

MANFRED



HIS STORY

**of Survival...from Concentration Camp
to Freedom in America
*(in his very own words)***

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of Survival...

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From Manfred's personal photo collection

Manfred's Story (in his very own words)

Pages marked **1 thru 15**, as indicated in **red** in the center of each page



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Foreword

As editor of Manfred's story of survival, for the sole purpose of authenticity, in transcribing Manfred's hand-written memoir, I chose not to correct his grammar or spelling errors; and, due to text justification re left/right margins, hyphens appear at the end of some lines, although they did not in *Manfred's Story*, as he'd written it; also, due to page layout, some paragraph breaks don't coincide with Manfred's. (The other editions made to the original memoir were the addition of photos and Author's notes.)

Of particular interest was Manfred's ability to adjust to displacement: Upon arrival in America, at age twelve and a half, his primary languages were Yugoslav, German and Italian, with a rudimentary knowledge of Greek and English. Nonetheless, he was able to write his story in English longhand by age thirteen, just six months after being in America!

'*Manfred's story ...*' is a young boy's account of having been brutally removed from his home, along with his father, mother, sister and adopted brother; that, followed by a horrific incarceration in a Nazi concentration camp. (Note: Manfred's father was killed at the onset of SS evacuating them from their home.

Manfred's mother, seizing an opportunity for her family to break free of the hell they were in, joined some camp inmates in a most daring escape into hostile countryside. The danger-filled journey eventually led the starving, desperate escapees to Yugoslav freedom fighters (Tito's Partisans).

Hidden in a partisan campsite deep the dense mountainside, for months, Manfred was made to fight alongside the partisans, until an escape plan was put into action: On foot, with the threat of capture following them every inch of a well-planned journey, Manfred and family, and fellow escapees, reached a prearranged rendezvous point, where they met up with an even larger group of Jews: 982 in total, from eighteen different European countries, primarily central and eastern Europe — all boarded on the U.S. Army transport ship, Henry Gibbins, bound for America.

The fourteen-day voyage, fraught with daily, intermittent German air fire, finally reach safe waters midday, August 3, 1944, in New York Harbor, pier 84. The incredible perilous journey to America ended on the highest of notes with screams of joy filling the air, the sun poking through a rising mist ever so slowly revealing the Statue of Liberty.

After an overnight on board the ship, and anxious first moments on dry land, Manfred and his mother, sister and brother, and fellow survivors, were then

ferried across the Hudson River to the Lackawanna railroad terminal; there, they boarded a train that ended up delivering them directly into the train depot at *Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter* in Oswego, New York. (The *Fort Ontario Military Post* had been converted into the shelter specifically for the expected 1,000 Jewish Holocaust survivors.)

Life in the shelter meant the refugees, for sixteen (eventually) comfortable months, had to live surrounded by (believe it or not) a barbed-wire fence! (The fence had been installed to keep anyone of 'Uncle Sam's guests' from coming and going unless given special permission/passes to do so.)

The Barbed-Wire Fence Surrounding the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter



Foreword (continued):

The rescue effort, aptly named ‘*Operation Safe Haven*,’ had been initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and finalized by President Harry S. Truman after Roosevelt’s death. And, although Manfred’s terrifying Holocaust experience and arduous rescue had ultimately ended with safe haven in America, unbeknown to him and all the other refugees at the time, sanctuary in the United States was only meant to be temporary: Apparently, Roosevelt had decreed that “the survivors could not remain in the U.S. indefinitely.”

His intention was that they’d be returned to their various countries of origin after their rehabilitation was concluded. However, Truman changed that on December 22, 1945, to “Full and outright freedom” *to live in the U.S.* or, if any survivor wished not to stay, they could live in any number of countries worldwide that had agreed to permanently take them in.

In February 1946, nine months after the Allies defeated Nazi Germany, the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter closed. The United States admitted the refugees on immigrant visas.

In this book, along with the 15-page section constituting Manfred’s amazing journey to America in his very own words, there are many incredible photo images, a few poems, some commentary, and a Hebrew prayer of remembrance.

~ ***Ruth Sabbath Rosenthal, Editor*** ~

Preface (with Disclaimer)

The content of this book is made up of ‘public domain’ online articles — some of which I, as editor, paraphrased. Also obtained online and included in this book are *photo images, each either supporting or enhancing the text content, so as to make the written subject matter more comprehensive and understandable.

*Quite a few of the photo images are from Manfred’s family’s private collection, and some are in the public domain; as for those images that are neither, I took the liberty of including them, as it applies to the *Fair Use Doctrine*, in lieu of permission from the sources themselves.

All credits are listed at the end of the book in the ‘Credits, References, and Sources’ section.) And, since my research was carried out online from 2020 – 2024, some sources’ website links may no longer be active. This version of the book (the most recent one) can only be accessed through my website, at no charge:

– ***Ruth Sabbath Rosenthal, Editor*** –

Special Thanks

In addition to providing the reader with Manfred's story, this book is meant to pay tribute, and thanks, to the people who, even in the smallest way, aided the Holocaust victims fortunate enough to have broken free of Hitler's death grip, via all manner of escape:

Escape that could very well have ended in so much more hardship and tragedy than it did, had it not been for the ingenuity and valor of the various European countries' underground resistance and the partisan freedom fighters; the cooperation of a number of government officials and Jewish agencies worldwide; and especially the courageous efforts of some everyday European Gentiles who hid Jews and played a part in their rescues, while all the time having to live under constant threat of death themselves.

Special thanks to presidents Roosevelt and Truman, and their respective staff; also, Roosevelt's emissaries, Ruth Gruber and Repatriation Officer Captain Lewis J. Korn — both of them having been assigned to deliver one thousand European Holocaust survivors to the *Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter* in Oswego, New York. (The 'one thousand' were deemed the most needy after an extensive interviewing process, which had involved a much, much greater number of survivors.)

And, enormous gratitude to the captain and crew of the U.S. Army transport ship *Henry Gibbins*, 'Ship of Dreams.' and to the 982 Jewish Holocaust survivors onboard.

Like thanks to the federal, state, and city officials of Oswego, especially those at Fort Ontario, and also, the many kind citizens of Oswego. But for these groups' and individuals' dedication and patience, the 'Safe Haven' group of survivors would, no doubt, not have found their refuge as accommodating and restorative as they ultimately did, once their fears and mistrust had allayed.

And, a most humble tribute to, and acknowledgement of, the six million Jews and the countless number of non-Jews who lost their lives under Hitler's reign.

Ruth Sabbath Rosenthal, on behalf of Manfred

**Below Is a Section of Page 10 of 'Manfred's Story,'
as Written by Him at Age Thirteen, in Longhand.**

walk had to continue ~~at~~ during the night of the ~~first~~ same day. This trip had to be made during the night time because we had to cross a german highway. We started this strenuous 14 hrs trip by climbing over the mount Labin. Right at the foot of this mountain was the highway we had to cross. 3 of ~~the~~ us protective guards and leaders went ahead to see if the way was clear. Then we had the women & children run over the road one by one. In case a german truck or so would come, we would all hide behind bushes. We all managed to arrive safely at the destined place called "Ragno," ~~at~~ in the morning at noon of the next day. At "Ragno" they told us that we are only 28 hrs away from the place on the sea coast. We were to pass one more small village and then proceed through a big forest in which we were to camp for 2 days and then arrive at the coast. This was all to be done during the night and we were to stay hidden during the day.

