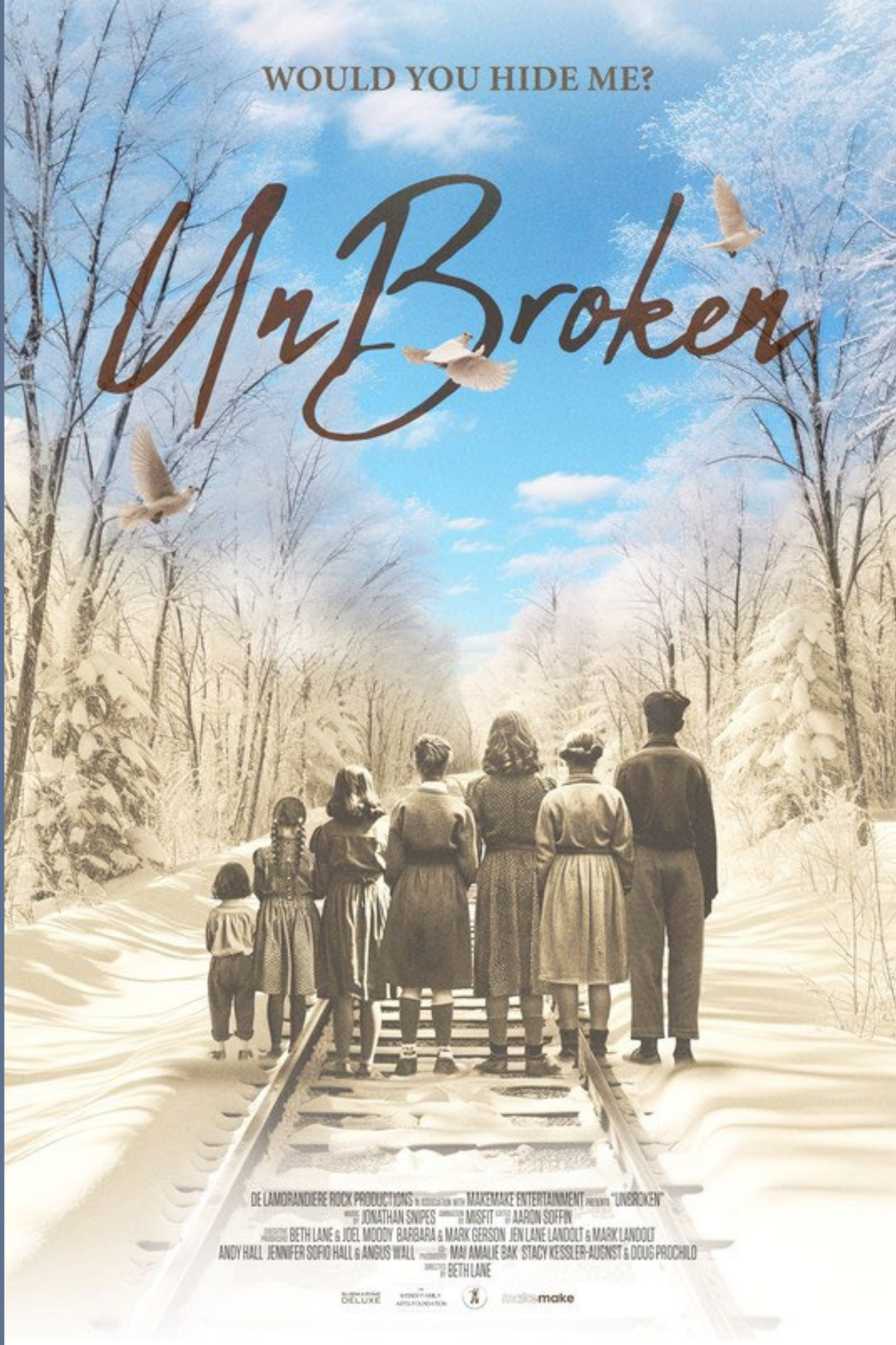
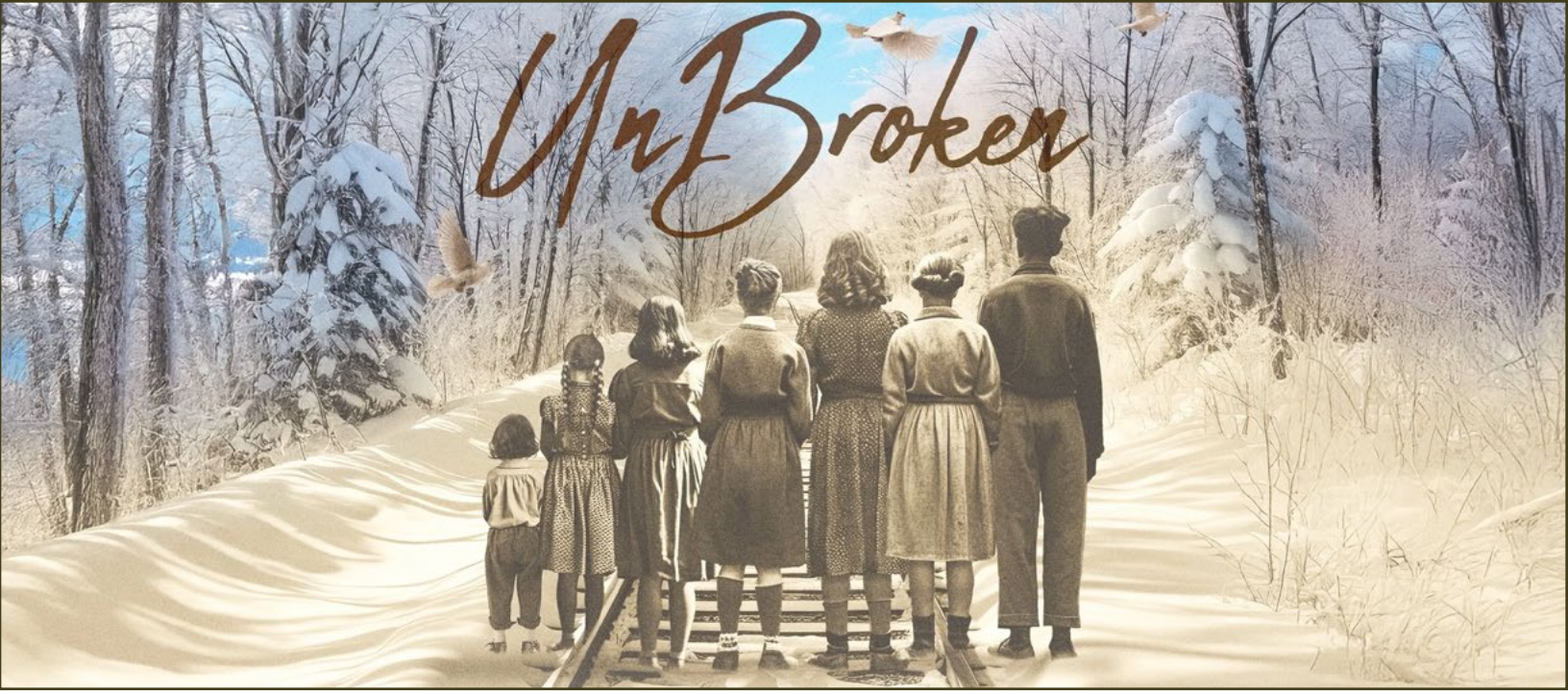

