Beyond the Holocaust Period: Studying Global Jewish History through the USC Shoah Visual History Archive

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Librarian’s role

- Promote to faculty, librarians & grad students
  - Training workshops, consultations
- Undergraduate courses
  - Freshman Honors Seminar to upper level
- Community members
- High schools (iWitness)
USC Shoah Visual History Archive (VHA)

“Life History Testimonies”

1994 Spielberg
50,000+ interviews
2006 to USC
2013 Rwanda & other genocides added
2016 other Holocaust collections added;
ProQuest partnership
How can researchers and students access the VHA?

**Full Access sites** (libraries/archives) affiliated users can access remotely; others can visit the library

**VHA Online** (3000 videos available)

[vhaonline.usc.edu](http://vhaonline.usc.edu)

Same access to indexing and interface as Full Access
Global nature of the VHA

Interviews conducted
~ 40 Languages
~ 60 Countries
Undergraduate student interests
pre & post-war

➢ DP camp experience
➢ Post-war loss of faith; change in religious belief or practice
➢ Trauma and its effects
➢ Post-war antisemitism
➢ Pre and post-war political activism
Indexing

- Human-Indexed for Minute-long segments
- Controlled vocabulary
  - Geographic locations and time periods
  - Movement of People
  - Experiences
  - Names of Individuals
  - Musical Recitals; Literary Recitals; Still and Moving Images; Documents and Artifacts
- New indexing terms added with additional collections, (e.g. JFCS psychological terms)
Demo of VHA

Itzu-Rella Weiss
Experience Groups
Search

→ Jewish Survivors
  ♦ Country of interview: Mexico
  ● Language of Interview: English

Holocaust
- Jewish Survivor (51,545)
- Rescuer and Aid Provider (1,162)
- Liberator (432)
- Sinti and Roma Survivor (406)
- Political Prisoner (268)
- Miscellaneous (World War II) (175)
- Jehovah's Witness Survivor (84)
- War Crimes Trial Participant (62)
- Non-Jewish Forced Laborer (14)
- Eugenic Policies Survivor (13)
- Homosexual Survivor (6)
- Descendant (2)
Index Search

Places by Time Periods

Mexico 1945 (May 9) - 2000 (December 1)
Pre-war Index Terms

- family members named (People Search)
- schools
- Jewish Religious observances
- Antisemitism
Post-war Migration and Resettlement Index Terms

- Migration to [Mexico]
- Acculturation
- Holocaust Faith Issues
- Future message
Transcripts

- ~1900 testimonies in English, ~900 German, more regularly released
- Search by keyword within transcript (Search in Testimony)
- Can browse/skim transcript
- Pauses, Laughs, Crying are noted
Locating pre and postwar experiences within a testimony

- Scroll through index terms (Segments) & transcript at **beginning** and **end**
- Photographs and documents at very end
- Often other family members join the interviewee at the end
Photographs and stills

- Family member photographs
  - prewar
  - post-liberation
  - postwar
- Documents
- Easily copied and pasted, unlike the videos
Resources

- Visual History Archive Curator’s libguide (USC Libraries)
- ProQuest’s VHA libguide
- Holocaust & Genocide Testimony (MSU Libraries)
- VHA User Guide (PDF download)
- iWitness: VHA for use by middle-high school teachers and students
- Center for Advanced Genocide Research (USC Shoah)
- USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia and Holocaust Bibliographies
Feel free to contact me

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