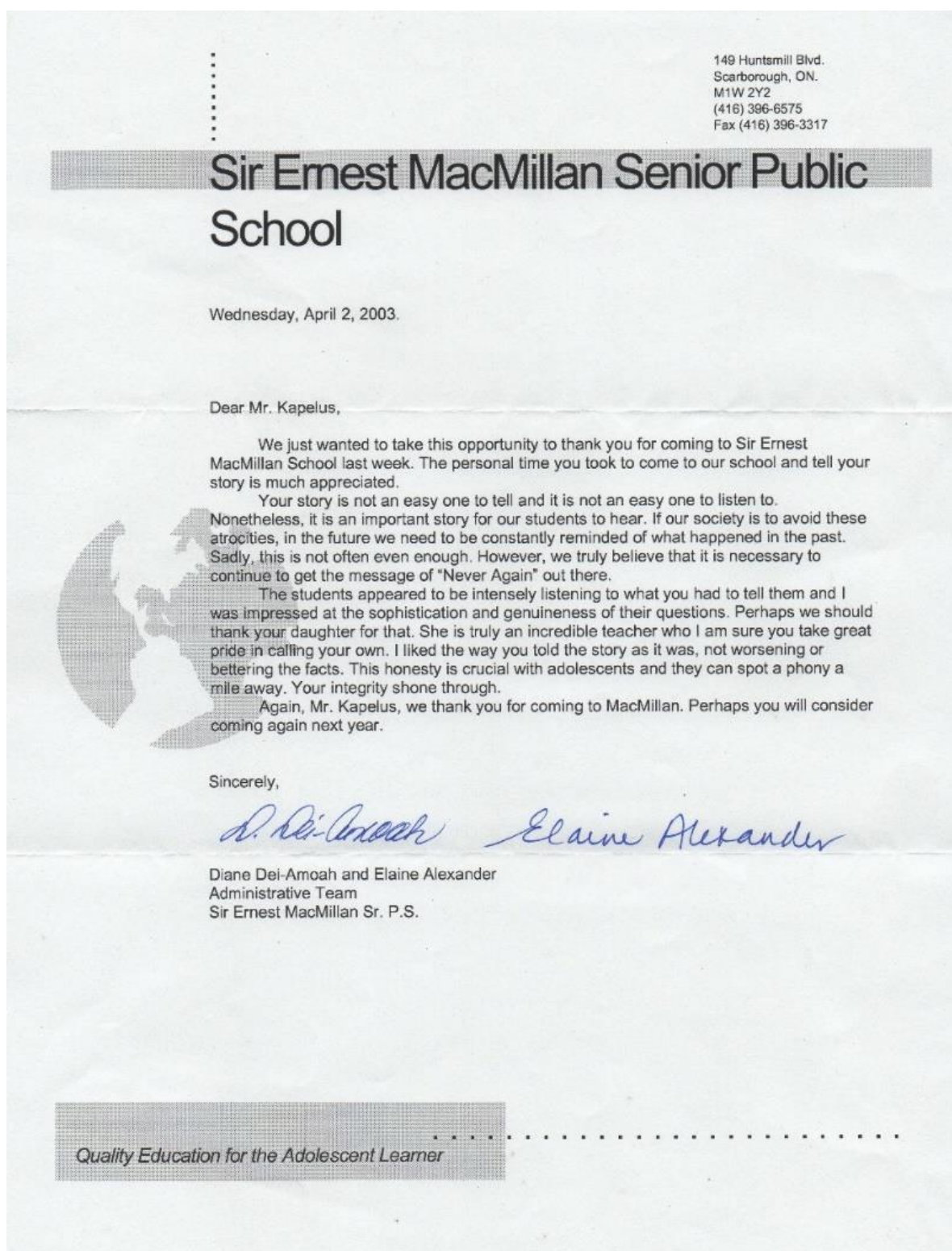
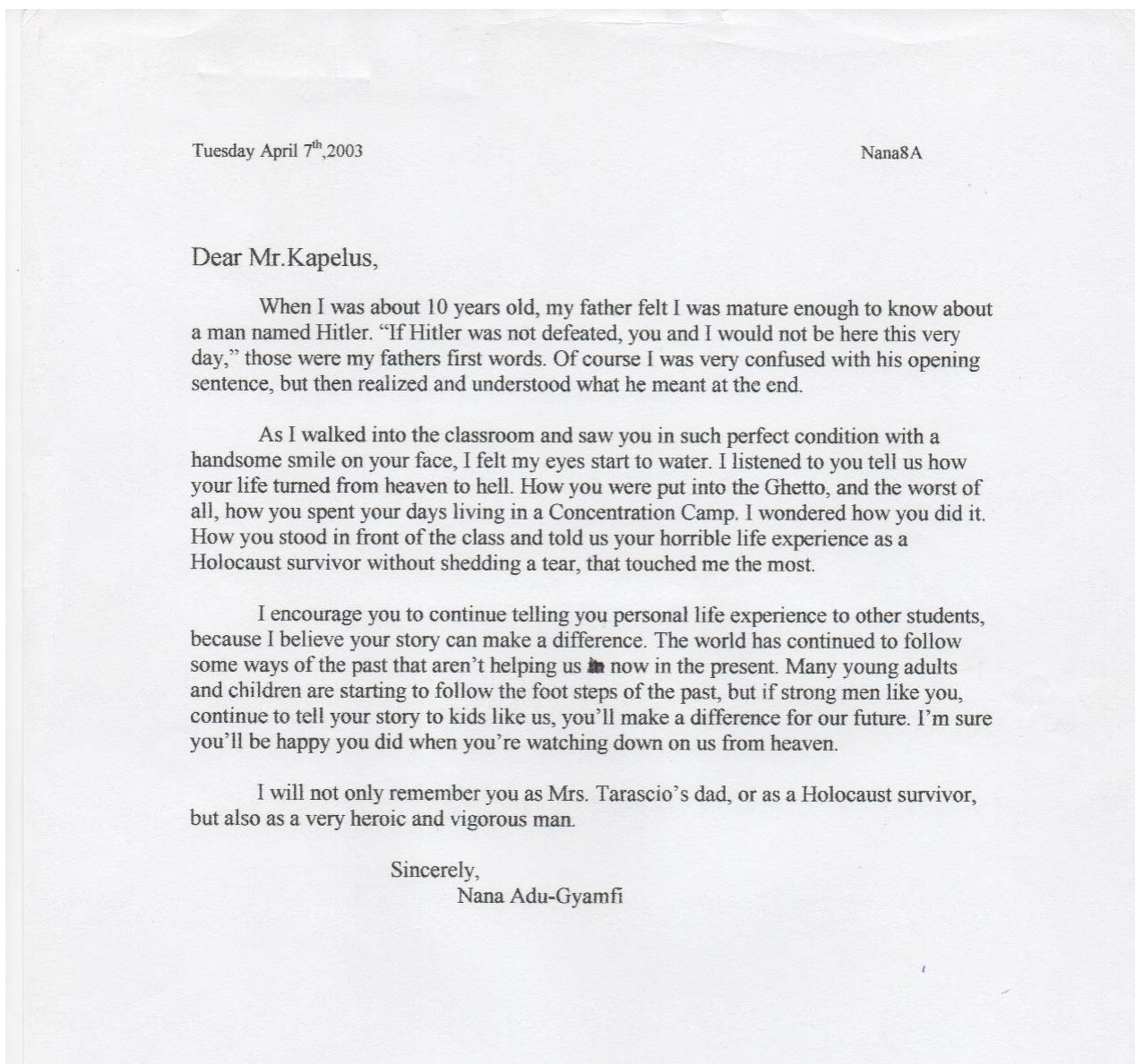


Fig 91c: A thank you note to Jerry from the staff at Sir Ernest MacMillan Sr PS April 2, 2003

## Jerry's Story



*Fig 91d: A thank you letter to Jerry from a student at Sir Ernest MacMillan Sr PS April 7, 2003*

Jerry particularly enjoyed speaking to students and answering their challenging questions. To make it authentic and relevant for the audience, he always made a point of linking his own story to whichever human rights tragedy was occurring in the world at that time, such as in Darfur, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia. Jerry routinely ended his presentations by appealing to his audience to speak out against bigotry and hatred.

On the following pages, we've included links so that you can watch and listen to recordings of a number of Jerry's public presentations (Fig 92).



## Jerry's Story

### Jerry speaks during Holocaust Education Week on November 4, 2003

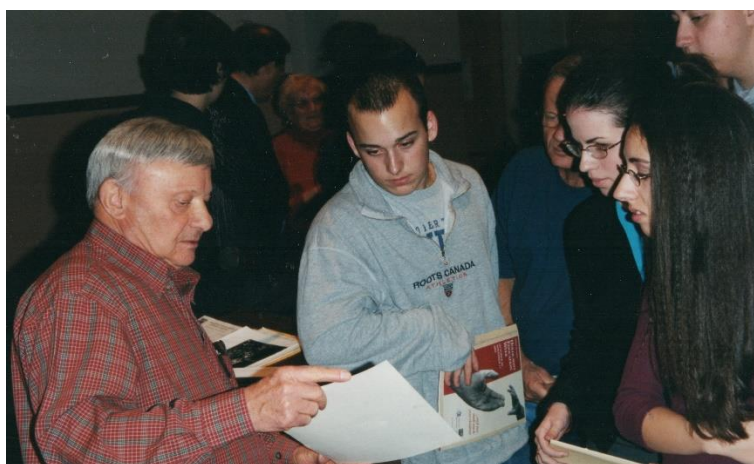


Fig 92a: Jerry speaking to students at the North York Public Library for Holocaust Education Week on November 4, 2003



Jerry Kapelus speech Holocaust Ed week Nov 4 2003

<https://youtu.be/Jz5PcXJsOh4>

Fig 92b: Watch and listen to the audio recording of Jerry's presentation to students at the North York Public Library for Holocaust Education Week on November 4, 2003

## Jerry's Story


Jerry speaks during Holocaust Education Week on November 2, 2006



Jerry Holocaust Ed Week Nov 2 2006

<https://youtu.be/Tiuz0pmLT1Y>

Fig 92c: Watch and listen to the audio recording of Jerry's presentation to students at the North York Public Library for Holocaust Education Week on November 2, 2006



### Halocaust Education Week (Nov. 3rd - 7th, 2008)

Newman Honours Holocaust Education Week

It has been 60 years since the Holocaust. To survivors, the Holocaust remains real and ever-present, but for others, sixty years makes the Holocaust seem part of ancient history. Year-round we try to teach and inform others about the horrors of the Holocaust. We confront the questions of, what happened? How did it happen? How could it happen? Could it happen again? We attempt to fight against ignorance with education and against disbelief with proof. Throughout the week, we listened to the stories of the survivors as our morning reflection and we transformed the Chapel into a Holocaust memorial displaying our immense collection of books, CDs, DVDs, pictures, maps and other valuable resources from Yad Vashem. Also on display were our award-winning pencil drawings of the Holocaust done by Cardinal Newman students in the Student Services lobby.

We were honoured to hear from two Holocaust survivors on Tuesday, Mr. Jerry Kapelus and Mr. Leslie Meisels.

Mr. Kapelus was born in Lodz, Poland in 1929. In 1939, he and his parents and two siblings were driven from their home to the Lodz ghetto, where they spent four terrible years. In 1944, the family was transferred to Auschwitz-Birkenau and all were murdered except for Mr. Kapelus. He became a slave labourer on a farm run by the SS and was able to survive by stealing food. In 1945, Mr. Kapelus was on a death march to the Buchenwald concentration camp. He was liberated by the U.S. army on April 11th, 1945 and along with many of the orphans from Buchenwald, he was sent to an orphanage in Paris. Mr. Kapelus moved to Canada in the early 1950s.

<http://www.tcdsb.org/cardinalnewman/News.html> 14/03/2009

Fig 92d: Jerry presenting to students at Cardinal Newman Catholic School on Nov 3, 2008

## Jerry's Story

### Jerry speaks during Holocaust Education Week on November 1, 2009



*Fig 92e: Jerry speaking to students at the Forest Hill Public Library for Holocaust Education Week on November 1, 2009*



<https://youtu.be/D4dkUoW5ZDI>

*Fig 92f: Watch and listen to the audio recording of Jerry's presentation to students at the Forest Hill Public Library for Holocaust Education Week on November 1, 2009*

Despite all his efforts as a Holocaust Survivor Speaker over the years, Jerry sometimes worried that *“the kids didn’t believe it and it felt like a waste of time”*. To put this concern into context, Eli Wiesel, the Nobel Prize-winning philosopher, writer and another of the Buchenwald and OSE boys, once observed<sup>45</sup>:

*“Deep down, the witness knew then, as he does now, that his testimony would not be received. After all, it deals with an event that sprang from the*

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<sup>45</sup> Reynolds, Daniel P (2018) "Chapter 1. Listening to Auschwitz". *Postcards from Auschwitz: Holocaust Tourism and the Meaning of Remembrance*, New York, NY: New York University Press, p58



