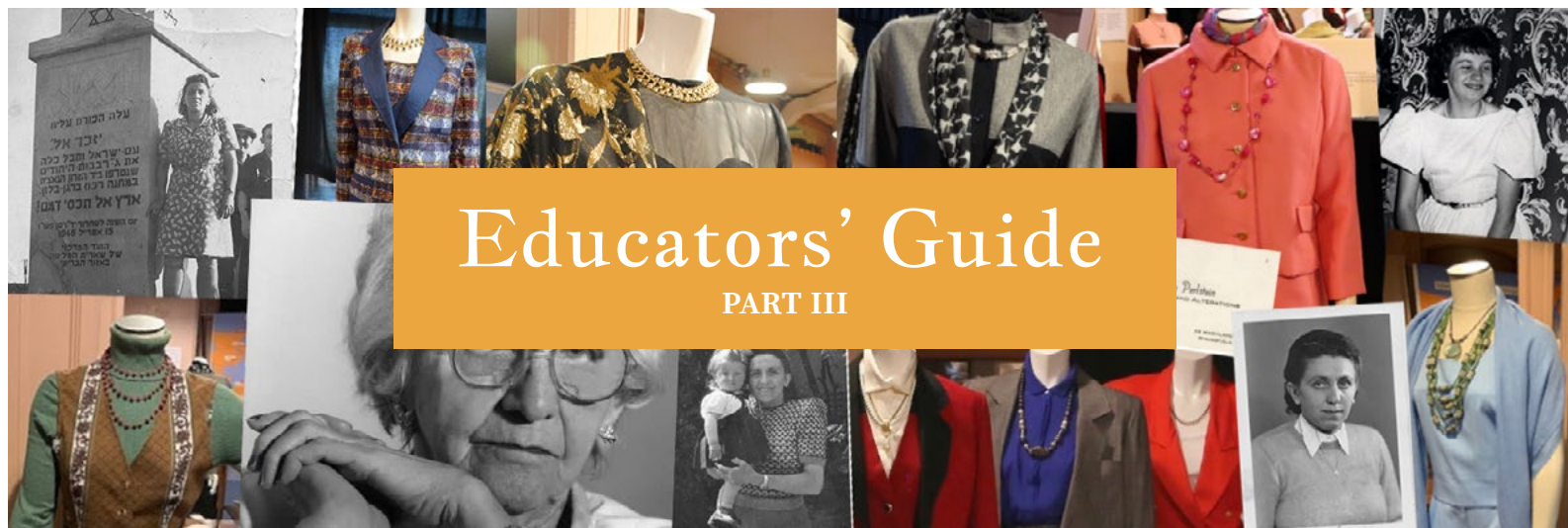




Educators' Guide

PART III

Sidonia's Thread

Crafting a Life From Holocaust to High Fashion

....

**A young Hungarian woman finds herself totally alone after the Holocaust,
the only survivor of her family.**

With her toddler in tow, she makes her way to America.

**She survives in a new country through her wits, her imagination,
and above all, her hands.**



**ECSU
FOUNDATION,
INC.**
Eastern Connecticut State University

Introduction

Purpose

This Educators' Guide walks students and teachers through the life of Sidonia Perlstein, in conjunction with the exhibit entitled "Sidonia's Thread: Crafting a Life from Holocaust to High Fashion." With the aid of her beautiful clothing designs, Sidonia's story is linked together with historical background and essential concepts in an effort to provide a meaningful and unique way to uncover the story of a remarkable Holocaust survivor. This Educators' Guide facilitates an engaging connection between students, teachers, and the exhibit, and is separated into sections based upon the following goals:

1. To promote an understanding of the concept of how an ordinary person, under certain circumstances, can lead an extraordinary life.
2. To promote knowledge regarding the particular plight of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust.
3. To bring about a greater knowledge regarding the lives of immigrants in the United States in the last half of the twentieth century.
4. To enhance knowledge about the relationship between creative design, dressmaking, and textiles and the Holocaust and its aftermath.
5. To learn some nontraditional methods of remembering those who have had a meaningful impact on our lives today.

The goals listed above showcase themes central to Sidonia Perlstein's life, incorporating the important history of Hungarian Jews and their experiences during the Holocaust, the topic of immigration, and the struggles and successes of starting a new life in a different country in the aftermath of World War II. The perseverance demonstrated by Holocaust survivors like Sidonia Perlstein is stressed throughout the themes, historical pieces, and activities included in this guide.

This guide provides historical background or context pieces accompanied by visuals and educational activities suitable for high school and college-aged students. While all five sections of the guide provide valuable educational experiences, teachers may not be able to utilize every section, and may have to pick and choose what to use. Each section is designed to provide a comprehensive experience related to the section goal. Educators may choose whether some or all of the sections and activities are suitable for their particular classrooms.

As a prerequisite for utilizing this guide, students and teachers should have background knowledge regarding the causes, events, and impact of the Holocaust. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website, specifically the "Learn About the Holocaust" link contains valuable information to aid with the building of this foundation. In addition, the Echoes and Reflections website offers lessons that are useful for gaining this background information. Both organizations also offer teacher-training programs for Holocaust education.

United States Holocaust
Memorial Museum "Learn
About the Holocaust" Link:
<https://www.ushmm.org/learn>

Echoes and Reflections link:
[https://echoesandreflections.
org/teach/](https://echoesandreflections.org/teach/)

Resources

Resources consulted and used for the narratives included in each section can be found at the end of this guide, in the “Resources” section. Each narrative is followed by suggested activities for high school and college-aged students, including internet resource links that are immediately accessible, without cost. A glossary of important terms is included at the end of this guide as well.

Standards Addressed in this Educators' Guide

The reputable Echoes and Reflections organization, which specializes in Holocaust education, created a Standards Alignment Chart for the lessons included in their program, which incorporates standards from both the Common Core and the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework. Due to the comprehensive nature of this chart, the connected content, and the credibility of the Echoes and Reflections program, the Echoes and Reflections Standards Alignment Chart was used as a guide for addressing applicable standards in this Educators' Guide. Most or all of the Common Core and NCSS C3 Framework standards listed in the Echoes and Reflections chart have the potential of being covered throughout the activities in this guide. The educators' choice regarding which activities they wish to use for their classrooms, along with adaptations, will impact which standards they address.