WOULD YOU HIDE ME?
UnBroken
DE LAMOTHE RICK PRODUCTIONS
MAKEMAKE ENTERTAINMENT
"UNBROKEN"
JONATHAN SNIPES
MISFIT
AARON SOFFIN
BETH LANE & JOEL MOODY BARBARA & MARK GERSON JEN LANE LANDOLT & MARK LANDOLT
ANDY HALL JENNIFER SOFIO HALL & ANGUS WALL
MAI AMALIE BAK STACY KESSLER-AUGNIST & DOUG PROCHILO
BETH LANE
DELUXE
makemake



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Note to users:

Each section is designed to be used independently and can stand alone for learning and growth in these areas in connection with the film. Handouts connect with specific sections but can be used in other ways. Sections can also be used in conjunction with one another, and some sections include suggested connections to one another. You can also use the guide in its entirety for a rich, in-depth learning experience.

Go 2 Films

JOURNEYS IN FILM™ educating for global understanding

FACILITATION GUIDELINES

Filmmakers use immersive storytelling to produce intense thoughts and emotions in the viewer. **Journeys in Film** uses this powerful medium as a springboard for meaningful dialogue around humanity's most pressing issues. In this guide, you will find suggestions for leading productive conversations that broaden perspectives, increase global competency, encourage empathy, and build new paradigms for education.

- When watching a film or having a powerful discussion, normalize taking breaks and exercising bodily autonomy. Acknowledge that conversations around complex topics can be vulnerable, complicated, and challenging. Encourage members to voice and do what is right for them without needing to explain or apologize.
- People do their best when they know what to expect. Start and end your meetings on time.
- Share or co-create your intentions for the meeting.
- Create your space. If possible, share snacks or find other ways to create an inviting, comfortable atmosphere.
- Create a trustworthy space. Maintain confidentiality and only speak to your own experience.
- Minimize distractions while you are together. Silence cell phones and devices so you can give your full attention to the conversation.
- Practice whole-body listening. Listen to words, tone, body language, and the feeling in the atmosphere.
- Acknowledge voices that may be absent. Is there a lived experience that isn't represented in your group? Who are the bridge people who might be able to connect you with other people in your community who might bring new perspectives to the table?
- Adopt an attitude of positive intent. If someone says something that bothers you, assume positive intent and ask for more information.
- Ignite your curiosity around other people's views and opinions. Listen to understand, not to respond. You don't need to agree with others in your group or make it known that you are "right" to have a worthwhile conversation.
- Words matter. Be open to learning and practicing new ways to communicate with others.
- Be clear, direct, and kind in your communication. Nobody benefits when you bottle your opinions.
- Everyone has blind spots and biases; cultivate a space of grace as you enter into new territory together.
- If a conversation gets heated, practice acknowledging the tension, pausing as a group, and taking a collective breath together before diving back in or taking a longer break to reset.
- Privilege your relationships with others over the content or agenda of the meeting. Show each other kindness.
- Create a closing ritual that celebrates the time you've spent together and either gives closure or gives members something to think about before your next meeting.

SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITHOUT ACCESS TO BIOLOGICAL FAMILY HISTORIES

UnBroken centers on archival research, family history, and ancestral memory. However, educators should be mindful that not all learners have access to information about their biological families. Some may be adopted, in foster care, estranged from family members, displaced by migration, or lacking records due to war, incarceration, or historical trauma. Others may simply not feel comfortable discussing family matters.

To ensure an inclusive learning environment:

1. Broaden the definition of "family history."

Instead of focusing solely on biological lineage, invite learners to explore:

- chosen family
- cultural or community traditions
- important adults in their lives
- neighborhood or local histories
- community archives or public records
- collective identities they participate in

2. Provide multiple entry points into genealogical inquiry.

Students may:

- research local historical sites
- interview a mentor or community elder
- analyze a cultural practice meaningful to them
- reflect on stories from their community, school, or neighborhood
- explore a historical event connected to their identity

No learner should be required to disclose personal or sensitive information.

3. Offer alternatives to sharing personal stories.

Include options such as private journaling, fictionalized narratives, archival exploration, or creative projects that do not require personal family details.

4. Avoid assumptions.

Use inclusive language such as "people who influence you," "stories connected to your community," or "a tradition that shapes your identity" to prevent placing learners in uncomfortable positions.

5. Build psychologically safe environments.

Genealogical and historical inquiry can evoke strong emotions. Offer opportunities to opt out, step away, or choose a different activity. Normalize diverse family experiences and emphasize that identity is shaped by many forces, not only ancestry.

By creating flexibility, honoring privacy, and recognizing diverse lived experiences, educators can ensure that all learners can engage meaningfully with the film's themes of memory, identity, justice, and repair.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FILM

UnBroken is the miraculous true story of the seven Weber siblings, ages 6–18, who evade capture and death, and ultimately escaped Nazi Germany. Following their mother's incarceration and murder at Auschwitz, they relied solely on their youthful bravado and the kindness of strangers.

After being hidden in a laundry hut by a benevolent German farmer, the children spent two years on their own in war-torn Germany. Emboldened by their father's mandate that they "always stay together," the children used their own cunning instincts to fight through hunger, loneliness, rape, bombings, and fear. Climactically separated from their father, the siblings were forced to declare themselves orphans in order to escape to a new life in America. Unbeknownst to them, this salvation would finally tear them apart, not to be reunited for another 40 years.