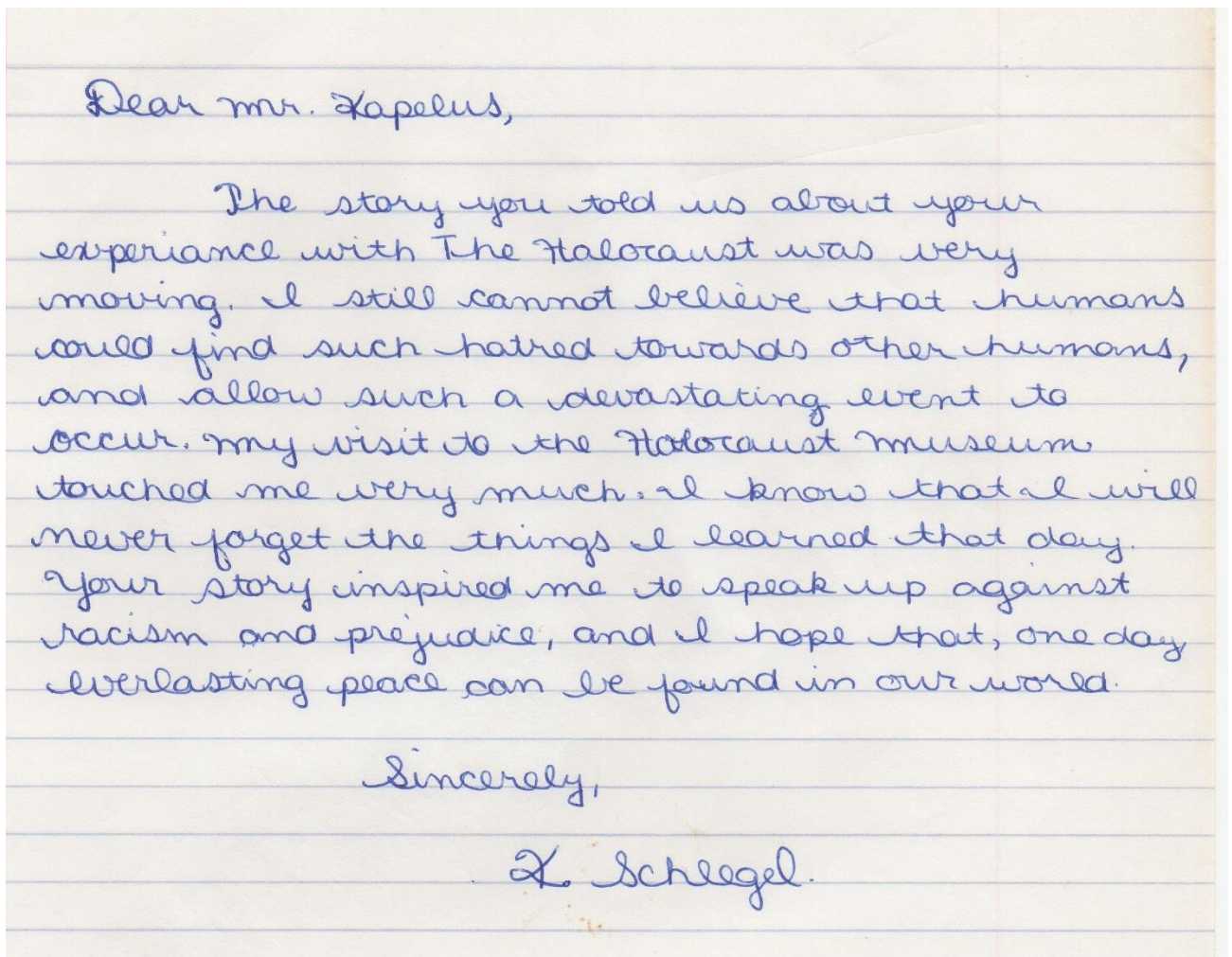
## Jerry's Story

*darkest zone of man. Only those who experienced Auschwitz know what it was. Others will never know”.*

Despite his apprehensions, many of the students Jerry spoke to over the years had indeed listened very carefully. They responded positively, honestly, even passionately, to his presentations both in person and through their typed or handwritten letters of thanks, and through their art and poetry written in response to his speeches (Fig 93). One student wrote to him:

*“You said that if you could just reach one person, that it would make you feel that you told your story for the good. I just wanted to let you know that you did reach me”.*

Jerry's commitment to telling the story of the Holocaust never diminished. ***“As a Holocaust speaker, it has become easier to tell the story”*** he said in one interview.



Dear Mr. Kapelus,

The story you told us about your experience with The Holocaust was very moving. I still cannot believe that humans could find such hatred towards other humans, and allow such a devastating event to occur. My visit to the Holocaust Museum touched me very much. I know that I will never forget the things I learned that day. Your story inspired me to speak up against racism and prejudice, and I hope that, one day everlasting peace can be found in our world.

Sincerely,

X. Schlegel.



## Jerry's Story

Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

Dear Mr. Kapelus,

Thank you so much for your amazing presentation today! I know you probably get thank yous alot and sometimes feel like some who say this do not always mean it but I really and truly do. I can not and hopefully never be able to relate to this horrible event but I do <sup>know</sup> what it is like to have ~~nothing~~ no one. To have no one stand up for you, no one to protect you, and no one to tell those who pick on you to just stop. This may have nothing to do with your experience, but I know that no matter how mean and cruel people can be you have to keep going not just for yourself but for everyone else in your position and even in worse situations. For me its obviously a much lower level but I can bet that you had the same feeling of emptiness in your heart when those monsters were mean to you and everyone else stuck in those truly disgusting places, <sup>the feeling</sup> that I get when picked on by others and having my friends laughing and sometimes joining in. I know that in the game of life, no matter hard, you just have to keep pushing forward because giving in is the only wrong move. I have many dreams and one of them is to attend Ettoboko School of the Arts (ESA). This ~~arts~~ school of the arts has been my dream every since I first saw it when I was very little. Dance is my life, I know I'm not the best and do not want to persue it for a career but I love it more than anything. Your story has not only shown me that I should never take anything for granted but to chase after my dreams because I am capable of anything and can do anything I set my mind to. One of my favourite quotes I'd like to share is one that represents my interpretation of life, "In the book of life, the answers aren't in the back".

Thank you for everything! The lessons learned will stick forever.

Alex Strickland ♥



## Jerry's Story

Dear: Mr. Jerry Hepelus

When I first thought about going to the Holocaust Museum, I thought we were just going to see a whole bunch of pictures of people who died. I never thought we would be able to meet an actual survivor.

To meet you and watch you speak was amazing. I too have the same opinion, I am against prejudices, racists and people who put down others just to make themselves feel good.

I'm so glad that you had the courage to speak of your experiences which must have been very painful for you.

You said that if you could just reach one person that it would make you feel that you told your story for the good. I just wanted to let you know that you did reach me.

I wish you the best in the years to come in health and reaching the world.

Sincerely

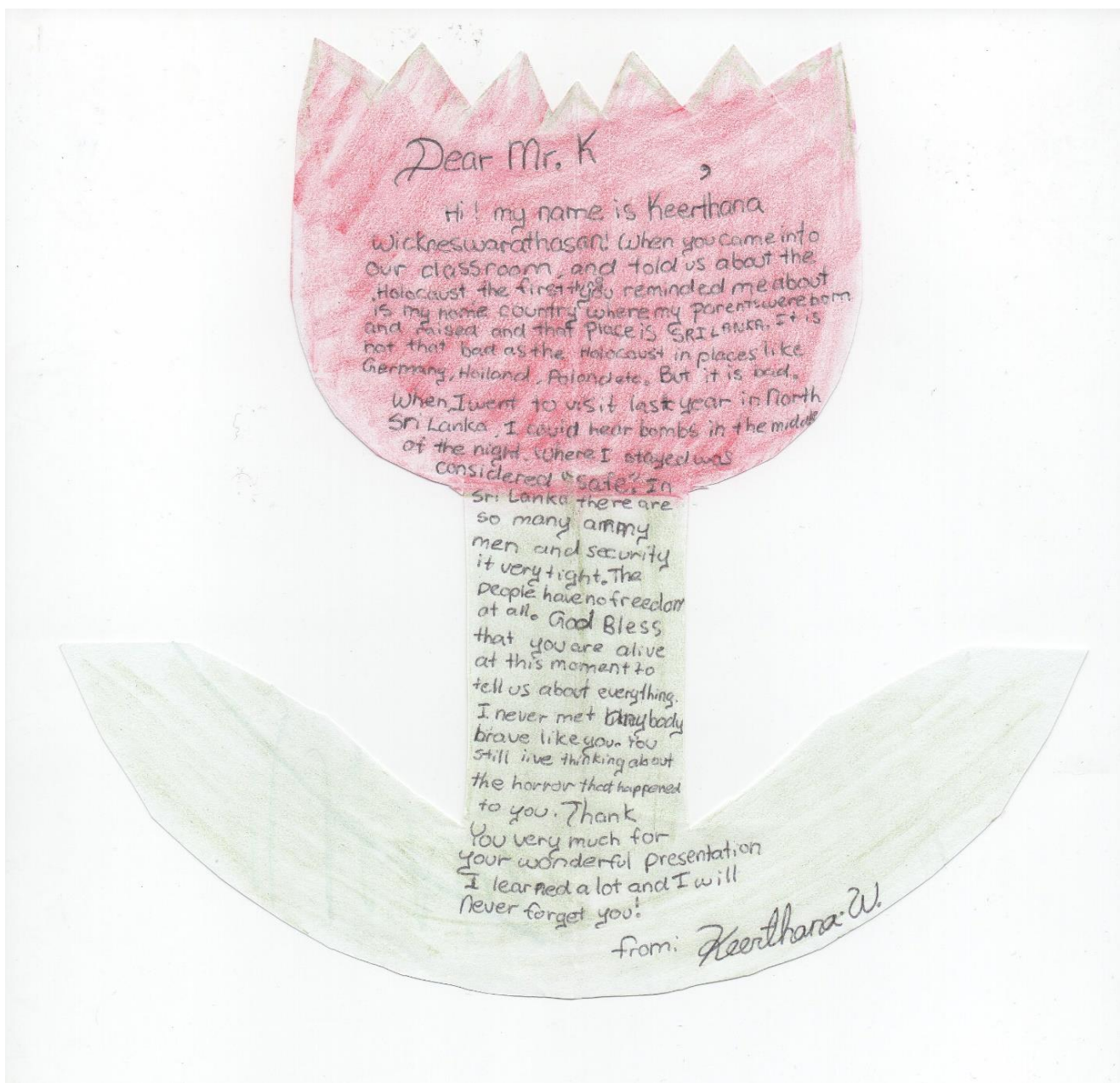
Kristy-Lynn Nichols

Jean Vanier High School.

Fig 93a: Examples of thank you letters from students



## Jerry's Story



## Jerry's Story

### Death is in the Air

Death is in the air  
There is no escape from the endless stares  
A German around every corner  
Giving no time for any mourners

Every day, the same routine  
We get up, but we're not keen  
We're hungry and we've had no rest  
But still we try to do our best

If we don't, the price we'll pay  
To give our lives, and die this way  
"No" I say and still hold on  
I'll live and see another dawn

Looking for a glimpse of light  
I find nothing, hard as I might  
A scrap of food, a place to lay  
Work faster, go harder the Germans say

Numbers smaller, corpses around  
Everywhere, a wretched sound  
No getaway from brimming hate  
No one even knows his or her fate

To live or die, the day will tell  
The many lives that have already fell  
They've no more strength, ringing moans  
Their bodies are now, just mere bones

... Death is in the air



Jasmine Chan 8A



## Jerry's Story

### Just Because I'm a Jew

It's dark,  
Pouring rain,  
I'm freezing and I'm hungry.  
There is nothing left of me but bones and a layer of scaly skin  
To withstand the bone chilling wind.  
But no one cares,  
Just because I'm a Jew

I have had to bear a lot.  
I was torn from my family,  
Rid of my rights,  
Rights as a human being,  
Ones everyone should have.

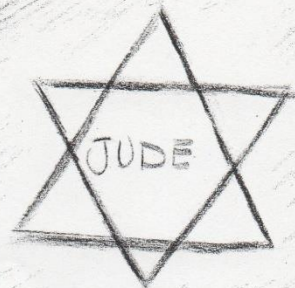
I take a look at my boney arm,  
The one I've had to work with so hard.  
A number tattooed  
That proves I'm owned.  
That proves I'm a Jew

I have no choice but to listen to the soldiers.  
Dressed in their uniform with the Nazi sign.  
The sign that shows their power and superiority.  
They have mean faces and no sense of guilt.

Dogs barking, children crying,  
Dead people all around me,  
Just because they were Jews.

I keep telling myself  
It will be alright,  
But no it won't be.  
I have suffered enough  
But no one cares,  
Just because I'm a Jew

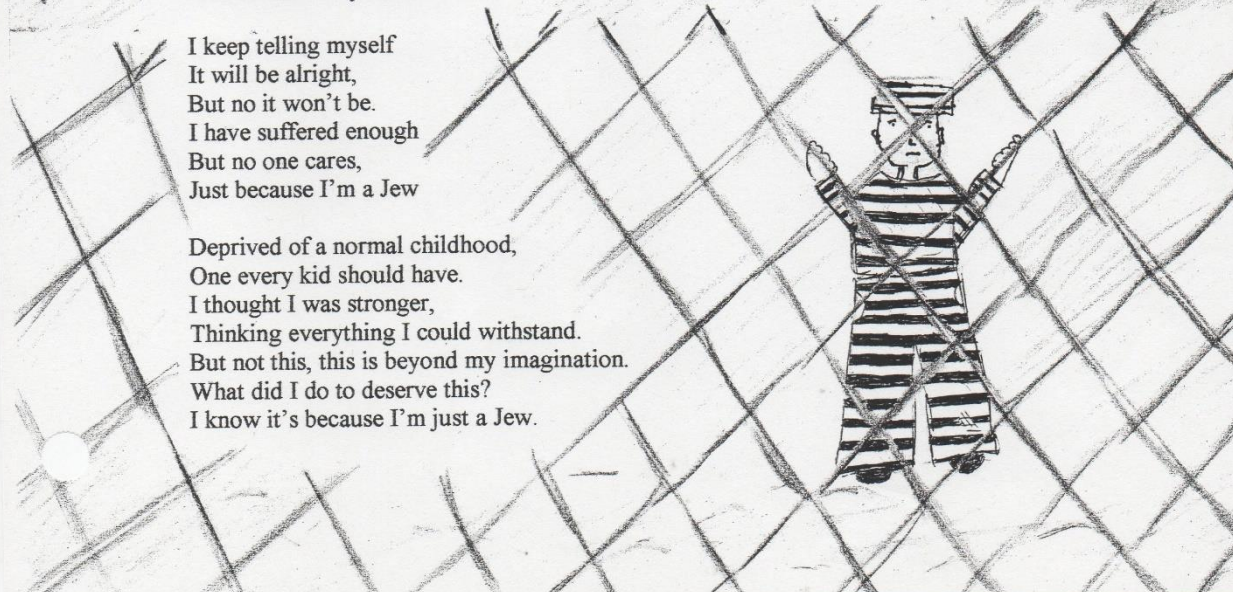
Deprived of a normal childhood,  
One every kid should have.  
I thought I was stronger,  
Thinking everything I could withstand.  
But not this, this is beyond my imagination.  
What did I do to deserve this?  
I know it's because I'm just a Jew.



*"Just because  
I'm a Jew"*

A-S-U-L-E-3-C-8-9-0-0

P-r-e-j-u-d-i-c-e





**A striped Uniform**

A striped uniform is all it is,  
To some people, but not them.  
They were there, not as people,  
They were numbers.  
Only they can describe the suffering, the pain,  
And the hope they tried to maintain.  
Only they can describe the fear they had.

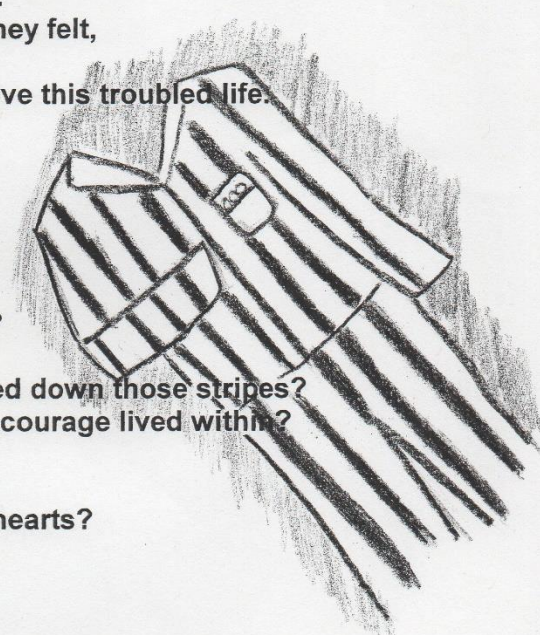
A striped uniform is all it is  
To some people, but not them.  
Only they know the sadness they felt,  
And the hunger and the strife.  
Only they know how it felt to live this troubled life.