Manfred's Story — in His Very Own Words

When the war broke out in 1939 Yugoslavia was still a neutral nation and so we didn't feel any part of the war. Meanwhile Germany invaded one country after another and we began to think the day will probably come when they will invade Yugoslavia too. In 1943 the tragedy happened. Germany declared war on Yugoslavia and on the same day, 800 "Stuka" planes bombarded Belgrade the capital. This unexpected bombardment caused 250,000 deaths. German troops were marching into Yugoslavia at full speed and there wasn't any great resistance on the part of Yugoslavia because the country immediately split into two major political parties. The "Ustasa" and "Tito's partisans".

The Ustasa were a fascistically inclined group and naturally favored the Germans. The "partisans" group was a communistically inclined group which tried to fight the Germans in every possible way. The leader of the Ustasas was Ante Pavelic, and Tito was the Leader of the partisans. The real name of the man whom we know as Tito, is Josip Broz. He started his group by gathering 25 men to go with him. In order to get guns, they had to kill soldiers with hatchets and thus take from them their guns and ammunition. The common people sympathized with this group very much, so that it grew very rapidly in size.

One day during this panic period, my father received a special delivery letter from some strangers from Zagreb. The letter said that they have a young boy who now stays with them at their house. His parents had been killed. They said that the little 9 yr. old boy mentioned our name. They were wondering whether we do know him and if we would like to take care of him. My father had him immediately transported to us. He was the son of one of my father's best school friends. As long as my father knew that his parents were dead, he decided to adopt him. By this time the Nazi troops had come to about 200 mi. from Split and there was no way for us to get away. Italy had been invaded by the allied and the little islands in the Adriatic too, so that the Germans kept strict guarding along the coast and there was no way of getting out that way.

Every day Split was bombed by German planes at least 15 times. Every Yugoslav city including Split had such a strong German secret spy service that they were informed of everyone in specific detail.

One of the incidents that occurred was a group of Nazi spies dressed in partisan uniforms, who advertised big signs saying that this was the last minute to join their partisan group and that every man should join as a fellow patriot to help hold the Germans back.

Many men who didn't dream that this could be a spy ring, joined and were kept somewhere in a prison until the German troops came who shot them.

As the Germans arrived into the city, they shot every man they saw on the streets and also took the first four people they met on the main plaza and hung them as an example of what they were going to do to any people who didn't expect to cooperate and respect them. On this very day they sent soldiers with lists (made by their spies of Jewish people and any others that didn't suit them for some reason) and they were to bring all these people into one big concentration place. My whole family was one of the names on one of the many lists.

We were all taken to this concentration place. There the men were separated from women and children, and we women and children were put behind bars to watch what was going to happen next. (By the way we were not allowed to take anything along from our home except for what we happened to be wearing just than. Our apartments etc. became official property of the German government.)

Now we saw that all these Jewish men were lined up against the wall and 8 machine guns were placed before them. They were then without mercy shot down in cold blood before our very eyes.

Then their bodies were dumped on trucks and that was the last we ever saw of our fathers. We were all horrified at this terrible sight and 2 women amongst our group died of immediate shock and heart failure. Another lady became paralysed and died the next day.

After this horrifying undescribly inhuman scene had happened we 140 remaining women and children were put into a room that was about 3 times the size of a normal living room. This room had no windows, it had a stone floor and only one door with bars, which had a chain lock around it and was guarded by a soldier at all times.

140 human beings have to live in a room as small as that which had practically no ventilation and no light one can very well imagine how dreadful it was. We were given something that was called food, once a day. It consisted of cooked wormy beans or raw rotten potatoes plus a glass of water. We were allowed to go to the toilet once a day and we were escorted by a soldier. If we had to go any other time it was just tough luck for us.

Women between the ages of 25 - 50 had to carry heavy ammunition for the Germans.

They also had to load and unload big trucks and actually do straight 12hrs of the hardest imaginable work without even any decent food. Of course due to excess strain and not enough nutrition and so much grief, many died day by day.

The girls from 16-25 were used as rape objects by the nazi soldiers and these poor innocent girls who were worked on by force were always brought back in such weak physical condition that they died a few hours later.

The women over 50 who were mostly ill had to get up at 6:30am on these cold January (1944) mornings and had to do gymnastics for two hours on the snow. In the evening they had to stand in the snow again for two hrs without moving. If they were caught moving they were brutally whipped by the soldiers.

Due to the cold, most of these women died of pneumonia. But the boys between the ages of 7-12 were forced to carry food for the whole german outfit from the main kitchen to their camp. We had an escort of 3 soldiers who walked behind us with guns, ready to fire.

On one of these trips a boy tried to run away and he was shot down by the nazi soldiers without mercy. We felt horribly not only because the stuff was so heavy to carry, but because they would beat us if we tried to taste some of the wonderful food they were getting.

One day just as we were carrying the food for them again, we were attacked at once by a number of American planes which were some of the 120 planes which just began to circle the city getting ready to bombard. These planes were dive bombers and as soon as they spotted us, they dove down and started to fire at us with heavy machine guns.

We immediately laid flat down on the ground and I who was carrying the soup in a heavy pot placed the pot over my head as sort of a protection. We always tried to move from the middle of the street to a wall of a house, because it is much harder to be hit by a bullet that way.

The planes kept diving and shooting and two bullets went through the soup pot which probably would have otherwise gone through me. Two of the Germans who escorted us were killed also 3 of my pals and another who suffered a serious heart attack and died later.

As soon as the air-raid was over the one German who was still alive took us back to the camp. When the commander found out that two of his soldiers were killed during the air-raid, he blamed it on us and had us beaten. Some of the other torturous cruelties were for instance: They placed an anti-aircraft gun on the roof of our concentration camp and it would always be the first gun to fire at the planes. Naturally it was very easily possible that bombs would be dropped where the anti-aircraft guns were placed.

The American bombardments would be up to 112 times daily. Another torture was to take a few people usually children and have their mothers watch how the soldiers would pull all their nails off their hands.

Still another torture was to place a person down on a table sideways so that he could not move and then let a dropper drop a drop of water into one ear every 20 seconds. This drives a person insane after a while and also makes one deaf. This terrible indescribable situation has now been going on for nearly 7 months. We were all to be transported to concentration camp Buchenwald as soon as possible.

The first stroke of great luck came when one day the Germans had a big party in the evening and they all got very drunk. The guard that was placed before the door of our camp was also drunk and by accident didn't put the lock on the door through both sides of the chain. Luckily one woman noticed it and a few minutes later they opened the door, grabbed the drunk soldier, strangled him and about 40 of us, who had enough courage, escaped. We figured that if we'd be taken to Germany we'd be killed anyway, but if we'd escape from here and not be caught, we'd save ourselves.

