

Everyday Objects:
Artifacts from Washington State Holocaust Survivors

Using primary sources to learn about the Holocaust

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Autograph Book

"This book belongs to Hester Waas."

January 25, 1939 - Hester was 12 years old when she received this journal.
Hester had her family members and friends sign the book with messages and drawings.

Hester's 15 year old brother Isaac wrote:

6 February 1939. There is in the world one pleasure for everybody whether happy or sad...Her name? Mother Nature!

Hester's brother and parents were deported to Auschwitz in 1942 and did not survive the Holocaust.

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Hester, 18 years old in 1945, taking care of the three van Westering children.

Hester Waas (now Hester Kool) grew up in the small coastal town of Zandvoort on the North Sea of The Netherlands.

Hester was thirteen years old when the Nazis invaded and occupied The Netherlands on May 10, 1940. The Nazis put in place new anti-Jewish laws, including forcing Jews to wear a yellow star sewn to their clothes. In an effort to concentrate the Jewish population, the Nazis ordered all Jews to move to restricted areas within Amsterdam. In May 1942 Hester and her family moved from her home town of Zandvoort into her aunt's apartment in Amsterdam.

Hester and her family lived in Amsterdam for only a few months. In July 1942, the Nazis began mass roundups of Jews within Amsterdam. In one of these roundups, the Nazis ordered Hester's father, mother and brother, along with many other Jews, into the city's Opera House. Hester had a special work permit – her name was not on the Nazi's list of Jews to collect and deport.

The group was forced to stay in the Opera House for several days. They were all transported to Westerbork, a transit camp in The Netherlands, and then to Auschwitz. Hester's father, mother and brother were killed in Auschwitz.

"Shortly after my parents left, I was approached by my girlfriend, Rosa Cymbalist, who, to my surprise, worked for the Dutch Resistance. She found a place where I could go into hiding. I took my yellow star off and got a new identification card with a new name, 'Helen Waasdorp.' My girlfriend was my first rescuer. She was all of 15 years old. I will always remember her courage."

Hester was told to take the train to the city of Overveen in The Netherlands. There she was to meet Mr. van Westering, the local church organist, at the church in Overveen—he would then decide if he could take her in. "Because I did not 'look' or 'sound' Jewish, he accepted me." Hester went to live with the van Westering family.

"The van Westerings had three children and my duties involved taking care of them and cleaning the house. I was not allowed to leave the house. I ate alone and slept in a room in the attic. I was very lonely.

"I do not have fond memories of my time in hiding. In fact, I could not wait to leave. Many social workers were involved because he [Mr. van Westering] claimed he was my foster father and wanted me to stay. He said I was a part of their family. I never felt a part of their family. I only worked there and was not included in conversation or meals. I still feel bad about remembering this time because even though I am grateful for being rescued, my feelings toward him are not good."

After the war ended, Mr. van Westering worked hard to prevent Hester from leaving his home.

"My girlfriend was my first rescuer. She was all of 15 years old."

"I ran away to the home of my aunt, uncle, and cousin in Amsterdam. The thought of being caught filled me with fear. I was afraid of Mr. van Westering."

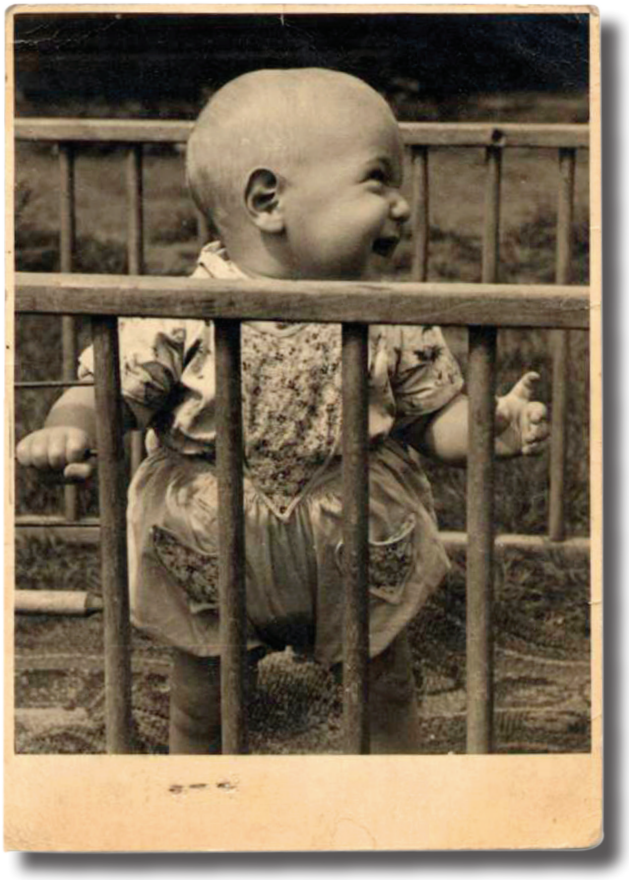
Hester stayed in Amsterdam for two years before immigrating to the United States in 1947. "There was nothing left for me in Holland. I wanted to start a new life."

