AMERICANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

What did Refugees Need to Obtain a US Visa in the 1930s?

As the Nazi regime's attacks intensified in the late 1930s, hundreds of thousands of Jews in Germany tried to immigrate to the United States. To enter the United States, each person needed an immigration visa stamped into his or her passport.

It was difficult to get the necessary papers to leave Germany, and US immigration visas were difficult to obtain. The process could take years.

EXPLORE THE SEVEN STEPS THAT WERE REQUIRED FOR THOSE SEEKING TO IMMIGRATE TO THE UNITED STATES.

STEP I

1 Register for the Waiting List

Between 1938-1941, US law allowed only 27,370 immigration visas per year to be issued to people born in Germany or Austria. If you wanted to present your paperwork and be interviewed by the US consulate in the hope of getting a visa, you needed to register and join the waiting list.

By 1938, you could expect to wait for at least two years for a visa.

Dieuer filmar istse 17 - 14/9/1938		
Datum des P.	oststempels	
Das Generalkonsulet teilt Ihner hierdurch mit, dass Sie auf der Geuforde. Warteliste unter den folgenden Nummern eingatragen sint: <u>45685</u>		
WAITING LIST REGISTRATION	warden warm	

2 Gather Documents

While on the waiting list, you would gather all the documents you needed in order to be ready when your turn came up. You had to go to many different government offices and often pay fees to obtain these documents.

Some had expiration dates and you might have to renew them more than once.

