Prague 1939: A True Story of Talent Lost. Paul and Hedy Strnad are trapped as the Nazis close in. Can Hedy’s dress designs and their cousin in Milwaukee help them get to the United States?

All efforts failed. Hedy and Paul perished in the Holocaust, but their memory lives on in the letter and sketches which form the core of this haunting exhibit. Come and experience Hedy’s designs brought to life.

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Introduction

In the winter of 1939, Paul Strnad, a Czechoslovakian Jew, writes his cousin Alvin in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Desperate to obtain an affidavit to escape the onslaught of Nazi Germany, Paul sends Alvin sketches of his wife Hedy’s dress designs. Paul and Hedy hope that these examples of her work will provide evidence of their financial independence. Despite Alvin’s best efforts, both Hedy and Paul are murdered in the Holocaust. All that remains of their story are these letters and Hedy’s sketches.

Jewish Museum Milwaukee’s exhibit, Stitching History From the Holocaust explores the life and work of Hedy Strnad before her murder. The main feature of this exhibit is the recreation of Hedy’s dresses from her sketches.

Key Messages:
1) Each victim of the Holocaust has his/her own story that deserves to be remembered.
2) The Holocaust not only took human lives, but also their contributions to our world.
3) The material items around us are an important means of remembering and discerning information about culture and history (drawn designs, dresses, photos, letters, recordings, etc.).
4) The actions of people in our world today can meaningfully help to remember those lost.

The following teacher resources will prepare students for viewing the exhibit by providing a concise explanation of the Holocaust. Through films and books which either directly relate to the fate of Czech Jewry or provide tangible examples which make the fate of the Strnad family more understandable, students will be prepared to view this story through a critical lens and apply what they’ve learned to contemporary issues. In addition, this curriculum will provide writing cues and lesson plans to help direct your students’ thinking during and after their visit.

Before You Visit:
• Read through these materials
• Discuss the Key Messages with your students
• Establish a basic timeline of World War II and the Holocaust with your students (Let the Museum staff know if you need assistance with this)
The Making of the Exhibit

In 1997, the Strnad family in Milwaukee discovered this letter and eight drawings in their mother’s attic. They donated them to the Milwaukee Jewish Historical Society, which became the Jewish Museum Milwaukee. Once the Museum opened, these pieces became central to the permanent exhibit. This shows the importance of preserving artifacts: if Alvin Strnad hadn’t decided to save these pieces and if his children hadn’t found them and donated them to the Museum or if they had thrown away these pieces without looking at them, there would be nothing to connect Paul and Hedy to people today.

JMM worked with the Costume Shop of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater to create Hedy’s dresses. Their team researched the technology available to Hedy, and the styles and techniques available to her; each dress is historically accurate (even the zippers are vintage).

Meanwhile, the Museum team researched the Strnad family in both the US and Europe. Genealogy, academic exploration, and newspapers were major focuses of our work. We started with the Names Database of Yad Vashem, where we discovered testimony submitted by Hedy’s niece in Germany. For the next four years, we tried to locate this niece, Brigitte Neumann Rohaczek, but with no luck until an intern found her in the fall of 2013. By interviewing Brigitte, we were able to discover personal reflections and details about Paul and Hedy. Each new discovery helped us understand who Hedy was and what the family experienced.

December 11, 1939

Dear Alvin:

I received your last letter and thank you very much for your kind care. I was very glad to hear that you are troubling to get an affidavit of necessity for my wife as a dress-designer. Would you be so kind as to let me know if you have had any success in this matter. You may imagine that we have a great interest of leaving Europe as soon as possible because there is no possibility of getting a position in this country. By separate mail I have sent you some dress-designs my wife made. I hope the dress manufacturer you mentioned in your letter will like them.

As to my family I can inform you that we all are well. All the members have lost their employments and cannot find any work. I am helping my wife in shapping (sic) and making artificial leather and silk flowers, which are much in favor here.

Could I trouble you to send me a fashion journal (for ladies), because we cannot get them now from Paris and are not informed about Paris fashions. Many thanks for your kindness beforehand.

I had the intention to send you the new stamps of the Protektorat Bohemia and Moravia, but I could not, because it is forbidden to send stamps to your country.

Hoping to hear very soon from you. I remain with kind regards to you and your wife and with the best wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Paul

P.S. Enclosed you will find a photo of both of us.
Who was Hedwig (Hedy) Strnad?