My family and I ran to some of our old friends. In most of these cases we made a great mistake. Now that we were no good Jewish refugees escaping from a conc. camp, they didn't care to know us or help us. We couldn't let ourselves be seen during daytime, because we had that marked clothing from the camp on. So we refuged into a cave made by ruins of bombardments just as dawn started breaking.

At night I bravely left our cave and explored the near surrounding (even though my mother was so upset and scared that I'd be killed). We had to do something, we couldn't just wait there indefinitely. Good luck came the next night. I came upon a small farm that look deserted. I looked around and saw near a bunch of large trees near a well and a farmer lying in a pool of blood under his head and he didn't move at all. I believed that he was dead and so I carefully checked him out and then I undressed him and hid his body and my clothing under stones in the ruins.

I dressed myself in his clothing. No one else was there except for a mule and a cow and some chickens. I took his mule and went downtown to the market place. There I sold all the milk, eggs and cheese he had and finally even sold the mule, which was very precious in those days. I brought old farmer's clothing back to the cave where my family was hiding.

On my way to the cave, I was caught by an air-raid and had to take shelter in a house. The house was hit by a bomb, collapsed and 42 out of the 47 people in the shelter were killed, thank God I was left untouched. Now that my whole family was dressed in farmers clothing and we had plenty of food and a lot of money, we started to walk toward a village which was 15 miles from Split. There we had some friends. They were my fathers assistants in the factory before the war started.

We didn't have too much trouble getting out there because farmers weren't often stopped and questioned by the soldiers. When we got to the village which was called "Vranica" it was evening. We knocked at the door of the house which that family lived. When he opened the door and saw us, he reacted differently than all our other former friends. He immediately asked us in. He was shocked to hear that his dear friend, my father, was dead and he couldn't believe his eyes when he saw how close to skeletons our bodies were.

We hadn't washed ourselves since the day before we came to the conc. camp, so one can imagine how dirty we were. We all took a bath and then went to sleep after a harty meal. The next day we started to talk with our dear friend, on the subject which was a problem to both of us. "What now". He said that our staying here is only a provisory solution because sooner or later people from the village would recognize us and as talk spreads we would be caught again.

He told us that he has some contact with certain secret agents of the "Partisan" group who might be able to lead us over the mountains into their safe territory, or even maybe transport us to Italy.

Everything seemed to brighten up for a while. But bad luck struck again. My adopted brother got a acute attack of appendicitis and had to be operated on immediately, if he was to live.

This was only a little village and naturally they didn't have any surgeons. We finally managed to get the county doctor who consented to operate him on his kitchen table, after he was promised to get a big some of money. Our friend was good enough to pay it at the time.

By the time the doctor operated the appendix had already broken and pus was spreading in his belly. The doctor finished the operation, but said that in his opinion it is a hopeless case. He said that the boy doesn't stand to live more than a few days.

We carried him back to our temporary home. His wound was still left partially open, with a piece of rubber tube sticking out at one end. The pus was to come out that way. Both the doctor and we could not believe it, but the miracle was here. My brother began to really recover. In fact a week after the operation, he was able to walk.

By that time the partisan leaders got in contact with us secretly, and we were to be taken to a little village called "Solina" which was at the foot of the mountain "Kozia". They told us that the afternoon of the next day a woman would come to get us. She would first take my brother and sister and my mother and I would follow. The next day came and everything went as planned.

We were put into a little house which had a trick floor in the living room. It could be opened and people could hide in there in case of trouble. In case the Germans would have ever come, we would have hid in there. We stayed in the village for eight days.

Then we were told to be ready to go in the evening when it is dark. We were to go with a group of 50 other refugees. We were all under the leadership of one partisan who knew the secret way. We had to cross the steep stone mountain "Kozia" and then walk another 5 hrs. until we were to arrive at a small house where we were to get refreshments and take a short rest.

The night came and everything was silent. We all had cold perspiration on our foreheads and were scared. But we knew it was the only way out. We all started the long walk. We tried to hold on to the other, so he wouldn't get lost. We had to walk in socks so that we couldn't be heard. Naturally no one was allowed to even whisper.

The Germans kept searching the whole mountain with strong search lights and so if we saw the search light coming, we had to be down and not move. This was so we couldn't be noticed.

Everything went well, and we arrived at the little house. We were all dead tired after a 9 hour walk. We were given hot milk and then rested for an hour.

We were given hot milk and then rested for an hour. Then came two armed partisans who led us right on in another 6 hr walk, which took us through save territory to their first headquarter which was at "Korusnica.

On the way to the headquarter we passed many villages which had been burned down by the "Cetniks" who were under "Drazan Mikailovitch". They betrayed their country in every way. While we were at the conc. camp we saw them walking arm in arm with the Germans.

At "Korusnica", we were asked many questions and were told that we are to stay here for several days. When 3 days had gone by we were told that they try to get all the women and children to Italy through their secret way. They were to take us to a certain spot between Split and Sibenik on the coast. There a rowing boat comes every second night. It brings ammuniion and guns from an American motor boat which arrives at the little island called "Mali Drevnik".

From there the American boat goes back to the island of "Vis" in the middle of the Adriatic Sea. The island was an American base. Unfortunately however the passage was closed for a while and so we were ordered to go to a village called "Brstanovo" which was deeper in the safe country. It was close to "Boznia".

We finally arrived at "Brstanovo" after a 12 hr. walk. It was a village of 15 houses and a partisan headquarter. We were given a room with a bit of straw on the floor, so we could sleep more comfortably. Food was given twice daily. It consisted of the best they had. Usually cooked lamb or beef and a lump of bread. Water was very scarce. We only had what was collected from the rain. So it was only to be used for drinking.

The partisans had a marvelous system worked out. They had boys eleven years and over, which they arrive with guns and hand grenades and sent as messengers from one headquarter to the other. In case of trouble they were to burn the messages and defend themselves with the gun and bombs.

They had such a marvelous secret service, that they knew the exact time when german trains were passing. They always mined the tracks and blew the trains up. This way they cut supplies of the germans off. Every german prisoner they caught, they tortured until he spoke of some plans the germans were preparing and then they killed them. What the partisans did to fight the germans is indeed something remarkable.

Tito who was at the main headquarter in Bosnja very often came to inspect all the headquarters. He walked as all the other did. He didn't use a horse or so. He acted very friendly and even we got to meet him once.

Now the big question arouse. I was already in the age where they can use me as a messenger boy or even to go on mining missions with them etc. My mother cried terribly and refused to let them take me. She said that I don't even know how to use a gun.

All this didn't help however. They said that I am old enough and that in their form of gov. no one is better than the other and so there is no reason why I should be excepted from any duty. I was five foot 4" and looked older and so there was really no excuse.

I was taught how to use a 32 bullet machine gun and how to throw hand grenades. The next thing I knew, was that I was being sent on the first mission. I was made a messenger and had my daily duties. 3 weeks later I was put into a squadron of 15 men which were the mining outfit for one certain district. This was already a much more dangerous job because we always had to cross secretly throu german territory and work on german R.R. tracks.

Every other day when we got the information about an arriving train, we had to go on the job. We walked until we got to the tracks. There we set the mines and when the train would arrive, we would blow it up. We always tried to blow the 2 engines of the train up, so that at least some of the supply could be made use of by us. The germans which were still alive on the train were taken prisoners and questioned than later killed. I watched about 30 trains being blown up. I was left at this job for five weeks.

