

# ECHOES and REFLECTIONS

A Multimedia Curriculum on the Holocaust



## Henry Mikols

Henry Mikols was born Henry Mikolajczak in Poznan, [Poland](#), on August 27, 1925, to Stanislaw and Joanna Mikolajczak. He had one brother, Zbigniew, and one sister, Lubomiva. His family was Roman Catholic. Henry's father owned a local movie house that played silent movies.

Henry first noticed life was changing in August 1939, when he and his father went to watch what they thought were Polish planes performing acrobatic maneuvers; however, when the planes started to bomb the airfields, Henry's father realized that they were actually piloted by Germans. The [Germans](#) invaded Poznan on September 8, and within a few months, Henry and his family were evicted from their apartment because the Germans thought his family was Jewish and wanted to occupy the center of the town where the family had lived.

The family went to live with Henry's aunt on the outskirts of town and Henry and his brother had to hide from the Germans who were looking to round up teenage boys for forced labor. In May 1940, Henry was caught while buying bread and was taken away by the Germans to the countryside where he was forced to work for German farmers, often under harsh conditions. One day, one of the workers told the German authorities that Henry had been listening to radio broadcasts and spreading anti-German propaganda. In May 1942, Henry was arrested and taken to Giessen, a prison in Germany.



## Visual History Biographic Profiles

After a couple of weeks in Giessen, Henry was transported to the [Buchenwald concentration camp](#) where he was quarantined with other political prisoners in a block where [medical experiments](#) were being conducted. There, Henry and the other prisoners were given potato salad infected with typhoid as part of an experiment. The entire barrack, including Henry, became ill and the German doctors observed each person's physical reaction. Henry remembers hallucinating and then being injected with a serum that made him feel better. Of the sixty prisoners who were infected, only eight managed to survive.

Henry was eventually deported to [Bergen-Belsen](#) a few days before the camp was liberated in April 1945. After [liberation](#), Henry was able to contact his family through letters and learned that his father had disappeared in [Switzerland](#) during the war but that his mother had survived. Henry stayed in Germany before going to England in 1948, and was eventually sponsored by a Catholic welfare organization in New York and immigrated to the United States in 1952.

Soon after arriving in New York, Henry moved to Massachusetts and worked as a contractor and carpenter. He married Concetta Cuginotta in 1954, and they had four sons, Stanley, Robert, Salvatore, and Joey. After a divorce, Henry married Alma Camargo in 1977, and they had a daughter named Angelica. Henry dedicated himself to sharing his life story and was awarded an honorary degree from Colby Sawyer College in New Hampshire in 1977, the same year his daughter graduated from the college. At the time of his interview in 2001, Henry had three grandchildren.

To learn more about Henry Mikols, please go to [Full Visual Histories](#) to view his complete testimony.

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