

Janice Rosen

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONIES AND RELATED RESOURCES IN CANADIAN ARCHIVAL REPOSITORIES

The inventory which follows is a survey of the principal Canadian sites for Holocaust research, with an emphasis on Holocaust testimony research involving survivors who later settled in Canada.

It should be noted that almost every repository of Jewish archival documents in Canada includes a certain number of Holocaust testimony materials. This is to be expected. With survivors constituting a significant proportion of the Canadian Jewish community it is appropriate that some of their histories be found among the memoirs of other native-born and recently-immigrated Canadians. It is also appropriate that Holocaust testimonies and memoirs can be found in a variety of environments and locations—in academic libraries, in community archives, in institutions specializing in the subject matter and in broader settings, in large cities and in smaller Jewish communities. This varied approach both allows the material to reach a wider selection of potential users, and allows the survivor a range of choices as to the manner in which his or her stories are preserved. (A general listing of the major locations for Jewish archival collections in Canada can be found in *Canadian Jewish Studies* Volumes 1 and 3, “Jewish Archival Holdings in Canada.”)

Updated information for this article was obtained with the help of Sharon Steinberg and Hélène Vallée at the CJC Archives, as well as the staffs of the various repositories described below. I thank everyone for their contributions, and apologize for any details left out or misconstrued. The listings are in alphabetical order.

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Archives Director: Janice Rosen
Assistant: H el ene Vall e
Address: 1590 Avenue Docteur Penfield
Montreal, Quebec
Canada H3G 1C5
Telephone: (514) 931-7531 Fax: (514) 931-0548
E-mail: archives@cj.ca
Web site: <www.cj.ca/archives.htm>
Hours: Monday-Thursday: 9:15–5:00,
Friday to 2:30 or 4:00 PM (seasonal)
Appointments advisable

GENERAL INFORMATION: For a general description of the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, and its major collections, see *Canadian Jewish Studies*, vol. 1, “Jewish Archival Holdings in Canada.”

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: Holocaust Documentation Project tapes (75 detailed, videotaped interviews with survivors across Canada, 1981-1984, most with transcripts); survivors’ memoirs and testimonies (mostly unpublished typescripts or cassette-taped accounts of experiences as recounted by survivors now living in Canada); United Restitution Organization records (over 11,500 claims case files, most with a testimony page detailing war experiences. Some restrictions on access apply); United Jewish Relief Agencies (UJRA) records (Interned Refugees, Post-War War Orphans Immigration Project, etc.: Administrative files, lists, case files). See also: Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) records; Landsmanshaften and Survivor’s Association files; Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Committee and Second Generation Committee files; research papers and published sources; clipping files on Holocaust Denial.

**HOLOCAUST EDUCATION AND MEMORIAL CENTRE
OF TORONTO**

Director of Educ. Dr. Carole Ann Reed
Resource Person: Hanna Schwartz
Address: 4600 Bathurst Street
Willowdale, Ontario
Canada M2R 3V2
Telephone: (416) 635-2883, ext. 153
Fax: (416) 635-0925
E-mail: holmem@feduja.org
Hours: Monday–Thursday: 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Friday: 9:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
Sunday: 11:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
Appointments necessary.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: The Resource Centre has a collection of Holocaust reference material including over 1000 books, extensive vertical files and memoirs of Canadian Survivors. In addition, a collection of 400 personal testimonies compiled through videotaped interviews with Ontario survivors conducted between 1986-1994 and a collection of 2000 slides will soon be accessible. Through the Museum, researchers can see a documentary, historical displays and memorabilia. The HEMC works with the Toronto Jewish Federations Board of Jewish Education which has a large collection of videos, films, and audio-cassettes. They can also put researchers in touch with survivors in the Toronto community.

Holocaust Education: Guided educational tours for students and professional development courses are offered for teachers.