A striped uniform is all it is,  
To some people....but.....  
NOT them and Not me!

I wonder.....  
What dreams were destroyed?  
What hearts were broken?  
Oh, what tears must have rolled down those stripes?  
Or perhaps, what bravery and courage lived within?  
How many tears were shed ?  
How many lives were taken?  
How much sorrow filled their hearts?  
Oh, somebody please tell me.

A striped uniform is all it is,  
To perhaps, far too many.  
But not to those who were there.....  
And certainly not to me!

**Dinah McKay 8B**



*Fig 93b: Examples of artwork and poetry from students inspired by Jerry's speeches*

## Jerry's Story

### Formal documentation and recognition

Jerry was formally interviewed twice about his childhood Holocaust experiences and later life. He was first interviewed for the *Holocaust Documentation Project* of the *Canadian Jewish Congress* on March 17, 1993 (Fig 94).

Later, Jerry was interviewed for the *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation* project of the University of Southern California (a project sponsored by the film director Steven Spielberg) on October 5, 1995 (Fig 95). Both interviews were originally recorded on videotape. We've included links so that you can watch or listen to the full interviews.

### Jerry's interview by Canadian Jewish Congress on March 17, 1993



Fig 94a: Jerry's interview by Canadian Jewish Congress on March 17, 1993



Canadian Jewish Congress Interview Mar 17, 1993

<https://youtu.be/fRfDGHT8zmk>

Fig 94b: Watch and listen to the audio recording of Jerry's interview by Canadian Jewish Congress on March 17, 1993



## Jerry's Story

### Jerry's interview by USC Shoah Foundation on October 5, 1995

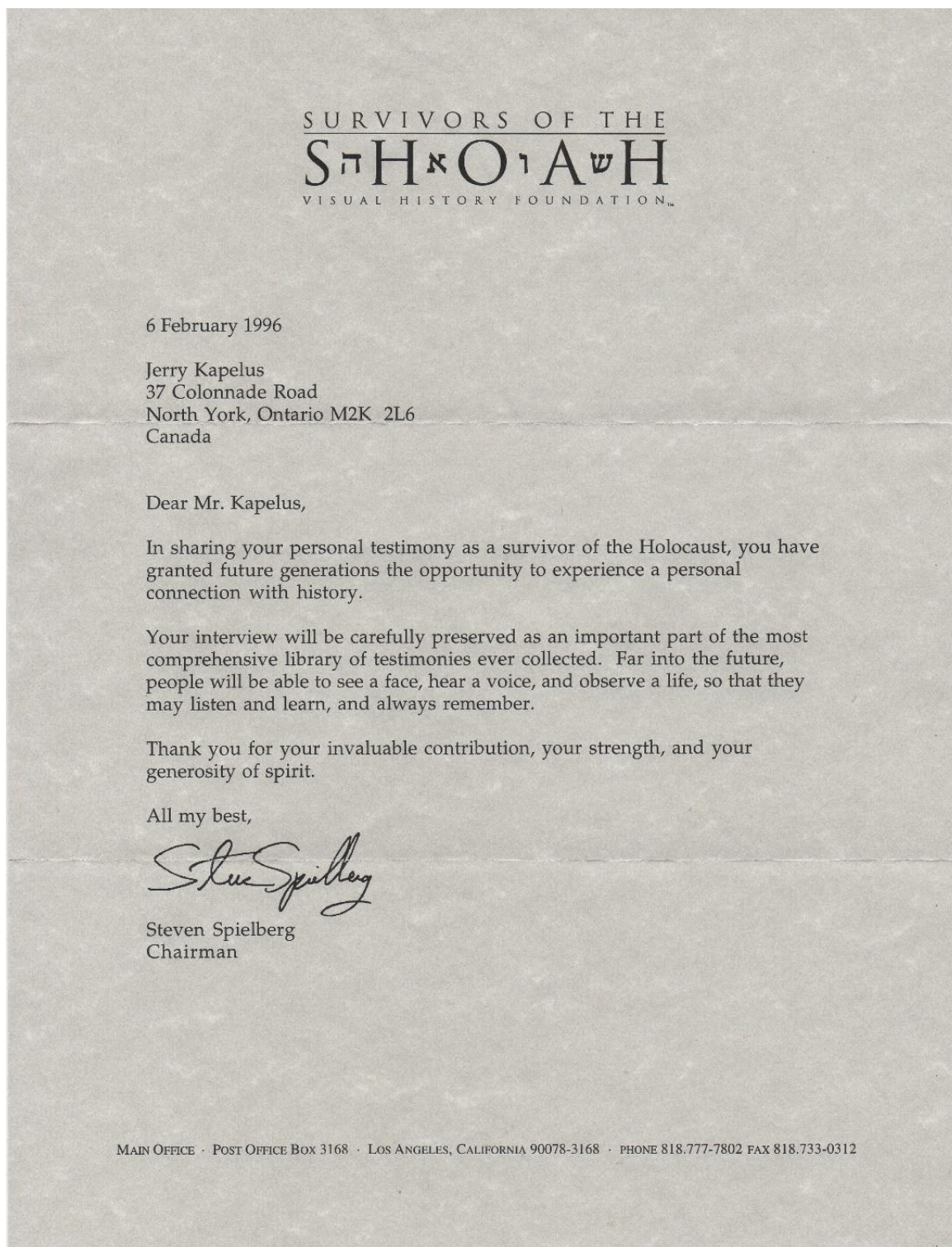


Fig 95a: Thank you letter from the USC Shoah Foundation regarding Jerry's interview on October 5, 1995



## Jerry's Story



Jerry's interview by USC Shoah Foundation on October 5, 1995

<https://youtu.be/2d4APC0Mldc>

*Fig 95b: Listen to the audio recording of Jerry's interview by USC Shoah Foundation on October 5, 1995*

## Jerry's Story

As a long-time volunteer Survivor Speaker, Jerry was honoured in perpetuity along with a number of other speakers with a beautiful visual exhibit. The display is situated adjacent to the old Holocaust Centre in the Lipa Green building at 4600 Bathurst Street in Toronto. For this display, Jerry met with photographer Leib Kopman and chose a photo of himself holding a picture of his mother while showing his Auschwitz tattoo (Fig 96).

**The Holocaust Centre of Toronto and UJA Federation  
are pleased to invite you to:**

***"We Who Survived..."***


a photographic tribute to those survivor-speakers  
who have shared their stories of survival and  
renewal for the furtherance of Holocaust education

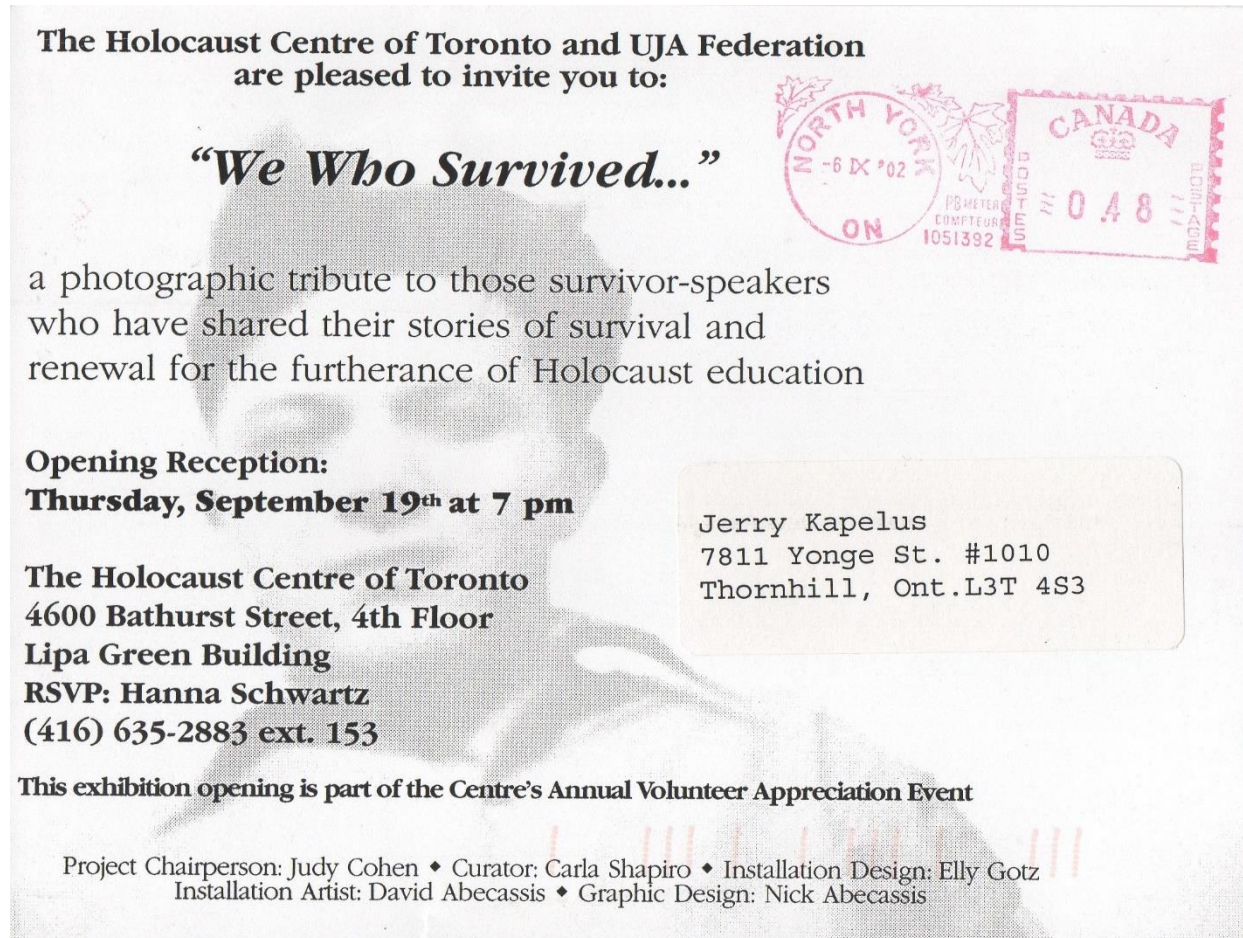
**Opening Reception:  
Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm**

**The Holocaust Centre of Toronto  
4600 Bathurst Street, 4th Floor  
Lipa Green Building  
RSVP: Hanna Schwartz  
(416) 635-2883 ext. 153**

**This exhibition opening is part of the Centre's Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event**

Project Chairperson: Judy Cohen ♦ Curator: Carla Shapiro ♦ Installation Design: Elly Gotz  
Installation Artist: David Abecassis ♦ Graphic Design: Nick Abecassis





Jerry Kapelus  
7811 Yonge St. #1010  
Thornhill, Ont. L3T 4S3

# Jerry's Story

**Jerry Kapelus**

## Jerry Kapelus

I was born in Lodz, Poland. The German army invaded our country in September 1939. In 1940 the Germans got all the Jews from Lodz into a Ghetto. I was surrounded by a barbed wire fence. We had little sanitation and no money. Everyone had to work, even at the age of 11. I was forced to work in a leather factory under very difficult conditions.

In 1944 they liquidated the Ghetto and we were crowded into cattle cars like animals, without food or water. After 3 days we arrived at Buchenwald. Buchenwald was a death camp. I was separated from my family and never saw them again. Most people went to the gas chambers. The rest became slave laborers. I was sent to a farm in a town called Balice. In January 1945 I was forced to go on a death march which lasted for many days. Those who could not walk were shot and their bodies left on the road - there were many of these. We landed in Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany where there were about 35,000 people of all races, ethnic groups, including Germans who had disagreed with Hitler's policies.

On April 11, 1945, we were liberated by the American army and we were free to go. However, we had no homes or families to whom we could go and nobody wanted children like us, who might never grow up to be normal adults. They were sent to orphanages in England, France, and the U.S. After much negotiation, France took 400. England took 200 and Switzerland took 100 of us.

An orphanage in Paris called O.S.E. looked after us well through our time in a normal life. We have known all these people since who protected us and would turn out to be criminals. We have become good and productive citizens of a rich country we settled in. From France I came to live in North America where I reside to this day with my family.

I truly believe the Holocaust happened because of religious intolerance and millions of men, women and children were killed simply because they were Jews or Gypsies. The most object be allowed to negotiate again to any group of people.

*Jerry Kapelus*

The orphan children of Buchenwald leaving the camp April 1945

Students in France 1946

Jerry in front of a tent in 1945

Children from Buchenwald coming in France 1945

Jerry (top left) with his second team, France, 1946

Children leaving Buchenwald on way to France, 1947

Jerry (left) on vacation in Cannes, France, 1948

Jerry (left) with "Les Trois" in Cannes, France, 1948



## Jerry's Story



## Jerry Kapelus



The orphan children of Buchenwald leaving the camp: April, 1945



Children from Buchenwald arriving in France: 1945



Jerry (top left) with his soccer team: France, 1946



Children leaving Buchenwald on way to France, 1947

I was born in Lodz, Poland. The German army invaded our country in September 1939. In 1940 the Germans put all the Jews from Lodz into a Ghetto surrounded by a barbed wire fence. We had little food or medication and many people died from starvation and sickness. Everyone had to work, even at the age of 11. I was forced to work in a leather factory under very difficult conditions.

In 1944 they liquidated the Ghetto and we were crammed into cattle cars like animals, without food or water. After 3 days we arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau which was a death camp. I was separated from my family and never saw them again. Most people went to the gas chambers, the rest became slave laborers. I was sent as a slave to a farm called Babice. In January 1945 I was forced to go on a death march which lasted for many days. Those who could not walk were shot and their bodies left on the road - there were many of these. We landed in Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany, where there were about 35,000 people of all nationalities, including Germans who had disagreed with Hitler's policies.

On April 11, 1945, we were liberated by the American army and we were free to go. However, we had no homes or families to whom we could go and nobody wanted children, like us, who might never grow up to be normal adults. They were sure we would become psychopaths and criminals. After much negotiations, France took in 450, England took 300 and Switzerland took 300 of us.

An orphanage in Paris called O.S.E. looked after us and brought us back to a normal life. We have proven all those people wrong who predicted we would turn out to be criminals. We have become good and productive citizens of each country we settled in. From France I came to live in North America where I reside to this day with my family.

I truly believe the Holocaust happened because of religious intolerance, and millions of men, women and children were killed simply because they were Jews or Gypsies. This must never be allowed to happen again to any group of people.

