

Memorial for members of my family who perished in the Holocaust

Thirty years ago, I compiled and printed a 143 page book called *"The Goldschmidt/Levy Family History"* based on the genealogical research I had done up to that point. In the introductory pages, I explained that one of my objectives was to identify the members of my family who had perished as victims of the Nazi Holocaust – so that their names should not be forgotten.

In 1996 my son David, at the age of 16, went on "March of the Living", an educational program that took teens to Poland and Israel to carry the torch of Holocaust remembrance. In 2000 my daughter Miriam, at age 17, went on the same program. On both occasions, I provided them with list of their relatives who had perished in the Holocaust (based on my genealogical research), for them to carry as they "marched" from Birkenau to Auschwitz.

I no longer have the precise list that I prepared at that time, but I recall that there were 32 names on it – uncles, aunts and cousins of my mother and father – all Holocaust victims that I had recorded in my family history database.

Only my younger children went on "March of the Living" because I only became aware of the program in 1996. My older son Joel did not go at that time, but he has now visited Auschwitz in the summer of 2026 with his wife Jeni. So now, all my children have visited this important site.

Since the 1990s, I have continued to research my family history, and my database has increased. Joel and Jeni's recent visit to Auschwitz inspired me to make a new list of relatives that perished in the Holocaust. It can be viewed at this [link](#).

My new list of relatives who were murdered in the Holocaust now contains a total of 84 names. 71 were adults and 13 were children. Of these 84, 28 were murdered in the gas chambers at Auschwitz (19 adults and 9 children). The others died in other death camps, concentration camps, ghettos and other places where they were deported. In the case of my family, these relatives were all Jews who had been born in Germany. Most were deported beginning in 1941. A few had managed to flee to Belgium and Holland before the start of World War II, hoping to escape persecution in Germany, but after the German forces invaded those countries they were subsequently arrested and deported to the death camps. My parents fled to Britain in 1939, and I feel very fortunate that the Germans were not successful in their attempts to conquer Britain.

In the following table, my family's Holocaust victims are presented in two separate lists: on my father's side and my mother's side. The list on my father's side is much shorter. This is because my father's father was not born Jewish (he became a convert to Judaism when he married my Jewish grandmother in 1905). Having not been born Jewish, the Nazis did not regard my paternal grandfather as a Jew by "race", and therefore he was not a candidate for deportation. In fact, he and my grandmother survived the war in Germany. My paternal grandfather's relatives were not

Jews, so they were not persecuted. Another reason the list of Holocaust victims is so small on my father's side is that I have not discovered a large number of relatives on my paternal grandmother's side.

I have been much more successful in discovering ancestors and other relatives on my mother's side, therefore her list is much longer.

In the table I have listed the people's names and date of birth, and how they were related to either my mother or father. Also, I have listed the date of their death, their age and the place where they died, as far as this is known. The places listed include extermination camps where Jews were gassed and then cremated, such as: Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Sobibor. In other cases, my family members were deported to city ghettos in Eastern Europe such as Riga (in Latvia), and Minsk (in Poland) where they were held for a time before being taken out into a nearby forest and shot. Elderly members of my family, along with many other German Jews, were deported to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp (nowadays in the Czech Republic). This was not primarily an extermination camp; its purpose was to imprison elderly Jews and others, falsely presenting it as a retirement settlement, to pacify public opinion in Germany and other countries. Prisoners there were not killed immediately, but conditions were appalling. During the years 1941-45, over 140,000 Jews passed through Theresienstadt; about 33,000 died there from disease and starvation, and as the war drew to a close nearly 90,000 were subsequently deported to be killed at extermination camps such as Auschwitz.

I have not visited any of the places listed in my table. I have visited Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp (in northwestern Germany) in 1996. I found it a very strange experience seeing the mass graves of tens of thousands of Jews who perished there by disease and starvation. While I could appreciate the tragedy that had taken place, I found it difficult to relate to the nameless masses who were buried there.

By placing this list on my website, my intention is to give my children and grandchildren a sense that the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust are more than a nameless mass. The 84 names in this list were family members who were murdered because they were Jews. They were real people who belong to us.

I have identified their relationship according to how they were related to my father and my mother, but I can appreciate that it is difficult for younger generations to understand the terminology – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th cousin, X times removed, sounds very confusing if you aren't used to it. But the terminology is correct. Sadly, I don't know how to describe the relationship in more simple terms.

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