

SURVIVORS OF THE
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VISUAL HISTORY FOUNDATION®

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**SHOAH FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES
RARE COLLECTION OF SINTI AND ROMA
HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES
TO BE HOUSED IN HEIDELBERG MUSEUM**

HEIDELBERG, GERMANY; May 23, 2002 – Today Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, the nonprofit organization that videotapes the firsthand testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses and make them accessible for educational purposes, opened a rare collection of Sinti and Roma Holocaust survivor testimonies at the *Dokumentations und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma* (Documentation and Culture Centre of the German Sinti and Roma) in Heidelberg.

There are 300 interviews with Sinti and Roma survivors in the Shoah Foundation archive, twelve of which are in the German language. The collection being housed at the *Dokumentations und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma* consists of these twelve testimonies recorded with German and Austrian Sinti and Roma survivors between 1996 and 1999. The experiences of Sinti and Roma during the Holocaust are largely undocumented; recent outbreaks of bigotry and intolerance directed at Roma and Sinti people, as well as others, makes the launch of this collection especially significant.

At an event held at the Centre this evening, Silvio Peritore, Head of Documentation Department for the Centre, presented portions of the testimonies and answered questions from visitors and attending media. Cara Noble, Senior Program Director for the Shoah Foundation in Berlin, was also in attendance.

"The opening of this collection marks a significant milestone for the Shoah Foundation. It has always been the Foundation's intention to return the testimonies to the communities from which they were gathered," said Shoah Foundation President and CEO, Douglas Greenberg. "It may sound as though 12 testimonies out of an archive of 52,000 is a relatively small number. But every one of those 52,000 stories is a miracle."

Silvio Peritore, of the Centre said, "Our cooperation with the Shoah Foundation is based on our mutual desire to incorporate the long ignored/suppressed persecution of the Sinti and Roma into our memorial culture. The testimonies which the Foundation recorded with survivors belonging to our minority, are especially pedagogically valuable and represent an important contribution to acknowledging the crimes of the Nazis. We would like to present these personal testimonies to young people so they can see first-hand what the Holocaust meant to those who suffered."

(more)

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About the Shoah Foundation:

Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation has videotaped the testimonies of more than 50,000 Holocaust survivors and witnesses in 57 countries in 32 languages since 1994. Today, the Shoah Foundation endeavors to overcome prejudice, intolerance, and bigotry—and the suffering they cause—through the educational use of the Foundation's visual history testimonies. To this end, the Foundation preserves and provides access to the archive; builds and supports educational programs; and develops educational products based on the testimonies. These products include two CD-ROMs, *Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust* (English-language); and *Erinnern für Gegenwart und Zukunft / Remembering for the Present and the Future* (German-language). The Foundation has also produced eight documentary films; three in English, including the 1998 Academy Award winning *The Last Days*; and five foreign-language documentaries, known collectively as *Broken Silence*, for international television broadcast in Poland, Argentina, Russia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Individuals interested in supporting the Shoah Foundation are encouraged to call 818/777-4673 or write to PO Box 3168, Los Angeles, California, 90078-3168. For more information, visit the Foundation's homepage at www.vhf.org.

About the Documentation and Culture Center of the German Sinti and Roma:

The Documentation and Cultural Centre of the German Sinti and Roma was set up in 1990 in a building in the old part of Heidelberg that had been purchased with the support of the federal government. After several years of renovation and extension work, the Center, which holds the world's first permanent exhibition about the holocaust against this minority, was opened to the public in March 1997.

One of the central roles of the institution is to document the more than 600 years of history of the Sinti and Roma in Germany. A particular emphasis has been laid on the national socialist crime of genocide which for decades was kept hidden from the public consciousness. From the very beginning, priority was given to interviews with survivors of the holocaust and the recording of their memories on audio or video tape. In addition to extensive archive research in Germany and elsewhere, staff of the Center systematically collect testimonies of survivors and their relatives. Old family photographs are of particular interest. The archive that now exists is the only one of its kind. For more information, visit the Center's homepage at www.sintiundroma.de/englisch/.

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