*Jerry Kapelus*



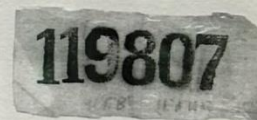
Jerry (left) on vacation in Grenoble, France, 1946



Students in France: 1946



Jerry (right) aboard a boat to USA: March, 1947



Jerry's Prisoner number in Buchenwald



Jerry en route to USA: March, 1947



Jerry (left) with Israel Lau (presently Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel): France, 1945

Fig 96: Jerry's 'Survivor Speaker' display in the Lipa Green building, Toronto



## Jerry's Story

In 2023, the new Toronto Holocaust Museum, which replaced the original Holocaust Centre, also honoured Jerry with a new photo and video exhibit (Fig 97).

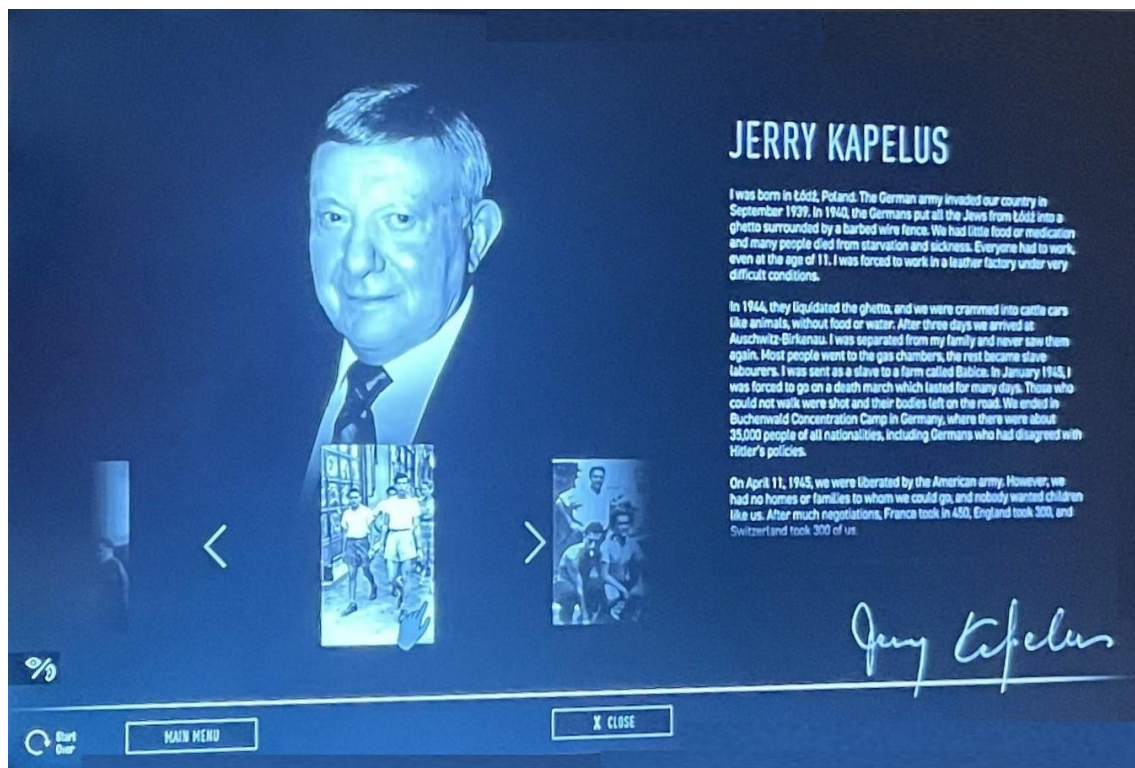


Fig 97: A photo and video exhibit about Jerry in the new Toronto Holocaust Museum, 2023

Jerry was acknowledged in several publications. In their 2000 book, *The Children of Buchenwald* by Judith Hemmendinger and Robert Krell<sup>46</sup>, the authors included a number of photos of Jerry and wrote in the introduction:

*“So, to George Goldbloom (Idel Goldblum), Jerry Kapelus (Jakob Kapelus) and Robbie Waisman (Romek Wajsman) and all the boys, our gratitude - you are an inspiration to us all”.*

Jerry was also quoted several times in the 2008 book, *Fire Unextinguished* by Aviva Woznica.<sup>47</sup> Notably, talking about the ‘wild boys’ who were liberated from Buchenwald in one of his many presentations, Jerry was quoted as saying ***“Not one delinquent among the thousand of us! We had become respected, law-abiding, contributing citizens, wherever we went”.***

On May 8, 2008, Jerry was among a group of Holocaust survivors who were honoured by the Premier of Ontario in collaboration with the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem. Jerry’s

<sup>46</sup> Hemmendinger, Judith and Krell, Robert (2000) *The Children of Buchenwald*, Jerusalem: Gefen

<sup>47</sup> Woznica, Aviva (2008) *Fire Unextinguished* Bloomington: Xlibris

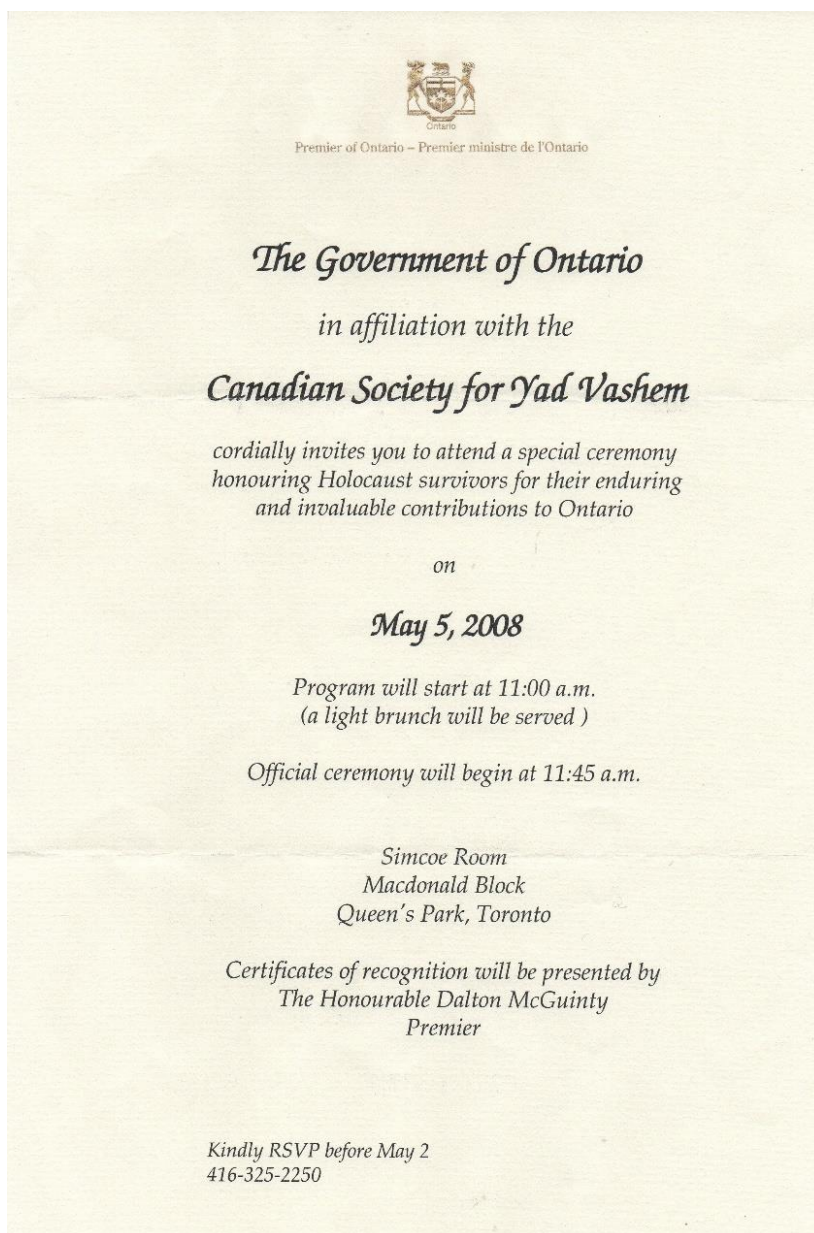


## Jerry's Story

immediate family joined him in the Ontario Legislature building at Queen's Park in downtown Toronto to celebrate this wonderful tribute (Fig 98).

In a follow-up letter to Jerry after the ceremony, then-Premier Dalton McGuinty wrote:

*"I felt deeply moved and honoured to present you with a scroll recognizing your personal triumph over adversity as a survivor of the Holocaust. Your story – one of tremendous courage, great strength of character and determination – bears telling and retelling so that its lesson of eternal vigilance against intolerance and injustice is never lost".*



## Jerry's Story



## Jerry's Story





## Jerry's Story





Ontario

PREMIER OF ONTARIO  
PREMIER MINISTRE DE L'ONTARIO

*In recognition and appreciation of*

**JERRY KAPELUS**

**HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR**

May 5, 2008

*On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am honoured  
to join Ontarians provincewide in paying solemn tribute to you for  
your profound courage, strength and determination.*

*Few can fully comprehend the unspeakable suffering,  
cruelty and inhumanity that you and your fellow Holocaust  
survivors witnessed and endured.*

*Yours is a remarkable story, one that serves as a  
compelling reminder of our obligation — as a society and as individuals —  
to learn from the lessons of our history, to be vigilant against all forms of  
hatred and intolerance, and to embrace inclusiveness and  
diversity — in the laws of our land and in our hearts.*

*You are a role model, a hero, a true survivor.  
Please accept my personal best wishes.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dalton McGuinty'.

**Dalton McGuinty**  
Premier

## Jerry's Story

The Premier  
of Ontario  
  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A1

Le Premier ministre  
de l'Ontario  
  
Édifice de l'Assemblée législative  
Queen's Park  
Toronto (Ontario)  
M7A 1A1



June 24, 2008

Mr. Jerry Kapelus  
1010-7811 Yonge Street  
Thornhill, Ontario  
L3T 4S3

Dear Mr. Kapelus:

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank you for being part of this year's tribute to Holocaust survivors and to victims of the Holocaust.

I felt deeply moved and honoured to present you with a scroll recognizing your personal triumph over adversity as a survivor of the Holocaust. Your story — one of tremendous courage, great strength of character and determination — bears telling and retelling so that its lesson of eternal vigilance against intolerance and injustice is never lost.

I have enclosed photos and a DVD of the ceremony, which I send to you with my renewed thanks for your participation. Please accept my warm regards and personal best wishes.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dalton McGuinty', written over a horizontal line.

Dalton McGuinty  
Premier

Enclosures



## McGuinty honours nine survivors

By DAVE GORDON  
Special to The CJN

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty last week joined the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem in a Holocaust memorial service at Queen's Park that paid tribute to nine survivors who have contributed significantly to their communities.

Michael Chan, the minister of citizenship and immigration, and Liberal MPP Monte Kwinter, presented scrolls of recognition May 5 to the survivors, who immigrated to and built new lives in Ontario, and made outstanding contributions.

The survivors honoured at the event were Tamara Erlich, Al Gelfant, Sol Kafka, Jerry Kapelus, Shifra Knobel, Mike Mayer, Johanan Steinberg, Jack Weinbaum and Severin Weingort.

Kapelus survived Buchenwald, and was liberated along with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Eli Wiesel and Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, former Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel.

As an adult, Kapelus ran a women's clothing store and later worked for London Life insurance.

"I felt quite excited and honoured," Kapelus said. "I did not expect it. It came as a pleasant surprise."

He described the mixed emotions of the event. "Some of the memories came back of some of the bad times we went through. The good emotions were that we survived. The therapists at the time told us we'd all grow up to be psychopaths, criminals and killers, because of the horrors we went through. We proved them wrong. We all grew up to be good citizens. Those of us who survived the Buchenwald camp, we even meet up every five years, in a different spot in the world."



Pictured last week at Queen's Park are, from left, Yaron Ashkenazi, executive director, Canadian Society for Yad Vashem; Israeli Consul General Amir Gissin; MPP Monte Kwinter; Immigration Minister Michael Chan; Severin Weingort; Jack Weinbaum; Johanan Steinberg; Mike Mayer; Premier Dalton McGuinty; Sol Kafka; Shifra Knobel; Tamara Erlich; Al Gelfant; Jerry Kapelus and Hank Rosenbaum, president of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem. [Elliot Sylman photo, courtesy Yad Vashem]

In 1995, the premier of Ontario began recognizing Holocaust survivors for their contributions to the province, said Gillian Weintraub, event organizer for Yad Vashem.

Honorees are nominated by friends and family.

"It was a very solemn event," Weintraub said. "Some of the survivors may not like to hear their stories as public record. But it's important for future generations and to make sure that nobody forgets. One of the ways that people don't forget is by repeating those stories."

Kwinter offered public accolades in the legislature to the honorees and spoke about the importance of history's lessons.

"We also remember those targeted for their race, disability or sexual orientation," Kwinter said. "Tragically, other genocides followed the Holocaust, such as Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia."

He also stressed the significance of liberty and democracy.

"We must continue our spirit of keeping alive the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved by the United Nations in the shadow of the Holocaust," Kwinter told a half-full legislature. "We must never take our freedom for granted."

Thornhill MPP Peter Shurman, who represents the most Jewish riding in Ontario, described how his father, a German Jewish refugee, arrived in Canada after fleeing Nazi Germany, coming to Canada by way of England.

"Because in Canada, he was free to be a Jew. In Canada we are all free to practise our religions and live any way we choose."

Shurman also stressed the importance of educating future generations.

Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh said the Holocaust holds many lessons for today. "It revealed the evil capacity of humankind. We must be watchful that this should never happen again. We learned how bystanders shared the responsibility of the Holocaust."

Fig 98: Jerry honoured with other Holocaust survivors at Queens Park on May 8, 2008

## **Jerry's Story**

### **Final thoughts**

Jerry died at home, surrounded by his family, on Nov 26, 2021 (Kislev 22, 5782) after a lengthy illness. He was buried on November 28, 2021, at Pardes Chaim Cemetery in Richmond Hill, Ontario. The graveside service was conducted in a snowstorm. A poem, written by Elysa, was read aloud.

*Some heroes don't wear capes.  
Some wear numbers tattooed on their arms instead.  
Some wear the hidden scars of a tragic childhood.  
Some heroes don't fly over cities or run into burning buildings.  
Some heroes light the fires that inspire you to do something great or  
give you the wings so you can fly yourself.  
Some heroes don't fight criminals.  
Some are gentle and quietly do everything they can to make the  
world a better place.  
Some heroes don't show their courage through daring feats that  
attract the world's attention.  
Some show their strength by protecting those they love from the evils  
of the world and by giving them the gift of optimism.  
Some heroes show kindness and compassion when bitterness and  
anger would easily be understood.  
Some heroes have eyes that smile and a heart that speaks wisdom  
and arms that are built to protect.  
Some heroes stand tall and proud with shoulders that their loved  
ones can lean on no matter what.  
Some heroes come into the world for a short time but leave their  
mark forever.*

We gathered again as a family on May 29, 2022, to unveil Jerry's memorial stone and to celebrate his most amazing life (Fig 99).



