



Montreal Holocaust
Memorial Centre

Newsletter

Summer 2013

MHMC Features: Bookfair 2013

Keep an eye on your inboxes in August! Following two successful Book Fairs in 2009 and 2011, the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre is organizing another **Book Fair** dedicated to the memoirs of Montreal survivors at the Gelber Centre on **Sunday, August 25, 2013 from 1 to 4 PM**.

All Holocaust survivors who live or lived in Montreal and who have written their memoirs are invited to present their books to the public. For the first time this year, we are also inviting members of the second generation whose work is related to their parents wartime experiences or their own experiences growing up with survivor parents. Any curious readers or others interested by the human stories of lives and communities disrupted by war and genocide are invited to attend this public event. The Azrieli Foundation will be there, presenting its publications and the Olivieri bookstore will also offer the opportunity to purchase reference books on the history of the Holocaust. In short, an exciting event for history buffs, book lovers and life story enthusiasts!



Teachers' Conference

As part of the Holocaust Education Series 2013, the MHMC is organizing a professional training day for teachers on **October 30th, 2013** entitled: **Telling Their Stories: Using Oral Histories to Teach about the Holocaust and Other Genocides**. Along with keynote speaker Dr. Steven High - principal investigator of the Concordia Life Stories project and professor at Concordia University - the Centre is also pleased to be hosting the USC Shoah Foundation's Director of Programs, Dr. Kori Street, a world expert on the use of recorded Holocaust survivor testimony for teaching young (and older!) people about the human experience of the Holocaust. The conference workshops and presentations will be oriented towards providing teachers with concrete tools and strategies for using survivor testimonies in their classrooms. The conference will provide a wonderful opportunity for over 100 teacher participants to learn about the Centre's extensive recorded oral history collection, and the survivors who bravely and generously agreed to record their testimonies as part of their legacy.

A Look Into our Collection:

These prisoner earmuffs belonged to Israel Viezel, a former prisoner of the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Buchenwald concentration camps. They are the first of their kind to become part of our collection. Ear protections similar to these are held at the Auschwitz State Museum Archives.

Israel Viezel was born in January 1919 in Marosvásárhely (Hungary) a town known today as Târgu Mureş in Romania. Raised in a religious family, he was attending a yeshiva in Sziget to become a rabbi when the Nazis invaded the region. On May 3, 1944, 8,638 Jews of Târgu Mureş were forced into three ghettos and most of them were deported the same month to Auschwitz, including Israel and his family.

Selected for slave labour in Auschwitz, Israel was working in the forests surrounding the camp. He was later transferred to the concentration camp of Buchenwald. Israel survived the camps, as did three of his siblings. His parents, two sisters and one brother were killed in Auschwitz. After the end of the war, Israel returned to Romania and spent some time in Israel. He finally immigrated to New Brunswick, where one of his sisters had settled. After a few months in Saint John, he relocated to Montreal.

Israel worked in several restaurants on Saint-Laurent Boulevard before opening his own deli, "Israel Delicatessen", on Decarie Boulevard. In 1965, due to construction on the road for the upcoming Expo 67, Israel Delicatessen had to close. Mr. Viezel took that opportunity to vacation and visit his brother in Israel. This is where he met Talia, a child survivor from Romania, who would become his wife. They lived together in Montreal until his death in 1999.

Unfortunately, Mr. Viezel never recorded his life story and told his wife very little about his experiences during the Holocaust. This makes it difficult for us to find more details about his survival. Research enquiries have been made with the Auschwitz State Museum Archives and the Buchenwald Memorial Museum Archives to find out more about his internment, the origin of his identification number and the making of these earmuffs.



From Top to bottom: Earmuffs donated by Talia Viezel in memory of Israel Viezel; Prisoners wearing earmuffs at Sachsenhausen concentration camp, Germany, December 19, 1938. Source: Heinrich Hoffman Collection-NARA 540177; Israel Viezel seen behind the counter at Israel Delicatessen, Montreal, circa 1964.