What we know about Hedwig Antscherl Strnad is very limited. She was born in 1899 in Prague. Her parents were from smaller towns and had moved to Prague before Hedy was born. At some point, she married Paul Strnad, a banker, whose family had a similar background. We learned from her niece that she had red hair and that Paul and Hedy were jolly people.

Hedy lived under three different governments in her 40 years of life. She was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire which decreased laws against Jews during her life, but still imposed many limits upon Jews and on women. After World War I, Czechoslovakia became an independent country and Hedwig received the right to vote and full citizenship. In 1938, the British and French, hoping to avert war, gave Nazi Germany control of the Sudetenland. By the beginning of 1939, most of former Czechoslovakia was under Nazi control. Under this regime, the Strnads lost their civil rights and employment opportunities. Paul wrote to his cousin, “As to my family I can inform you that we all are well. All the members have lost their employments and cannot find any work. I am helping my wife in shapping (sic) and making artificial leather and silk flowers, which are much in favor here.”

The couple was deported to Theresienstadt and then to Warsaw. Most Warsaw Ghetto residents died of malnutrition or disease in the ghetto or were further deported to Treblinka between July and November, 1942. Both Hedy and Paul died in the Holocaust.

“My wife is 39 and for the last 17 years has been running as a proprietress, a first class dressmaking establishment.”

Paul Strnad, 10-24-1938

What’s in a Name?

When the exhibit development began, we did not have a name for the woman who drew these designs. Paul Strnad referred his wife as a talented designer, but did not write her name. We gathered information on the Strnads from Theresienstadt records and Yad Vashem’s Names Database¹, which referred to her as Hedvika, a Czech name. From the Yad Vashem records, JMM found the name of a surviving niece who lived in Germany. When a Museum intern interviewed Brigitte Neumann Rohaczek at her home in Nuremberg, Germany, she referred to her aunt as Hedwig or Hedy, the German version. From this interaction, we learned what Hedy’s family called her and about her cultural identity. Like many Czechoslovakian Jews, Hedwig Strnad’s family moved from Czech-speaking towns to German-speaking towns in the Sudetenland in the 1800’s. The Museum chose to present Hedwig in the way she identified herself. This discovery was crucial in understanding Hedwig Strnad, her family, and her background. Regardless of intention, it would have been an unfortunate choice to represent the fashion designer’s life in a way which would have been foreign to her. We could not refer to her using a name that was not her own and which was, moreover, exclusively used in the records of her murder.

¹ The following link leads to Hedwig Strnad’s record in the database: http://db.yadvashem.org/names/nameDetails.html?itemId=1895213&language=en#prettyPhoto

The Shoah Names Database is a feature of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, Israel. Courtesy of Yad Vashem
Jewish Life in Czechoslovakia

Bohemia is a territory where Jews and Christians, Czech- and German-speakers, lived. This western portion of the modern Czech Republic has been a center of Jewish life since the 900s. In 1254, the king of Bohemia granted Jews physical protection and their independence, which ensured Jewish economic stability. Prague is one of the only European cities with almost continuous Jewish presence from the Middle Ages until the Holocaust.

Bohemia became part of the Habsburg Empire, which increased the Jewish population, but also led to challenges. Following the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648), emperors sought to curb the growth of Jewish communities across Bohemia, allowing only one son of each Jewish household to marry and establish himself. Younger siblings settled in the small towns and villages that were less centralized within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and had their own governments. There, they performed various jobs as servants of the local nobility. Jews were scattered to 2,000 towns by 1850 and made the Bohemian Jewish community fractured. Two members of the extended

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Jewish Life in Czechoslovakia

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Strnad family, Hedwig’s mother, and Paul Strnad’s father, were born in small Czech towns.

In the late 1800’s, restrictions upon the Jews eased, and many Jews became fluent in German to fit in with the elite. They left the Czech-speaking countryside, returning to Bohemia’s cities. You can find this upward mobility in the biographies of Paul and Hedwig: their parents came from the country, but they were born in cities at the turn of the twentieth century, Hedwig in Prague, and Paul in the border city of Ústí nad Laben in the Sudentenland. This linguistic integration led to a high cultural integration and a high intermarriage rate (between 1928 and 1933, 43.8% of Jewish marriages were with a non-Jewish partner). The Holocaust and the destruction of the Jewish community in Czechoslovakia ended over a millennium of relatively peaceful Jewish-Christian coexistence.