## Jerry's Story



*Fig 99: Jerry's memorial stone, Pardes Chaim Cemetery, Richmond Hill, Ontario*



## **Jerry's Story**

So, now you know a little bit more about your grandfather Jerry. From everything we've learned, he enjoyed a normal and happy childhood until the start of the Second World War. Jerry and his immediate and extended families suffered indescribable heartache and loss during the Holocaust. He carried that history silently for many years, doing his best to block it out and to protect us all from the trauma. Eventually, Jerry saw the need to speak out against Holocaust deniers and purveyors of hatred. He spent most of the rest of his life enjoying his family and trying to make the world a better place. He was a dedicated volunteer Holocaust educator, and he was honoured for that work. Optimistic and positive by nature, Jerry went on to lead a rich, fulfilling, successful and long life. He had many friends and admirers and a loving family.

You, his grandchildren, were our collective gift to him. Despite the nefarious plan to eradicate the Jewish people, Jerry found a way not just to survive, but to flourish and extend the family. He was the patriarch of three children, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren (so far!), a total of fourteen Kapelusz decedents. Each of you carries the Kapelusz genes and a small bit of his family's story.

On Jerry's memorial stone we inscribed the phrase "a man of integrity and hope" because these words best described him.

With love,

Gary, Stephen, Elysa and Merna

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## Jerry's Story

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United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**UNITED STATES  
HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
MUSEUM**

**Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database**

Displaying 2 of 7

**Jakob Efroim Kapelusz**

Sex:	Male
Age:	14
Date of Birth:	1926
Apartment Number:	11
Address:	Block No A 41, Am Bach 9
Residence:	Lódź, Poland
Place of Incarceration:	Litzmannstadt-Getto, Lódź, Poland
Primary Media:	You can request a digitized copy of the original document by submitting the <a href="#">Document Request Form</a> .

**Source**

Title:	<a href="#">Block No. A 41 Am-Bach Str. No.9</a>
Description:	Registration book for a house. Includes apartment number, name, sex, date or year of birth, and age.

---

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
Main telephone: 202.488.0400  
TTY: 202.488.0406

[https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person\\_view.php?PersonId=8373158](https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person_view.php?PersonId=8373158)

## Jerry's Story

### United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

# UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

## Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database

Displaying 1 of 7

### Jakob Efraim Kapelusz

Sex:	Male
Date of Birth:	30 Mar 1920
Apartment Number:	11
Address:	Am Bach 9
Residence:	Łódź, Poland
Place of Incarceration:	Litzmannstadt-Getto, Łódź, Poland
Card Number:	075752
Primary Media:	You can request a digitized copy of the original document by submitting the <a href="#">Document Request Form</a> .

### Source

Title:	<a href="#">Am Bach Str. Nr. 9</a>
Description:	Street listing showing: first and last name; gender; birth date; profession; previous address; card number; other.

---

#### United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
Main telephone: 202.488.0400  
TTY: 202.488.0406

[https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person\\_view.php?PersonId=8356455](https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person_view.php?PersonId=8356455)



## Jerry's Story

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**UNITED STATES  
HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
MUSEUM**

**Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database**

Displaying 1 of 49

**Herszel Kapelusz**

Sex:	Male
Date of Birth:	30 Feb 1889
Apartment Number:	11
Address:	Am Bach 9
Residence:	Łódź, Poland
Place of Incarceration:	Litzmannstadt-Ghetto, Łódź, Poland
Card Number:	075747
Primary Media:	You can request a digitized copy of the original document by submitting the <a href="#">Document Request Form</a> .

**Source**

Title:	<u>Am Bach Str. Nr. 9</u>
Description:	Street listing showing: first and last name; gender; birth date; profession; previous address; card number; other.

---

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
Main telephone: 202.488.0400  
TTY: 202.488.0406

[https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person\\_view.php?PersonId=8356450](https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person_view.php?PersonId=8356450)

## Jerry's Story

Information about **Esther Kapelusz**

[https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person\\_view.php?PersonId=8356451](https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person_view.php?PersonId=8356451)

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**UNITED STATES  
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# Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database

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## ESTERA KAPELUSZ

Sex:	Female
Date of Birth:	16 May 1892
Apartment Number:	11
Address:	Am Bach 9
Residence:	Łódź, Poland
Place of Incarceration:	Litzmannstadt-Getto, Łódź, Poland
Card Number:	075748
Primary Media:	You can request a digitized copy of the original document by submitting the <a href="#">Document Request Form</a> .

SOURCE

Title:	<a href="#">Am Bach Str. Nr. 9</a>
Description:	Street listing showing: first and last name; gender; birth date; profession; previous address; card number; other.

The address is consistent with Jakob and David; the birthdate would make her 37 years old when Jakob was born

## Jerry's Story

### United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

# UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

## Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database

### Chaja Kapelusz

Sex:	Female
Date of Birth:	15 Mar 1919
Apartment Number:	11
Address:	Am Bach 9
Residence:	Łódź, Poland
Place of Incarceration:	Litzmannstadt-Getto, Łódź, Poland
Occupation:	Handelsgehilfe
Card Number:	075749
Date of Death:	19 Nov 1941
Primary Media:	You can request a digitized copy of the original document by submitting the <a href="#">Document Request Form</a> .

### Source

Title:	<a href="#">Am Bach Str. Nr. 9</a>
Description:	Street listing showing: first and last name; gender; birth date; profession; previous address; card number; other.

---

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
Main telephone: 202.488.0400  
TTY: 202.488.0406

[https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person\\_view.php?personid=8356452](https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person_view.php?personid=8356452)



## Jerry's Story

[https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person\\_view.php?PersonId=8356457](https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person_view.php?PersonId=8356457)

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**DAWID LEJB KAPELUSZ**

Sex:

Male

Date of Birth:

21 Jul 1930

Apartment Number:

11

Address:

Am Bach 9

Residence:

Łódź, Poland

Place of Incarceration:

Litzmannstadt-Getto, Łódź, Poland

Card Number:

075754

Primary Media:

You can request a digitized copy of the original document by submitting the [Document Request Form](#).

SOURCE

Title:

[Am Bach Str. Nr. 9](#)

Description:

Street listing showing: first and last name; gender; birth date; profession; previous address; card number; other.

This document shows his middle name, which we knew; his birthdate, a little over a year after Jakob (we know that Jakob's brother was a bit younger); and where he lived in the Lodz Ghetto (the address on Am Bach is consistent with the info written on Jakob's actual concentration camp registration card)

## **Jerry's Story**

### **Appendix Three: Jerry's handwritten and typed testimonial notes**

## Jerry's Story

①

### JERRY KAPELUS

I WAS BORN IN LODZ POLAND. ON SEPT 1939 GERMAN ARMIES OCCUPIED OUR COUNTRY. IN 1940 THE GERMANS PUT ALL JEWISH PEOPLE FROM LODZ INTO A GHETTO AND PUT A BARBED WIRE FENCE AROUND IT. IN THE GHETTO EVERYONE HAD TO WORK, WE HAD VERY LITTLE FOOD AND FEW MEDICATION. MANY PEOPLE DIED OF MALNUTRITION AND SICKNESS. I HAD TO WORK IN A LEATHER FACTORY AT AGE 11 UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITION AND LITTLE FOOD. ON JULY 1944 THEY LIQUIDATED THE GHETTO AND ALL THE PEOPLE FROM THE GHETTO WERE SENT TO DEATH CAMPS TO BIRKENAU-AUSCHWITZ. THEY PUT US IN CATTLE CARS LIKE ANIMALS WITH NO FOOD OR DRINKS. AFTER 3 DAYS WE ARRIVED IN BIRKENAU-AUSCHWITZ. THEY SEPARATED ME FROM MY FAMILY, AND I NEVER SAW MY FAMILY AGAIN. MOST PEOPLE DIED IN THE GAS CHAMBERS AND THE REST WERE SENT TO SLAVE LABOUR. I WAS SENT TO SLAVE IN A FARM NAMED BABICE. ON JAN 1945 I WAS SENT ON THE DEATH MARCH. ~~HERE~~ WE WALKED FOR DAYS AND NIGHTS, AND THE PEOPLE WHO COULD NOT WALK WERE SHOT. THE ROADS WERE COVERED WITH DEAD PEOPLE. WE LANDED IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP CALLED BUCHENWALD IN GERMANY. IN BUCHENWALD THERE WERE ABOUT 35,000 PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONALITIES INCLUDING GERMANS WHO DISAGREED WITH HITLER'S POLICIES. ON APRIL 11, 1945 THE AMERICAN ARMY LIBERATED OUR CAMP. IT WAS GREAT JOY AND CELEBRATIONS. THEY FOUND ONE THOUSAND CHILDREN ~~SURVIVED~~ FROM AGE 8-18 SURVIVED ~~THE~~ IN CAMP. WE HAD NO PLACE TO GO, OUR HOMES WERE TAKEN AWAY OUR FAMILIES KILLED. AND NO COUNTRY WANTED US. THEY CLAIMED THAT WE THE CHILDREN WHO SUFFERED SO MUCH WILL NEVER GROW UP TO BE NORMAL PEOPLE. WE WILL GROW UP PSYCHOPATHS AND CRIMINALS. AFTER A LOT OF NEGOTIATION FRANCE TOOK IN 450 OF US 300 WENT TO ENGLAND AND 150 TO SWITZERLAND. WE PROVED THEM WRONG WE GROW UP TO BE VERY GOOD CITIZENS IN WHATEVER COUNTRY.



## Jerry's Story

(2)

WE LIVE IN. WE PRODUCED LAWYERS, DOCTORS, POETS  
BUSINESSMEN AND THE CHIEF RABBI OF ISRAEL RABBI LAU  
IS ALSO ONE OF US. MOST OF US ARE SUCCESSFUL  
IN OUR CAREERS. IN FRANCE AN ORGANIZATION CALLED O.S.E.  
TOOK US IN AND LOOKED AFTER US AND TOOK GOOD CARE  
OF US FOR WHICH I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO THIS DAY.

FROM FRANCE I IMMIGRATED TO NORTH AMERICA.

I BELIEVE THE HOLOCAUST WAS ONE OF THE WORST CRIMES  
IN HUMAN HISTORY, WHERE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE MEN, WOMEN,  
AND CHILDREN WERE KILLED ONLY BECAUSE THEY WERE JEWISH  
OR GYPSIES NO OTHER REASON. I ALSO BELIEVE THE HOLOCAUST  
WAS THE RESULT OF YEARS OF PREJUDICE, YEARS OF  
DISCRIMINATION AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE. WE MUST  
NEVER ALLOW ANYTHING LIKE THIS THE HOLOCAUST TO HAPPEN  
AGAIN TO ANYBODY EVER

## Jerry's Story

There are people out there who say the Holocaust never happened. I hope this visit to Auschwitz left you with an important impression for a long time in your life so you can tell your friends and relatives what you saw in Auschwitz, and realize how brutal and evil some people can be and do harm to other people, when good people stand by and do nothing to stop it. The hate crimes that were committed in the death camp Auschwitz was the result of years of discrimination, prejudice, and religious intolerance.

I was 10 years old when the war started. I and my family spent 4 horrible years in a ghetto in Lodz Poland. After 4 years the Nazis liquidated the ghetto and I and my family were sent to the death camp Auschwitz, where my entire family was killed. I had a younger brother David an older sister Helen, loving parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, they all were murdered because they were Jewish. I am the only survivor from my family.

In Auschwitz I was put to work on a farm as a slave laborer at age 15. I worked from sunrise to sunset six days a week with little food. Although we produced and grew lots of food, yet we were not allowed to eat any of the food we produced, we had to live on the starvation rations.

## Jerry's Story

### II

the Germans gate us. On January 1945  
I was sent on the infamous death march  
from Auschwitz. We had no food or drinks  
for 4 days, we lived on snow about 80%  
of people on that march died, all those  
people who could not walk in that march  
were shot. I ended up in an other  
death camp Buchenwald, where I was  
liberated by the American Army on April 11/45.  
We must not allow such crimes to happen  
anywhere in this world, ever again.

My name is JERRY KAPPELUS, I live now  
in Thornhill, Ont



## Jerry's Story

2001

JERRY KAPELUS

7811 YONGE ST.#1010 THORNHILL ON.

I was born in Lodz Poland into a large family. I was 10 years old in September 1939 when the German Army invaded Poland, and within 2 weeks they occupied our country. immediately

they started on their program what they called the FINAL SOLUTION, which meant the destruction and killing all the Jews. First they made a law that all the Jewish people in our city had to wear a yellow star, one in the front of coat and one on the back. If someone was caught in the street not wearing the yellow star, he could be arrested or shot, depending on the mood of the German at that time. Then they took our rights away, we were not allowed to go to school, Jewish professional people such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, artist, were not allowed to work in their profession. Jewish owned business was taken away from them, my father owned a menswear business for which he worked so hard all his life, one day two Germans walk in into his place of business and took the keys, and told him to leave and never come back or he will be arrested, had he resisted, they would have shot him. We lost everything he ever worked for. There was no one to help us.

Four month later the Germans created a ghetto, were all the Jewish people had to live, it was the worst part of the city. They chased us out from our home and escorted us to the Lodz ghetto. They gave us one room to live in for the 5 of us. We had no running water or toilet facilities in our room. After all the Jewish people were settled in the ghetto, they put a barbed wire fence around the ghetto, and a soldier with a gun every 100 meters to watch that no one leaves the ghetto. No one could get in or out of the ghetto unless you had a special permit from the Germans.

In the ghetto, we had little food, a lot of people died from malnutrition. We had little medication to help the sick people. I was put to work in a leather factory where I made leather supplies for the German army, such as leather belts, ammunition pouches, saddles for horses and other leather goods. I had to make my daily quota, or I would be punished and my food ration for the day was taken away from me. My father worked in a tailor factory where he made army uniforms for the German soldiers, my sister worked in a mattress factory, my mother and my little brother stayed home. After four difficult years in the ghetto, most people were sent away and a lot of people died in the ghetto.