HOLOCAUST LITERATURE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Director: Dr. Alain Goldschager
Address: Department of French, Room 306,
University College
The University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario, Canada, N6A 2K7
Fax / Phone: (519) 661-3820
E-mail: agold@julian.uwo.ca
Web site: www.arts.uwo.ca/HLRI.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Established formally in 1996, the role of the Institute is to search out and collect survivor narratives. The goals of the Holocaust Literature Research Institute are to: house the Alain Goldschlager collection of Holocaust literature; extend the collection to encompass new publications and texts not yet located; create an annotated bibliography of literature written by Holocaust survivors, using the latest in technology for the purpose of documentation and access; operate as a resource centre for professors and graduate students in Western's Faculties of Arts and Social Science; form a centre for discussion of the creation of courses on Holocaust literature at the graduate and undergraduate levels and support graduate work on the Holocaust; organize colloquia at the University; and establish links throughout the world with other scholarly research centres on the Holocaust.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: The Institute currently holds 650 narratives from Dr. Goldschlager's personal collection. Dr. Goldschlager is also compiling an exhaustive and comprehensive annotated bibliography of witness accounts of the Holocaust, standing at close to 2,000 texts to date. In the form of a scholarly database, it will be an inestimable resource for researchers attempting to understand the Holocaust and an essential weapon against denial and revisionism. Through the Institute web site, one can access survivor narratives, articles on survivor testimonies, and the annotated bibliography of witness accounts, as well as information about the activities of the organization and related institutions.

THE JEWISH HERITAGE CENTRE OF WESTERN CANADA

Archivist: Irma Penn
Address: Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada
C116–123 Doncaster Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3N 2B2
Phone: (204) 477-7460
Hours: see below
E-mail: heritage@jhcwc.mb.ca
Ipenn@aspercampus.mb.ca
Website: <www.jhcwc.mb.ca>
Hours: Monday-Thursday: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Friday: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

GENERAL INFORMATION: As of January 1999, the Marion and Ed Vickar Jewish Museum of Western Canada, the Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre, and the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada have amalgamated to form the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, Inc.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: Holocaust testimonies and related research material are housed at the Jewish Heritage Centre, but have not yet been organized or catalogued. Books and educational videos are already available in the Freeman Family Holocaust Education Centre collection. The Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada houses archives which include photographs, documents, taped interviews, and a database of Yiddish and Anglo-Jewish. The Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre features exhibits of artifacts and memorabilia.

LIVING TESTIMONIES PROJECT, MONTREAL

Director: Professor Yehudi Lindeman
Admin. Assistant: Megan Bremer
(McGill University)
Phone: (514) 398-3294
For an appointment, contact the Centre by phone.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Living Testimonies, McGill University's Holocaust Video Documentation Archive, a non-profit organization, devotes itself to recording and preserving survivor and witness testimony of the Holocaust. The archive operates to ensure that these stories, and the events on which they are based, will never be forgotten. The video documents present images of great historical value with striking immediacy. The format allows audiences, in particular the young, to appreciate the voices and faces that have lived these stories. Each interview is a precious historical resource and a powerful tool to help combat the rising tide of Holocaust denial.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: The witnesses of the Shoah interviewed by the archive includes interviews of rescuers, resistance fighters, and many others. The expanding archive and resource centre is intended for scholars, educators, and the general public. Viewing facilities are available by appointment only at the project's audio-visual room.

MONTREAL HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL CENTRE

Director: Bill Surkis
Director: Naomi Kramer (Programs and Education)
Archivist: Carol Katz
Address: 1, Carré Cummings Square
Montreal, Quebec
Canada H3W 1M6
Telephone: (514) 345-2605

Fax: (514) 344-2651
E-mail: karent@fedcjamtl.org
Museum Hours: Sept.-June: Sunday through Thursday
10:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
July-Aug.: Monday through Friday
10 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
Archives Hours: By appointment

GENERAL INFORMATION: The Montreal Holocaust Centre holdings, collected primarily in Montreal from Jewish immigrants and their descendants, are comprised of original art, religious objects, artifacts, photographs, archival material, personal testimonies, and memorabilia. Major areas of interest are materials relating to the Holocaust, to Jewish life that was destroyed by the Nazis, to post-war life and to antisemitism, both past and present.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: The museum collection contains approximately 50,000 artifacts, documents, and photos. The archives consists of 12 meters of textual documents (on site storage), 2,000 slides, 2,000 photographs, 1,000 negatives, 150 posters, a number of unpublished manuscripts of testimony, a small collection of Yiskor books, and approximately 400 videos (800 including duplicate safety copies). Most of the videos are Holocaust testimonies. In addition there are approximately seventy reel-to-reel audio testimonies (1981-1986), which will be transferred to sound cassette.