Filmmaker Beth Lane, daughter of the youngest Weber sibling, embarks on a quest to retrace their steps, seeking answers to long-held questions about her family's survival. The film examines the journey of the Weber family as told through conversations with living siblings — now in their eighties and nineties — while Beth and her crew road trip across Germany, following the courageous, tumultuous, and harrowing path taken by her family over 70 years ago.

UnBroken is Beth Lane's feature directorial debut, and it is both a professional milestone and a personal quest to immortalize the incredible survival of the Weber siblings — the only family of seven Jewish siblings living in Nazi Germany known to have survived and emigrated together.

THE WEBER SIBLINGS

Alfons Weber
1927 – 2016

Alfons was born as the first child and only son of Alexander & Lina Weber in Paderborn, Germany. As a teenager, he lost his mother and was separated from his father for long periods of time, so he took on the role as the protector of his six younger sisters, who all adored him. Alfons settled in Chicago, where he married and raised a family, working as a physicist. He had planned to take a trip to Germany with his niece, Beth, but his death in 2016 meant that this trip never came to be. Beth's film UnBroken is her way of finally taking that trip with her uncle.

Senta Saulters
1929 – 2016

The eldest Weber daughter, Senta was born in Paderborn, Germany. After immigrating to the United States, she met her husband, Bob Saulters, with whom she raised four sons and co-owned small businesses in Chicago. She was a devout Catholic, and a creative soul with a love for poetry, dancing, and singing. Her lovely singing voice is missed dearly by her siblings and entire family.

Ruth Gilliana
1930 – 2023

Ruth was born in Berlin and came to be the driving force that would ultimately get the seven Weber siblings out of Germany once and for all, thanks to her unrivaled street smarts and moxie. Ruth raised five children in Chicago and she had four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She was an avid Tiger Woods fan!

Gertrude Chapman
Born 1932

Born in Berlin, Gertrude lives in Buffalo Grove along with the love of her life, Sherwin Chapman, her husband of over 55 years. Together, they raised three children in the Jewish faith, and now they have six grandchildren and one great grandchild. Gertrude was the nerve center of communication once the Weber siblings came to Chicago, and she is still the chief cook and bottle communicator.

Renee Dicker
1935 – 2020

Born in Berlin, Renee eventually had three children, four grandchildren and a great-grandchild. Her matter-of-fact, no-nonsense approach to life has an enduring quality that inspires all of us to live an authentic and meaningful life.

Judith Lal
Born 1937

Judith was born in Berlin. As a young adult she worked at The University of Chicago and met her adoring husband, Harbans Lal. Judith converted to Sikhism when she married, and together, they raised three children. Today, she lives in Texas and enjoys spending as much time with her granddaughter as she can.

Ginger (Bela) Lane
Born 1939

The youngest Weber sibling, Ginger Lane was born Bela Weber in Berlin, Germany. After immigrating to the United States at age six, she was adopted by the neurosurgeon I. Joshua Speigel and his wife, Rosalynde, an artist who raised Bela in an artistic household. She became a ballerina and eventually married and had three children. She is the proud grandmother to seven grandchildren, and is the recipient of numerous awards for her contributions to disabilities advocacy, as well as dance and choreography. In the Spring of 2022, Ginger's image was featured on Chicago bus stops and billboards in honor of Women's History Month!

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Beth Lane, Director

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I was sitting in a coffee shop next to the Empire State Building in New York City when my phone rang. "Go outside," my husband said. "The World Trade Center buildings have been hit by an airplane." I thought he was joking. But I went outside, looked down the barrel of Fifth Avenue and saw that the sky was changing. Smoke rose where the towers had stood. I watched in disbelief as the impossible unfolded. Frozen. Silent. I called a friend in the suburbs and asked her to pick up my three children from school — "just in case." I even gave her my sister's phone number in Illinois… "just in case."

I had grown up believing the Holocaust could never happen again. Ever. But on that terrible sunny day, something shifted. The fear. The hatred. The shock of pure evil. It all felt terrifyingly familiar.

My mother, Ginger, was born into poverty in Berlin. As a little girl, she watched the Gestapo kidnap her mother, who was later murdered at Auschwitz. My mom, known as Bela, became one of the hidden children of the Holocaust. Against all odds, she survived. Bela and her six siblings emigrated from Germany to the United States, were then separated into different foster homes, and eventually, my mother was adopted. Her American life was born with loss, silence, education, culture, and love.

In 1986, 40 years after leaving Europe, Ginger, my mother, reunited with her biological brother and sisters. I found out after the reunion. I wasn't there. And I've always carried that absence with me.

Ten years later, Alfons, Senta, Ruth, Gertrude, Renee, and Judith stood together again — this time on my mother's front lawn, beneath a towering paper Statue of Liberty. That gathering unlocked something. We opened scrapbooks. Studied photographs. Read a short memoir Uncle Alfons had written. Eventually, he returned to the village of Worin, Germany, where the children had been hidden. With local historians, he submitted an application to Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Museum in Jerusalem, to honor the farmers who saved them, Arthur and Paula Schmidt. In 2015, the Schmidts were officially named Righteous Among the Nations, and in 2018, a ceremony in The Gardens of The Righteous took place to unveil their names on the granite walls. Uncle Alfons passed away just months before the ceremony, in 2017.

Seventy-two years after my mother fled Europe, she decided to pick up where her brother Alfons left off and return to their hiding place in Worin. I went with her. That journey altered the shape of both our lives. Three weeks later, the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, took place, a white supremacist rally. And I knew the story I had inherited now carried urgency. I had never made a film before. But without question, this story needed to be told.

On October 8, 2023 — less than 24 hours after Hamas attacked and kidnapped civilians at a concert in Israel — *UnBroken* had its world premiere. The timing was surreal. One week later, it won Best Documentary Feature Premiere. That single moment ignited a forty-city tour, a national theatrical release, and finally a Netflix debut on Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. Within 24 hours, *UnBroken* soared to #5 in the Top 10 movies in the U.S. on Netflix. To date, over 1.5 million people have streamed our film.

Why does it connect? Because *UnBroken* is not just a film. It is an invitation.

To feel.
To remember.
To examine who we are and who we choose to be.

I did not create *UnBroken* to make a political statement or a religious one. I made it to build empathy. To remind us that caring is an action. That standing up for one another is a choice. That the way we treat others is the truest measure of who we are.

UnBroken carries a message that is both urgent and enduring. And after audiences absorb its message, I want more than reflection. I want audiences to feel more deeply, care more fiercely and choose, in their own lives, to be upstanders. For themselves, for their communities, and for humanity.