One day the Germans informed us that we have to leave the ghetto, because the Russian army is coming close to us, and if they enter our city all of us will be executed because they consider us as collaborators because we worked for the German army, and they want to save us and relocate us to an other place of work, where we will be well treated and looked after. Little did we know that the other place will be Auschwitz. We believed them and willingly went to the trains. On July 1944 on a very hot day we went to the trains to be relocated. The trains were cattle cars, they packed us in the cars like kettle. We travelled on those trains, for 3 days and 3 nights without food and water, we had no toilet facilities, a lot of people died on this voyage and the bodies were not removed. After 3 days and nights of travelling, the trains stopped, and those who survived this trip had to get off the train and form a single line and walk toward a German officer who waived as you approached him to the left or to the right. Those people who were waived to the left their



## Jerry's Story

destination was the gas chamber and those people who were waived to the right their destination was slave labour. I was waived to right. That was the last time I saw my family, and never saw them again. After the selection we were taken to a bath house. We had to strip naked, they shaved the hair of my head, they disinfected me and had a shower. My own clothing was taken away, and they gave me the striped prison uniform, which consisted of a pair of shoes, no socks, pants and no underwear, a shirt, jacket and hat, all in blue and white stripes. I was taken then to my sleeping quarters, which was a long barrack with 3 tiers of bunks, 4 to 6 people to a bunk. Every morning we had a row call. We had to line up in front of the barrack, and they counted all the people including the once who died in the middle of the night. If a person was missing we had to stand until that person was found dead or alive. After one week in Birkenau Auschwitz a number was tattooed on my arm, and I was sent to work on a farm in a place called Babice. It was a very large farm, it was run by the German SS group. We were 65 men on this farm, we had to do all the work. We lived on the farm in a barrack fenced with barbed wire and armed soldiers watching us all the time. We had row calls every morning and if someone was missing, we had to stand in front of our barrack until that person was found. On this farm we grew potatoes, sugar beets, all kind of vegetables, and fruits, we had cows, horses, and dogs to look after. Although we grew all kinds of food, yet we were not allowed to eat any of it. We had to live on the measly food ration the provided for us. All the food we grew went to the Germans. The work was hard. We worked from sunrise to sunset six days a week. On January 1945 a German officer came in to our barrack and told us we have to leave the farm because the Russian army is coming close to us. They did not have any transportation for us therefore we have to walk. We walked for days and nights with no food or drinks. This was called the death march, because most people died on this march, people who could not walk, because of weakness were shot. The road was paved with death bodies. After a few days walking, and living off snow, this was the only thing we had to eat, they found some open air cargo trains, and put some of us on those trains and sent us off to a concentration camp called Buchenwald in Germany. When I arrived in Buchenwald I was in very bad condition, my hand and my feet were frozen solid, my stomach was shrunken. They gave soup to eat, but I could not swallow anything. I was taken to my sleeping quarters which was a large barrack with 3 tiers of bunks, 4 to 6 people to a bunk. Again every morning we had a row call, and we had to line up in front of the barrack as they counted the people, if someone was missing we had to stand there in the bitter cold weather until that person was found.

In Buchenwald I did not work very much, we were just waiting for something to happen to us. We had no idea if they are going to kill us or send us to another work camp.

On the day of April 11-1945 it was very quiet in the morning. They did not come in to our barrack and screaming and yelling to get up and get out as they usually did every day. I did not know what was happening. One person came in from another barrack and told us to lay down on the floor, because there may be some shooting because the Germans are leaving and we may be liberated soon. The American Army is coming in soon. Of course we did not believe in that story. Fortunately it was true. The American Army came in in the afternoon on that day, and the camp Buchenwald was liberated with about 25000 people in it.

## Jerry's Story

There was a lot of celebration and joy. The Americans brought in a lot of good food which we did not see for a long time. We had a great time. Among the survivors they found 1000 children from age 8 to 18 we were called the children of Buchenwald and even now we are still the children of Buchenwald. The prisoners from other nationalities had homes to go back to. We the children of Buchenwald had no place to go, Our homes were taken away and our families killed, and no country wanted to take us in. After a lot of negotiation France took in 450 of us England took in 300 and Switzerland took in 300.

Although this group, the children of Buchenwald live now all over the globe. After 56 years we still are in touch and meet every 5 years, in different parts of the world.

I lived in Paris France for about 3 years after I went to live in New York USA for 3 years then moved to Canada where I have been living for 51 years.



## Jerry's Story

I was born in Lodz, Poland. The German army invaded our country in September 1939. In 1940 the Germans put all the Jews from Lodz into a Ghetto surrounded by a barbed wire fence. We had little food or medication, many people died from starvation and sickness. Everyone had to work, at the age of 11 I was forced to work in a leather factory under very difficult conditions. In 1944 they liquidated the Ghetto and we were crammed into cattle cars like animals without food or water. After 3 days we arrived at Birkenau-Auschwitz which was a death camp, I was separated from my family and never saw them again. Most people went to the gas chambers, the rest became slave laborers, I was sent as a slave to a farm called Babice. In January 1945 I was forced to go on a death march which lasted for many days, those who could not walk were shot and their bodies left along the road, there were many of these. We landed at Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany where there were about 35,000 people of all nationalities including Germans who had disagreed with Hitler's policies. On April 11th. 1945 we were liberated by the American army and we were free to go. However we had no homes or families to whom we could go and no one wanted children who might never grow up to be normal adults, they were sure we would become psychopaths and criminals. After much negotiation France took 450 of us, England took 300 and Switzerland also took 300. An orphanage in Paris called O.S.E looked after us and brought us back to a normal life. We have proven wrong all those people who predicted we would turn out to be criminals, for we have become good and productive citizens of each country we settled in. From France I came to live in North America where I reside to this day with my family. I truly believe the Holocaust happened because of religious intolerance and millions of men, women and children were killed simply because they were Jews or Gypsies. This must never be allowed to happen again to any group of people.

## Jerry's Story

*There are people out there who say that the Holocaust never happened. I hope this visit to Auschwitz left you with an important impression for a long time in your life. I hope you will tell your friends and relatives what you saw in Auschwitz and realize how brutal and evil some people can be to do harm to other people while good people stand by and do nothing to stop it. The hate crimes that were committed in the death camp, Auschwitz, were the result of years of discrimination, prejudice, and religious intolerance.*

*I was only 10 years old when the war started. My family and I spent 4 horrible years in a ghetto in Lodz, Poland. After 4 years, the Nazis liquidated the ghetto and my family and I were sent to the death camp, Auschwitz, where my entire family was killed. I had a younger brother, David, an older sister, Helen, loving parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. They were all murdered because they were Jewish. I am the only survivor from my family.*

*In Auschwitz I was put to work on a farm as a slave labourer at the age of 15. I worked from sunrise to sunset 6 days a week with little food. Although we produced and grew a lot of food, we were not allowed to eat any of this food. We had to live on starvation rations the Germans gave us. In January, 1945, I was sent on the infamous death march from Auschwitz. We had no food or drinks for 4 days. We lived on snow. About 80% of the people on that march died. All the people who could not walk in that march were shot. I ended up in another death camp called Buchenwald. I was liberated by the American army on April 11, 1945.*

*We must not allow such crimes to happen anywhere in this world ever again.*

*My name is Jerry Kapelus. I live now in Thornhill, Ontario.*



## Jerry's Story

I was born in Lodz, Poland. When the war broke out I was ten years old. About three months after, the nazis marched into Poland. They put all 300,000 Jews living in our city into a ghetto.

The ghetto consisted of the old slum part of the city fenced off with barbed wire and an armed guard every two hundred feet. No one could go in or out. Every family, regardless of size, was given one room only, to live in. In my family there were five people. We lived in one room with no running water or toilet facilities. The toilet was an outhouse in the back yard. For water there was a well with a pump, also in the back yard.

We had no communication with the outside world, no radio, no newspaper. To own a radio was an immediate death sentence. We had very little food, no doctors or medications. If someone got sick, he had two choices-- either he got better or he died.

There were a lot of informers who reported everything to the nazis. Some were our own people who sold their friends and family for a piece of bread. There were also a lot of informers who were planted there by the Germans. Therefore we could not organize or talk against the nazis for fear of being reported and taken away to be tortured or killed.

Everyone over the age of ten had to work in factories that produced supplies for the Germans. Every few weeks there was a roundup. They came in with trucks and grabbed everyone on the street or in the apartment, put them on the trucks and took them away. We never saw these people again. They told us that they were



## Jerry's Story

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taken to work somewhere else. We knew better. Sometimes they made people they took write letters to their families. The letters said how well they were, that they had lots of food and clothing. The letters were smuggled into the ghetto by the Germans. They did this to fool the people and cut down on resistance so that people would volunteer for the roundups.

After four years under these conditions, most people either died or were taken away. There were only about 60,000 left. When they decided to liquidate the ghetto, in the summer of 1944.

One day the head of the gestapo came to our factory, assembled everyone and made a speech. I still remember he said, "Friends," not their usual rhetoric, they always addressed us as 'pigs', 'swines' or 'insects'. This time he called us friends. He said, "You have worked for us for four years. We are happy with your performance. Therefore, we are going to relocate you to other places with better working conditions and more food. The trains are waiting for you. Please pack your belongings and come with us."

A lot of people believed him and voluntarily went to the trains. My father knew better. We hid for about two weeks until the nazis with dogs found us and sent us to the new place which was Auschwitz. This was the last time I saw my family.

What happened in Auschwitz you all know. You've read about it and seen documentaries. No one can nearly imagine what really happened. It's too incredible for a human mind to conceive the horror of Auschwitz and other death camps. I was lucky in that I was sent to a farm to work. We had to steal food from the cattle since they were better fed than us.



## Jerry's Story

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From there we were again relocated. In February, 1945 we marched for three days and nights with no food or drinks. We lived on snow. On that march 95% of the people died. After three days they found us some open cargo trains. Those who survived were put on those trains and shipped to Buchenwald.

We were liberated in Buchenwald on April 11, 1945 by the American army. The Germans had put bombs around the camp before they left to blow up everyone in the camp. By mistake a message was intercepted. They found out in time before the bombs exploded and they were dismantled.

The question which is being asked and one about which you are probably wondering is how can six million of our people go to their death with no resistance. It is a good question and there is an easy answer.

There were many factors which contributed to there being no resistance. One is that no resistance started way before the war. For example, I lived in a city in Poland which had a population of 900,000. 30% of which was Jewish, yet you were not safe to walk the streets for fear of being beaten by a Christian because you were Jewish. We had no where to turn to for help because the police and government were just as bad. Therefore either you fought back or you ran. We chose the latter because we were always told that Jewish boys didn't fight--this attitude led to no resistance.

Another factor that contributed to no resistance was that most Polish Jews were deeply religious with a ghetto mentality. Every misfortune that happened to us was considered God's will. God is punishing. We must pay for our sins. If a Christian beat you and

## Jerry's Story

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broke your leg, the saying was, 'Thank God for that, he could have broken both your legs.' This attitude again led to no resistance.

During the war the nazi propoganda machine was very effective. They starved you. They beat you, humiliated you, disgraced you. They reduced a human being to the stage of an imbecil, where there is no resistance left. Your only wish was to die.

It is very hard for anyone to understand what really happened unless you have lived through it, and even then you don't believe it really happened. But we learned our lesson. We have to make sure that it will never happen again. Never again! We must fight anti-semitism and bigotry wherever and whenever it raises its ugly head.



## Jerry's Story

### Appendix Four: Jerry's diary from his volunteer stint at SAR-EL

#### VOLUNTEER TRIP TO ISRAEL

NATAFIM

MONDAY OCT 11/93 AND OCT 12 TUESDAY

Garry picked us up at 9:15 AM to take us to the airport. Merne, Ariva, Daniel and Aaron came with to see me off. The El-Al plane<sup>747</sup> was suppose to take off 12:30 PM it took off 20 minutes late. It was a long line to board the plane. In the line I met Goldi about 70 years, she is going as a volunteer for the 8th time. After take off we stopped in Montreal to pick up more passengers. The stopover was two hours, we could not go out or leave the plane. After 12 hours we landed in Ben Gurion Airport about 9:30 A.M. on Oct 12. At the Airport all the volunteers 20 of us, from Canada, U.S. and Holland were met by a Madricha a young ladie soldier name Odipole very efficient, pleasant, after collecting our luggage, we all went by bus to the army base NATAFIM. We arrived just before lunch. After lunch we met the sergeant Major FROYKA we had a get acquainted meeting for about one hour, he told us the rules of the base the do's & don't's we were issued 2 army uniforms, and toured the camp. It is a supply base not a training base very few soldiers. After supper (army food) but enough. We met again in the T.V. room and discussed about our activities for the weekend which starts Thursday afternoon. Odipole advised us about booking hotels or Hostels or Kibutzim she made all arrangements for us. By then we went 24 hours with no sleep we went to bed. 9 PM



## Jerry's Story

WEDNESDAY OCT 13

We got up <sup>showered</sup> 6 AM at 7:10 AM we had the flag raising ceremony, after we had a briefing with camp commander Doo-Doo (DAVID) as he likes to be called, every one told his name, family background and occupation, Doo-Doo gave us a nice welcome and a pep talk how good we are for volunteering in Israel. There are 4 more Jews in this volunteer group. They assigned us to different jobs. My job today was cleaning rust off and repacking parts of tanks.

We stopped for breakfast 8:30 AM. Eggs, vegetables, bread, and ~~thats~~ We went to work at 10-11:30. We had lunch at 12:30 to 1 PM back to work till 3 pm. Work is not hard, a bit dirty, we can change jobs if we want to.

After 3 pm we showered and relaxed. After supper a group 14 of us went by bus to see Tybiriass, which is only 15 Kilometers from camp. The closest city it is right on the sea of Tiberias or Galilee. A very pretty town it is a summer resort town lots of hotels, restaurants, a very busy place.

We returned 10:30 pm. and went to sleep.



## Jerry's Story

THURSDAY OCT 14

got up at 6 Showered & Shaved at 7:00 AM  
Flag raising ceremony. After we went to work  
today we clean rods for tank chains, and pack  
them in large containers. Breakfast at 8:30 to 9  
Eggs + vegetables + bread. 9 o'clock we return to work  
the work is easy, they always tell you to slow  
down, we are working too fast. We stopped for lunch  
at 12. Eggs + salads + bread (boring) went back to  
work 1 PM to 3 PM. We finished for the week  
showered relaxed 4:20 PM we took off to  
Tel-Aviv Ben, Myer + Me shared a hotel room  
in the Astor Hotel on Hayarkon + Frishman 1 Block  
from the ocean.

We arrived in Tel-Aviv at 7:30 PM we had  
dinner walked around the city visiting  
several hotels in the area. I phoned my  
cousin Sarah in Holon. She invited me  
to her place on Saturday.



## Jerry's Story

FRIDAY OCT. 15

got up 7 AM had breakfast in the Hotel a great breakfast. had enough good food for the rest of the day. After breakfast we relaxed and went to see the open air market Carmel after walked on the boardwalk ~~back~~ back to the hotel we also visited the Opera Tower a very beautiful Bldg, with lots of restaurants. In the afternoon we went on the beach and I swam in the ocean, it was very relaxing. the weather was just perfect 85°

All stores close at 2 pm on Friday except the ~~most~~<sup>some</sup> restaurants stay open.

Things are very expensive here coffee about 4-5 shekels a soft drink 3-5 shekels. just a ordinary meal in a local rest cost betw. 20-30 shekels. we get 2 shekels for ~~the~~ Canadian dollar.

In the evening we went for dinner on Dizengoff street, also walked on Ben Yehuda street the streets are congested with traffic lots of cars and lots of noise.