MONTREAL INSTITUTE FOR GENOCIDE AND HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES (MIGS)

Director: Prof. Frank Chalk
Address: c/o Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West
Montreal, Quebec
Canada H3G 1M8

Telephone: 514-848-2404
Fax: 514-848-4538 or 514-848-4539
E-mail: migs@concordia.ca
Web site: [<http://www.migs.org>](http://www.migs.org)

GENERAL INFORMATION: MIGS, founded in 1986, is based in the Departments of History and Sociology at Concordia University. Its approach is comparative and historical, accomplishing its objectives through research, teaching, and publication. It has a special interest in promoting teaching about genocide in high schools, colleges, and universities. It seeks to acquire and to improve access to scholarly resources on genocide. It also seeks to encourage research by organizing seminars and workshops, and by offering the use of its resources and its hospitality to students and colleagues. MIGS participates in the publication of a series of Holocaust survivor memoirs jointly with the Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies.

RELATED COLLECTION:

**THE DAVID J. AZRIELI HOLOCAUST COLLECTION
OF CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

GENERAL INFORMATION: This extensive collection of books and research materials was purchased under the auspices of the Azrieli Holocaust Book collection project, funded by a substantive grant from Dr. David Azrieli, and supplemented by grants from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada as well as through private donations in kind. The majority of the materials were selected and described in a collection catalogue (1994) by librarian Sol Katz. The catalogue is available through the Concordia University Library while the materials are filed in their subject areas within the general Concordia Library system.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: The Collection includes an extensive collection of North American theses and dissertations on aspects of the Holocaust; a complete set of the Nuremberg trials organized by the Allies and all twelve trials of Nazi war criminals subsequently organized by the United States; and hundreds of reels of microfilm of the unpublished diplomatic and intelligence records of the United States and Great Britain relating to the origins and implementation of the Holocaust. The Library also houses a wide-ranging and growing collection of materials on other genocides and mass killings throughout history, including a microfilmed set of manuscript materials from the U. S. National Archives relating to the Armenian genocide.

**VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST CENTRE SOCIETY FOR
EDUCATION AND REMEMBRANCE**

Director: Dr. Roberta Kremer
Education Coord.: Frieda Miller
Address: 50-950 West 41st Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V5Z 2N7
Telephone: (604) 264-0499
Fax: (604) 264-0497
E-mail: holedctr@direct.ca
Hours: Monday/Wednesday 9:00-5:00
Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.
Friday 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Some Sundays 12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Incorporated since 1985, the mandate of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society for Education and Remembrance (VHC) is to combat prejudice and racism by educating the citizens of BC, especially students and teachers, about the events and implications of the Holocaust. The society is pledged to establish and maintain a Holocaust education and program centre as a resource for the community.

The Centre's major programs include the Archives, a Library, the Oral History Documentation Project, a Survivor's Drop-in Centre, and the Geshar Project, a creative program for survivor and second-generation contributors. The Centre's interdisciplinary programs support the arts and film. The Centre produces a newsletter, *Zachor*.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: The Archives is responsible for several displays, including a travelling exhibit, and is currently designing "visible storage" displays intended to aid in Holocaust education. The Archives collection includes over 1200 objects, several linear meters of documents, photos, and graphic materials donated by Vancouver-area survivors and liberators of the concentration camps, and over 200 audio/ audio-visual recordings, including the Oral History Documentation Project currently containing 132 testimonies on videotape. A catalogue and synopsis of the testimonies is in progress. The Centre also houses an extensive library collection, in which can be found written testimonies by survivors as well as clipping files.