Echoes and Reflections
Standards Alignment Chart
https://echoesandreflections.org/wp-content/themes/twentyseenechoes/fileview.php?source=1&file_nm=2020/02/11_Acadmic-Standards-1.pdf

Please consult the first link to the left to access the Echoes and Reflections Standards Alignment Chart. Note that the lessons referenced in the Echoes and Reflections Standards Alignment Chart are lessons included in that program, and not this Educators' Guide. However, the standards from the Common Core and the NCSS C3 Framework listed in the Echoes and Reflections chart can be addressed through the activities in this guide.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage
<https://education.mjhnyc.org/aligning-with-the-common-core/>

Furthermore, the second link from the Museum of Jewish Heritage also includes standards from the Common Core that are applicable to this Educators' Guide. While many of them are also included in the Echoes and Reflections chart, it may be worthwhile to view this link from the Museum of Jewish Heritage when considering standards.

Educators' Guide Acknowledgments

Hanna Perlstein Marcus Sidonia's Daughter, Author, Contributor, Lead Editor

Anya Sokolovskaya Associate Professor of Theater in Costume Design at Eastern Connecticut State University, Exhibit Curator

Jennifer Wilson Social Studies Teacher, Lead Educators' Guide Developer

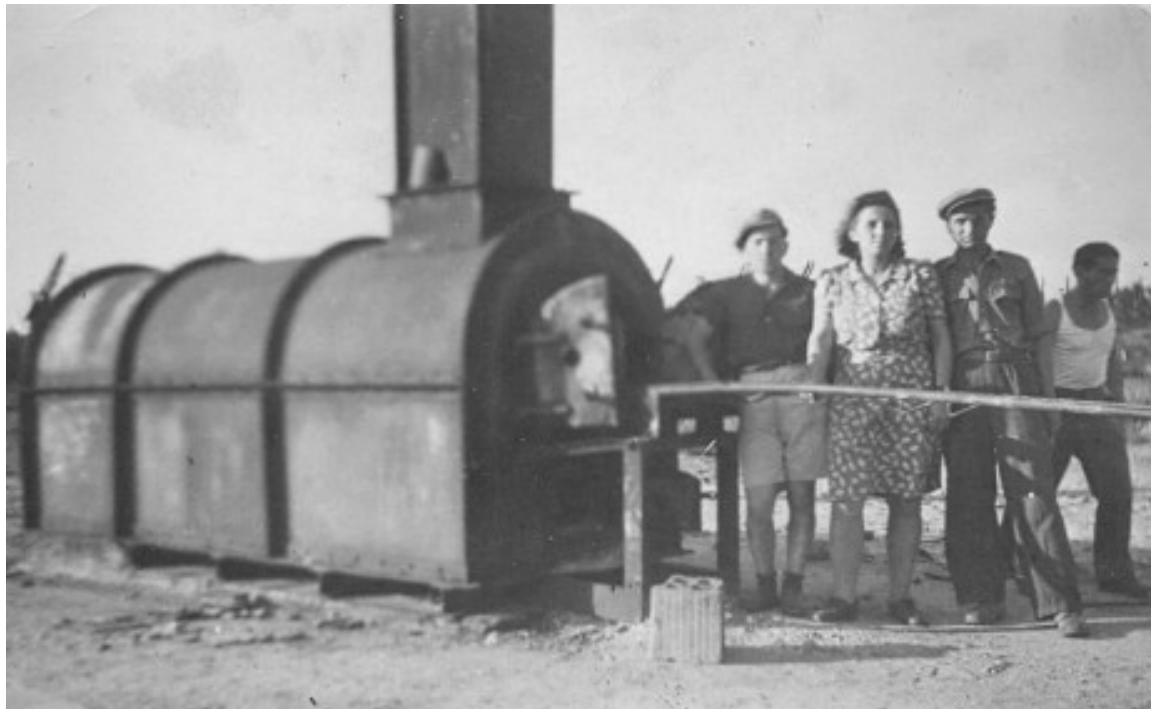
Hope Marie Cook Head of Curriculum Center, Lead Education Librarian, J. Eugene Smith Library, Eastern Connecticut State University

Immigration and a New Life in America

Challenges of Post-World War II Immigration and Starting a New Life in the United States.

Liberation

Liberation for Holocaust survivors like Sidonia Perlstein was a complicated experience that contained significant challenges. The many legal restrictions enacted by the Nazis and their collaborators prior to World War II made for a range of obstacles for survivors in its aftermath. Educational pursuits had often been interrupted or their ability to work in their chosen career had been banned. For some, as in the case of Sidonia, their skill in sewing may have helped to keep them alive, as the Nazis forced them to sew uniforms or other items in ghettos and camps around Europe. Regardless of skill level or education, a monumental task in starting over awaited Holocaust survivors.



Sidonia at Bergen
Belsen crematorium

Inmates liberated from Nazi camps, along with refugees who found themselves homeless, usually ended up in displaced persons (DP) camps. Jewish survivors typically found themselves stateless, homeless, impoverished, physically debilitated, and emotionally traumatized. In addition, the United States immigration quotas imposed in the 1920s provided a barrier to immigration that would not start to ease until 1948. Various organizations throughout Europe, and especially in DP camps, promoted the acquisition of vocational training and skills in an effort to gain employment and to promote a type of spiritual healing. This push for technical skills began before and even during World War II, in an effort to aid Jewish refugees in preparation for emigration. After the war, certain skills like Sidonia's ability to sew became a valuable asset when seeking acceptance as an immigrant into a new country.

Major camps for Jewish displaced persons, 1945–1946

Following World War II, several hundred thousand Jewish survivors remained in camps for displaced persons. The Allies established such camps in Allied-occupied Germany, Austria, and Italy for refugees waiting to leave Europe. Most Jewish DPs preferred to immigrate to Palestine but many also sought entry into the United States. They decided to remain in the DP camps until they could leave Europe. At the end of 1946 the number of Jewish DPs was estimated at 250,000. [US Holocaust Memorial Museum](#). The red rectangle denotes the camp where Sidonia Perlstein was liberated and where her daughter Hanna was born.