If you own some historical documents that you would like to donate to the MHMC in the future, don't hesitate to contact our Museum and Collection coordinator, Julie Guinard, today, to discuss the best way to preserve their memory. If you ever dined at "Israel Delicatessen", please contact us, we are also looking for information about it.

Holocaust Education Series 2013

The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre is pleased to announce the 16th edition of the Holocaust Education Series. It will take place from **October 23 to November 3, 2013**. This year, the Centre will explore the theme of Resistance, exposing various forms of armed resistance, but also the spiritual strength, creative and community initiatives, and resilience through which individuals and families preserved their humanity, their dignity and sense of hope in a context designed to dehumanize and eliminate them.

The Series opens **Wednesday, October 23** with the **launch of the 2013 Azrieli Survivor Memoirs and short films**, organized in partnership with the Azrieli Foundation at the Gesù Theatre. The educational mission of the Series will also be highlighted by the presentation of our new self-guided Museum tours through an iPad application and on **Wednesday, October 30, the bi-annual Teachers' Conference**, focusing on the use of recorded oral history in classrooms. Our Human Rights Committee will discuss the persecution of homosexuals under the Nazi regime during World War II and raise the current legal issues of sexual minorities. The Museum will host open houses on Sunday October 27 and November 3, during which you can visit the museum for free and meet with survivors to discover the history of the Holocaust by those who lived it. A detailed program will be available soon!



Montreal's Survivor Stories: Terry Wolfson

This is one of over 700 recorded oral histories preserved by the Centre:

Terry Wolfson was born in 1928 in Nancy, France. She had a happy childhood with her parents and two brothers, until May 1940, when the Germans bombed Nancy. Shortly after, Terry's father was arrested and taken to the camp in Drancy. As soon as the family was able to liberate him, they left everything behind and fled to Toulouse, then to Luchon in the Pyrenees. Terry was hidden in a Catholic convent until the family embarked on a walk across the Pyrenees to Spain by foot. In 1943, with the help of JIAS, Terry went to Lisbon where she was able to take the Serpa Pinto ship to Philadelphia. The Red Cross sent her first to live with her aunt in Detroit and then to a foster home. Her family managed to obtain permission to immigrate to Canada. They arrived in Montreal in March 1944 and Terry joined them a few months later.

If you or someone you know would like to give a video testimony and thus ensure its long-term preservation, please contact the MHMC's Remembrance Coordinator, Eszter Andor by email at eszter.andor@mhmc.ca or by telephone at 514 345 2605, ext. 3093.

A Few Highlights



Yom Hashoah 2013:

To honor the heroic efforts of Jews during the Holocaust, this year's Yom Hashoah commemoration, which took place on April 7th, addressed the theme of **"1943 - The Year of Uprisings"**, of which the best-known example is the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The highlight of the program was six survivor video testimonies, followed by lighting the memorial candles. Musical interludes were provided by the Bialik High School Choir, and soprano and cantor Sharon Azrieli Perez sang Adio Querida in Ladino. Over 1,200 participants, including the growing number of members of the 2nd and 3rd generations, as well as the presence of March of the Living graduates (visible in their blue jackets) shows that the commemoration speaks to all generations.

United Against Genocide

On June 3, over 100 members of the Armenian, Rwandan and Cambodian communities joined the MHMC to inaugurate the **new United Against Genocide exhibit**. This interactive exhibit, made possible by the **Alex and Ruth Dworkin Foundation** is located near the entrance to the museum. It informs and educates visitors on the important question of genocide prevention. Resulting from a partnership between several Montreal communities affected by genocide, the project will explore different themes over the course of the next 5 years, through their stories and artifacts. The first theme explored is transmission of the memory of genocide. Why is it important to keep the memory of these events alive? How and by what means can we begin to talk despite the often unspeakable horrors? The answers to these questions vary from community to community and from person to person. The exhibition presents visitors with some of their answers, while provoking reflection and questions. Come and visit!



Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre

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