Adapted from “The Jews of Bohemia: A Lesser Known Story” by Shay Pilnik

"I have heard...to obtain a permit to enter the States, one must have a so-called affidavit..."

Paul Strnad, 10-24-1938

Immigration: Doors Opened, Doors Closed

Like most immigrants, the Strnad family maintained connections across oceans. As the correspondence between Alvin and Paul Strnad shows, these connections were a source of hope for European Jews during late 1930s and early 1940s.

The family members who successfully immigrated to the United States came much earlier, during an era of open migration from Europe. When Benedict and Julius Strnad arrived, in 1891 and 1905 respectively, they were part of a large cohort of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. Drawn to the social tolerance and the possibility of work, these newcomers transformed the ethnic and religious makeup of the United States.

Paul Strnad found completely different conditions in 1939: restrictive laws, a world-wide depression, and anti-immigrant sentiment. The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 forced prospective emigrants to obtain a visa. Throughout the 1930s, few visas were granted. Although there is evidence that Alvin Strnad initiated the paperwork to bring his cousins over to the United States, the odds against his succeeding were high.

Adapted from “Immigration and the Strnad Family: Two Eras, Two Outcomes” by Rachel Ida Buff

Dressmaking and the European Jewish Woman

Tailoring and dressmaking had long been understood in Eastern Europe as Jewish professions, with entire families engaged in clothing production. Jews became prominent in all aspects of the trade. Their entrepreneurship led to the rise of 19th century clothing factories, and by the end of that century, several Jewish families established couture houses that became vital parts of Prague society. Two of the most important were named for their founders, Hana Podolská and (Oldrich) Rosenbaum. Having handmade dresses was not limited to the wealthy. While many people sewed their own clothes for everyday wear, most people relied on dressmakers and tailors like Hedy to create their finer clothing.

After the Holocaust when the city was emptied of its Jewish people—its skilled fashion work force—Prague had trouble rebounding as a fashion center. The final death blow was brought by the Soviet takeover in 1948, after which private companies, including fashion houses, were converted to cooperatives and state enterprises.

Adapted from “What do Hedwig’s Strnad’s Designs Reveal?” by Beverly Gordon

"I have heard...to obtain a permit to enter the States, one must have a so-called affidavit..."

Paul Strnad, 10-24-1938
The Nazi Occupation and the Holocaust:

"Now strong anti-Semitic tendencies are making themselves felt, such tendencies as never even existed before in this country."

Paul Strnad, 10-24-1938

World War II officially began with the Nazi invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. The beginning for Czech Jewry was one year earlier. In September 1938, leaders from France, Great Britain, Italy and Germany met in Munich and agreed to give a part of Czechoslovakia, the Sudetenland, to Germany. The Sudetenland was an area of mostly German-speaking Czech citizens on the eastern border with Germany, Austria and Poland. Many of its 25,000 Jews, reacting to intensifying anti-Semitism in their home towns, headed south to Prague. By March 1939 the Nazi conquest of Czechoslovakia was complete.

During the Occupation, Jews were subjected to unjust laws including the seizure of property and businesses; Jewish exclusion from non-Jewish schools and adults from work; mandatory wearing of a yellow Star of David; and abolition of many human rights. Some Czech Jews tried to escape; at least 26,000 were successful in immigrating to Palestine, South America, and Western Europe.

As a portion of their Final Solution, their plan to rid Czechoslovakia and all of Europe of its Jews, the Nazis built Theresienstadt, a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, as a transit camp for sending Jews to ghettos and death camps in Eastern Europe. In late 1941, approximately 74,000 Czech Jews were transported to Theresienstadt; 80% were then deported.

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Kindertransport: Why Could Brigitte Escape?

In studying the fate of this family, it may come as a surprise that nine-year-old Brigitte Neumann survived while most or her family, including her uncle Paul and aunt Hedwig, did not. Many European Jews at the time of the Holocaust had no avenue for escape. Brigitte escaped Czechoslovakia on the Kindertransport. This rescue mission, organized in the United Kingdom, provided visas to children under 17 during the nine months before World War II. Nearly 10,000 children from Nazi-controlled Europe survived because of this program by escaping via train and boat and living with foster families. However, most of these children lost their entire families in the process.