A Brief History of Jewish Immigration and the Garment Industry in the United States

The immigration of European Jews to the United States, especially for the purpose of partaking in the garment industry, can be traced back for well over a century prior to World War II. The years from around 1820 to 1920 brought approximately three million European Jews to the United States. While the earliest Jewish immigrants, typically from Germany, did not yet benefit from the mechanization of clothing production that would begin a few decades after their arrival, they were drawn to the vast landscape in America. They could set up networks for peddling that provided services and items for rural residents. During these early years of Jewish immigration, the system of clothing production, involving cutting and sewing overseen by a clothier, started the tradition of chain immigration, where immigrants would follow each other from the same small towns in Europe to the United States to peddle.

The next stage of the garment and fashion industries in Europe and the United States was marked by the invention of the modern sewing machine mid-nineteenth century, and the growth of ready to wear clothing. In the United States, chain immigration for Jews continued to increase, due to the growing number of garment manufacturing workshops that popped up because of the sewing machine. Important networks grew between big and small garment firms among Jewish entrepreneurs. More self-help local agencies emerged, and continued to aid incoming immigrants while maintaining connections to villages, towns and cities in Europe. These networks and agencies proved crucial later during the Nazi Era and its aftermath, as the lives of Jewish refugees often depended upon these agencies.

Immigration During the Nazi era, World War II, and the Immediate Aftermath

Immigration regulations and procedures continued to change and to tighten prior to World War II during the Nazi era. European nations like France and the United Kingdom required more stringent visa stipulations. Switzerland demanded that the infamous red “J” be stamped on the passports of German Jews. Steamship ticket prices rose, and the required amount of money that immigrants had to possess in order to immigrate increased. Nazi Germany, until the war began, worked with agencies to allow Jews to transfer money out of Germany at a cost; those with money had to help finance the emigration of those without money. The battle zones of World War II made immigration harder. Members of various organizations worked with many groups, both Jewish and non-Jewish, risking their lives to provide networks for immigrants until all legal options were exhausted. The Jews of Europe found that throughout the 1930s, it was possible to leave Germany and other Nazi held lands, but they struggled to find a place to go; the 40s brought with it the end of emigration, and the beginning of the unimaginable events of the Holocaust.

The Critical Role of Jewish Agencies

The dire circumstances faced by Jews at the beginning of the twentieth century in Europe spurred an uptick in action from the agencies that had existed to aid Jewish immigrants for decades. By the end of the nineteenth century the HIAS or Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society had helped Russian Jews immigrate to the United States. By 1927, a major conglomeration of three important agencies worked together to aid Jewish emigration by obtaining and distributing information, providing protection, giving advice and intervening on the behalf of immigrants if necessary. This agency became the HICEM, which continued to aid Jewish immigrants by connecting them with agencies in 32 countries in the first decades of the twentieth century.

At the end of the war, Jewish Holocaust survivors faced enormous challenges. Despite the extensive range of survivor experiences spanning multiple countries, most who were still in Europe in 1945 shared the same immediate fate: they had nowhere to go. Displaced persons (DP's), a person from one country stuck in another country, often waited in refugee camps for the resources necessary to travel, including the appropriate paperwork to live in a new country if they could not go home. Overall, the situation regarding displaced people of all types was overwhelming.

Historians estimate that there were some twenty million people moving around Europe at the end of the war, with many millions more during it. Within these numbers, an estimated 90,000 Jews were liberated in Nazi concentration camps, including Sidonia. As early as 1943 the

United National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), a cooperative effort among over forty nations, offered necessary items and services to victims of war found in any country of the United Nations.

The aftermath of World War II though proved to be nothing short of chaotic: supplies were low, destruction extensive, boundaries were changing, political tension was mounting, and the discovery of thousands of Nazi camps meant both an affirmation of what the world already knew, coupled with a reality check over what they did not. The UNRRA quickly set up basic camps for refugees and DPs that were expected to be temporary for the purpose of sending people back home. However, with many people unable to return home, they realized they had to facilitate immigration for many people to new countries. After President Truman authorized an investigation into the DP camps in the American Zone, it was evident that the DP camps needed to improve their services. They also realized they needed to operate longer than originally planned.



Sidonia's defiant pose at the monument in Bergen Belsen

In the United States, President Truman passed the Displaced Person's Act, allowing 100,000 displaced persons to immigrate to the United States between 1948-1949. The United States followed up this act with the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, allowing for refugees displaced by the war to immigrate to the United States if they had not been able to previously under regular immigration laws. Subsequent United States immigration acts throughout the 1950s and 1960s allowed for some refugees to escape Communist countries and immigrate to the United States.

Along with Israel, the United States was a preferred destination for Jewish DPs seeking to emigrate. The United States allowed for sponsorships for DPs, in the form of an affidavit, to be provided by both individuals and institutions. American Jewish organizations stepped up to help; Jewish organizations that often began with the influence of the leaders of the garment industry provided funding

and contacts. The United Service for New Americans (USNA) was created, and overall, Jewish community organizations in the United States provided necessary services and stability. They serviced the approximately 140,000 Jewish DPs who made their way to America from 1946-1954.

The Complicated Emigration Process

The process for one DP to emigrate took around nine months, including multiple passport photos taken and copies of birth, marriage or divorce certificates located or made, along with character references, forms claiming the death of family members, and some sort of documentation for residency prior to the war. After this process, a visa could be issued; then the wait for an opening began. For Sidonia and Hanna, they were sent to Camp Wentorf in order to process the documentation necessary for their emigration. They needed affidavits of birth, certificates of character, applications for immigration visa and alien registration, eligibility as displaced persons, and medical certificates. It took two months to complete this process with multiple government officials representing various commissions, organizations, and committees. They were also examined for contagious diseases, mental conditions and physical defects.

Sidonia's PWX/DP card marked "EMIGRATED"

Life in America

In addition to those whose training and education were interrupted prior to and during World War II, many Holocaust survivors came to the United States after World II with prior vocational training, skills, and professional backgrounds, but lacked the paperwork to prove it. As a result, they were expected to and often did take jobs that were beneath their educational level. The range of employment experiences for Jewish Holocaust survivors in the United States during the aftermath of the war was broad, from those who became extremely successful to those struggling to find employment.