Than I was transported to a group which attacked villages which were under german or Ustasa government. The whole point in that was to steal cattle so that we would have food. We would usually go 30-40 men and women heavily armed and sorround a village from all sides of the sorrounding mountains. (Thiss was all done at night.) When our commander gave the signal, we threw our hand grenades into the village and shot with the machine guns, creating fires and great panic.

We would then enter the village and gather all the farmer families. If we would find any male farmers we would shoot them and burn their houses because we would call them traitors who didn't care to join the "partisan" army to fight against the germans. (The "Cetniks" would do the same in reverse.

Whenever they found the men missing, they burned the villages saying that the men are members of the "Partisan army".) We would then gather all the cattle and flour and quickly escape back to the headquarters. Also if we knew that a big german motorized coloum was stationed for a day in the village, and if we knew it had plenty of ammuniion supply, we would get our gasoline ready. Also if we knew that a big german motorized coloum was stationed for a day in the village, and if we knew it had plenty of ammuniion supply, we would get our gasoline ready.

We again sorrouned the village from the top of the mountain. At once we would begin to throw hand granades, shoot machine guns and spray gasoline over the whole german outfit. In a minute the whole outfit exploded with all the ammuniions and we left triumphantly. Sometimes we were able to take with us some rubber tires which we used to make shoe soles.

During this whole time I was wounded only once. It was on my knee, from a piece of hand granade which exploded nearby. The partisans always had to fight with the germans from behind. Because they had tanks or such other heavy equipment to get into an open fight.

The germans tried many times to enter the partisan territory with tanks and many man. They would always be sorrouned at night and burned and blown up. The germans didn't know the mountains as well as we did.

It was now the sixth week that I was at this job and I felt terribly exhausted and ill. I was never used to walking 12 hrs. a night, nor to the excitment to which I was exposed. I was full of lise as all the others were. But on me they had a very bad effect. Every bite became a infection.

There was no drugs to cure the wounds with and so my skin became more and more full of pus blisters. During this whole time my mother was working in the kitchen and my brother and sister were under supervision with all the other children.

Then one day a message arrived from the "Kouisnica" headquarter which said that the way to Italy was reopened again and that we were to be sent to the "Glovna Komanda" which was another headquarter. There we were to receive further instructions.

At first they didn't want to let me go along but when they realized that my health condition was very critical I was allowed to go along.

During my whole fighting time my mother didn't hear from me too much. She always was in fear that one day I wouldn't come back, which was very possible.

We got ready to start out on the 14 hr. walk to the "Glovna Komanda". Just before we left, I was called to the headquarter and ordered to shoot the seven prisoners who were locked in a cell. I got two other soldiers to help me and we ordered these germans to stand against the wall with their backs facing us and with their arms raised. Then I raised my machine gun and within a few seconds they were all dead on the floor. I felt very good to have been able to shoot these nazis because they were members of the "S.S. Prinz Eugene" troop which shot my father.

When we arrived at the "Glovna Komanda" we were given shelter and we had a chance to take a night's rest. The next morning we started on with the walk again and our goal was to arrive at a village called "Labin" which was about 7 hrs from here. We got there in the afternoon and given refreshments.

Our next walk had to continue during the night of the same day. This trip had to be made during the night time because we had to cross a german highway. We started this strenious 14 hrs trip by climbing over the mount Labin. Right at the foot of this mountain was a highway all had to cross.

3 or the proctective guards and leaders went ahead to see if the way was clear. Then we had the women and children run over the road one by one. In case a german truck or so would come, we would all hide behind bushes. We all managed to arrive safely at the destined place called "Razno" at noon of the next day.

At "Razno" they told us that we are only 28 hrs away from the place on the sea coast. We were to pass one more small village and than proceed through a big forest in which we were to camp for 2 days and than arrive at the coast. This was all to be done during the night and we were to stay hidden during the day. We followed strict directions and were now under the leadership of a new guard who knew this secret passage to the coast. There was relatively little excitement on the way. Everything went well.

When we finally arrived at the coast we had to wait for 4 days in the woods. The sea was stormy and so the row boat couldn't come. Finally the 5th night, the boat arrived at 12midnight. They delivered gunes and were to take us to the little island "Mali Drvenik" in 2 loads. There we were to wait for the U.S. motor boat which was to take us to safety. We did get on the row boat and did arrive at the little island. Everything looked hopefull now until bad luck struck again. Germans came from an island across called "Vilik Drvenik".

They came to make an inspection. As soon as we heard of their arrival, all of us were hidden in trick graves in the cemetery. This was also a horrible experience.

The germans left in the afternoon and said that they would be back the next day, in order to get some food to take with them. Our commander on the island was so excited, that he telegraphed to "Vis" that the U.S. boat should not come for a few weeks now. He also ordered that we be taken back to the mainland this coming night. Naturally all of us lost every bit of hope we had, and we all thought that we wouldn't be able to go thru it once more.

When we arrived at the mainland during the night there were 2 partisans that awaited all of us. They told us that the germans found our secret way again and that they are after us. We were all terribly shocked and without even resting a moment started back toward the safe territory.

While we were on the way back toward "Rozno" we were attacked by germans and 12 of us were killed. I had to shoot back at them with my other fellow guards. I counted 4 which actually shot with machine guns. I threw a hand grenade also, which hit in the middle of a truck loaded with soldiers. I am sure there were many dead there too. The rest of us managed to escape safely and we finally arrived at "Rozno". Instead of being able to rest there, we had to march right on. We found the place deserted, and we heard shooting from not too far away.

We all new we couldn't possibly go through another straight 14 hrs. march so we decided to rest in the woods for the night. We all were terribly hungry and thirsty. There was no water around and we had no food. There was no sign of rain so there was no hope for water. Some of the children, one of them my sister, became unconscious due to weakness. They had to be carried. We knew that if we didn't get some food into them soon, they were going to die.

The mothers were in hysterics. We understood very well why they were in hysterics. When a mother sees its child die its no wonder. Still, we had to beat them until they kept quiet, because if we'd be heard we might all be killed. The situation got so bad that we decided not to wait until the night to cross the german highway.

We took the chance and crossed it during the daytime. The last few people were unfortunately seen by 4 german trucks and naturally they immediately started shooting. We all ran up the mountain "Labin" to try to come to the village of "Labin" on the other side.

The Germans kept shooting up on the mountain and managed to kill 2 people and wound a child. We who were armed shot back at them. The situation looked hopeless. The Germans were a large number and we were only a few who were armed. I kept throwing the hand grenades I had around my belt but it didn't help much.

Our bit of luck came when just at that moment two American planes saw the German trucks and started diving down and shoot at them. The Germans immediately stopped shooting and were looking for shelter.

Meanwhile most of the people were over the mountain and we guards started after them too. At once I noticed that about 200 feet away from me, my brother was crying and yelling for help. I ran over and found my mother suffering a severe heart attack and beside her was my unconscious sister. My mother who was not yet unconscious kept telling me that she was dying and that I should take good care of my brother and my sister.