Talent and Creativity Lost

Hedy’s is a personal story, but it represents something much greater. Along with the millions of human lives extinguished as a result of the Holocaust, there was an immeasurable loss of talent and creativity. It’s almost impossible to quantify. In imagining the ideas and theories left unformulated—the canvases never painted, the poems and books never written, the music never composed, the scientific cures never discovered—the impact is incomprehensible. What would our world be like today if the people and talent who perished had been able to bring their visions and creative contributions to life?

This is a question we can never answer; we are aware of the collective void in cultural and intellectual life. We can never regain all that was lost, but in bringing Hedy’s designs to life, we provide a glimpse of what should have been—an intended legacy which would have made the world infinitely richer.
Big Ideas, Essentials, Questions

This exhibit is a springboard for thinking about our relationship to historical events and demonstrates how a single artifact can connect to the past. There are many ways to explore this issue with your class—here are some questions that can be used as a discussion or as writing prompts:

- Hedy and Paul sent this letter as a lifeline, utilizing Hedy’s talent to try and escape from Nazi oppression. How would you represent yourself if you were in danger? What skills or talents best represent who you are?
- This letter is all that remained of the Strnads after the war; it was saved in an attic and turned over to Jewish Museum Milwaukee in 1997. What role do Museums play in preserving the memory of the Holocaust? How do primary sources help us remember those who were lost? What is the process of learning about history beyond the textbook? What are different kinds of primary sources and how are they reliable? When should we trust sources and when should we question them?
- In “Stitching History From the Holocaust,” fashion stimulates our understanding of the loss of talent. While the dresses are beautiful, they are also functional. They help us understand who Hedy was. What do the dresses say to you; how would you personify (give them feelings) each dress? What are other ways to promote memory of historic events? Does your family preserve pictures, letters, other objects to help maintain memory?
- Genocide is the systematic and deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic, racial, religious, or cultural group. This term was invented to describe the Holocaust, but reflects on many other historical time periods and persecutions. What is lost when a group is eliminated from the population? How would you try to enforce the idea of “Never Again?” Create something (a song, poem, drawing, sculpture, video, etc) that celebrates ethnic diversity.

Class Activities

Imagine a World without Hate
Instruct children to research the life of an individual who lost his/her life to hatred. Using this information, construct a presentation on that person’s life and accomplishments as if they had survived. Presentations could include: a newspaper article, an interview, an obituary (assuming the individual died of natural causes), a timeline, or other ideas.

Suggestions for individuals to research:
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, President John F. Kennedy, Harvey Milk, Matthew Shepard, James Byrd, Yitzhak Rabin, Abraham Lincoln, Benazir Bhutto, or others.

Holocaust-Connected Individuals:

Students may use the following video from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) for inspiration: http://www.adl.org/imagine/


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Class Activities

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The Story Objects Tell
This exhibit is about the stories that objects can tell. Ask the students to bring in an object from their home and describe its history. Where did it come from and who made it? Why is it important to your family? Does it connect to any historical events?

Have students create an exhibit with these artifacts. They should create captions for them and figure out groupings based on time period, themes or types of artifacts. Ask the students to act as docents and describe the artifacts and the connections to other classes or visitors.


What’s Your Talent?
In Paul Strnad’s letter to his cousin Alvin in Milwaukee, he sends Hedy’s sketches as proof of her talent as a dressmaker. Knowing that remaining in Czechoslovakia after the Nazi invasion would be dangerous, Paul and Hedy rely upon her talent to convince their relatives to take them in, get an affidavit, and save them. Each of us, like Hedy, adds creativity to the world. Consider what your talents are and create something that reflects them (a drawing, sculpture, song, poem, story, play). Then write a letter to someone describing your work and why it is important.


Oral History Project
(for advanced students)
Oral history interviewing is a method used in history, anthropology, and folklore. An oral history interview collects information about the past from observers and participants in that past. A large amount of information for this exhibit was gathered from an oral history interview with Brigitte Neumann Rohaczek, the niece of Hedwig Strnad. Brigitte remembered details about Hedwig no one else could have known: her red hair, her refined personality and sense of fashion, her hobbies, and her cheerful demeanor.

Interview a grandparent or an older friend/relative about a family treasure. Ask the interview subject to select a personal treasure and ask them questions about this piece. Here are some select questions, but get the students to generate more:

- Get them to describe the object
- Ask them about when the object was made and how they got this object
- What does this object remind you of
- Are there any historical events that connect to this object (Civil Rights Movement, Elections, Wars, The Great Depression)

Have the student film or record the interview. Create a presentation of your interview to present in class.