It was not unusual to find survivors working together in certain occupations; the garment industry was one trade where this frequently occurred. Much like the immigrants of the prior century, the post war Jewish immigrants who settled into the garment industry found themselves surrounded by people with a shared language and shared experiences which provided a sense of community. Unlike the immigrants of the prior century, these shared experiences involved memories of the horrors of the Holocaust that were unfathomable to those who did not experience them, coupled with a profound sense of loss. Jewish Holocaust survivors greatly appreciated the value of work; but for many their economic success was intertwined significantly with the way in which they and others addressed the considerable suffering they had endured.



Sidonia and Hanna on corner

The mental state of survivors was usually ignored or passed off as a phase. The remedy to their physical complaints or their emotional turmoil was typically to view their workplace as rehabilitation, and to put great effort into acculturating into the United States. Names were changed (usually simplified), and birth dates were sometimes adjusted. Stories about prior lives that included lost spouses, children, parents, and grandparents, and memories of times spent in camps, forests, or in hiding, were shared only in private settings.

Nonetheless, survivors like Sidonia Perlstein were determined to succeed. They suffered immense physical and emotional trauma and loss due to the Holocaust. They also had to overcome the typical hardships for immigrants, such as language barriers, obtaining jobs and housing, and taking steps towards citizenship. Yet, they came to the United States and set about starting their new lives as American citizens. Many of them had children and began new families, often living in communities with other survivors, at least initially, for support.

Over time, as they became more acclimated with American culture, Holocaust survivors often moved into other areas. In the case of the group of survivors Sidonia and Hanna lived near in the north end of Springfield, Massachusetts, most of them left the area and moved to more affluent areas of Springfield. Along with their own efforts to live and work in America, the children of these survivors, including Hanna, bore the fruit of their labor and efforts to have a normal life. From this select group in Springfield, most of their children went on to college and professional careers. Around the nation and the world, similar patterns of immigration, acculturation, and revitalization emerged among Holocaust survivors.

Activities

Essential Questions

- How did Holocaust survivors acculturate and, in some cases, assimilate into American culture?
- What were Sidonia's challenges in America and how did she overcome them?
- Would you do anything different to enhance your life situation?

Activities

1. The History of America and Immigration

A. The long history of immigration to the United States has shaped who we are as a nation and as individuals. Researching the immigrant experience is a worthwhile investigation, and adds a layer of meaning and knowledge to comprehending the impact that immigrants have made to the development of the United States. To review a piece of this history, consider consulting the resources to the left on Ellis Island and Angel Island, two sites especially important to the waves of immigrants who came to the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Depending upon time, and how much attention is desired with this topic, the following activities could be considered.

There are also lessons and activities on each website. Students could also spend a period of time simply viewing the websites.

- Look through both websites and take notes on the experiences of the immigrants who came through each. Then, write a post card, or a letter, pretending to be either a European immigrant that checked into Ellis Island, or an Asian immigrant that checked into Angel Island. In the letter, describe the push and pull factors that brought immigrants to America, and the experiences that most immigrants had at Ellis or Angel Island. Also describe the challenges of being an immigrant in a new land, and the steps taken by immigrants to assimilate into America, and also to preserve traditions from their home countries.
- Make a comparative graphic organizer for the experiences of immigrants at both Ellis and Angel Island. Include photographs for both in the organizer.

B. The Impact of Twentieth Century Immigration Laws

- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website link entitled "United States Immigration and Refugee Law 1921-1980" provides an excellent, concise review of immigration laws, especially concerning refugees, throughout the twentieth century. It has 11 sections chronicling different time periods throughout the century.

Ellis Island website:

<https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/overview-history/>

Angel Island website:

<https://www.aiisf.org/curriculum>

Individually or in small groups, each group will take one or more sections, and answer several questions either in writing, on poster paper, or digitally. The questions focus upon the attitudes and impact that contributed to decisions to keep or change immigration laws. Each section should be denoted by the title on the website, but underneath the title, answer the following questions:

- What laws were passed and which groups of immigrants were addressed?
- Why were these laws passed?
- What impact did the laws have on immigrants at the time?
- What other factors influenced the laws that were passed, such as world events or American public opinion?

USHMM Link on Immigration:
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/united-states-immigration-and-refugee-law-1921-1980>

- If the questions are written out by hand, each set of questions can be written on poster paper per section, and a short presentation can be given to the class by the individual or group that answered the questions. After each presentation, the posters can be hung around the room. If done digitally, each section could be shared to a Google Slides (or a similar program) presentation. Individuals and groups could also present their sections using a program like Flipgrid. When all parts are shared, students can look across all of the posters, slides, or videos and search for trends and connections that occurred over time with immigration laws.
- For enrichment and a more advanced activity, if desired, after completing the above activity, consider the article from the *Hungarian Review* website on “American foreign policy and immigration”, especially focusing on the Cold War after World War II, and *The Georgetown Law Library’s* “Historical Overview of Immigration” link. What information do they add to the activity above? What factors contributed to immigration policies in American History?

Hungarian Review Link:
http://hungarianreview.com/article/20170517_migration_as_a_tool_of_us_foreign_policy_in_the_cold_war

The Georgetown Law Library Link:
<https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=592919&p=4171684>

USHMM link to “America and the Holocaust”:
<https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/museum-exhibitions/americans-and-the-holocaust>

USHMM link to “America and the Holocaust” teaching materials with downloadable lesson plans, worksheets and other resources:
<https://www.ushmm.org/teach/teaching-materials/americans-and-the-holocaust>

The lesson plans provided by the USHMM for this exhibit include a thorough and thoughtful analysis of immigration before, during, and after World War II.

C. America and the Holocaust: Immigration

- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has an excellent exhibit on American responses during the Holocaust. The topic of immigration is significant throughout this exhibit. The link to the left is to the online exhibit, which contains an excellent and informative 39-minute tour by the curator, Dr. Daniel Greene. In addition, the second link (this link is also easily accessible through the first link to the online exhibit) has teaching materials for this online exhibit.
- In addition, the Facing History and Ourselves website had a review of the American response to the Holocaust. There are connection questions at the bottom, and related content regarding refugees and immigration as well.

