



Jack Adler

[Yakov Szlama Adler]

Born 1929

PABIANICE, POLAND

Jack Adler (Yakov Szlama Adler) was born in Pabianice, Poland on February 1, 1929. One of four children, Jack was ten years old when the Nazis launched their Blitzkrieg attack and overwhelmed Polish defenses on **September 1, 1939**.

Nazis swiftly implemented anti-Jewish laws. They concentrated the Jewish population into ghettos with wretched conditions that Jack's mother and older brother did not survive. During the liquidation of Pabianice ghetto in 1942, Jack rescued his younger sister from deportation by hiding her in a pile of rubbish. Jack, his two surviving siblings, and their father miraculously remained together and were deported to Lodz ghetto.

When the Lodz ghetto was liquidated in 1944, the Adlers were deported to Auschwitz, where Jack's youngest sister was murdered. His older sister was assigned to labor and would later die at Bergen-Belsen. Jack and his father were separated but reunited before they were both sent to a labor camp near Dachau, Germany. In early 1945, Jack was assigned to work in the office of an SS commandant in the main Dachau camp. This officer secretly left Jack small parcels of food, likely saving his life. His father perished just weeks before the end of the war.

In late April 1945, Jack and approximately 10,000 other Dachau inmates were forced on a death march. When Nazi captors fled and Jack was rescued by the Red Cross on May 2, 1945, he weighed 66 pounds. He spent three months in a hospital recovering.

Soon after his discharge, Jack's application to immigrate to the United States as a war orphan was accepted. At the age of 19, he settled with a foster family in Chicago, where he attended school and later college. After military service during the Korean War, he met his wife in Chicago, and they raised two children. Jack later relocated to Colorado, where he has spoken to thousands of students and remains an active member of the Holocaust Awareness Institute's Survivor Speakers Bureau.



Paula Burger

[Pola Koladicki]

Born 1934

NOVOGRUDEK, POLAND

Pola Koladicki (Paula Burger) was born in Novogrodek, Poland on July 27, 1934. Her father, Wolf Koladicki, traded in various local goods and was well-known for his knowledge of the region, and her mother Sarah was a pharmacist. German forces entered Novogrodek on **July 4, 1941**, and soon thereafter, Jews were ordered to move into the Novogrodek ghetto.

Paula's family escaped and returned to the ghetto several times. They were sometimes able to find shelter with a neighbor for short periods. Paula's father hid in the countryside, sure that he would be killed if he returned. The SS questioned and eventually arrested Paula's mother in order to discover her father's location.

With her mother imprisoned and her father in hiding, Paula and her brother stayed with her aunt and cousins. Paula's mother was murdered. After her execution, Paula's father devised a plan to sneak Paula and her brother out of the ghetto inside an empty water barrel. They waited for several days on a farm until their father came for them.

The family spent the next two years in the forest with the Bielski partisan group, sleeping in makeshift camps and surviving on what they could forage or trade. The group was often forced to move, and Paula was expected to keep up with the adults on days-long treks through the wilderness. Living under such harsh conditions, the family was afflicted with many illnesses, including one which fused together Paula's fingers and toes.

After two years of hiding in the forest, liberation came in the form of the Russian Army in the summer of 1944. After the war, the family lived briefly in Lida, before joining the streams of refugees moving throughout Europe and making their way westward. They arrived at Foehrenwald DP camp in Germany in 1946. After their immigration to the United States in 1949, they settled in Chicago.



Henry Lowenstein

[Ernst Heinrich Loewenstein]

Born 1925

BERLIN, GERMANY

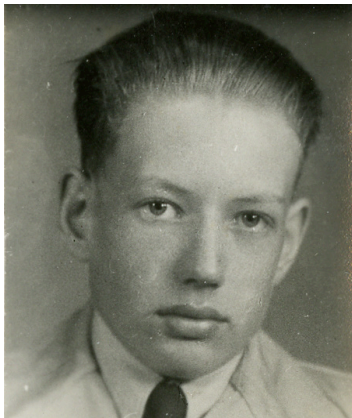
Ernst Heinrich Loewenstein (Henry Lowenstein) was born in Berlin, Germany on July 4, 1925. Henry's mother was Protestant and his father was Jewish, the family celebrated both Jewish and Christian holidays. Seven years old when Hitler came to power in **1933**, Henry was subjected to mistreatment from German classmates and teachers who supported the Nazis.

Henry was 13 on November 9-10, 1938, when the wave of anti-Jewish violence known as Kristallnacht erupted. His uncle, who lived nearby, was arrested and taken to a concentration camp. The family hid at the uncle's apartment for several weeks. Because Henry's mother and half-sister were not Jewish, they were able to come and go from their hiding place to maintain a semblance of normalcy while the situation for Jews in Germany worsened.

Finding a way to leave Germany became the highest priority, and Henry was accepted for a Kindertransport, a program funded by private citizens and Jewish organizations that allowed unaccompanied refugee children to enter Great Britain on temporary visas. Only weeks after Henry's arrival to England, British government ordered children to be evacuated from London due to the threat of German bombings.

Henry was sent to live on a farm in the countryside next to a zoo. He learned English, and eventually started to work, first at the zoo, and later on the farm. Through the Red Cross, he was able to occasionally communicate with his family in Berlin, but the brief messages were subject to censor and did little but confirm that they were alive and well.

After the war, the Lowensteins immigrated to the United States and settled in Pennsylvania. Henry joined them there in 1947. After finishing school and military service during the Korean War, Henry eventually moved to Denver and had a successful career in theater.