— Beth Lane, Director

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE HOLOCAUST AND JEWISH REFUGEES

Germany Between the Wars

The German Empire shattered after World War I. The Treaty of Versailles forced the loss of key industrial land and dictated that Germany pay significant reparations to allied countries. Blockades, continued shortages of food, fuel, and manufactured goods, and skyrocketing inflation stymied the rebuilding of the economy. Anger over the treaty and social unrest spurred revolutionary movements and political instability, paving the way for radical nationalist ideologies.

Amid this turmoil, the German Workers' Party — renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party, in 1920 — rose to prominence by opposing the Treaty of Versailles and promoting a vision of moral renewal rooted in antisemitism. Despite the party being briefly outlawed, by 1932 it was the largest political party in Germany. Shortly after Adolf Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, the Parliament (Reichstag) was destroyed by an act of arson. This event enabled Hitler to suspend civil liberties and political opposition. In retribution, the government rounded up Communists (the group blamed for the fire) and opened the first concentration camps to hold enemies of the state at Nohra, Oranienberg, and Dachau. When President Hindenburg died in 1934, Hilter merged the offices of President and Chancellor, declaring himself Führer, or leader of the country.

The Rise of a New Antisemitism

Antisemitism had deep roots in the continent, rearing its head throughout the two-millennium history of Jewish communities in Europe. Late 19th-century "Social Darwinism" gave it new, pseudo-scientific language, postulating a hierarchy of distinct human "races" in constant conflict with one another for superiority and survival. ***(It is critical to note that there is no biological evidence to support the theory of race or inherent difference between races.)*** The "white" or "Aryan race" crowned this bogus hierarchy while Jewish peoples were seen as a distinct and inferior race. Although Jews represented only approximately 1.7% of Europe's population in 1933, antisemites claimed they held an outsized influence on culture, politics, economics, and media. At the same time, the eugenics movement was gaining favor and influence within the racial policies of the United States and was much admired by Germans arguing for a racially "pure" populace. Postwar Germany's social and economic crises created fertile ground for these ideas, offering scapegoats for national humiliation and decline and a roadmap toward desired supremacy.

Persecution, Emigration, and Genocide

The Holocaust was not a single event, but an escalating and evolving series of laws, policies, and actions perpetuated by the Nazi government, their allies, and collaborators against Jewish people between 1933 and 1945. These actions deprived Jewish citizens of their rights, property, and freedom, and included isolated and mass episodes of violence that ultimately culminated in genocide.

As persecution intensified in the early days of the Nazi Regime, hundreds of thousands of Jews fled Germany and Austria, creating a global refugee crisis. Many Jewish, secular, and Christian organizations worked tirelessly throughout the war and in its aftermath to assist Jews in emigrating. By 1939, 400,000 had escaped to neighboring countries, the United States, Palestine, Great Britain, Central and South America, and the Japanese territory of Shanghai; many were later caught as Nazi territory expanded. Countries began to implement strict Jewish quotas, and steep emigration taxes levied by Germany left many trapped.

When emigration was impossible, Jewish families sought ways to protect their children. The Kindertransport brought 10,000 Jewish children to Britain between 1938 and 1940, where they were housed with British foster families or in residential homes and schools. A similar, smaller program ran in the United States. Although meant as a temporary measure, most of these children never saw their families again.

After invading Poland in September 1939, the Nazi Regime established ghettos for the forced segregation of Jewish populations. Hundreds of ghettos were created across Central and Eastern Europe, as well as 20,000 concentration camps to imprison enemies of the state without recourse to normal legal proceedings. Thousands of Jews in both the ghettos and camps died from starvation, disease, and violence.

By late 1941, all emigration of Jews was forbidden, and Hitler ordered the remaining 338,000 Jews in the Greater German Reich and Protectorate to be deported. The result was forced displacement to severely overcrowded ghettos in Eastern Europe, mass executions by mobile killing units, forced labor, and eventually the development of a plan the Nazis called "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question." This last stage of the Holocaust included the deportation of Jewish people to five death camps for execution.

Rescue and Survival Amidst the Holocaust

The Weber siblings featured in *UnBroken* were among only a few thousand Jews that survived by hiding in Germany. Across occupied Europe, individuals and networks risked their lives to save Jewish people, providing shelter, food, supplies, false papers, or safe passage. As was the case with the Webers, children were often separated from their parents and sent into hiding. Many more were left orphaned when their parents were arrested or murdered. In France, organized networks smuggled up to 15,000 Jewish children into Spain and Switzerland, while Danish resistance fighters organized fishermen to ferry 7,200 Jews to neutral Sweden. Countless brave efforts like these saved tens of thousands of lives.

Most dangerous of all was sheltering Jewish people, as the Schmidts did for the Weber children. Individuals and families were hidden in secret rooms, attics, cellars, and barns. In other instances, organized networks placed Jewish teens on farms in the Netherlands and France, where they hid in plain sight, or passed Jewish children off as gentiles in Christian orphanages, schools, and convents. An acute challenge was finding enough extra food and other supplies for hidden Jewish people without attracting attention during a time of shortages and rations. For this reason, many people rotated their hiding places frequently. Sometimes survival depended on the support of a few individuals, but often it required a chain of helpers. It is estimated that 30,000 people were required to save 5,000–7,000 Jewish people in Berlin.

The State of Israel created an award called Righteous Among Nations to commemorate individuals who were documented to have risked their lives to harbor, support, and save Jewish people from the Holocaust. To date, 28,486 people have been honored, including Arthur and Paula Schmidt. When their names were added, they were only the 600th names from Germany, a very small number in comparison to other countries.

Shattered Families After the War

By the war's end, the Nazis had murdered six million of Europe's 9.5 million Jews, along with five million other individuals: Communists, Roma, Black people, political opponents, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, the disabled, and prisoners of war. Displaced Persons camps administered by allied forces and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration housed more than 800,000 people in the immediate aftermath of the war, including 250,000 Jewish survivors awaiting resettlement. These homeless survivors faced the same insecurity, isolation, and trauma that many refugees still endure today. The last DP camp in Europe didn't close until 1952.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, survivors searched desperately for missing family members. Many children, raised from a young age under false identities or hidden in Christian homes, struggled to reconnect or even recognize their surviving family. Reunification in many instances brought about identity crises, trauma, and even legal custody battles. Thousands of other Jewish children grew up in orphanages when no family remained.

