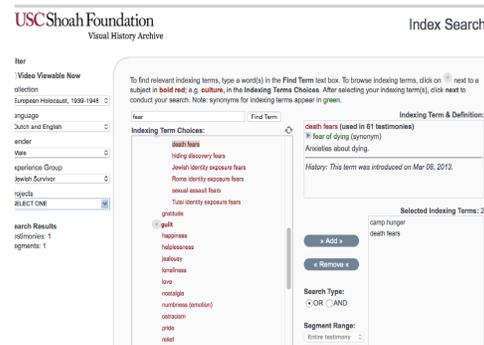


The Visual History Archive® is the Institute's collection of audiovisual interviews with witnesses and survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides. It is the reason USC Shoah Foundation was originally founded, and continues to be the basis for its educational and scholarly programs today.

Enriching the Future with Testimony

With a current collection of more than 55,000 eyewitness testimonies, the Visual History Archive is the largest digital collection of its kind in the world. It preserves history as told by the people who lived it. Each testimony is a unique source of insight and knowledge, offering powerful stories from history that demand to be explored and shared. In this way we will be able to see their faces and hear their voices, allowing them to teach and inspire action against intolerance.

To ensure the testimonies stored in the Visual History Archive are accessible worldwide, every testimony is digitized and fully searchable to the minute via indexing. This means a scholar, researcher, or student can instantly access the exact point within the 115,000 hours of testimony in the Archive that matches their query. This is made possible by the use of more than 64,000 keywords that have been assigned directly to digital time codes within testimonies where the specific topics are discussed. Indexing involves the Institute's proprietary software for which it was awarded 11 patents. Keywords cover geographic and experiential indexing terms, about 1.8 million names of people mentioned in the testimonies or recorded in pre-interview questionnaires, and biographical information for each interviewee, including city and country of birth; religious identity; places of incarceration (e.g., camps



and ghettos) and hiding, flight or resistance details. Similar to the index of a book, indexing terms point directly to specific points of interest. But instead of taking users to pages, the Archive's terms lead to digital time codes (one-minute segments) within the testimonies.

“No matter how our civilization advances, there are certain values that define us as individuals and as a society ... The content of the Visual History Archive is priceless material to teach those core values to our students.”

*C. L. Max Nikias, president,
University of Southern California*

Testimony in the Visual History Archive has been taken in 62 countries and recorded in 41 languages. Originally, the Institute collected testimony from Jewish survivors, political prisoners, Sinti and Roma (Gypsy) survivors, Jehovah's Witness survivors, survivors of eugenics policies and homosexual survivors, as well as rescuers and aid providers, liberators, and participants in war crimes trials.

Testimony Collections

Since 2006 the Institute has partnered with other organizations to expand the Visual History Archive to include testimony from other genocides:

- The 1937 Nanjing Massacre, which were collected in partnership with the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall to preserve the testimonies of the last survivors of the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, also known as the Rape of Nanjing, in which 300,000 civilians and unarmed soldiers were killed over the course of two months.

- The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, collected in partnership with Aegis Trust and the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre. The Rwandan Testimony Collection presents survivor, eyewitness, and soon a few perpetrator accounts of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis that claimed as many as one million lives over the course of approximately 100 days.

- The 1915 Armenian Genocide, which were presented to the Institute by the Armenian Film Foundation. With over 370 interviews conducted by genocide survivor and documentary filmmaker Dr. J. Michael Hagopian, the Armenian Genocide Collection explores the WWI-era massacres and deportations in the Ottoman Empire that claimed the lives of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians.

- The 1981 Guatemalan Genocide, collected in partnership with La Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG).

- The 1975 Cambodian Genocide, begun with assistance from the Documentation Center of Cambodia.

Each collection adds context for the other, providing multiple pathways for students, educators and scholars to learn from the eyewitnesses of history across time, locations, cultures and social-political circumstances.

Plans to add collections from other genocides are in development.

The Visual History Archive is also integrating additional Holocaust testimonies through a program called Preserving the Legacy, which uses the Institute's state-of-

the art infrastructure to digitize, index and integrate testimony taken and owned by other organizations to make them more accessible to scholars, students, educators, and the general public. Some of the partner groups' testimonies will also be incorporated into IWitness, the Institute's award-winning online education website designed for students in grades 6-12.

These collections include:

- Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS) of San Francisco Bay Area. JFCS, which runs the JFCS Holocaust Center, began recording its nearly 1,400 oral history interviews of Holocaust survivors, witnesses, and liberators in the early 1980s.

- The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre and Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Center in Toronto. These 1,250 Holocaust testimonies, which include small collections from several Canadian cities were integrated into the Visual History Archive in September 2016.

- The Houston Holocaust Museum collection, which contains 300 testimonies.

New Dimensions in TestimonySM and testimonies from Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are two additional collections being integrated into the Visual History Archive under the main Holocaust collection.

New Dimensions in Testimony is developing new technology that will enable students – now and far into the future – to be able to ask any question to the survivor about their life experiences. Over a dozen Holocaust survivors who previously sat before cameras to give their testimony to the Visual History Archive are again sitting in front of cameras to give their testimonies for New Dimensions in Testimony. The project delivers a learning environment in which a survivor answers questions as if he or she were in the room.

Testimony from the Middle East and North Africa will include the testimonies of Jews who were living in North Africa and the Middle East during World War II and witnessed the destruction created by the Nazi occupiers or governments that were

Nazi sympathizers. These stories are important to capture because North Africa and the Middle East, though far from the Holocaust in Europe, were an important part of Hitler's Final Solution. Hitler intended to exterminate all Jews, not just those in Europe, and, according to Holocaust scholars, the persecution of the Jews in French North Africa was an integral part of the Holocaust in France. For example, Nazis occupied Tunisia from November 1942 until May 1943, and Jews throughout this part of the world were subjected to deportation, imprisonment in concentration camps, and the destruction of their homes, as well as severe anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish laws from their own governments.

Ultimately, the Visual History Archive forever preserves the faces and voices of the people who witnessed history, allowing their firsthand stories to enlighten and inspire action against intolerance for generations to come.

There are several ways to access the Visual History Archive. The full collection is available by subscription at USC and 79 other institutions around the world. In March of 2016 USC Shoah Foundation announced a landmark partnership with ProQuest to quadruple that number within two years and project a 10-fold increase by the Institute's 25th anniversary in 2019.

There are also over 220 institutes in 36 countries that have smaller collections of curated testimonies. A limited collection is also available on the public Internet at vhaonline.usc.edu. This site features over 1,600 fully accessible testimonies, and has full search capabilities for the remaining testimonies, as well as biographical and other information collected from the survivors. Many testimonies are also available on the Institute's YouTube channel. The Institute also posts a clip of testimony on its website every weekday as a way of highlighting how testimony influences the work of Institute.

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