

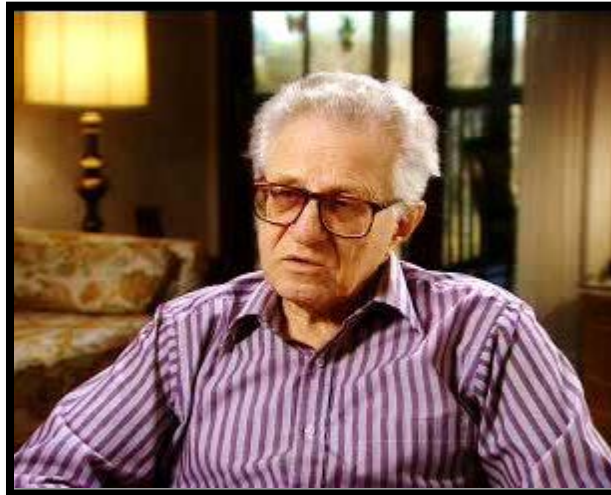
Henry Oertelt

Henry Oertelt was born in Berlin, Germany on January 13, 1921. Henry's father, Arthur, died when Henry was two years old and he was raised by his mother, Else, who made a living as a seamstress. Henry had a brother, Kurt, six years his senior.

Soon after the Nazi rise to power in 1933, anti-Jewish laws came into effect in Germany, and Else lost her job. Henry was 14 when he was expelled from public school and his soccer team.

In the wake of deportations of Jewish population from Berlin, the family was transported to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia, in May 1943. In 1944, Henry and Kurt were deported to the Auschwitz II-Birkenau death camp in Poland, and from there to Golleschau, a subsidiary camp of Auschwitz III in Upper Silesia. In Golleschau, Henry was forced to work in a cement factory and a furniture workshop.

In early 1945, Henry and Kurt were sent on a death march to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany, and then, to the Oranienburg-Heinkelwerke forced labor camp. Eventually, they wound up in the Flossenbürg concentration camp, where they were separated: Kurt was sent out, while Henry remained behind.



Visual History Biographical Profile

Henry was liberated during a death march from Flossenbürg by the American army in April 1945. His mother was killed in the gas chambers of Birkenau.

After the liberation, Henry returned to Berlin where he was reunited with his brother. In 1946, Henry married Inge Fromm. The family moved to the United States in 1949 and settled in St. Paul, MN. The couple had a daughter, Stephanie, and a son, David.

In the United States, Henry worked as a furniture designer and was actively involved in the Holocaust education.

The interview was recorded on November 21, 1995, in St. Paul, MN, U.S.A.

In 2000, with the help of his daughter Henry published his memoir *An Unbroken Chain: My Journey Through the Nazi Holocaust*.

In 2006 Henry received an honorary doctoral degree from St. Cloud State University. He delivered numerous Holocaust lectures to various audiences throughout Minnesota and the Midwest. Henry Oertelt passed away on January 27, 2011 at the age of 90.