RESOURCES:

- "Incorporating oral history into the K–12 curriculum" LearnNC (http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/764)
- “10 Tips for Interviewers” Southern Oral History Program. UNC Center for the American South (http://sohp.org/files/2012/04/10-Interview-tips.pdf)


Paul Strnad with his parents and sisters as a small child. All the people in this photo died in the Holocaust.
**Affidavit**
A written statement by an individual, under oath, that provides evidence. Under the Johnson-Reed Act (Immigration Act) of 1924, a person wishing to immigrate to the United States needed an affidavit from a friend or relative in the United States stating that the immigrant would become a contributing member of American society.

**Anti-Semitism**
Hostile belief or behavior toward Jews. It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews, or political efforts to oppress them. The anti-Semitic beliefs propagated by the Nazis relied upon the incorrect belief that Jews constitute a “race” which is inherently inferior to others.

**Auschwitz**
Built in 1940 and used until the end of the War in 1945, Auschwitz was the most notorious Nazi concentration camp that housed and killed people deemed “inferior”. The camp, located in southern Poland, used gassing as its primary method of killing prisoners. At least 1.1 million prisoners died at Auschwitz, approximately 90% of them Jewish.

**Bohemia**
Bohemia is a region in the western half of the Czech Republic. Historically inhabited by German-speakers, Bohemia was a kingdom in the Holy Roman Empire and later a province in the Habsburgs’ Austrian Empire.

**Concentration Camp**
In the case of World War II, a concentration camp was a guarded compound for the imprisonment and murder of millions of Jews and other groups considered inferior by Nazi Germany. The term implies horrifying conditions and carries many of the connotations of “extermination camp” or “death camp”.

**Czecho-Slovakia**
A country in Central Europe that existed from October 1918, upon receiving independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, until its dissolution into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. The principal regions of Czecho-Slovakia were Bohemia to the northwest, Moravia-Silesia in the center, and Slovakia to the southeast.

**Final Solution**
Also known as the Final Solution to the Jewish Question, refers to the Nazis’ plan to empty Europe of its Jewish population through a carefully-devised genocide. This plan culminated in the Holocaust, which killed two thirds of Europe’s Jews.

**Hitler (1889-1945)**
Adolf Hitler was the German Nazi Party leader from 1919-1945 and dictator of the Third Reich from 1933-1945. Hitler outlined his plans of territorial conquest and his hatred for Jews in his autobiography Mein Kampf (1924). He was the architect of the German Racist State, the enslavement of non-Aryan peoples, and the central figure behind the instigation of World War II.

**Holocaust**
The Holocaust refers to a specific genocidal event in 20th century history: the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims; 6 million were murdered; Sinta-Roma (Gypsies), Poles, people with physical and mental disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

**Kindertransport**
German for children transport, a rescue mission that took place during the 9 months preceding World War II. During this time, the United Kingdom took in nearly 10,000 Jewish children predominantly from Germany, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, and the Free City of Danzig. Often, these children were the only members of their families to survive the Holocaust.

**Nazi**
Short for nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiter-Partei (N.S.D.A.P, also the National Socialist German Workers Party), it was a political party that emerged in Munich after World War I. The party was taken over by Adolf Hitler in the early 1920’s. The swastika was the party symbol. While the term applied at first to the Nazi Party, it became the common name for Germany during World War II.

**Sudetenland**
The Sudetenland is a German word used to refer to the crescent-shaped, predominantly German-speaking areas in Czecho-Slovakia, particularly its northern, southwest, and western areas. The name is derived from the Sudetes Mountains which run along the northern Czech border. Most of the Strnads and their relatives were born in the Bohemian portion of the Sudetenland. This area was annexed by Germany in September of 1938, one year before the beginning of World War II.

**Theresienstadt**
Concentration camp established by the Nazis in the historic, walled town of Terezin in what is now the Czech Republic. Theresienstadt served as a “model camp”, largely housing Western European Jews. While tens of thousands of people died here, the camp was mainly a transit camp; people were sent here before being sent to their deaths in extermination camps like Treblinka or Auschwitz-Birkenau. Many members and relatives of the Strnad family were interned in Theresienstadt.

**Third Reich**
The name given to Adolf Hitler’s regime in Germany (1933-1945). The first Reich was the Holy Roman Empire (800-1806); the second Reich was the Bismarck-Kaiser period (1871-1918). Hitler envisioned that the Nazis would rule for a thousand years.