Returned to the Hotel 10 PM. After a busy day we went to sleep.

I could not sleep the first night because of the busy traffic and noisy cars all night.



## Jerry's Story

SAT. OCT 16

Got up 7 AM showered and went for breakfast. The breakfast is great it is included in the price of hotel, I ate enough to last me the rest of day.

At noon Sarah, my cousin from Holon picked me up and took me to her place in Holon I met Shlomo her husband and Daphne her daughter. I had a very good lunch with them and spent the rest of the day with them. They drove me home about 7 PM.

We went for a walk on the promenade, it seems the whole population of Tel-Aviv was out tonight on this promenade (Boardwalk) along the sea. I ~~watched~~ saw a group of 4 Musicians playing classical music, a dancer and all kinds of activities on this boardwalk the restaurants were packed with people. The weather is still very warm.

We returned to the hotel about 10.30 pm watched T.V. and went to sleep.



## Jerry's Story

SUNDAY OCT 17

Got up 5:30 AM to get ready to return to Army Camp Netefin.

Had breakfast 6:30 in the hotel. The 3 of us Ben, Myer and me got a cab to the bus station for the 7:20 bus which takes us to Golan Junction. ~~At 10:30~~ where we met the rest of the volunteers. At 10:30 an Army truck pick us up at the junction and took us all to the base. After a short rest we had lunch at 12:30. At one o'clock we went to work. Today I work with Rudolph an Argentine Jew, the foreman also called Bulley Myer, Ben, David Stewart and me. We clean pins for tracks of tanks. We finished this job today, and started cleaning disc or cylinder for steering. We stop work at 3 pm. Showered and relaxed untill 5:30 dinner time (not great) but enough. At 6:30 PM we had a Hebrew class for the volunteers, to 8 PM. Then we had a game called picturinary. A word is said and each group of four has to draw a picture and guess what it is. The game finished at 9:30. Went to sleep 10:30.



## Jerry's Story

MONDAY OCT-18

Got up 6am showered + shaved at 7:10 flag raising ceremony. I was picked today to raise the flag. All the soldiers and volunteers attend this ceremony. After went to work cleaning cylinders at 8:30 we stopped for breakfast. the usual, eggs, veggies, bread, cheese + tea. after breakfast back to work till 12 noon. at 12:30 lunch eggs again. 1pm went back to work till 3pm.

showered, relaxed at 5:30 we had supper today we had some middle eastern food. after supper we had Israeli folk dancing lessons with Avigale our Medichra. it was a lot of fun. We all got to know each other and we became like one family.

After the dance. Al Chapnik a very funny guy kept us laughing with his stories!  
Went to sleep 10:30

Tomorrow we are going on a field trip



## Jerry's Story

TUESDAY OCT 19

Got up at 6 AM Flag raising ceremony at 7:10  
after ceremony we had breakfast and at 8 AM  
we left on a bus. the volunteers + 2 soldiers and  
one medic. We had our army uniform on and  
left for our field trip.

The first stop was ROSH HANIKRA on the Lebanese  
border, we visited the famous caves and grotos, tunnels  
and caves formed by the sea. We used a cable car  
to get to the caves, a very interesting place + picturesque.  
The bus driver fell asleep in the bus, it took a half hour  
to locate him, we had to wait for him in the heat.

Next stop was NAHARIA an interesting busy place.  
Then we went to ACCO, an ancient city a stopping  
place for travelling merchants and also a famous prison  
the British used for the Dergun members. We also past  
JERICHO, did not stop here.

Next stop was TEPFEN INDUSTRIAL PK. a place where they  
invent and create new industries for Israel, for  
the future so they can be competitive with the rest  
of the world. It is very modern, interesting and creative  
place, there is also a car museum here and art  
museum here.

We returned to the base at 6 pm. We had  
dinner and relaxed the rest of the day.

It was a very enjoyable, and informative trip.  
We travelled through the most beautiful scenery  
of the mountains of Galilee.



## Jerry's Story

WEDS DAY OCT 20

Got up at 6 AM flag raising ceremony 7:10 AM  
I was picked again to raise the flag today.  
After the ceremony we went to work.

Today I had to unwrap the hoses I did 2 days  
ago. The foreman Balty made a mistake. When  
he told me to do the job.

Breakfast 8:30 back to work at 9 AM worked  
to 12 noon. The weather is still hot.

We worked to 3 PM.

To night all the volunteers decided to go out  
for dinner at the Golden Junction it is an  
Arab owned restaurant, the food is good and  
the price reasonable.

After dinner 8 of us walked back to the Base  
the rest were picked up by the army truck.  
The rest of the evening we played charades  
went to sleep 10:30



## Jerry's Story

THURSDAY OCT 21

Flag raising at 7<sup>10</sup> AM. today the camp commander allowed us to take pictures of the ceremony. Changed uniforms for clean ones went to work, today we clean disks for wheels of tanks. At 8<sup>30</sup> breakfast, eggs again and veggies bread + tea. 9 AM we go back to work, today I work with Ben, Meyer + Dave.

12.30 lunch, we finish work 3 pm. end of week we shower and leave camp by army bus at 4.20 for Haifa Ben, Albert Morrison (Irishman) and me share a room in the Hotel MAROM. The hotel is located on the top of the hill it is a nice hotel but we were the only guest in the hotel. Al Chopnick and his wife Claire also ~~checked~~ booked the hotel later on now there is 5 guests in Hotel. We get special rates for Hotels, since we are considered army.

we stay in for the night



## Jerry's Story

FRIDAY OCT 22

We got up 7 AM had breakfast in the Hotel, reasonable good breakfast. The 5 of us take a cab to downtown Haifa. We walk a lot, we visit all 3 levels of the city, and all the business section. Here the stores close at 3 pm on Friday. The weather is still hot about 34°.

We stayed downtown, we had dinner at a restaurant called Kepinski it is about 8 pm. I have a Greek salad, was so much food I could not finish it. It was very good food. Haifa is an interesting and beautiful city. The traffic is heavy and noisy, the Israelis do smoke a lot of cigarettes just about everyone smokes. Their politeness is questionable. We return to the hotel about 10 PM, and very tired.



## Jerry's Story

SATURDAY OCT 23

We have breakfast at 730 AM. Ben is going to synagogue for service. At 10 AM Albert and I take an city organized tour, walking tour with a guide supplied by the city at no cost. We meet at corner Albany & Ben Guion. We walked to Marc Chagal museum. The guide name Sharon in fluent English explained everything. Then on the promenade which was build by an Israeli Citizen who donated the money in the name of his son who was killed. The view was breath taking. We could view the port, the Bahai temple and the city. Then we walked to the Bahai Temple, visited the Gardens, which are magnificent. We visited the Artist park, which had beautiful steel sculptures of people, all over the park.

The tour took 2 hours, the guide was very knowledgeable about the origin of the city of Haifa when it was settled and by whom. After the tour Ben joined us, we all went to the beach. The beach is beautiful the ocean was perfect for swimming.

We returned to the hotel about 5 PM rested a while, went out for dinner in an Italian restaurant I had pizza.

After we walked back to the hotel and the 5 of us talked until 10 PM then went to sleep.



## Jerry's Story

SUNDAY OCT 24

Got up 6 AM packed our things, had breakfast at 7 AM.

at 8:15 AM the five of us took a Sherrett back to the Golan Junction to meet the rest of Volunteers group.

at 11:30 AM the Maduchia Adigole took us on a ~~for~~ visit to the Golan Brigade Museum. It is a memorial for soldiers killed in battles from 1947-1982. The Golan Brigade is an elite Brigade fought in most wars in the northern part of Israel. There was an exhibit of different weapons and tanks they used in the battles. It is a very interesting place.

at 1 PM we were picked up by an army truck to take us back to camp.

We had lunch, and went back to work for one hour.

~~In~~ Tonight we have a movie about the Entebi Raid in an Israeli version.

## Jerry's Story

MONDAY OCT 25

Flag raising 7:10 AM. Went to work till 8:30 stop for Breakfast. Today I do my laundry in the sink and hang it out, on the washing line it will be dry by lunch time.

Went to work after clean cylinders and pack them in crates. We stop work for lunch at 12:00. After lunch we have a short day, we stop at 2 PM. The civilian workers have some kind of union meeting, in camp.

We had dinner at 5:30 today we have meat chicken + sausages. bread + tea. desert fruit.

after dinner we have Hebrew lessons then Israeli folk dancing lesson

We go to sleep at 10:30



## Jerry's Story

OCT 26 TUESDAY

flag raising at 7:10 AM. A new group of 10 Russians with army uniform joined us for the flag raising. They came to study Hebrew and Israeli culture and life in the army. Went to work 7:30-8:30 back to work 9:30 till 12. 12:30 we had lunch. Today we had an exceptional good lunch, meat mashed potatoes, fruit + Hefke for desert. The Lieutenant Major Moishe the head of the entire Ce-Rel program joined us for lunch. The camp was spotless. After lunch we all the volunteers met with Lieutenant Major Moishe for 1 1/2 hour in the T.V. room. He told us how the Ce-Rel program started, what it is all about how it works. He thanked us for the volunteering, and ~~told us~~ how we help the state of Israel. The program is increasing by 25% each year, he says. After the meeting all the volunteers with the help of Forayke + Avigale had a tree planting ceremony. Every two volunteers planted a palm tree on the base.

Myer Shraw had to leave the camp today, to go home to Toronto, so he can be home for his daughters University Graduation on Oct 31. The weather is still hot 34°.

at 5:30 we had dinner.

about 7 pm 8 of us (volunteers) left the camp to the local rest. for coffee.

The army truck picked us up 9:30 at the restaurant, took us back to the base. Went to sleep at 10:30.

A very interesting day to day.



## Jerry's Story

WEDNESDAY OCT 27

Flag raising ceremony at 7:10 Am. The last one for us volunteers in this camp. NATAFM went to work at 8:30 stopped for breakfast, worked till 12 noon. We had lunch 12:30 took the rest of day off, to pack and get ready to leave the camp for good. We returned all the army uniforms & boots, to the warehouse. At 4 O'clock we had a meeting with Camp Com. DODO (DAVID) and Sergeant Major Franke. They all thanked us officially for all the good work we have done on the base. We had a toast of Israeli wine, then they gave out to each volunteer a certificate and a pin of merit and recognition for the service we have done. At 5:30 pm we have dinner, tonight we have pizza, eggs, veggies, tea and colce. We finish packing our luggage and go to sleep early. Tomorrow we have breakfast early at 6 Am. then leave to town Jerusalem by bus.



## Jerry's Story

THURSDAY OCT 28

We get up 5 AM, shave, shower. We have breakfast at 6 AM.

At 6.30 all the volunteers 2 armed soldiers guards and a medic leave the camp by bus for the last time. We are going to Jerusalem for a tour. We travel through Judean Hills, Jerico and other interesting places. We arrive in Jerusalem at 10.30 AM. In Jerusalem they provided an English speaking tour guide who took us first to Yad Vashem. I became very emotional it brought back a lot of memories which I try to forget, I started to cry. Myra walked with me and ~~gave me a bit of~~ comforted me.

There was a special service inside the building for a French nun who saved Jews during the Nazi occupation. The people she saved and their families were also there. We spent 2 hours at Yad Vashem. After we went to the south deck of Jerusalem we can see the whole city in panorama, beautiful. Then we went to Zion Gate entered the Jewish quarter which Jordanians occupied to 1967, walked to the Kotel the Western Wall. The tour guide told us the history of it all.

At 5 pm we said goodbye to the other volunteers the bus dropped us at the Lincoln Hotel where we booked for the next 6 days. Me, Ben & Christoph. ~~At 7 pm we went out for dinner on Ben Yehuda~~ The Lincoln Hotel is located ~~across~~ from Lincoln and King David, across from King David Hotel and the W.M.C.A. At 7 pm we went for dinner on Ben Yehuda st. The weather cooled off.



## Jerry's Story

FRIDAY OCT 29

We get up early 6 AM, had breakfast in the hotel, very good breakfast. 2 more volunteers Dave Steiner and Markene Smith checked in at the Lincoln Hotel. After breakfast we walked over to King David hotel, which is across from our hotel a very beautiful hotel. It looks like the Royal York very British looking. Then we visited the W.M.A. Building, across the street. We went after for a long walk to Ben Yehuda str. and other business section. The stores close at 2 pm. People rushing home for Shabat, traffic is heavy, & the city is bubbling with excitement and activities. The Election for Mayor of Jerusalem is next Tuesday. There is a lot campaigning going on for the election. We bought some groceries for dinner tonight, we are eating in.

At 4 pm we walked over to the Kotel (Wall) there were a lot of religious chasidim there already, with the fur hats and black coats, praying at the wall. At sunset a large group of youth 10 a breast shoulder to shoulder marched in towards the wall singing and praying. I was a moving screen. After they finished the evening service, they marched away from the wall backward the way they came in. We returned to the hotel at 7 pm had our dinner, and relaxed for the rest of the evening.



## Jerry's Story

SAT. OCT 30

Got up 6.30 had breakfast at 7.30.

Ben went to synagogue. I went to meet a group for our morning guided ~~tour~~ walking tour for 2 1/2 hours. We visited an old castle built by a Sultan just ruins left. Then we walked to the Valley of Hinnom, outside the wall a wicked place then where the Canaanites made sacrifices to their gods. Sometimes they sacrificed children, depending which king ruled. Also the caves used as a cemetery. They buried people in the caves during the 1st Temple. The place where King David saw Bathsheba bathing and fell in love with her.

There was also a lot of fighting during 6 day war with the arabs, in this valley. There is still the cable which they transferred weapons & food from one side of the valley to other side at night. Late in the afternoon Ben & I walked through the park just south of King David's Hotel overlooking the valley.

In the evening most of the volunteers met at a restaurant on Ben Yehuda, had a nice reunion. We said goodbye to some people who are leaving on Sunday morning for home.

We went to sleep after midnight.

The weather is still warm.



## Jerry's Story

SUNDAY OCT 31

Had breakfast in the Hotel at 7.30 am  
10 am waited to the El-Al office to confirm  
our flight back home, ~~for Thursday~~ Wednesday Morning  
Nov 3. 1 Am.

10.30 Ben, David, Marlene<sup>me</sup> went to the Israel Museum  
and Shagol Museum. We also saw the Knesset  
near by, very interesting. Returned by 3 pm.  
at 6 pm Ben's friend Greenstein picked us up  
We went for dinner, after he showed us the new  
Shopping mall in Jerusalem (CAM/OT) something  
like the Fairview, the biggest mall in Israel.  
after walking around in the mall Ben & I  
went back to his apartment for coffee, Sam  
and Annette Greenstein treated us very nice  
We had a pleasant evening. Sam drove us  
back to the hotel at 11.30 pm.  
The weather tonight is a bit cooler

## Jerry's Story

MONDAY NOV 1

We had breakfast in the Hotel at 7.30 Am  
It has been raining all night and is still  
raining. It is the first rain since we came to  
Israel. It is cool we need a light jacket.  
The rain stopped at 10 Am, went out for a walk  
in the area. The other volunteers who stayed in the  
hotel left ~~Israel~~ last night.