Fred Marcus

[Fritz Werner Marcus]

Born 1924

BERLIN, GERMANY

Fritz Werner Marcus (Fred Marcus) was born on May 16, 1924 in Berlin, Germany. His father, Samuel Marcus, was a successful businessman and Fred was an only child. When Hitler came to power in **1933**, Fred was 9 years old. At school he was subjected to the taunts of his German teachers and classmates.

As the situation for Jews in Germany deteriorated, many sought to emigrate, even as it became more difficult to obtain visas to escape. After the death of Fred's mother due to a prolonged illness, Fred and his father departed to Shanghai in 1939. There, they adjusted to their diminished circumstances as refugees. In early 1943, Japanese troops occupying Shanghai ordered all "stateless refugees," who were overwhelmingly Jewish, to move into a Designated Area in Hongkew where their access to work, food, sanitation and medical care was severely restricted.

In 1944, both Fred and his father were ill. Fred contracted pneumonia and fought a high fever for over a week. He recovered only to find that his father had passed away from his own illness. Alone and with no income, 19-year-old Fred joined a fire brigade and later served as a member of the local police force. These jobs helped to keep him afloat financially and provided structure to his life.

The refugees in Shanghai followed the war in Europe through the Russian radio broadcasts, celebrating the Allied victory in Europe in May 1945 while the war against Japan continued through the summer. After the Japanese surrender, Fred threw himself into the excitement of post-war Shanghai. He found work at a prestigious hotel, where he met influential Americans.

National quotas made immigration difficult for Jewish refugees in Shanghai. After watching many of his friends leave, Fred was finally approved to enter the United States, and in February of 1949, he sailed for San Francisco, where he became a Jewish educator and frequently spoke to audiences about his experiences growing up in Nazi Germany and as a refugee in Shanghai.



Oscar Sladek

Born 1935

PREŠOV, CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Oscar Sladek is born Prešov, Czechoslovakia to Irene and Frici Štaub on March 18th, 1935. In **1938-1939**, Czechoslovakia is partitioned, and Prešov becomes a part of the newly-formed independent Slovak Republic, a client state of Nazi Germany. In **1941**, the Slovak government passes a series of laws discriminating against Jewish citizens and, in **March 1942**, begins deporting Slovak Jews to labor and concentration camps. A good friend of the Štaubs, a local judge, helps them to hide from these roundups. But as the danger for Jews increases, Oscar is smuggled across the border into Hungary to live with his aunt's family.

When the Nazis occupy Hungary in the **spring of 1944**, Oscar returns to his family in Prešov. Once reunited, the Štaubs leave Prešov and use forged baptismal certificates to live under assumed names. Caught in the midst of the Slovak National Uprising of 1944, the Štaubs must finally flee on foot into the Tatras mountains as the German army closes in. For two months, they live with other Jewish refugees in a small shepherd's cabin without running water or electricity. In December 1944, in the middle of one of the coldest winters on record, they must abandon their cabin when German forces sweep the mountains searching for Jews in hiding. They build a small lean-to and hide in the bitter cold with little food or resources. They are eventually discovered by some partisans who, in March 1945, lead the Štaubs to the Soviet line of war.

Thus liberated, the Štaubs return to Prešov but soon after move to Hungary and change their name to Sladek. There, Oscar celebrates his bar mitzvah and the Sladeks have another baby. In May of 1949, the Sladeks immigrate to Israel. In Israel, Oscar finishes school, begins a musical career, and joins the Israeli Defense Force. Later he immigrates to Caracas, Venezuela and then to Los Angeles, California. Oscar meets and marries his wife in L.A. and they move to her hometown of Denver, Colorado where they have four children and many more grand- and great-grandchildren. Oscar continues his musical career and travels across the country speaking about his experiences in the Holocaust.



Barbara Bandler Steinmetz

Born 1936
GYŐR, HUNGARY

Barbara Bandler Steinmetz was born on November 26, 1936 in Győr, Hungary. Soon afterwards, she returned with her parents and older sister to the Italian island of Lussinpiccolo, where the family operated a hotel.

In 1939, Italy passed anti-Jewish laws requiring all foreign-born Jews to leave the country. The Blanders were forced to give up their hotel and return temporarily to their native Hungary. Their search for a haven from Nazism would send them on a journey across Europe and around the world.

As the Blanders moved from country to country, Barbara attended a new school every few months. Her father wrote to business contacts all over the world to seek safety for his family. Many responded with sympathy; none offered assistance. At the 1938 Evian Conference, only the Dominican Republic agreed to provide sanctuary to Jewish refugees. In 1941, the Blanders seized an opportunity to be among those Jewish settlers dispatched to a fledgling agricultural community in Sosúa.

Jewish settlers in Sosúa found life very different from what they had known in Europe. Their tropical surroundings were beautiful, yet harsh and unfamiliar, and the work was strenuous... but they were safe. The Blanders were tapped to run a modest hotel in the mountains where settlers could recover from their labors. Barbara and her sister helped with chores around the hotel; later, they attended a nearby Catholic boarding school.

In 1944, the Blanders reconnected with a friend who sponsored their immigration to the US. They moved to Boston in 1945. Barbara adjusted to American life much more easily than her parents, who struggled to learn English and to find employment. They moved many more times, eventually settling in Detroit. Barbara graduated high school, attended college, and married. She and her family vacationed in Colorado for years before moving to Boulder in 2005. Today Barbara is an avid swimmer and regularly speaks to students about her experiences.