2. Life after the Holocaust in America

- A. For many Holocaust survivors, life after World War II meant starting over in a new country. The United States was the preferred place for many. Historian Hasia Diner noted in her book, *The Jews of the United States*, that a baton had been passed for

Facing History and Ourselves link:
<https://www.facinghistory.org/defying-nazis/america-and-holocaust>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Links:
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/displaced-persons?series=89>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-aftermath-of-the-holocaust?series=89>

These links can simply be discussed, or focus questions could be assigned first, followed by discussion.

In addition, it may be useful for discussion to look at this important link from the Southern Poverty Law Center's "Teaching Tolerance" Teaching Tolerance magazine regarding myths about immigration:
<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2011/ten-myths-about-immigration>

Article from Stanford University:
<https://siepr.stanford.edu/research/publications/immigrants-assimilate>

Graphic poster of research results from New York University:
https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/jm2734/Psych_Cafe/TC_Posters/Holocaust_Coping.pdf

USHMM website link About Life After the Holocaust, with several stories from survivors:
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/about-life-after-the-holocaust?series=89>

Article from the New York Times called "Holocaust Survivors had Skills to Prosper," from October 6, 1992, Section C, Page 1.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/06/science/holocaust-survivors-had-skills-to-prosper.html>

More resources for 2D on next page.

European Jews to the United States after World War II. Settling in as immigrants, however, was complex, and included a range of experiences with both successes and failures. Prior to beginning the activity below, study the links on the left from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum regarding displaced persons and the aftermath of the Holocaust.

- B.** While every immigrant has a unique story to share, Holocaust survivors who immigrated to a new country after the war had experiences that were similar, and some that were different from those of other immigrants who were not Holocaust survivors. To begin this activity, brainstorm the general challenges that all immigrants face when they emigrate from one country to a new country. Consider information recently viewed in the Ellis Island and Angel Island websites, and the way in which immigration laws can and did influence the experiences of immigrants. This brainstorm can be written on the board, or shared through a digital platform like a shared Google Document, a Google Jamboard, or a Nearpod assignment.
- C.** Next, define the words "acculturation" and "assimilation." Then, read through the article from Stanford University entitled "What history tells us about the assimilation of immigrants." While reading, list the ways that immigrants assimilate into a new society, and the challenges they face during the process, including the attitudes from those around them. This could be completed in a two-column chart as well. When finished, compare to the brainstorm above. Are there any challenges that were missed? What should be added?
- D.** Now, consider the experiences of Holocaust survivors as immigrants in the United States after World War II, using the resources to the left. What made the immigration experiences of Holocaust survivors different from other immigrants? What was the same? A graphic organizer for comparison could be created to organize the information uncovered in this research, or a comparative essay could be written that analyzes the similarities and differences between immigrants who were and were not Holocaust survivors. Much of the literature written about Holocaust survivors who immigrated to new countries describes survivors as having unique challenges. What were they? How did these challenges influence their lives as immigrants after the war? How did they overcome these challenges?

3. Sidonia as Survivor

- A.** Look over the short biography of Sidonia in Section I of this guide. Think about what you would have done in some of the situations that Sidonia faced after World War II. Would you have made the same decisions? Pick three situations where Sidonia faced difficult or challenging circumstances, and write a personal reflection contemplating her choices in these circumstances. Would you have made the same choices if faced with these situations that Sidonia dealt with? Consider the following questions: how hard was/is it

If desired, the websites below (or anything similar) can also be consulted to provide a range of immigrant stories and experiences, for comparison.

Series of websites that have stories of modern immigrants:
<https://www.iamanimmigrant.com/stories/>
<https://theimmigrantstory.org/immigrant-story/>
<https://cla.umn.edu/ihr/immigrant-stories>
<https://diversity.utexas.edu/2017/06/04/coming-to-america-students-and-faculty-share-their-american-immigration-stories/>

to be an immigrant? What goals did Sidonia and other immigrants have, when it came to living in America as an American? What added burdens did Sidonia and other survivors have, with being a Holocaust survivor?

B. An alternative to writing a reflection would be to create three “web” style organizers.

Each organizer would have the difficult or challenging circumstance listed inside a circle in the middle, along with Sidonia’s reaction to the circumstance. Then, have several lines (or arrows) radiating from the circle. At the end of each line, list the variables that contributed to Sidonia’s decision to react in the way that she did to each circumstance. Lines can be added if necessary.

- Short reflective statements regarding Sidonia’s choices could also be added around the center circle relating to the difficulties of being an immigrant with the added burden of being a Holocaust survivor. If desired, this activity could be done individually or in small groups, and each web could be shared among students, so that they could take turns commenting on the web organizers that were shared.

C. For enrichment, write a letter to Sidonia as if you were preparing to interview her.

What questions would you ask her? What advice would you seek from her, when it comes to making tough decisions in your own life? What can you learn from how she problem-solved through the challenges she faced?

Resources

The following resources were either consulted for the narrative introductions to each of the five sections of this guide, or they are resource recommendations for that section. For resources related to the educational activities, please see the suggestions included with the activities for each section.

Resources for Part I

Marcus, Hanna Perlstein. *Sidonia's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America*. New Charleston: Create, 2012.

Surviving Remnant: Memories of the Jewish Greenhorns in 1950s America. Middletown: Buttonhole Publishing, 2017.

Resources for Part II

Braham, Randolph L. *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000.

Haraszti, György. "Hungary from 1918-1945." *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*. https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Hungary/Hungary_from_1918_to_1945

"Historical Background: The Jews of Hungary During the Holocaust." *Yad Vashem*. <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/jews-of-hungary-during-the-holocaust.html>

Marcus, Hanna Perlstein. *Sidonia's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America*. New Charleston: Create, 2012.

Silber, Michael K. "Hungary before 1918." *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*. https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Hungary/Hungary_before_1918#id0e1pak

Weiner, Rebecca. "Hungary Virtual Jewish History Tour." *Jewish Virtual Library*. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hungary-virtual-jewish-history-tour>

Resources for Part III

Bazarov, Valery. "HIAS and HICEM in the System of Jewish Relief Organizations in Europe, 1933-41." *Eastern European Jewish Affairs* 39:1 (2009): 69-78. doi: 10.1080/13501670902750295.

Cohen, Beth. *Case Closed*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Diner, Hasia R. "American Jewish Identity and the Garment Industry." *In A Perfect Fit: The Garment Industry and American Jewry, 1860-1960*, edited by Gabriel M. Goldstein and Elizabeth E. Greenberg, 29-40. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press for Yeshiva University Museum, 2012.