Within this context, we can see the survival of the Weber children as emblematic of the plight of Jewish families, and extraordinary in the fact that all seven siblings and their father survived the war. Without the bravery and selflessness of those who helped them hide, survive, and ultimately emigrate, their story of hope and resilience would surely have been a tragedy.

Sources

The Holocaust Encyclopedia of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The Holocaust Explained from The Wiener Holocaust Library

History of the Holocaust Timeline from the Montreal Holocaust Museum.

Additional Resources

The case of two families who are still trying to find and reunite with lost children are chronicled by Joanna Beata Michlic for The Wiener Holocaust Library.

The Imperial War Museum hosts an online exhibition documenting six of the children who were part of Britain's Kindertransport. The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure project has translated letters of some children, documenting their experience of Kindertransport.

Video testimonies recount Jewish children's experiences of hiding, escaping, and being incarcerated during the Holocaust: Child Survivors of the Jewish Holocaust, California State University, Northridge.

Useful Terms

Antisemitism: A certain perception of Jewish people, which may be expressed as hatred toward the Jewish community. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. (This definition utilized for this guide was adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.)[1]

Aryan: Originally a term used to describe speakers of Indo-European languages, the meaning evolved under Social Darwinism to describe a mythical "superior" or "master race" of people, specifically white Christian Europeans.

Concentration camp: A prison or other facility used for the internment of "enemies of the state," including political prisoners, minorities, and other groups of people deemed "undesirable." Prisoners were detained and held indefinitely in harsh conditions without recourse to normal judicial proceedings, sometimes for the purposes of forced labor, transportation, or execution, as with the Nazi extermination or death camps.

Eugenics: The discredited and racially biased study of human genetics that led to a set of controlled selective breeding practices aimed at "improving" the genetic quality of the population.

Ghetto: A segregated part of a city where Jewish people were forced to live, often in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.

Pogrom: A Russian word meaning "to wreak havoc, to demolish violently." The term has historically been used to refer to violent attacks and riots against Jewish people.

Reparations: The act of making amends; compensation paid by a defeated nation for damages to or expenditures of another nation as a result of hostilities.

[1] *Antisemitism definition adapted from "What Is Antisemitism?" IHRA, May 5, 2025. https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism*

THE POWER OF STORYKEEPING THROUGH ARCHIVAL ACTIVISM

DRIVING QUESTION

What do you think influences or motivates an upstander's decision to stand up for what they believe is right?

The saying "history is written by the victors" underscores the fact that what we learn as history can often be one-sided and biased in favor of the most powerful elements of society. History books and archives are full of those who had property or wealth, who were literate, and whose actions society deemed worthy of remembering because of certain social or cultural values, either then or now. The result is an erasure of the lived experiences of minority groups and those with less power and influence. So often, our understanding of history relies on an incomplete picture.

The collection of oral histories and records such as letters and photographs can help round out our understanding of the past. Importantly, these personal lived experiences also ground history in the individual rather than the collective. Hearing, for example, that six million Jewish people were murdered during the Holocaust is very different from reading Anne Frank's diary, seeing pictures of people interred in concentration camps, and hearing the Weber siblings recount their harrowing tale of survival in *UnBroken*. This is how we move from big ideas to being able to recognize the humanity in others and empathize with their experience. It's how we learn to see ourselves in other people's stories.

But the stories and items that document the lives of underrepresented people need to be preserved if we are to learn from them. They need someone to recognize their value, to collect and safeguard them, to organize them in a way that is easy to access, and to shine a light on their existence.

The term "activist archivist" was first coined by Howard Zinn in 1970 and is defined as "an archivist who strives to document the underdocumented aspects of society and to support political and social causes through that work." (https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/activist-archivist.html)

Personal Reflection

1. One way to think about history is as a collection of stories. Who gets to tell those stories? How does that change whose stories we hear? Why was Beth the right person to tell her family's story? What story is the perfect one for you to excavate and share?

2. Our everyday lives can feel so boring and normal, it's hard to recognize that someone might someday find them fascinating. Imagine someone living 150 years from now. What would you like them to know about you, your family, and your community? What might they find interesting? What traces of your life might future individuals use for understanding?

Discussion Questions

1. In the film *UnBroken*, filmmaker Beth Lane consults many primary sources related to her family's time in Germany, in addition to the interviews she does with the surviving members of the Weber family. How does her use of primary sources help her tell their story in a more impactful way?

2. How might our understanding of the Holocaust be different if we didn't have firsthand survivor accounts like those of the Weber family and other documentary evidence from Jewish people themselves?

3. Consider a story that is well known to you. It could be something you've learned in history class, a family story, or even a book you've read or movie you've seen.

a. From whose perspective is the story being told?
b. What assumptions are held within the telling of this story?
c. Who benefits from this perspective?
d. Whose perspective is missing? Why might it be missing?
e. How might the story be different if it were told by someone else?

4. How can social media and the use of hashtags create a digital archive to preserve voices and experiences that might not otherwise be heard? How can this contribute to broader activism? How might online spaces preserve or distort memory?

Extension Activities

1. Learn about the Oneg Shabbat Archive, also known as the Ringeblum Archive. This was an underground archive established in the Warsaw Ghetto by historian Emanuel Ringelblum and is one of the first and largest examples of archival activism. He recruited a diverse group of people to secretly document everyday life in the Ghetto under German occupation. The archive was stored in milk canisters and metal boxes and buried underground in the hopes that they would one day be recovered and expose the truth about the Holocaust. In all, approximately 35,000 documents have been saved from two sets of archived material. A third set was known to have been buried but has not yet been discovered.

a. Discuss the Nazi creation of Jewish ghettos to segregate and persecute Jewish people across German-occupied Europe.

b. Study the **Handout Items Recovered from the Ringelblum Archive**. Discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

i. Why do you think the people who contributed to the Oneg Shabbat/Ringelblum Archive felt compelled to save these materials at great personal risk to themselves? Was it worth the risk?

ii. Has your understanding about life in the Warsaw Ghetto changed at all after studying some of the items found in the Archive? What do you know or feel now that you didn't before?

iii. In what ways was the creation of the Ringelblum Archive an act of resistance?