Although this was a situation that called for someone much stronger and more mature than I was I realized that it wasn't the moment to break down and give up. Any fellow guards who were all much older took care of the wounded and tried to bury the dead.

My brother took my sister on the back, and I took my mother, who was also unconscious by now. We managed to get across to "Labin" and when we got there, I blacked out due to weakness. By the time I awoke I found my mother resting, awake and my sister too. I was given food to, and a half day later we felt much better.

We stayed in "Labin" for a week. The situation on the coast was hopeless so that we were ordered to go all the way back to "Brstanovo" or even further into "Bosnja". They said that they didn't know how long we might have to wait until the way would be open on the coast again.

After all the long walks we arrived back in "Brstanovo". We were allowed to rest for a week. Then my mother was ordered back to her former job in the kitchen and I was given a job as helper in the office. They often had to read or write or use interpreters who know German and so they used me. I don't think that I could have gone through another night of fighting.

During our stay there, one of my aunts arrived with her little 7 year old son. She couldn't believe that we were her relatives. She could hardly recognize us.

During this whole time, she was hiding in a Protestant church, and when the church was bombed, she escaped and also came up to the partisans the same way as we did. She had no idea that it was going to be as strenuous as we told her it is. From then on we went all the way together.

We were now staying for the second month in Brstonovo again. Finally the message came, that a new place was found on the coast again. We were ordered to leave the next morning. Again now we had to walk through all the villages that we passed on the way down the first time. There were no battles on the way. It was a fairly safe way because it was new, and the Germans didn't have a hunch.

Again we had to wait hidden in the woods during the day and at night go down to the coast and wait for the boat to come. Unfortunately a terrible country rain and storm started just then and so the boat couldn't come. We kept hoping that the rain would stop, but it didn't for 6 days. We had practically no cover except for the trees.

We couldn't do anything, but wait. A few children got pneumonia and died with high fever. When the rain finally stopped, we went down to the sea at night and were praying that the boat should come. There was already no rain now for 2 days and the boat still didn't come. We were all as desperate as could be. We know if the boat didn't arrive up to midnight it wouldn't come anymore. It was already the third night now and we were all waiting again.

Midnight was here and no boat again. The women were all so tired and their nerves were so weakened that they decided to sleep down here on the rocks of the coast and let themselves be discovered by the German patrol boat in the morning, and just surrender to them.

At once at about 1:30am at night I heard heavy rowing strokes of a boat. I immediately awoke everybody and we anxiously awaited to see what it was. The expressions on all the faces is something that I'll never forget. There it was thou!! The Boat!!! It was here.

There were 110 of us who were to go, but only 60 could go on one trip. Immediately a great panic broke out, one was throwing the other into the sea and people were like mad dogs at one another.

My family went on the first trip and I went on the second trip which luckily went the same night. On the other side of the little island of "Mali Drvenik" was the U.S. motor boat, which was waiting to take all of us.

The American motor boat which was able to carry 200 persons, was about 100 feet away from the shore of the island. Those that were able to swim, swam toward the boat and the others went by rowing boats. My mother and sister went by boat and I took my brother on the back, and we swam. I never swam before at night.

We reached the U.S. boat which was well equipped with heavy guns and hot good sweet coffee and sandwiches. All of us were too tired to realize that this was actually the moment, we had all been praying for.

Six hours later we entered the allied port on the island of "Vis". We were all put into a hospital there. My wounds were treated. Our clothings were all burned and we were desinfected. We were given anti-tiphoid injections and got the best food we could possible dream of. We weren't sure if this was all true or if it was just a dream.

After 3 weeks of good rest on the island, we were all transported to the city of "Bari" in Italy. We went on a beautiful english ship. Within a half day we arrived in "Bari". "Bari" is a beautiful big city and in its outscurts there was a camp made for people that always arrived as we did.

As soon as we arrived at the camp, the Red Cross gave us new clothing and again we were desinfected. After we had been in Italy for a few days, we were told that President Roosevelt wants 1,000 refugees to come to the U.S. as his guests and stay at camp "Fort Ontario" at Oswego N.Y. We immediately registered and were accepted.

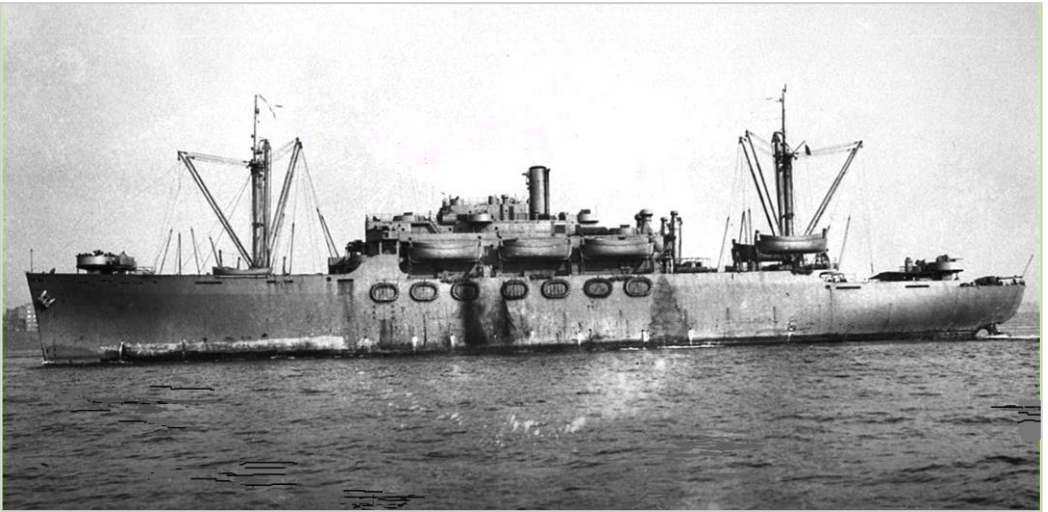
So 15 days later we were transported to "Napoli" where we left Europe on one of the ships of a 32 ship Army Convoy. The trip was wonderful except for one night, just as we were passing the "Strait of Gibraltar" we were attacked by german air-planes. They started to drop bombs but we managed to quickly release artificial fog so that they weren't able to see us. They managed to sink the last boat off the convoy. That boat carried 2,000 german prisoners. So we all didn't mind.

We were all very frightened because it was very easily possible for us to get bombed too. After that we had a wonderful voyage. After 18 days we arrived at New York where we were received by the Red Cross and an army band.

We left by train for Oswego the same day, and arrived there the next morning. We stayed at the camp "Fort Ontario" for 18 months. During this time unfortunately President Roosevelt died.

So when the war ended, President Truman in his annual Christmas speech, said he would like 40,000,000 people to enter the United States and that he offers us 1,000 people from Fort Ontario to stay permanently in the U.S.A. All of us were very happy about that and we all went to Canada for a day and legally entered the U.S.A. and were given our first papers.

