



*From the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's Collection.
The photo was a gift from John Rock.*

Photograph

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Pictured are orphaned children who survived the Holocaust. This photo was taken in a displaced persons (DP) camp in Germany. John Rock (seated in the second row from the bottom, third from the left, with a cap) was the Director of the DP Camp.

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Photo from John Rock's photo album.*

Unaccompanied children, which was their official description, who somehow got into our camps, or don't know where their parents are.

Some [children] were there [when I arrived] and some came later... There was one group that came in when I was there. They were very thin and undernourished. About eight to ten children, where the oldest child was 13, and they'd been in the woods for about a year or two, by themselves, and managed to survive.

—John Rock, in a 1996 WSHERC interview**

John Michael Rock (born Maximillian vonRochlitz) was born in Vienna, Austria in 1922. When John was 16 the Nazis annexed Austria into the German Reich. Distrustful of Nazi control and angry about the changes he noticed occurring in his country, John escaped to England in 1939. The following year John joined the British Army, and later joined the British Navy.

John's mother and step-father were killed in Auschwitz. His brother escaped Jasenovac, a concentration camp in Yugoslavia, and joined the partisans.

Just after World War II ended in 1946, John began to work with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. He became a director in the displaced persons (DP) program.

Throughout his life John described this as the most important work he ever did.

John was an important and popular figure in the five small displaced persons camps he administered near Kassel, Germany. He frequently received cards and letters of thanks and good wishes—all of which he kept until the day he died.

When John left his position at the DP camp in Germany, he was greatly missed.

Every time I pass your office I must stop and look through the window, and I cannot overcome my desire to look for you.

—From a letter written to John Rock by one of the Jewish survivors in the displaced persons camp in Germany.

John immigrated to Canada in 1949, and then to the United States in 1951. John Rock, a long-time resident of Seattle, died in 2004 at the age of 82.

Even if I received no thanks, I would have been more than happy to do it. —John Rock

*John Rock's photo album is on display at the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center (WSHERC).

**Interview is available on video tape at WSHERC.



Cover of John Rock's photo album.