2. Conduct an oral history project by interviewing a family or community member. Either assign an event or social movement in living memory to focus on, or have learners choose their own.

a. Research your event or social movement of interest using both primary and secondary sources. What questions does your research raise? How might a firsthand account deepen your understanding? Are there holes in your research that oral history might be able to fill?

b. In small groups, brainstorm possible questions to ask your interviewee. Focus on open-ended questions, such as "tell me about…," or "describe…," or "what do you remember about…," or "tell me more about…." Remember to be respectful and to allow the interviewee to do most of the talking. One interesting question might be "What changes have you seen over time about how people remember or talk about that event?"

c. Conduct a short oral history interview. Record the interview if appropriate and with permission of the interviewee.

d. Analyze the content of your interview and primary research.

i. Did the interview reveal something that wasn't found in the archival record?

ii. Does the interviewee's memory challenge the archival record in any way?

iii. What biases are present in both the oral history and the archive?

iv. Did the oral history challenge, change, or deepen your understanding of the event or social movement?

3. Create a community archive to capture a week or month in your community. Learners may choose to define a theme to guide their work or keep it broad. Some possible themes include a week in the life, everyday heroes, archive of the pandemic or other significant recent local event, then and now. Have learners collect artifacts such as photos, interviews, social media posts, posters, newspaper clippings, demographic data, other ephemera, etc. For each physical or digital item, have learners provide a contextual note that details:

a. The larger context of the item. Where does it come from and why does it exist? What was happening in the community at the time this was made?

b. What does it tell us about the theme of the archive?

c. Whose story or voice does it represent?

d. Does the item challenge or expand what's usually recorded in official archives?

Once the archive is complete, have learners examine it as a whole.

a. How did you decide what to include and not to include?

b. Are there patterns or themes that emerged across the collection?

c. Are there any perspectives that are overrepresented, underrepresented, or missing?

d. Did you face any challenges as archivists?

Useful Terms / Related Vocabulary

Archive: A collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people.

Ghetto: A segregated part of a city where Jewish people were forced to live, often in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.

Primary source: A firsthand account, original document, or other artifact that provides direct evidence of a time or event and was created by people or things who were present during the time or event.

Secondary source: A source of information created about an object of study without direct firsthand evidence.

Additional Resources

Examples of Archival Activism:

After Violence Project:
https://afterviolenceproject.org/

Archive of Immigrant Voices:
https://archiveofimmigrantvoices.omeka.net/

Black Women's Organizing Archive:
https://bwoaproject.org/

Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement:

Oral Histories and Archives:
https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/oral-histories-archives-disability-rights-independent-living-movement/

Documenting Ferguson:
https://digitalexhibits.library.wustl.edu/s/ferguson/page/home

History of Disability: Complete Guide to Resources, Archives & Civil Rights Movement:
https://www.disabilityresources.org/history.html

NYC Disability Rights Archive:
https://nycdisabilityrightsarchive.org/

Outwords Archive:
https://theoutwordsarchive.org/

South Asian American Digital Archives:
https://www.saada.org/

The Baltimore Legacy Project:
https://baltimorelegacyproject.com/

The Documented Border:
https://exhibits.lib.arizona.edu/exhibits/show/documented-border/intro

The Freedom Archives:
https://freedomarchives.org/

The Lesbian Herstory Archives:
https://www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org/

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition:
https://boardingschoolhealing.org/

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:
https://nctr.ca/about/history-of-the-trc/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-of-canada/

Toxic Docs:
https://www.toxicdocs.org/

Website of Disabled in Action, the organization founded by Judy Heumann:
https://www.disabledinaction.org

Learn more about Ghettos in Occupied Poland from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:
https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/ghettos-in-poland?series=33

They've also produced a short podcast on the Ringelblum Archive: ***"What A Secret Archive Taught the World"*** (17 min):
https://www.ushmm.org/learn/podcasts-and-audio/12-years-that-shook-the-world/what-a-secret-archive-taught-the-world

NSDOKU Munich (The Nazi Documentation Centre) has an excellent multi-media exhibit on the Warsaw Ghetto and creation of the Ringelblum Archive:
https://www.stories.nsdoku.de/ringelblum-archives

The Jewish Historical Institute houses the **Oneg Shabbat/ Ringelblum Archive**:
https://www.jhi.pl/en/oneg-shabbat

The website **Poetry in Hell** contains a collection of Yiddish poetry found in the Ringelblum Archive that is translated into English:
https://poetryinhell.org/

Library of Congress has a Teacher's Guide and Primary Source Analysis Tool for Students working with primary sources:
https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/

ITEMS RECOVERED IN THE RINGELBLUM ARCHIVE

Handout

"Hunger is a wild, raw, primitive, animal thing… From yesterday's soup until today is an eternity. I can't imagine that I will be able to sustain such a murderous hunger… Someplace in the world they eat as much as they want… Another hour until I get my soup, another hour, you understand?"

— Lejb Goldin, "A 24-Hour Chronicle of Hunger", August 1941. Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

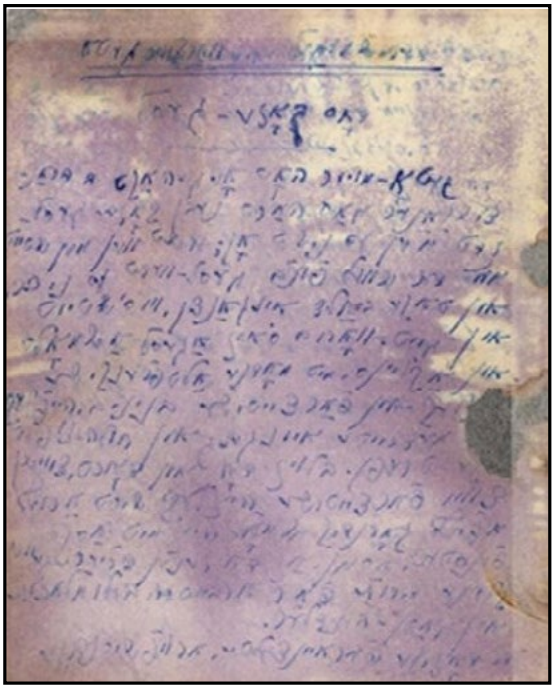
This set of rations was issued to the Weber family.

Food stamps (rations) for bread, sugar, marmalade, meat, flour, and "various," issued to the Weber family. Photo courtesy of the film, UnBroken*, and The Weber Family Arts Foundation*

Rations for Jewish occupants of the Warsaw Ghetto amounted to approximately 180–300 calories per day, otherwise known as "starvation rations." Nothing was guaranteed and food was often rancid or bulked up with sawdust or other inedible ingredients.