**Warsaw Ghetto**
The Warsaw Ghetto in Poland was the largest ghetto in Nazi-occupied Europe. Established in 1940, over 400,000 Jews lived in an area of 1.3 square-miles in the Polish capital, Warsaw. The death toll of the ghetto, between its deplorable conditions and through deportations to camps, is at least 300,000. Hedwig Strnad is assumed to have died in the Warsaw Ghetto.

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"You will of course have read in the press what a catastrophe has overtaken our country, a catastrophe which has upset our whole life"

Paul Strnad, 10-24-1938
# A Timeline of the Strnad Story

*(Strnad Family Events are in Blue)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Benedict Strnad (1871-1939) immigrates from Bohemia to Milwaukee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Paul Strnad born in Aussig (Ústí nad Labem), Bohemia, also part of the Sudetenland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Hedwig Antscherl Strnad born in Prague, Czechoslovakia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>With the end of World War I, the Habsburg Empire dissolves, creation of a new nation of Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Passage of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act, drastically reduces European immigration to the U.S.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1933 | • Hitler named German Chancellor  
• Dachau, first concentration camp, established |
| 1935 | Germany adopts the Nuremberg Laws denying civil rights to Jews |
| 1938 | • Leaders of Germany, France, and Great Britain meet in Munich and agree to allow Germany to annex the Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia  
• German troops occupy the Sudetenland. Jews living there flee, many south to Prague.  
• Paul Strnad sends his first letter to Alvin  
• Kristallnacht: Night of Broken Glass, an anti-Jewish pogrom in Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland. 267 synagogues were destroyed, 7500 shops looted and 30,000 sent to concentration camps, 91 Jews killed.  
• Nicholas Winton begins Kindertransport program in Prague |
| 1939 | • German troops cross the border to occupy Czechoslovakia  
• Liselotte and Brigitte Neumann, nieces of Paul and Hedwig Strnad, leave Prague for England on one of the last Kindertransports to depart Czechoslovakia  
• Germany invades Poland to begin World War II  
• Paul Strnad writes to his cousin Alvin in Milwaukee stressing the need for affidavits to bring him and Hedwig to the United States |
| 1940 | • Germany invades and conquers much of Western Europe  
• Warsaw Ghetto established |
| 1941 | • All Jews age 6 and above required to wear a yellow star in Czechoslovakia  
• Establishment of Birkenau as an extermination camp at Auschwitz. Death estimate by war’s end: 1 Million.  
• Establishment of concentration camp at Terezin (Theresienstadt) in Czechoslovakia  
• United States declares war on Japan and Germany |
| 1942 | Wannsee Conference: Nazis meet to plan the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" |
| 1942 | Hedwig and Paul Strnad deported to Theresienstadt. In April they were deported to the Warsaw Ghetto. Most of Hedwig and Paul's family were deported at this time to various concentration camps and ghettos. |
| 1943 | Warsaw Ghetto Uprising ends in the death of 50,000 Jews |
| 1944 | • D-Day: Allied troops land in Normandy  
• The International Red Cross arrives in Theresienstadt to inspect the camp. Since the Nazis had cleaned it up and staged presentations, the IRC declare that the prisoners were being treated humanely. |
| 1945 | • Auschwitz liberated  
• Germany surrenders; Soviet Union liberates Theresienstadt  
• U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Japan surrenders, ending World War II  
• The Nuremberg Trials begin, which try 22 major Nazi figures of war crimes. They conclude in October 1946. It is estimated that over 60 million people died in World War II; of these, 11 million were victims of Nazi genocide, and 6 million of whom were Jews. |
The following books and video resources will assist students in preparing to view the exhibit as well as provide a thorough explanation of the Holocaust. Through first-hand accounts and narratives which reference this history, these resources address topics including: Auschwitz and Theresienstadt concentration camps, anti-Semitism, Jewish Czechoslovakia, the Kindertransport, and children’s personal accounts of the Holocaust.

Many of the following books and films are available through the Nathan & Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center.

**Books (First-Person Narratives)**

- **I Am a Star** by Inge Auerbacher  
  Grade Level: 5 and up  
  Paperback: 96 pages, illustrated  
  This account of one girl's Holocaust experience at Theresienstadt is rich for its interweaving of autobiography and historical data.

- **Hana’s Suitcase** by Karen Levine  
  Grade Level: 4 - 7  
  Paperback: 120 pages  
  This book tells the story of Hana Brady, a girl killed at Auschwitz, and how her suitcase came to be a part of the Tokyo Holocaust Education Resource Center.