USAT Henry Gibbins, August 1944



President Roosevelt's Emissaries: Captain Lewis J. Korn, Repatriation Officer, July 1944; and Ruth Gruber onboard the USAT Henry Gibbins, August 1944

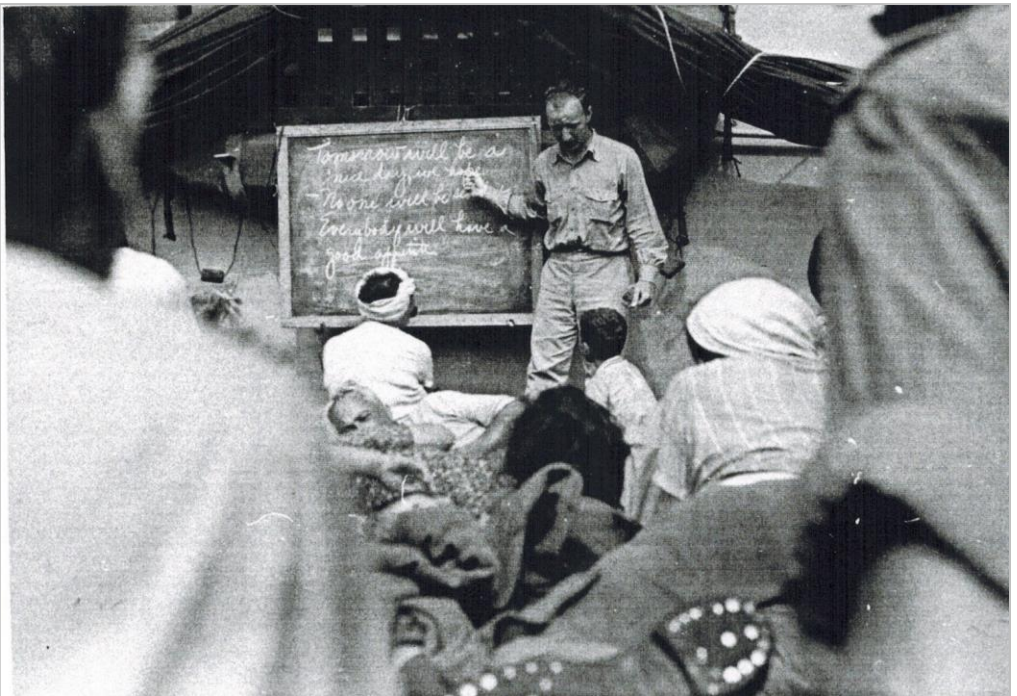


Photo credit: Louise Korn-Waldron, 2013 from her book *"We Were Prisoners, Too"*



Photo credit: David Michaels
US Holocaust Memorial Museum

*Holocaust Survivors Onboard the Henry Gibbins,
August 1944, Atlantic Ocean*



The Video-Still (Below) and the Photo (Below That), as Well as Those on the Following Two Pages, Represent the Refugees Arrival at Fort Ontario



***An Arriving Refugee Declares What He Is Bringing Into the Country
to a Customs Official at the Fort Ontario Refugee Center
in Oswego, NY***



Newly Arriving Refugees Check in at The Fort Ontario Shelter, by Representatives of the War Relocation Authority and the US Army



***The Refugees' Assorted Baggage Stewn Outside the Barracks
at the Fort Ontario Refugee Center***



*Newly Arrived Refugees Receive Food and Drink
at a Picnic at Fort Ontario in Oswego, NY*



***The Day After Their Arrival at Fort Ontario, Father J.J. Davem
Pronounces an Invocation at a Welcome Ceremony for the Refugees***



Manfred (Center) with His Sister and Brother, July 1944



Manfred (Center) with His Sister and Brother, August 2004



Manfred with 'Some Meat on His Bones' October 1944



***Manfred (in the Scout Uniform)
with His Mother, Sister, Brother, June 1945***



The Editor's Notes Re the Henry Gibbins and Operation Safe Haven

The US Army transport ship, first launched November 11, 1942, as the *Biloxi*, was delivered to the U.S. Army Transportation Service on February 27, 1943, and re-named *Henry Gibbins*. And, after several voyages, the ship was assigned to transport 1000 European Holocaust survivors to the U.S., as ordered by President Franklin Roosevelt shortly before he died.

The survivors had been chosen from a long list of names narrowed down to those qualifying as most needy: Manfred, his mother, sister, brother, and 870 of their brethren would make the voyage to America, along with non-Jewish survivors: 7 Protestants, 73 Roman Catholics, 28 Greek and Russian Orthodox, and according to Manfred, wounded U.S. soldiers and German prisoners. *In actuality, only 982 survivors* (from eighteen different European countries, primarily central and eastern Europe) *boarded the ship: 18, of the 1000 survivors had, possibly, been recaptured by the Germans, or had gotten lost, or died en route to the ship.* Also onboard were Ruth Gruber and U.S. Repatriation Officer, Captain Lewis J. Korn, both having been assigned by President Roosevelt to oversee the rescue effort, which was so aptly named *Operation Safe Haven*.

On, or about July 21, 1944, the *Henry Gibbins* left Naples, Italy. After fourteen perilous days on the Atlantic Ocean, the ship — a moving target for German air fire, dropped anchor midday August 3, 1944, in the port of New York, Pier 84, with all aboard safe at last.

The group of survivors reached their final destination, via train that went directly into the depot at the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter in Oswego, NY. (The 'U.S. Military Post, Fort Ontario' had specifically been overhauled in order to provide suitable living quarters for the refugees.)

At the shelter, for approximately sixteen months, the refugees tended to their wounds and immersed themselves in the process of healing and preparing for moves into houses or apartments in America, or any country coming forth to welcome them. After President Roosevelt's death, President Truman decreed (on December 22, 1945) that the refugees could make the United States their permanent home, if they so desired.

More About the 'Henry Gibbins'

“Henry Gibbins (T-AP 183) was laid down as Biloxi under Maritime Commission contract by Ingalls Shipbuilding Corp., Pascagoula, Miss., 23 August 1941; launched 11 November 1942; sponsored by Mrs. H. I. Ingalls, Jr.; delivered to the Army Transportation Service 27 February 1943. She was renamed Henry Gibbins and served the Army as a troop transport during World War II.

“She was acquired by the Navy, from the Army, 1 March 1950, and assigned to the Military Sea Transportation Service. During the Korean War she transported men and equipment from New York to Caribbean and Canal Zone ports, prior to their assignment in the Pacific. In 1953, Henry Gibbins operated on the New York to Bremerhaven, Germany, and Southampton, England, runs, making a total of 12 cruises to these European ports.

“From 1954 until late 1959 the veteran transport steamed from New York to the Caribbean over 75 times, sailed to the Mediterranean on 3 occasions, and crossed the Atlantic to Northern Europe eight times. During this time Henry Gibbins shuttled thousands of troops and tons of supplies between the United States and her foreign bases.

“The Gibbins was transferred from MSTS to the Maritime Administration December 2, 1959, at Fort Schuyler, N.Y., for service with the New York Maritime College.”