The Jews of the United States. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Helmreich, William B. *Against All Odds: Holocaust Survivors and the Successful Lives They Made in America*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996.

Marcus, Hanna Perlstein. *Sidonia's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America*. New Charleston: Create, 2012.

Surviving Remnant: Memories of the Jewish Greenhorns in 1950s America. Middletown: Buttonhole Publishing, 2017.

"Post War Years." *US Citizenship and Immigration Services*. <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/our-history/overview-of-ins-history/post-war-years>

Segev, Zohar. "Remembering and Rebuilding: The World Jewish Congress, In the Shadow of the Holocaust." *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 14, no. 2 (July 2105): 315-352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2014.957917>.

Stone, Dan. *The Liberation of the Camps: The End of the Holocaust and its Aftermath*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

Wilson, Jennifer. "Creating Beauty in the Wake of the Holocaust: Jewish Holocaust Survivors and their Post-War Careers in the Clothing Industry." MHGS Thesis. Gratz College, 2019.

Resources for Part IV

Gabriel M. Goldstein and Elizabeth E. Greenberg, ed. *A Perfect Fit: The Garment Industry and American Jewry, 1860-1960*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press for Yeshiva University Museum, 2012.

Kaplan, Marion. *Between Dignity and Despair*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. (Quotation "Sewing Knows No Language" page 114)

Kremer, Roberta S. ed. *Broken Threads: The Destruction of the Jewish Fashion Industry in Germany and Austria*. Oxford, Berg: Vancouver Holocaust Education Association, 2007

Martin, Sean. *A Stitch in Time*. Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 2015.

Newman, Johanna. "Modern Jewish History: From Ghetto to Glamour-How Jews Redesigned the Fashion Business." *The Jewish Virtual Library*. Accessed March 15, 2019. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/from-ghetto-to-glamour-how-jews-redesigned-the-fashion-business>.

Postrel, Virginia. *The Fabric of Civilization: How Textiles Made the World*. New York: Basic Books, 2020.

Wilson, Jennifer. "Creating Beauty in the Wake of the Holocaust: Jewish Holocaust Survivors and their Post-War Careers in the Clothing Industry." MHGS Thesis. Gratz College, 2019

Resources for Part V

Lambros Fatsis. "The Importance of Studying People." *The Sociological Review*.

<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/the-importance-of-studying-people/>

Stearns, Peter N. "Why Study History (1998)." *American Historical Association*.

[https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-\(1998\)](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-(1998))

Glossary

The majority of the following terms were defined using the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website (ushmm.org), unless noted otherwise. Glossary terms are listed in alphabetical order.

Adolf Eichmann

Eichmann was a crucial figure in the implementation of the Nazi's Final Solution, which eventually became the mass murder of the Jewish population of Europe. Eichmann had experience with organizing emigration and forced deportation of Jews in the early years of World War II, and continued to do so until the end of the war. He was the main figure involved with organizing and managing the deportation of Hungarian Jews starting in 1944. He escaped US custody at the end of the war in 1946, but was discovered in Argentina in 1960 and brought to Israel, where his trial was widely publicized, bringing attention to the events of the Holocaust. He was hanged for his crimes in 1962.

See the following link for the documents required by Nazi Germany in order for Jews to leave:
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documents-required-to-obtain-a-visa>

Affidavit

A sworn statement in writing. In order to emigrate during the Nazi era, German Jews had to obtain many documents, including affidavits. Affidavits were also necessary for Holocaust survivors who wanted to emigrate after the war.

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Also known as "The Joint" or the JDC, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was created in 1914 in New York from forty Jewish organizations, which met to provide relief efforts for Jews in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The JDC continued its efforts throughout World Wars I and II, providing money and food to European Jews in peril, even while their European offices were ransacked or closed. They helped to facilitate the escape and emigration of Jewish refugees during the Nazi era, as well as supplied aid to rescuers like Raoul Wallenberg and Carl Lutz. After the war, the JDC continued to operate, often working in conjunction with other agencies to provide aid to Jewish Holocaust survivors.

National Park Service, US Department of the Interior:
<https://www.nps.gov/places/u-s-immigration-station-angel-island.htm>

Angel Island

Sometimes called the "Ellis Island of the West," Angel Island is located in California's San Francisco Bay, and was the point of entry for Asian immigrants. It processed approximately one million Asian and other immigrants between 1919 and 1940.

Anti-Defamation League:
<https://www.adl.org/anti-semitism>

Antisemitism

The belief or behavior hostile toward Jews just because they are Jewish.

It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews. Hostility toward Jews dates back to ancient times, perhaps to the beginning of Jewish history.

In the late 19th century, Jews were associated with modernity and liberalism, ideologies that were at odds with the growing trends of conservatism and nationalism. Hatred and discrimination of Jews, however, predates the 19th century and can be traced back hundreds of years. Antisemitism during the Nazi era was especially associated with Nazi racial ideology, where Jews were considered an enemy race.

Smithsonian Institution:
<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/idealabs/ap/essays/looking.htm>

Artifact

An object created by and used by people, allowing researchers to make connections between history and people. Artifacts have a way of bringing the past back to life.

Merriam-Webster:
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/assimilation>

Assimilated/Acculturate

Assimilation occurs when groups from different cultures absorb the dominant culture by acquiring its habits, language, and modes of life.

Acculturation is a process of social, psychological, and cultural change that stems from the balancing of two cultures while adapting to the prevailing culture of the society (Google Dictionary).

The Jewish Virtual Library:
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/bar-bat-mitzvah-and-confirmation>

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

A ceremony for Jewish children where they formally are obligated to observe the commandments, usually around age 13 for males, and age 12 or 13 for females.

National Geographic:
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/health-and-human-body/human-diseases/the-plague/>

Black Plague

After starting possibly in China and spreading along trade routes in the early 14th Century, the Black Plague killed about twenty-five million people in Europe, and continued to appear for centuries. The cause was later discovered to be fleas infecting rats with the *Y.pestis* bacteria. However, during the 14th century, when the cause was unknown, Jews were often blamed for the Black Plague.