- **I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from the Terezin Concentration Camp, 1942-1944** by Hana Volavková and Celeste Raspanti

- **Brundibar**  
  Brundibar was a children’s opera which was written in 1938 and was originally performed by children separated from their parents during World War II in 1942. It was performed in Theresienstadt 55 times. Playwright Tony Kushner and Maurice Sendak created a children’s book adaptation of the story.

- **All My Loved Ones**  
  Grade Level: 9 and up  
  Length: 91 min.  
  Told from the perspective of a man reflecting on his childhood in Prague in the early years of World War II and the eventual destruction of his family as the Nazis rise to power

- **I’m Still Here: Holocaust Survivor Diaries (Available on YouTube)**  
  Grade Level: 6-8  
  Length: 48 min.  
  This documentary brings to life the diaries of young people who witnessed the horrors of the Holocaust. The film celebrates a group of brave, young writers who refused to quietly disappear.

- **Into the Arms of Strangers**  
  Grade Level: 6 and up  
  Length: 122 min.  
  The story of the child refugees who were transported to Britain to escape the Nazi Holocaust via the Kindertransport.

**Reference Books**

  Grade Level: 9-12  
  Paperback: 55 pages  
  An excellent resource that addresses the causes of genocide. Students consider the definition of genocide and the possible responses the United States could take in the future. The Teacher Resource Book contains lesson plans with primary resources.

- **A Dark Side of History: Antisemitism Through the Ages**, Jerome A. Chanes. Anti-Defamation League, 2000  
  Grade Level: 9-12  
  Paperback: 210 pages  
  This book traces anti-Jewish behavior and violence beginning with the ancient world to the history of European anti-Semitism through World War II and anti-Jewish expressions in the United States.

**Videos which Reference Holocaust History**

- **Theresienstadt-Gateway to Auschwitz: Recollections from Childhood**  
  Grade Level: 6 and up  
  Length: 57 min.  
  More than 140,000 Jews were interned at Theresienstadt. Of the 15,000 under 15 at the time, less than 100 survived. Art, music, drama,
Resources
(Intended for Grades 5-12)

ballet and sports were all part of the inmates’ daily routine. Through interviews with survivors, we gain meaningful insight into their most unusual childhood.

Holocaust: Theresienstadt
Grade Level: 9 and up
Length: 53 min.
Theresienstadt was originally advertised as an “end camp” where weary Jews would finally be able to rest at the “Reich Home for the Aged.” The reality, however, couldn’t be further from the truth, and after signing away their properties to the SS, the Jews in Theresienstadt were shipped to eastern death camps.

Transport from Paradise
Grade Level: 9 and up
Length: 94 min.
Originally Transport Z Raje, the Czechoslovakian Transport from Paradise is set in an unusual World War II concentration camp, where lax Nazi guards permit Jewish prisoners to roam freely about the camp and conduct their own affairs, without the threat of death. The prisoners’ main fear is that they may be deported to a death camps. In the film’s heartbreaking climax, a group of prisoners willingly board a train to Auschwitz, under the illusion that they are being sent to another “paradise” camp. Based on a true story.

Additional Resources
- Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center (www.holocaustcentermilwaukee.org): Resource Trunk available for use in classrooms; Workshops; Survivor Speakers available to talk with students.
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (www.ushmm.org/educators) Teacher’s Guides and Lesson Plans; Videos that give Holocaust Background (including this one on Anti-Semitism http://www.ushmm.org/confront-antisemitism/european-antisemitism-from-its-origins-to-the-holocaust); Identification cards and personal stories that give students more individuals to connect with
- Yad Vashem (www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/educatoin/index.asp) Israel’s Holocaust Memorial Museum—Teacher’s Guides and Lesson Plans; Names Database with documentation about the people murdered in the Holocaust
- Museum of Tolerance (www.museumoftolerance.com) Teacher Resources; Children of the Holocaust lists children who were in the Holocaust, with biographies and pictures.
- Prague Jewish Museum (http://www.zmizeli-sousedecz.cz/aj/) Includes an exhibit on neighbors who disappeared from the Czech town of Melnik; many biographies of children are included in this.

Paul Strnad’s first letter to his cousin Alvin in Milwaukee, dated October 24th, 1938, in which he describes the terrible situation in Czechoslovakia and expresses interest in emigrating.

Jewish Museum Milwaukee