One month after arriving in New Jersey, Hester married her husband, Sam Kool. Together they are now proud parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents.

Twenty years after her arrival, Hester and her husband ran across an old suitcase amidst their belongings. "There was my book," Hester recounts, "waiting for me to remember."

Hester began telling her story in 1995, encouraged by her children's questions and by seeing an image of Zandvoort at an Anne Frank exhibit. "It is important that kids hear from a survivor about what happened to us."

Hester, age 20, with her grandfather in New York, 1947. Hester had been in New York only about one week when this photo was taken. Hester's grandfather had come to the U.S. from Holland several years earlier.



Baby Picture

"Until we received this photo in 1946 we did not know he existed.
He is Hans Phillip Weinberg, the only son of Ruth and Walter Weinberg."
– Judith Adler, Seattle resident

Hans was 10 months old when this photo was taken in 1943.
For Judith Adler, this single picture is the only evidence that she once had a cousin, Hans.
The baby was murdered during the Holocaust.

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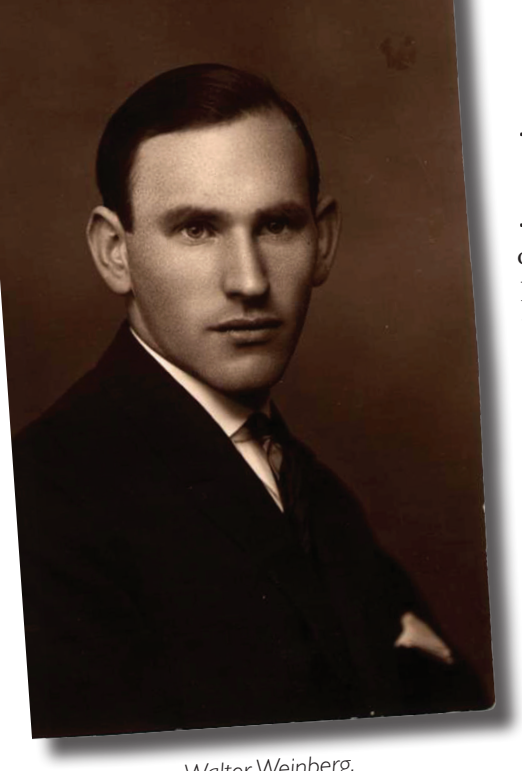


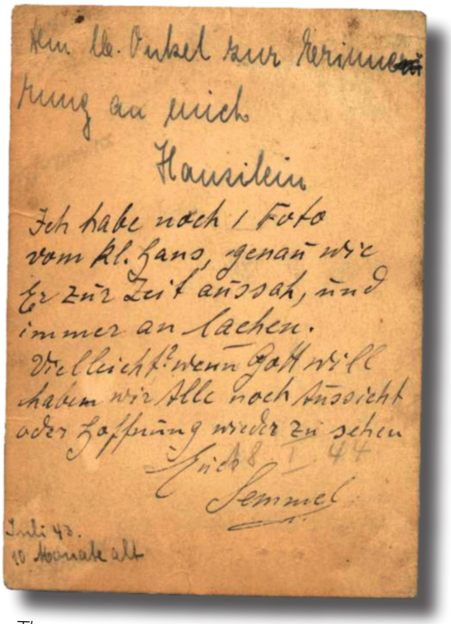
Walter Weinberg.

In May 1939, six months after *Kristallnacht,* or "The Night of Broken Glass,"* Walter Weinberg boarded the *St. Louis* in Germany with a visa bound for Cuba. The ship carried over 900 passengers, almost all of them Jews fleeing the Third Reich. When the ship arrived in Cuba, the Cuban government refused entry to the passengers. The Captain of the ship, Gustav Schroeder, sailed to Florida, but the U.S. State Department and the White House would not allow the passengers to enter the U.S. Finally, after thirty-one days at sea, four countries agreed to admit the passengers: Holland, Belgium, France and England.

Walter landed in Belgium and was reunited with his wife, Ruth. Both were interned in Westerbork, a camp established by the Dutch government for illegal Jewish refugees. From Westerbork, the Nazis deported Ruth and Walter to Theresienstadt, a ghetto and concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. In the ghetto, Ruth and Walter found Walter's Uncle Semmel and his aunt, Ida.