Editor's Note Re Conflicting Dates of the 'Henry Gibbins-Operation Safe Haven' Departure

The date the Henry Gibbins departed and Manfred's account of the number of days at sea does not, always, correspond to the information I found online:

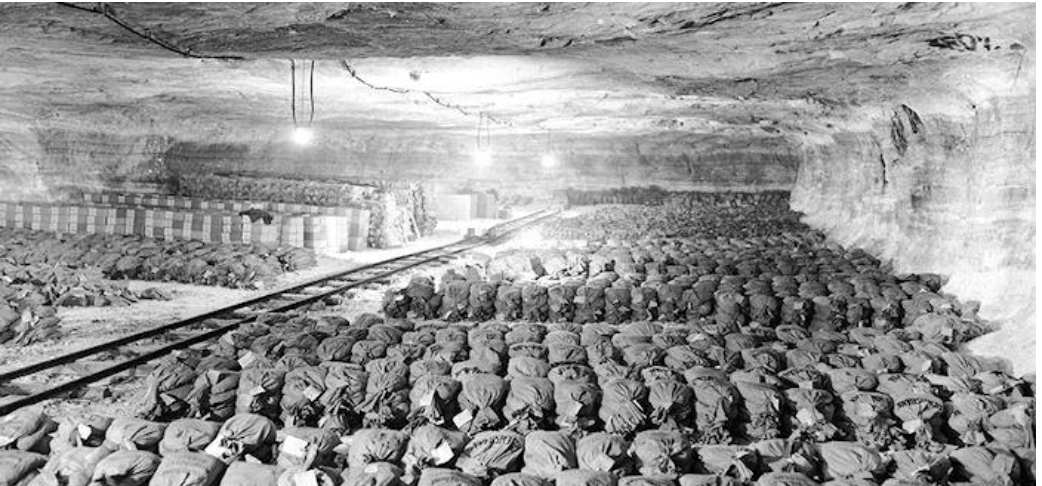
Manfred says they were en route to America on the Henry Gibbins for eighteen days, but what I read online, from several different sources, was "fourteen Days at sea." Also certain published survivors' accounts and historical data refer to different departure dates, each being either the day before or after the July 21, 1944 date that Manfred states in his story.

The discrepancies may be due to the fact that there had been a great deal of chaos at the time, insomuch as the survivors arrived at the ship's location over the course of several days and the boarding of the ship did not happen in just one day; this, I believe, could explain the varying dates first recorded, then reported by numerous sources over time. However, the August 3, 1944 arrival date is not in dispute.

Please Note: It is important to know that the July 1944 Holocaust-survivor-rescue mission, named 'Operation Safe Haven,' should not be confused with the 'Project Safehaven' — the tracking of Nazi gold, which was a covert operation designed, in part, by The Office of Strategic Services (the OSS) mandated to root out and neutralize German industrial and commercial power worldwide as of May 1944.

An Estimated 100 Tons of Gold Bullion Discovered in Merkers Mine

(Located in Krayenberggemeinde, Wartburg District, Thuringia, Germany)



Bales of Currency Found in Merkers Mine



“Searching for Records Relating to Nazi Gold, Part 1”

***The article pertains to the U.S. Government’s Covert Operation
“Project Safehaven,” Designed, in part, by
the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)***

The process of identifying, locating, and uncovering Nazi looted assets had begun well before the discoveries of April 1945. Early in 1944 the U.S. Government became increasingly concerned about the Nazis attempting to cloak their assets outside of Germany for personal use, as well as for building another strong Germany after the war. The U.S. Government was also concerned about neutral countries taking looted gold from the Germans in payment for military and other supplies.

As a result of these concerns, in May 1944, the Departments of State, the Treasury and the Foreign Economic Administration began an effort, variously code named: (the ‘Safehaven Program’ or ‘Safehaven Project’ or simply ‘Safehaven,’ to identify and stop the movement of Nazi assets out of Germany, then to locate, recover, and restitute them.

These three agencies, besides having their own intelligence-gathering programs, relied heavily on the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), other Federal agencies, and the British Ministry of Economic Warfare to acquire information about the movement and location of Nazi looted assets, especially gold. This information was gathered not only to be used in negotiations with the neutral countries about their dealings with the Nazis, but also for restitution purposes after the war.

El Malei Rachamim
(A Hebrew Prayer of Remembrance)

EL MALEI RACHAMIM,
shochein bamromim.
Hamtzei m'nucha n'chona tachat
kanfei ha'Shechinah,
b'maalot k'doshim u'chorim,
k'zohar harakia mazhirim,
et nishmot shisha milyon
acheinu v'ach'yoteinu
shenehergu al kiddush haShem.
Ba'al Ha'Rachamim yastireim
b'seter k'nafav l'olamim,
v'yitzror bitzror hachayim et nishmatam.
Adonai hu nachalatam,
v'yanuchu b'shalom al mishkavam.
V'nomar, amen.

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים,
שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים.
הַמְצֵא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה תַּחַת
כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה,
בְּמַעְלוֹת קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוֹרִים,
כְּזוֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ מְזַהְרִים,
אֶת נְשֵׁמוֹת שֵׁשׁ־מִלְיוֹן
אֲחֵינוּ וְאֲחֵיוֹתֵינוּ
שֶׁנֶּהְרְגוּ עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם.
בְּעַל הַרַחֲמִים יִסְתִּירֵם
בְּסֵתֶר כְּנָפָיו לְעוֹלָמִים,
וְיִצְרֹר בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נְשֵׁמַתְכֶם.
יְיָ הוּא נַחְלַתְכֶם,
וְיִנּוּחוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכַּבְכֶם.
וְנֹאמֶר, אָמֵן.

FULLY COMPASSIONATE God on high:

To our six million brothers and sisters
murdered because they were Jews,
grant clear and certain rest with You
in the lofty heights of the sacred and pure
whose brightness shines like the very glow of heaven.

Source of mercy:
Forever enfold them in the embrace of Your wings;
secure their souls in eternity.

Adonai: they are Yours.
They will rest in peace.
Amen.

Credits, References, and Sources

5. Foreword

6. Foreword (continued), and a Photo: Courtesy of The Palladium Times, Oswego, NY.

https://www.oswegocountynewsnow.com/news/local/city-and-refugees-form-a-story-of-hope/article_ee9b7e3a-fbe6-5da6-8ddd-db8e1a1a82b2.html and

https://www.oswegocountynewsnow.com/search/?l=25&s=start_time&sd=desc&f=html&t=article%2Cvideo%2Cyoutube%2Ccollection&app=editorial&nsa=eedition&q=Safe+Haven+Refugee+Center+Barbed+Wire+Fence

7. Foreword (continued) plus Preface and Disclaimer

8. Special Thanks

9. A Section of Page 10 of Manfred's Story, as Written by Him at Age Thirteen, in Longhand

10. Manfred's Story (fifteen pages, indicated in red, centered on the page (1 thru 15) thru 24.

25. Photo: (USAT Henry Gibbins, August, 1944.

USAT Henry Gibbins, August, 1944 "youtube.com"

Sanctuary at Fort Ontario: The Story of America's Only World War II Emergency Refugee Shelter/ a still from a video. <https://youtu.be/blB3QY6stSE?t=1052>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=blB3QY6stSE>

<http://www.navsourc.org/archives/09/22/092218305.jpg>

Photo: Captain Lewis J. Korn. (Photo credit: Louise Korn-Waldron, 2013 from her book "We Were Prisoners, Too")

Photo: Ruth Gruber aboard the Henry Gibbins. (Photo credit: David Michaels); Courtesy, the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum

26. Photos (two): The Survivors Aboard the Henry Gibbins, en route to America, July 1944

The two photos, from the Ruth Gruber Collection, courtesy of the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum

27. Photo: The Holocaust Survivors Arriving by Train into the Depot at the

Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Center, August 6, 1944. (Video Still)/accredited to: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (Copyright: No restrictions on use.)