Wikipedia:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casual_wear

Casual Culture

Also called casual wear, or leisure wear, casual culture clothing includes comfortable, relaxed everyday wear that is not formal. Casual culture became especially popular in Western society starting in the 1960's.

Code of Ethics

A set of guidelines for moral or ethical conduct for personal and/or professional use.

Nazi Concentration Camps

Camps where people targeted by the Nazis were imprisoned and confined in harsh conditions without legal processes. Concentration camps served to incarcerate people considered a security threat, often involving forced labor. Concentration camps also resulted in the killing of groups targeted by the Nazis. There were tens of thousands of Nazi concentration camps. Sidonia

Perlstein was in Auschwitz, which was both a concentration camp used for slave labor and a Killing Center. She was also in Dachau and Bergen Belsen.

Dámóc

A small, agrarian town where the Perlstein's lived, near the border of northeastern Hungary and Czechoslovakia, at the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. (Information taken from *Sidonia's Thread*, by Hanna Perlstein Marcus)

Killing Center

The Nazi camps designed specifically for large-scale murder. While some victims sent to these camps were kept alive for various reasons, the main task of these camps was to use a systematic and industrial program to put to death, often upon arrival, the victims who were sent there. There were a handful of Killing Centers, including Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Chelmo, and Auschwitz Birkenau.

Deportation

The removal of Jews from their existing home and their subsequent relocation to ghettos, camps, or killing fields. Once Jews were removed from their homes, their property was often confiscated by the Nazis and/or looted by non-Jewish community members. Deportation involved a mass coordination especially of railways, involving Nazis, military personnel, and civilians (like train engineers) from various countries.

DP Camp/Displaced Persons Act

The end of World War II revealed around ten million “Displaced Persons,” or “DPs,” who were often forced laborers, prisoners, or concentration camp survivors left on German soil. During the process of sending them back to their home countries, called repatriation, camps called “DP camps” were set up to house the DPs until they acquired the necessary paperwork to leave. Among the millions of DPs were Jewish Holocaust survivors, who often had no home to return to. Thus, their situation often resulted in emigration. In 1948, the United States passed the Displaced Persons Act, allowing 400,000 DPs (68,000 of which were Jews) to immigrate into the United States between 1949-1952.

Einsatzgruppen

These were Nazi mobile killing groups that followed the German army in its march eastward and murdered over one million civilians to “secure” the occupied territory. The invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 intensified the number of killing squads as well as the amount killed, the vast majority of which were Jews. The mobile killing squads by then consisted of a variety of collaborating groups including the Nazi SS, army and police, along with local officials.

Ellis Island

Located in New York Harbor, Ellis Island served as an immigration station for 62 years, starting in 1892. During this time, 12 million immigrants especially from Europe were processed at

Ellis Island in a series of inspections that lasted around three to five hours. All but around two percent made it through to start a new life in America.

Wikipedia:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textile_sample_)
 Textile_sample_

Fabric Swatch

A small piece of fabric left over from an existing project, or ordered as a sample from a textile company or other retail establishment.

Final Solution

The Final Solution was the name of the Nazi plan to solve what they deemed the “Jewish problem.” The “solution” changed over time, from forced emigration of Jews out of Germany, to the mass murder of the Jewish population. The specific point when the Nazis decided to switch from forced emigration to mass murder is unclear. However, somewhere between 1941 and 1942, the steps towards the annihilation of the Jewish population (and other Nazi targets, especially the Roma population) began, which included deportations, gassing, shooting, acts of terror, disease, and starvation.

Case Western Reserve:
[https://case.edu/ech/articles/g](https://case.edu/ech/articles/garment-industry)
 garment-industry

Garment Industry

Usually a reference to the creation and growth of ready to wear clothing that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, especially due to the mechanization of clothing production by the sewing machine. Trends in urbanization and immigration often contributed to the growth of the garment industry.

Genocide

Coined by Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin in 1944, the term genocide comes from the Greek word “genos,” for tribe, and the Latin word “cide,” for killing. Legally the term genocide means the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group as such, by killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, inflicting conditions of life to bring about the group’s destruction, preventing births, or forcibly transferring children from one group to another group.

Ghetto

The name “ghetto” comes from the Jewish quarter created by authorities in the sixteenth century in Venice, Italy. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Jewish quarters called ghettos were created in various cities around Europe. During World War II, the Nazis created ghettos, starting in Poland, to concentrate and isolate Jews from non-Jewish populations. The conditions of life were designed to cause great suffering.

Jewish Virtual Library:
[https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hapsburg-monarchy)
 org/hapsburg-monarchy

Hapsburg Empire

The Hapsburg Dynasty ruled a multi-national empire centered in Austria for centuries, from the late thirteenth century until the end of WWI. Within the Hapsburg Empire were areas with considerable Jewish populations. Jews experienced an ebb and flow of restrictions during the

centuries of Hapsburg rule; towards the end of the nineteenth century, they began to gain civil equality within the empire, until it fell after WWI.

Holocaust

The Holocaust was the state sponsored, systematic persecution and killing by the Nazis of six million Jews, two-thirds of them **European Jews**, as well as other targets considered inferior or a threat by the Nazi party. The Nazi regime led Germany starting in 1933 until 1945. Legal restrictions and discrimination marked the beginning of the Nazi regime, until the violent events of Kristallnacht in 1938, the beginning of World War II in 1939, and the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 which resulted in the mass murder of Nazi targets by bullets and in killing centers. Holocaust survivors often found themselves in DP camps awaiting immigration into the United States and other countries.

Horthy, Miklos

Miklos Horthy, who had been an officer in the Austro-Hungarian navy, came to power at the head of a conservative-nationalist coalition, which unraveled most of the democratic reforms created in Hungary immediately after World War I. Horthy presided for the next 24 years over an authoritarian, almost feudal system of aristocratic rule.

Hungary

A country located in Europe surrounded by Austria, Czechoslovakia (at the time of World War II), Romania, and Yugoslavia (at the time of World War II). The Jews of Hungary were a diverse set of communities including modern and traditional Jews, which were by and large still alive in the middle of 1944. Despite the impending loss of Germany and the Axis Powers, and despite world leaders acknowledging the mass murder of Jews prior to 1944, the Jews of Hungary were still deported and put to death in large numbers in the last year of the war. (DO Arrow Cross Party)

Immigration/Emigration

Immigration is the process of moving to a new country while emigration is the process of moving from another country. Immigrants trying to move to the United States after World War I faced quota limitations and had to obtain many documents including an American immigration visa. Jews trying to emigrate from Germany in the 1930s as the Nazis increased their restrictions often found it incredibly difficult to do so, due to emigration requirements.