"From all sides I hear voices crying out for bread. A very small boy, trembling, stretches out his thin arm and begs… Here is a poor woman, her clothes torn and tattered. Swollen from starvation, she lies in the street like a corpse. I can't look at her and I turn my face away…"

— Yaffa Bergman, age 14, from a student essay, "What we see in the street," 1941, Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.



"At night, the smuggling is carried out over the roofs of the houses, through narrow holes, through cellars and even through the wall of the Ghetto itself. In short, every possible way...

Who knows if some day a memorial will not be put up in memory of the smuggler, for having risked his life — because, in retrospect, we know that he thus saved a large part of Warsaw's Jews from death and starvation."

Excerpt from Perez Opoczynski's diary, Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

"The mildest punishment for smuggling is death, carried out on the spot...
The children who were smuggling had the most extraordinary and fantastic courage...
These children went through [the ghetto walls] several times a day, laden with goods that often weighed more than they did.

Smuggling was the only source of subsistence for these children and their parents, who would otherwise have died of starvation."

— Emanual Ringelblum, Polish-Jewish Relations.

One Pair of Shoes

by Rifke Galin

Painting by Gela Seksztajn

The wind wails, it's cold and wet.
And I can't go out today:
My little sister and I —
we both share one pair of shoes.

Today my little sister hid
the shoes someplace, I don't know where,
then she started teasing me —
So I caught her and hit her.

But I don't know what came over me —
Suddenly I began to see
how pale and thin my little sister is…
and then my anger left me.

Something seized me in my heart,
It made me so ashamed,
that in those two minutes
I became so very good.

"If you want," I say, "put on the shoes,
and take them for yourself always,
for I am strong and can insist,
and I love going barefoot anyway."

She looks at me and does not stir.
I see she doesn't believe a word.
Then I go closer to the bed
and softly pat her little head.

And once more I repeat
But this time with kinder voice:
"You want the shoes, take them, they're yours,
and wear them every day, your choice.

"For I am strong and can insist,
and love going barefoot anyway."
There was much more I had to say
but tears were choking in my throat.

Poetry in Hell, Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

German notice of eight Jewish people executed for leaving the Ghetto without authorization, November 17, 1941. Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

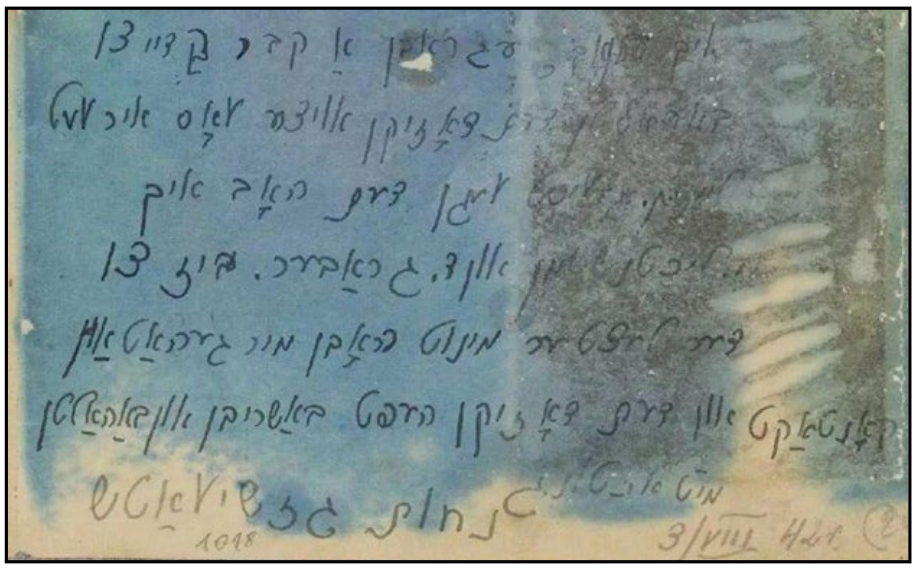
"He who fights for life has a chance of being saved:
He who rules out resistance from the start is already lost,
doomed to a degrading death in the
suffocation machine at Treblinka....
We, too, are deserving of life!
You merely must know how to fight for it!"

— Poster urging an uprising, January 1943,
Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

*Cover of **Iton Hatnua** (Newspaper of the Movement), an underground newspaper published in the Warsaw Ghetto by a youth group. Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland*

Candy wrapper. Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

In the summer of 1942, two students, Dawid Graber and Nachum Grzywacz, and their teacher, Izrael Lichtensztajn, worked tirelessly to document the mass deportation of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to concentration camps. On August 3, 1942, they wrote their last will and testaments and buried them along with a section of the Ringelblum Archive in the basement of their school.



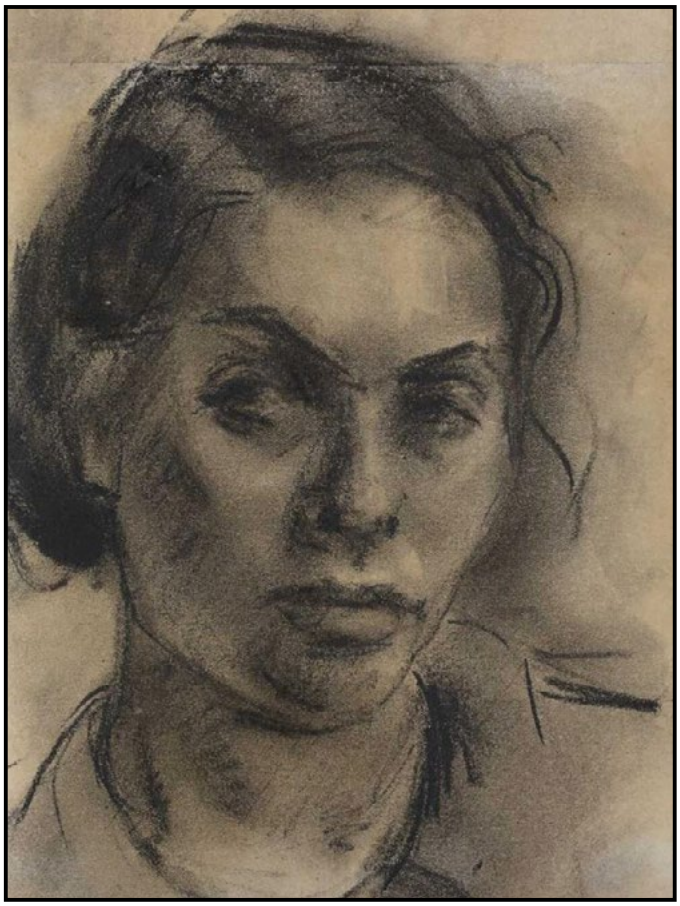
"While I'm writing this letter, I'm at work, it's 30 July 1942, 6 PM. I'm fully clothed and I have some food with me. I see them running, so I walk downstairs to the street and I find out that Smocza street from Dzielna to Gęsia have been blocked by the gendarmerie. My parents live at 41 Pawia street. I'm quickly asking what's happening and I learn that the street is blocked. I don't know what is happening to my parents. I'm waiting for the right moment to run and find out how they are. Now I hear shouts. They're coming. I'm in the yard. There was only fear.