We went over to King David Hotel to see the  
action taking place for the Mayors race (election)  
on Tuesday, I saw Ted Kolesk, and all his officials  
running around in the hotel, getting ready for  
tomorrow's election, a very busy place.

After dinner an other friend of Ben, Magdalen (ex Tori)  
picked us up ~~and~~ drove us to his place  
for the evening, we had coffee + cake and  
nice conversations, the rest of the evening  
He drove us back at 11.30.

We are getting ready for tomorrow a bit  
we are leaving Israel tomorrow



## Jerry's Story

TUESDAY NOV 2

Got up early 5 AM could not sleep because of the noise. A store alarm went on at 5 in the morning outside in a store. The siren did not stop until 10 AM. Had breakfast at 7:30. Len came over to see us at 8:30, and the 3 of us went to see ME-SHARON the orthodox people of Jerusalem, quarters. We walked through the narrow streets, some not to clean. Then one resident from the area picked us up in his car and showed us the rest of ME-SHARON. I took pictures. We returned to the Hotel by 3 pm.

We reserved a Sharutt for 6 pm to take us to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel-Aviv. We ~~checked~~ had to check out from the hotel by 3 pm. We spent the rest of the time until 6 pm in the King David Hotel. The Sharutt arrived on time at 6 pm. picked us up, drove me & Ben to the Airport in Tel-Aviv.

We arrived at 7 pm, checked in our luggage, cleared the security, and spent the rest of time at the airport until departure at 1 AM Nov 3. We bought some liquor at the duty free shop and spent the rest of shekles we had.

The plane left on time at 1 AM. We stopped in New York for 1 1/2 hours. half of passengers got off in New York. It was a nice stop over we left the plane into a lounge waited around they gave us refreshment. After 1 1/2 hour, we boarded the plane for Toronto. We arrived in Toronto at 9:30 AM a very long flight, but comfortable it was a big El-Al 747 plane.



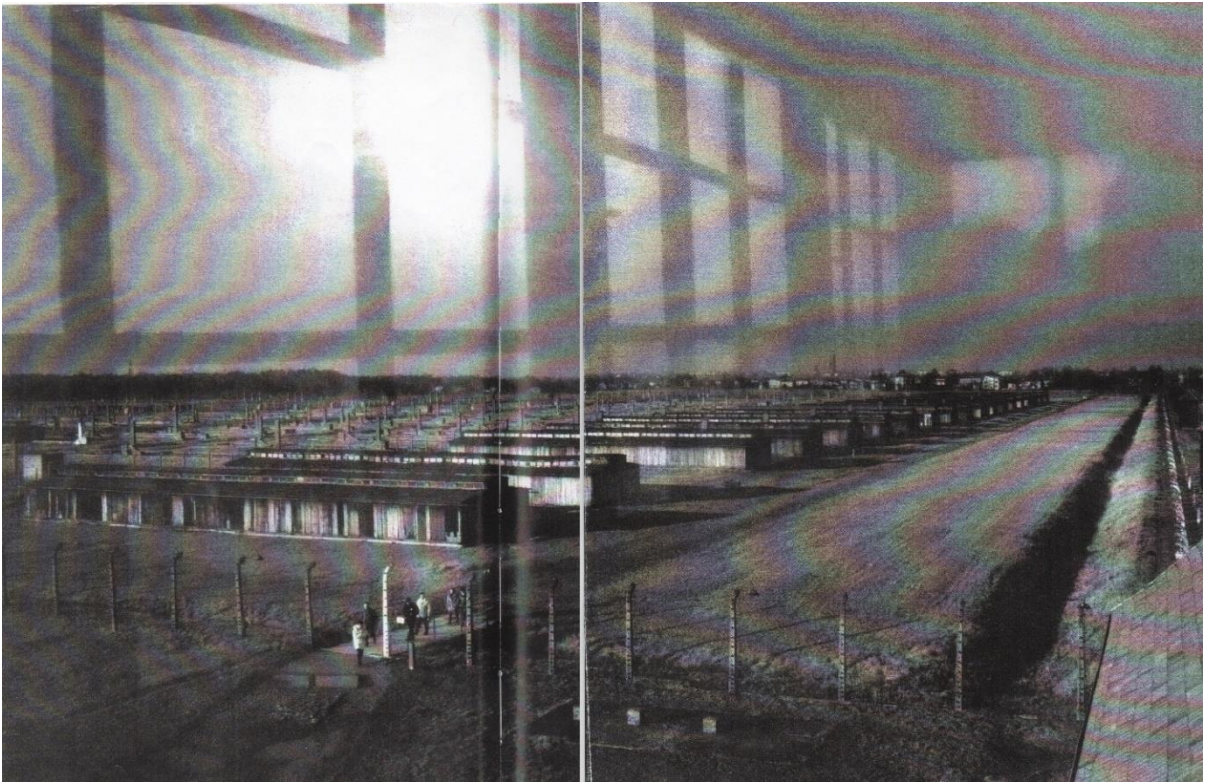
## Jerry's Story

### Appendix Five: The visual materials used to support Jerry's in-person Holocaust presentations



A view of a concentration camp

## Jerry's Story



An outside view of a concentration camp



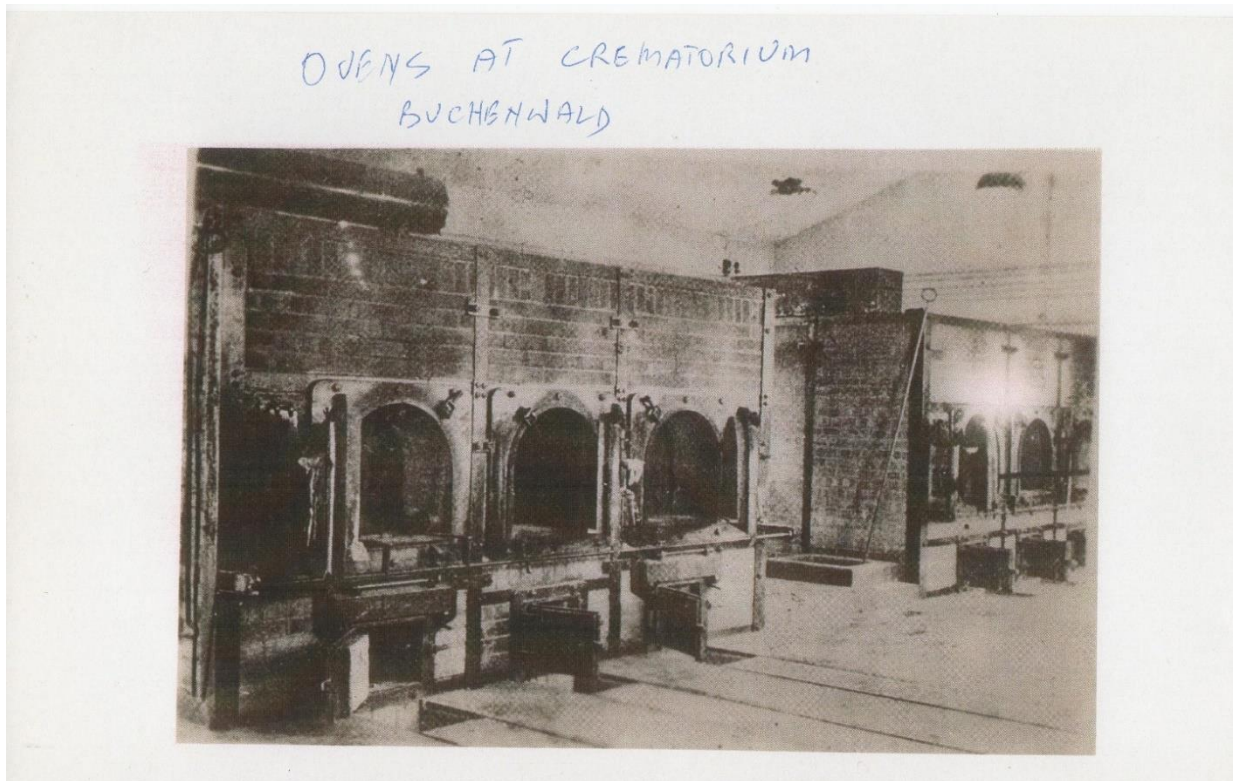
## Jerry's Story



Wooden barracks. Birkenau kz; Oswiecim, Poland  
*Originally Polish cavalry stables intended for 52 horses, each building  
later held as many as 1,000 prisoners in three-tiered bunks.*

## The barracks in Auschwitz

## Jerry's Story



The crematorium at Buchenwald



## Jerry's Story



CAMP FENCE

The outside fence of a concentration camp



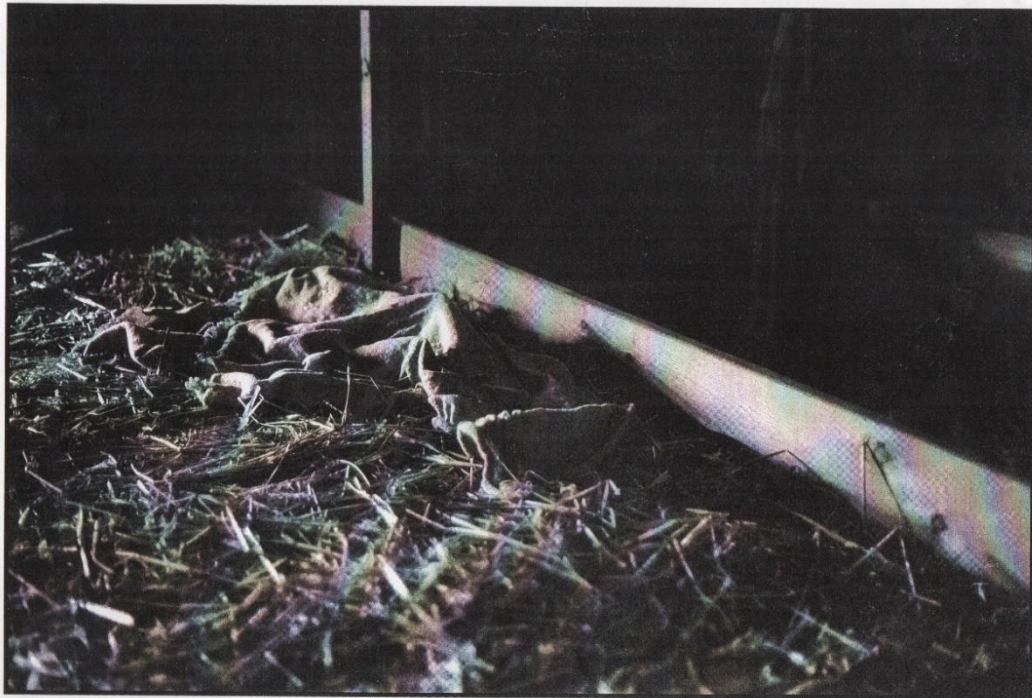
## Jerry's Story



GAS CHAMBER

A gas chamber in a concentration camp

## Jerry's Story



Pallet. Buchenwald KZ, near Weimar, Germany

*Windowless barracks held as many as 1,500 prisoners in four-tiered wooden bunks. They slept four to a pallet on rotting straw, covered—if at all—with thin blankets or rags.*

A straw sleeping bunk in Buchenwald



## Jerry's Story

USHMM Photo Archives

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W/S # 10055

CD # 0111



*This image is for reference purposes only!*

Jews forced to leave the ghetto



## Jerry's Story

USHMM Photo Archives

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W/S # 67052

CD # 0111



*This image is for reference purposes only!*

Jews forced on to cattle trains, unknowingly heading to concentration camps


## Jerry's Story



A lampshade ordered to be made of human tattooed skin and other artifacts found by US soldiers at Buchenwald



## Jerry's Story





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Search

HOME > SHOP > WORLD WAR II & OTHER MILITARIA > ORIGINAL GERMAN NAZI PARTY NSDAP 1939 MAY DAY BADGE. (MAI-TAG ABZEICHEN) CERTIFIED

ORIGINAL GERMAN NAZI PARTY NSDAP 1939 MAY DAY BADGE. (MAI-TAG ABZEICHEN) CERTIFIED



ORIGINAL GERMAN NAZI PARTY NSDAP 1939 MAY DAY BADGE. (MAI-TAG ABZEICHEN) CERTIFIED






SOLD

Original German Nazi Party NSDAP 1939 MAY DAY BADGE. (Mai-tag Abzeichen) Certified. (Mai-tag Abzeichen) A 35mm diameter, cast alloy badge to whose obverse face is the image of a young woman in a sheer dress dropping flowers from the bouquet cradled in her other arm. An eagle clutching a wreathed, mobile swastika is behind her, with a scroll emanating from it and passing under her, which reads "Ostmark," "Alt Reich" and "Sudetenland." "1. Mai 1939" arches over the eagle, and the designer's initials may be seen beneath the second section of the scroll. The vertical pin-back device crimped to its reverse. Maker marked". This badge was the last of the Labor Day tinnies. lightly worn example; in overall good condition with some slight toning on the zinc. We have several from a collection and will pick the best one for you (the one you get will be as good or BETTER than the one pictured! Gettysburg Museum Certified (COA) provided. Rare 100% Guaranteed to be authentic. Sold for historic purposes only. See our other items on our web site. Also note when browsing our web site there are several pages of items, at the bottom of the list look for other page numbers. An Excellent scarce badge.

Availability: Out of stock

Category: World War II & Other Militaria

Tags: Adolf Hitler, Authentic Nazi Flags for Sale, German Helmet, German war relics, Hitler, Infantry Assault Badge, Nazi flag, Nazi Flag For Sale, Nazi Germany, Nazi Party, NSDAP, SS, Waffen SS, War Merit Cross, War Service Cross, War Service Cross 2nd Class, WW2, WWII, WWII Artifacts, WWII German Artifacts for sale, WWII Relics



ADD TO WISHLIST

DESCRIPTION

A 'May Day' badge, torn from the uniform of a German guard in Buchenwald



## Jerry's Story



Scrip, valued in Reichsmark, was distributed in Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. While held at the camp, inmates were compelled to work, and a special currency was issued to incentivize work output, though the money had no real monetary value. Buchenwald operated 134 subcamps and issued two different types of special currency. The canteen scrip, seen above, was used in the main camp. Notes were issued in .50-, 1-, 2-, and 3-mark denominations.

Source: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn524865>

## Jerry's Story



A replica of the yellow Star of David worn by all Jews in German-occupied countries

## Jerry's Story



Jakob Kapelusz and other young survivors of Buchenwald, free at last



## Jerry's Story



Jerry and his mother Esther, separated forever at Auschwitz



# A man of integrity and hope