***CANADIAN HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY RESOURCES
OUTSIDE CANADA:***

**SURVIVORS OF THE SHOAH VISUAL HISTORY
FOUNDATION**

Address: P.O. Box 3168
Los Angeles, CA
USA 90078-3168

Tel.: (818) 777-4673

Web site: <<http://www.vhf.org>>

(Canadian details supplied by Paula Draper)

GENERAL INFORMATION: Founded by Steven Spielberg in 1994, Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to videotaping and archiving

interviews of Holocaust survivors and witnesses worldwide. The Shoah Foundation has conducted over 50,000 interviews, of which 2,839 are with survivors and rescuers living in Canada. Interviews are catalogued and archived using breakthrough digital technology and will be made available via on-line, interactive networks to museums, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations and through educational documentaries, books and CD-ROMs. The Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation will make its archive available via secure on-line computer networks to these five initial repositories: Yad Vashem—The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority (Jerusalem), the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington D.C.), the Simon Wiesenthal Center (Los Angeles), the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (Yale University, New Haven), and A Living Memorial to the Holocaust—Museum of Jewish Heritage (New York.) In the future, the archive will be available to additional repositories throughout the world

AVAILABLE RESOURCES—(CANADIAN): Interviews were conducted with Canadian survivors in both large and small communities across Canada. The over 2,800 videotaped interviews were carried out with Canadian survivors living in Fredericton (New Brunswick); Halifax (Nova Scotia); Montreal, St. Lambert, Hudson, St. Sauveur, and Brossard (Quebec); Toronto, Ottawa, Windsor, London, Hamilton, Stratford, Waterloo, Brantford, Port Dover, Oshawa, Guelph, Echo Bay, and Midland (Ontario); Winnipeg (Manitoba); Edmonton and Calgary (Alberta); Vancouver, Victoria and Ladysmith (British Columbia.). At present there are no copies of the tapes stored in this country, except in the hands of the survivors themselves and in cases where survivors have donated copies to a local Jewish repository.

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Address: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington DC
USA 20024-2150

Main telephone: (202) 488-0400
Ref. Librarian: Aaron Kornblum
Direct telephone: 202-488-6113
Fax: 202-479-4726
E-mail: akornblum@ushmm.org
Archives e-mail: archive@ushmm.org
Web site: <http://www.ushmm.org/access.htm>

GENERAL INFORMATION: The USHRI Archives contain textual records on a wide range of subjects pertaining to the Holocaust, its origins, and its aftermath. Access to the Archive's collections is provided by an automated database search-and-retrieval system, in addition to paper-copy preliminary inventories. The Archive also has a large collection of inventories, guides, and catalogs to the relevant holdings of other institutions in North America, Israel, and Europe. The organization's excellent web site outlines all the Archive's holdings, including the Canadian archival materials, as well as books.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES:

Canadian material in this repository includes:

"The Winnipeg Second Generation Group Oral History Collection 1988-89," consisting of 53 interviews with Winnipeg survivors; Case files of the United Restitution Organization-Toronto Office (Archives collection # RG-28.005). These inactive case files were transferred from their source, the United Restitution Organization office in Toronto Canada, to the USHMM in October 1990. The collection consists of 83 boxes containing inactive case files of Jewish

Holocaust survivors who claimed restitution for suffering and damage resulting from persecution by the Nazis during the period 1933 to 1945. The records date from 1940-1970 and are divided into five major groups:

- 1) "BEG" (Bundes-Entschadigungs-Gesetz or Federal Compensation/Restitution Law). The BEG files contain one-time-only claims. For the most part, these are copies. The originals are in Germany;
- 2) Records titled "URO." These files contain general claims for restitution;
- 3) "Jewelry cases." These concern claims of restitution relating to stolen jewelry;
- 4) "Hungary cases." These cases deal only with Jews born in Hungary and persecuted in Hungary or elsewhere, either by Germans or Hungarian collaborators;
- 5) "Austria cases." These cases deal with Austrian-born Jews, who were persecuted by the Germans in Austria or elsewhere.

In general, the Toronto URO files concern life in Nazi-occupied Europe, life in concentration camps, and experiences of survivors during and after the Holocaust. Among the documents are sworn testimonies of witnesses, indemnity claims, correspondence with doctors and lawyers, medical reports, and memoirs.

The USHRI Archives also lists various individual video interviews, photographs, memoirs, and manuscript collections donated by Canadian survivors.