Ruth Weinberg.

Hans Phillip was born to Ruth and Walter in either Westerbork or Theresienstadt. When Walter learned he was to be "resettled" to the East, Ruth had the option of remaining in Theresienstadt with the baby or following her husband. She decided to take the baby and go with her husband. "Resettlement" turned out to be a euphemism, or code phrase, for deportation to concentration camps. The Nazis deported Ruth, Walter, and Hans to Auschwitz, where they were murdered.



The reverse side of Hans Phillip's photo.

Ruth gave this picture to Uncle Semmel before she left Theresienstadt. After Germany's defeat in 1945, Uncle Semmel sent the photo to his brother, David Weinberg, in Chicago. The photo was eventually passed on to David's granddaughter, Judith Adler, a Seattle resident.

The inscription on the back of the photo is in Ruth's handwriting: "To my Uncle to remember me by." The name beneath the photo is "Hansilein." Uncle Semmel writes, "I still have one picture of little Hans exactly as he looked at that time, and always laughing. Perhaps, God willing, we will all have the chance or the hope of seeing one another again."

The Memorial Book at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum describes the fate of Walter and Ruth Weinberg with one word, *"verschollen"* – disappeared. There is no mention of the baby. This photo is the only evidence that Hans Phillip Weinberg lived.

***Kristallnacht** - November 9 & 10, 1938. Organized destruction of Jewish homes, shops, and synagogues throughout Germany and Austria. The violence included arrests of individual Jews, instigated primarily by Nazi party officials and the SA (Nazi Storm Troopers).*

On display at the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center. Photograph by Harve Bergmann.

Badges

Pictured is a piece of cloth from a bolt of fabric.
Printed on the fabric are yellow "Stars of David" and the word "Jude" (Jew) printed in the center of each star. These Stars of David were to be cut (notice the outline) and sold to Jews. In many areas (see reverse side for a list) the Nazis required Jews to sew stars like these onto their clothing so they could easily be identified.

The original bolt of fabric was four feet wide by six feet long. It was most likely made sometime in 1942 in Poland. Mr. Thomas Blatt, author and survivor of the death camp Sobibor, found this piece in Poland in 1984. He brought the piece back to the United States for conservation.

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Members of the Arrow Cross (Hungarian Nazis) came to our house. They told us to stand in our backyard. They told us that in a few days large posters would be glued onto the walls outside the houses. We had to read and obey them. On them were the "Jewish Laws."

The first law told us to wear the yellow star. We had to wear it whenever we went outside. Where should we get those yellow stars? The Arrow Cross told us. We had to march to the store. Soldiers were all around us. We had to use our own money to buy yellow stars. We had to sew one onto each piece of clothing we had on.

Imagine how embarrassed we were when we had to go outside. People looked at us wherever we went. We knew in our hearts that something much more terrible would soon come.

- Noemi Ban, in her memoir, Sharing is Healing: A Holocaust Survivor's Story (2006). Noemi Ban is a member of the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's Speakers Bureau.

Fanny Wald, a local Holocaust survivor, wearing an armband. Poland, circa 1940.

This star was worn in the Lodz Ghetto in Poland. On display at the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center. Photo by Harve Bergmann.

"J" stands for Jood (Jew) in Flemish/Dutch, also for Juif (Jew) in French, the two languages spoken in Belgium. This star was worn by Martha Schnabel-Bloch (1889-1991), the grandmother of local Holocaust survivor Robert Herschkowitz.

Jood—Dutch for "Jew." This star was worn by Elli Metzelaar, the mother of local Holocaust survivor, Peter Metzelaar, in Amsterdam, Holland.

One time my mother and my cousin got caught not wearing the armband. The reason you didn't want to wear them was because anybody can throw rocks at you or hit you, because who was going to protect you? Nobody was out to protect the Jew. So if people went to an area where they were afraid to walk with the armband, they might take it off.*

Well, the police did catch my mother and my cousin not wearing it. My mother they beat with a ball, a rubber ball, but inside was a piece of steel and her arms were beaten up, were all swollen. My cousin was about seventeen years old, they made her clean an outhouse with her hands.

- Henry Friedman in the video "Never Again I Hope" produced by the Holocaust Center (1994). Henry Friedman is a member of the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's Speakers Bureau.

***Yellow stars** were used by the Nazis to identify Jews in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Alsace, Bohemia, Slovakia, parts of Poland, parts of Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, and Romania.
White armbands with a blue star of David were used to identify Jews in parts of Poland, east and upper Silesia.
Yellow armbands were used to identify Jews in parts of Greece, Serbia, Belgrade, and Sofia.