I'm now in the building and I'm going to my parents to see how they are. I don't know my fate. I don't know whether I will be able to tell you what happened later. Remember: my name is Nachum Grzywacz."

— From the last will and testament of Nachum Grzywacz, Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

"What we were unable to cry and shriek out to the world we buried in the ground. I would love to see the moment in which the great treasure will be dug up and scream the truth at the world. So the world may know all. So the ones who did not live through it may be glad, and we may feel like veterans with medals on our chests. ... May the treasure fall into good hands, may it last into better times, may it alarm and alert the world."

— From the last will and testament of Dawid Graber, Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.



"Standing at the border between life and death, quite certain that I will die,
I would like to bid farewell to my friends and to my artworks (...)
I don't ask for praise, only for preserving memory about me and my daughter. (...)
I am calm now. I have to die, but I have done my job.
I would like the memory about my paintings to remain.
Goodbye, friends and colleagues, goodbye, Jewish nation!
Don't let destruction like this happen again.

— Gela Seksztain, August 2, 1942. Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland

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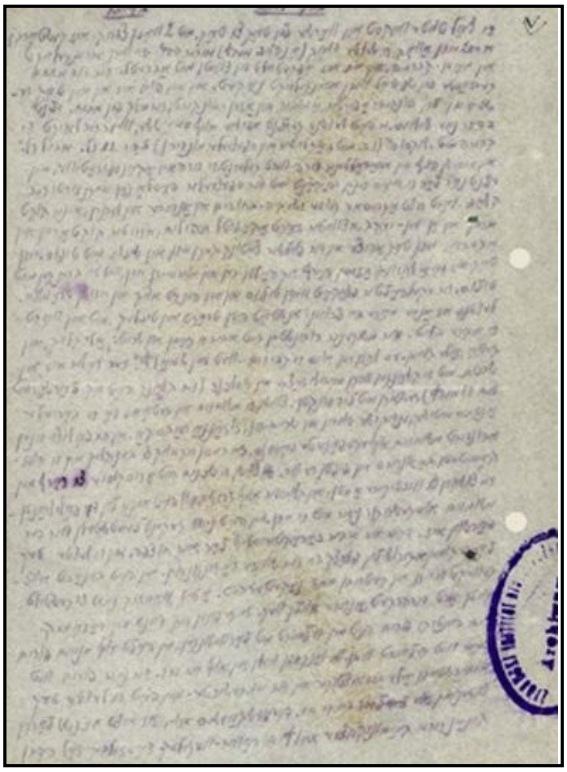
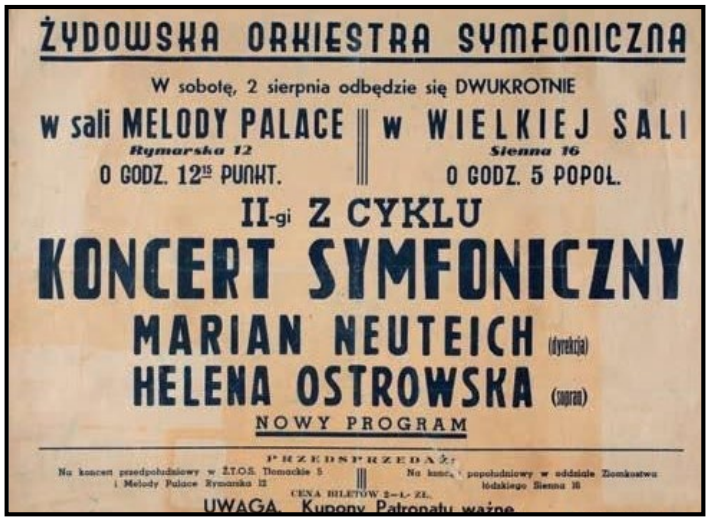
"I wish my wife should be remembered, Gela Seksztajn, talented artist,
whose numerous works could not be exhibited, could not appear in the bright light [...].
At present, together with me, — both of us get ready to meet and receive death.
I wish my little daughter to be remembered. Margalit is 20 months old today.
She has fully mastered the Yiddish language [...]. I don't lament my own life nor that of my wife.
I pity only the so little, nice and talented girl. She too deserves to be remembered."

— From the last will and testament of Izrael Lichtensztejn, July 31, 1942,
Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.



"The future historians will have to devote a fitting page to the Jewish woman in the war. She will fill an important page in Jewish history for her courage and resilience. Thanks to her, thousands of families managed to survive the horror of those days. Recently, an interesting phenomenon has taken place. In some of the house committees, women have taken the place of the men, who have abandoned their tasks, tried and exhausted by their work. On some of these committees, the entire management is composed of women."

— From Emanuel Ringelblum's diary, Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.



Poster for a symphony within the Jewish Ghetto
Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

FILM CREDITS

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Misfit

IMAGE CREDITS

COVER & PAGE 2: *UnBroken* Film Poster

PAGE 5: Weber family Photo Courtesy of USHMM

PAGES 6-7: Photo courtesy of Anna Andlauer; ID photos courtesy of Weber family archives

PAGE 8: Headshot of Beth Lane by Austin Hargrave

PAGE 9: Photo of Beth Lane by Chad Batka

PAGE 10: Animated still for *UnBroken* created by Misfit, courtesy of the production

PAGE 14: *UnBroken* personal archives, circa 1956

PAGE 18: *UnBroken* production still

PAGE 22: *UnBroken* production still, Berlin 2019

PAGES 28: Weber family tree, comprising ID photos courtesy of Weber family archives

PAGE 31: *UnBroken* production still

PAGES 34-39: Images courtesy of Ringelblum Archive, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland

PAGE 34: Images of Food stamps courtesy of the film *UnBroken* and The Weber Family Arts Foundation

PAGE 42: *UnBroken* production still

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