Isolationism

The policy of reducing involvement with foreign affairs. The United States practiced isolationist policies after World War I by not joining the League of Nations, creating new laws with immigration restrictions, and passing Neutrality Acts.

Jewish Virtual Library:
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/kapos>

Kapo

Supervisors in Nazi concentration camps, some of which were Jews. They were sometimes as harsh as their German non-Jewish counterparts, creating an ethical dilemma in the aftermath of the war among Jewish Holocaust survivors.

Liberation

In the context of World War II, liberation meant the freeing of survivors in Nazi concentration and killing centers by Allied troops starting in July of 1944.

Nazi

The name for the National Socialist German Workers Party, a far right, nationalist, racist, and anti-democratic political party in Germany led by Adolf Hitler. Created right after World War I, it especially gained followers due to the Great Depression. The meaning of the word “socialist” for Nazis was not the same as the socialistic movements elsewhere; socialism for the Nazis meant a unified country based upon Nazi racial ideology, with a German community of people (the Volk) that were devoted to the state.

Numerus Clausus Law in Hungary

This law was enacted in Hungary in 1920 and severely restricted the number of Jews in institutions of higher learning. It is considered the first antisemitic piece of legislation put forth by a European country after World War I. (Peter Tibor Nagy, The Numerus Clausus in Interwar Hungary, *Eastern European Jewish Affairs*, Volume 35, No.1, June 2005).

Operation Margarethe

In March of 1944, Operation Margarethe began in Hungary; German Wehrmacht paratroopers followed by occupation forces, which included Einsatzgruppen, SS and Gestapo, invaded and took over Hungary without resistance from the Hungarian military, or the civilian population. Once the military operation was deemed successful, the Wehrmacht soldiers were dispersed to the front within a month, and the government of Hungary was reorganized to align with both German military goals and the goals of the Final Solution. Adolf Eichmann and his Special Commando led the effort towards the latter with the help of certain departments within the Hungarian police. (Jennifer Wilson—see citation in Resources, Part III)

ORT Impact Through Education:
<https://www.ort.org/en/>

Organization for Rehabilitation and Training

Created in Russia in 1880, the ORT provided skills training for impoverished Jews. It grew throughout Europe and provided loans, training, and equipment to Jews, especially refugees, and continued to grow worldwide, helping Jewish DPs after World War II. The ORT continues its work today providing vocational training around the world.

Ottoman Empire

Founded in 1299, The Ottoman Empire grew to dominate the area around the Mediterranean Sea with a multilingual, multiethnic empire. The Ottoman Empire ruled southern and central

medieval Hungary during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Hungarian portions of the Empire were taken over by the Hapsburgs in the eighteenth century. Already faltering on the eve of World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed after the war, resulting in the creation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and other states in the Middle East.

Peddlers

Individuals who traveled the countryside, selling goods to customers often from a sack that was carried on their back. It was common for young Jewish men to do this in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially due to restrictions that prohibited other occupations for European Jews.

Refugee

A person outside of their native country who cannot return due to fearing for their life because of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, or affiliation with a certain group.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>

Resilience

Defined by the American Psychological Association as the means to adapt and even achieve personal growth in the face of adverse circumstances and traumatic events.

Sátoraljaújhely

Located at the base of the Sator Hills at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, Sátoraljaújhely was at one time the capital city of the region that included Dámóc. Prior to the war, the Perlstein family visited this town frequently. During the war, it became a ghetto, where the Perlstein family was sent before their deportation to Auschwitz. (Information taken from *Sidonia's Thread*, by Hanna Perlstein Marcus)

Seamstress/Tailor

A seamstress typically sews items; a tailor alters items to fit. It is generally accepted that both seamstresses and tailors can alter and create clothing, so their occupational titles are often grouped together.

SS (Schutzstaffel)

Originally Hitler's personal bodyguard unit, the SS was made up of elite, "pure" German party members and became the leading enforcement organization that oversaw internal security and the execution of Nazi racial policies. The SS ran the Nazi concentration and killing camp system, and the intelligence branch of the SS (the SD) participated in the Einsatzgruppen.

Diane von Furstenberg,
Master Class:
<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/natural-vs-synthetic-fibers>

Synthetic versus natural fabrics

Synthetic fabrics are man made; natural fabrics are made from animal or plant-based fibers.

UNRRA

United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, created in the United States in 1943. It was designed to help European nations after World War II with their massive refugee and displaced persons population. It helped millions of refugees and displaced persons with a variety of services and administered displaced persons camps.

YIVO Archives:

<http://www.yivoarchives.org/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=32628>

USNA

The United Service for New Americans, created in New York in 1946 that assisted immigrants, especially Holocaust survivors, with integrating into American society.

See the USHMM link here to learn the steps for this process:

<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/what-did-refugees-need-to-obtain-a-us-visa-in-the-1930s>

Visa

The necessary documentation to enter into a foreign country, issued by the foreign country. For Jewish refugees trying to leave Europe, obtaining a visa to enter into a new country was particularly difficult.

Wallenberg, Raoul and Lutz, Carl

Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg and Swiss diplomat Carl Lutz worked in Budapest, Hungary, to provide tens of thousands of Jews their certification papers claiming they were under the protection of neutral powers. Lutz and Wallenberg worked with local Jewish agencies as well to gain protective papers and shelter for the Jews in Budapest.

Wehrmacht

The official German military, which often assisted the SS in perpetrating Nazi crimes.

World War I/World War II

World War I was the first significant international conflict of the twentieth century, occurring from 1914-1918. The devastation and destruction from World War I, coupled with the unease and economic crises of the interwar period, gave rise to dictatorships and eventually World War II, which occurred from 1939 to 1945.

Yellow star of David

The yellow Star of David was the “Jewish badge” that the Nazis forced the Jews of Germany and occupied territories to wear, in order to label, humiliate, segregate, and control their movements. While the yellow Star of David was common, other areas had variations, such as the white armband with a blue Star of David in areas of Poland.