

# Holocaust Survivor Biography: George Marcus

George Marcus was born in the Jewish Hospital in Cologne, Germany, in 1937 and lived in the town of Vettweis. His father was a trained weaver but because of the Nuremberg Laws, had to work in George's grandmother's grain business. His mother lived in the nearby town of Drove, where George's grandfather was a kosher butcher. She had just graduated high school but was not able to find work due to the Nuremberg Laws. Both sides of the family could trace their roots back to the early 1700's in Germany and were considered middle class.

On November 9th-10th, 1938, Adolf Hitler, Germany's dictator, celebrated George's first birthday and his mother's birthday by burning synagogues and shattering Jewish store windows, and arresting Jewish men. This was Kristallnacht. His father and uncle were arrested and imprisoned in the Buchenwald concentration camp where they were abused and witnessed murders. His family had no idea of their whereabouts. His father was released when the family's exit Visa was approved but was forced to pay his own fare home. During the three months he was missing, George and his mother were sequestered in his grandfather's home with 22 other men, women, and children.

His parents, grandmother, and himself left Germany in late February 1939 and arrived in New York City on the S.S. Manhattan on March 3, 1939, six months before World War II broke out in Europe. His father only had \$30 in his pocket to renting a furnished apartment and then found a job in Conshohocken, near Philadelphia, in a factory weaving cloth for US army uniforms. His mother found work as a seamstress in a ladies garment factory. George's grandparents stayed in Germany to care for an elderly aunt and perished at Belzec in Poland in 1942, as did countless relatives.

George spent his early years in a synagogue that was comprised of other Holocaust survivors in Germantown, Philadelphia. He then graduated from Central High School in 1955 and in 1959 earned an Economics degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He is an Air Force veteran and is married with two children and two grandchildren. He has lived with the specter of the Holocaust through his mother and uncle, who could not get their parents out in time. The Holocaust was not and is not now far from his thinking.



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## Witness to History Project:

The Witness To History Project is designed to further the message and lessons of the Holocaust by direct interaction between students or interested adults and Holocaust survivors. Participants "adopt" a survivor by learning his or her unique account of via listening to the survivor tell his/her story, asking questions, writing a biography, reviewing a videotape, and memorizing and re-telling the story to others. Ultimately, the participant will have the lifelong job of educating others about the Holocaust by sharing this personal narrative. Contact the Holocaust Awareness Museum to participate.

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