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1000178>

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/us-haven-from-war>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCwshEVMdAw>

28. Photo: Arriving Refugee Declares What He Is Bringing into the Country to a Customs

Official at the Fort Ontario Refugee Center in Oswego NY, August 6, 1944. Photograph No. 60000 (Photographer: Hikaru Iwasaki), National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. This photo is in the public domain of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) Collection. Copyright: No restrictions on use.

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1081293>

29. Photo: *Newly Arriving Refugees Are Checked in at Fort Ontario Shelter by Representatives of the War Relocation Authority & the US Army, August 6, 1944.* Photograph No. 18392 (Photographer: Hikaru Iwasaki), National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. This photo is in the public domain of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) Collection. Copyright: No restrictions on use.
<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1078428>

30. Photo: *The Assorted Baggage of Refugees Lies Outside the Barracks at the Fort Ontario Refugee Center, August 1944.* Photograph No. 60014, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. This photo is in the public domain of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) Collection. Copyright: No restrictions on use.
<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa8824>

31. Photo: *Newly Arrived Refugees Receive Food and Drink at a Picnic at the Fort Ontario Refugee Center, 1944.* Photograph No. 18398, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. This photo is in the public domain of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) Collection. Copyright: No restrictions on use.
<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1078519>

32. Photo: *The Day after The Refugees Arrival at Fort Ontario, Father J.J. Davem Pronounces an Invocation at a Welcome Ceremony, 1944.* Photograph No. 60018, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. This photo is in the public domain of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) Collection. Copyright: No restrictions on use.
<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa5482>

33. Photos: *Manfred with His Sister and Brother, July 1944 / Manfred with His Sister and Brother, August, 2004.* Both photos courtesy of Manfred's family.

34. Photos: *Manfred with 'Some Meat on His Bones, October 1944 / Manfred with His Mother, Sister, and Brother, June 1945.* Both photos courtesy of Manfred's family.

**35. Commentary (paraphrased from several online sources):
*The Editor's Notes Re the Henry Gibbins and Operation Safe Haven:***

Paraphrased from online sources, as listed below.

<https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/h/henry-gibbins.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USNS_Henry_Gibbins

Also, based on Manfred's account in this book and, also, from book "Haven by Ruth Gruber, published by Coward-McCann, 1982; also from Article "The day after their arrival at Fort Ontario Father J.J. Davem pronounces an invocation at a welcome ceremony for the European refugees."

<http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa5482>

<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/main/fort-ontario-refugee-camp>

**36. Commentary (paraphrased from several online sources):
*More about the Henry Gibbins***

<https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/h/henry-gibbins.html>

<https://www.navsource.net/archives/09/22/22183.htm>

<https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/dans/h/henry-gibbins.html>
"USNS Henry Gibbins" *wikipedia.com*.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USNS_Henry_Gibbins

[https://alchetron.com/USNS-Henry-Gibbins-\(T-AP-183\)](https://alchetron.com/USNS-Henry-Gibbins-(T-AP-183))

37. Commentary: Editor's Note Re Conflicting Dates of the Henry Gibbins/Operation Safe Haven Departure is based on Manfred's account in this book and, also, from book "Haven by Ruth Gruber, published by Coward-McCann, 1982; also from Article "The day after their arrival at Fort Ontario Father J.J. Davem pronounces an invocation at a welcome ceremony for the European refugees."

<http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa5482>

Image:

An Estimated 100 Tons of Gold bullion Discovered in Merkers Mine

<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1999/spring/nazi-gold-merkers-mine-treasure.html#page-header>

38.

Image:

Bales of Currency Found in Merkers Mine

"Brewminate: A Bold Blend of News and Ideas" *Baled currency in the mine/Photo courtesy U.S. National Archives, Public Domain.*

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/540135>

<https://brewminate.com/nazi-gold-eisenhowers-third-army-and-the-merkers-mine-treasure/>

Article (paraphrased) from:

"Searching for Records Relating to Nazi Gold, Part I," by By Greg Bradsher Assistant Chief, Archives II Textual Reference Branch/The Record, May 1997; this article pertains to the U.S. Government's Covert Operation 'Project Safehaven,' Designed, in part, by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

<https://www.archives.gov/research/holocaust/records-and-research/searching-records-relating-to-nazi-gold1.html>

39. Hebrew Prayer of Remembrance (El Malei Rachamim)

The Prayer (in Hebrew and English) Published in *Yom HaShoah Holocaust Memorial Service*, 2016, May 1. Hilton Head Island, SC: Congregation of Beth Yam. (English Translation of the Prayer by Rabbi Brad L. Bloom, page 15.),

<https://bethyam.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2012/05/YomHaShoahProgram2016.pdf>;

The following page is the Back Cover of the Book

MANFRED - HIS STORY

(in his very own words)

A young Jewish boy recounts his brutal ordeal in a Nazi concentration camp, his harrowing escape, then his terrifying experience as one of Tito's partisans; that followed by a perilous passage to America aboard the US Army transport ship **Henry Gibbins** — Joyful, yet beyond terrifying journey that culminated at the **Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter**, in Oswego, New York.

The **Henry Gibbins** was first launched in 1942, as the **Biloxi**, then delivered to the US Army Transportation Service, February 27, 1943; she was renamed and readied for the sole purpose of transporting **1000 European Holocaust survivors** to the US, as ordered by **President Franklin Roosevelt**. The rescue **Operation Safe Haven** was carried out by Roosevelt's wartime emissaries, **Ruth Gruber** and U.S. Repatriation Officer **Captain Lewis J. Korn**.

*On July 21, 1944 the Gibbins left Naples, Italy; on board, along with the ship's captain and crew, were: Ruth Gruber, Captain Korn, Manfred, his mother, sister and brother, and the other 978 survivors; additionally there were wounded US soldiers and, according to what Manfred remembered, some German prisoners, too.

After 14 danger-filled days at sea, the ship arrived mid-afternoon August 3, 1944 in New York Harbor — the Statue of Liberty, literally, rising out of a rainy-day haze. The journey from unthinkable tyranny and enslavement, to terror on the high seas, to safety on dry land, continued by railroad to Ft. Ontario, in Oswego, NY. The fort had been converted to the **Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter** especially for the 982 Holocaust survivors. In October 2000, the administration building became **The Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum** housing a priceless collection of artifacts, photos, and documents mapping the survivors' extraordinary exodus.

*The date the Henry Gibbins departed and Manfred's account of the number of days at sea don't necessarily correspond to some historical data, as researched for purposes of this book; plus, some survivors' accounts suggest a departure date falling within a day or two of July 21st. Such discrepancies may well have been due to the chaos at the time and also, clusters of refugees had boarded the ship on different days from one another prior to the actual sailing date.



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