Form No. 255 ANEXEAN FORMON SERVICE (Revised July 1806)	American Consulate No. 3796 AT_STUTTGART, GERMANY.	1 Grand
APPLIC	CATION FOR IMMIGRATION VISA (QUOTA)	1 Grund Nummer 00501004
		Geburtsschein
I, the undersigned APPLICAN Roberts Alice Olle: Hebrew	T FOR AN IMMIGRATION VISA, being duly sworn, state that my full and true mame is ndorf Stern ; that I am 48 years of age of the female sex and race; that I was born on the 10th day of NOVEMBER 1891.	50krenzer Ich Endesgefertigter bestätige hiemit, dass nach Inha
at Frankfurt M. German at the following places, during the peri	17 FOR XX MANDERATION VEA, being doily over, doing that my find and then manue in MOTT STATE. The provided state of the state in a state of the sta	Stempelmarke der Geburtsmatrik Band IV Fol.83 dem Herrn Samuel
ROBINGI SVI GOSO OF		Federmann aus Libochovic, Buchhalter zu Deutschbrod, Sohn der Ehe-
That I am {married}, and the nam Daderborn. Germany	oo of my (MERX) in Ludwig Stern , who was been ; and readies at decensed d places of readies of my minor children are:	leute Salomon und Anna Federmann, von seiner Gattin Josefine
That the names, dates of birth, as Helmut Stern	ad places of residence of my minor children are: August 31,1921 London, England.	Federmann Tochter der Eheleute Michael und Judith Spitz ,unter
		Beistand der Hebaume Marie Lauer aus Deutschbrod am 2.Mai 1893 (neunzigdrei) zu Deutschbrof Ha. 10. eine sheliche Tochter geboren
	VISA APPLICATION	BIRTH CERTIFICATE, wobei Amalie Stern
	behave by region a received and received by engineers	
STEUERADMHISTRA		Dr med H Berberich
In sec. it . Not and Kith . (Dienstatelle	All The Stration (Ort und Datum)	Dr. med. H. Berberich Inden bereckigt Augsburg. den 6. XH. 37
Aktenzeichen)	Service and Sont XXL Bezink	7. 1
	alticheitedever / Monat ab Ansstellung	Besch einigung. Ithenne Lendemenn, geb. 30. Fr. 2, wohn heft augeten
St	euerliche Unbedenkbichkeitsbescheinigung	
Gegen die Aus	euerliche Unbedenktichkeitebescheinigung reise der(s)	(A Komested und set the genund und
. Saharte 51	(Beruf oder Stand, Vor-und Zumphe)	and how after the t
("onnung)	(Seruf oder Stand, Vor-und Zuppfie) 35geboren am	Merbert
a seiner shefrau		
	und seiner Kinder geboren am.	
		MEDICAL CLEADANCE
Polizeipräfid	ent Derlin, am IS. In formalised. 19	Bentlessenngeschein Benstand Whi
II 200 135. am 5. The part geboren, wird amtild	ent Berlin, am 15: In form land 19 Führungszeugnis Jannan Jann Mithen Mark Mand III 4. 311 in ber Seit	Enllassungsschein
II 200 1 35. am 5. The part geboren, wird amtild	ent Dectin, am IS. In Sparra brief. 19	Enllassungeschein
II 200 1 35. am 5. The protocol	ent Berlin, am 15: In form land 19 Führungszeugnis Jannan Jann Mithen Mark Mand III 4. 311 in ber Seit	Enllassungsschein
II 200 135.	ent Berlin, am 15: Baffram bond 19 Führungszeugnis Gerrom Garnffer Giftern hardt, abord 1884 su Giellett g., Breis abord 1890 5 618 Jacks POLICE CERTIFICATE	Gentlessen an 2:12.11. nach: Eilla
Be gar an 5. In gars geboren, wird antild bom 9. I. M.	ent Beetin, an 15. Tayform bord 19 Führungszeugnis garran <u>Jaco H. John Mark</u> Jacon M. Jacon H.	Gentlessen an 2:12.11. nach: Eilla
I 200 / 35-	ent Bertin, am 15. Saffarm bord 19 Sübrungszeugnis Jorran Jan J. John Mark Jan Jan J. John Mark Mark 1844 J. John Mark Mark 1995 Bis Jak POLICE CERTIFICATE	Gentlessen an 2:12.11. nach: Eilla
II 200 / 35. am 5. In part geboren, with antild wom 9. Inter- wom 9. Inter- 1 Klavier 1 Klavier 1 Klavier 1 Klavier 1 Klavier 1 Klavier 1 Klavier 1 Sen 3 Sessel	ent Berlin, am 15: England both 19 Sübrungszeugniz Genome Gampe Genome Content bergen 184 - an Haller g., steis bergen 184 - an Haller POLICE CERTIFICATE Margan A. Margan POLICE CERTIFICATE ant araufstellung satz ublade 1 Fuppensteppdecke Hiverse Stoffreste 1 Badetach 1 Federpolster	Gentlessen an 2:12.11. nach: Eilla
II 200 / 35- am 5- 20 prot geboren, with antific wom www. Inve I Klavier I KOmode mit Auf I" " Sen I taank Sessel I Tisch Lotterbett	ent Sübrungszeugnis forom fangt Annhalt forom fa	Gentlessen an 2:12.11. nach: Eilla
II 200 / 35- am 5- 2- 2- 2- 2- 2- 2- 2- 2- 2- 2- 2- 2- 2-	ent Bectin, and 5. Byffrem low 19 Sübrung 33. eugnis genoran Jan M. Marker Jana 1995 bis Jahr POLICE CERTIFICATE Marg M. M. d. Mile satz ublade 1 Puppensteppdecke H Wares Stoffreste 1 Substantel 1 Federpolster 1 Rosshaar *	Gentlessen an 2:12.11. nach: Eilla
II 200 / 35. am 5. In parts geberen, with antild vom 9. Inter- with antild vom 9. Inter- 1 Manasoline 1 Schallssen	ent Sübrungszeugnis forom fangt Annhalt forom fa	Gentlessen an 2:12.11. nach: Eilla
II 200 / 35. am 5. In post geboren, with antilit wom 9. I Mit unve 1 Klavier 1 Rommode mit Auf 1" " Seh	ent Bectin, an 15. Saffarm box 19 Säbrungszeugnis garan <u>Jan M. Har Mark</u> bodgenint, bag er son in ber zeit abox 1925 bis <u>Janfa</u> POLICE CERTIFICATE Marg M. M. A. Mike intarsurstellung satz ublade 1 Fuepensteppdecke H Weres Stoffreste 1 Bosshar 1 Kinderbadenantel 11 Federpolster 1 Sosshar 5 Federtunchenten 2 Stopdecken 5 Federtunchenten 2 Stopdecken 5 Federtunchenten 2 Stopdecken 6 Stopdecken 6 Stopdecken 6 Stopdecken 6 Stopdecken 7 Stopdecken 6 Stopdecken 6 Stopdecken 7 Stopdecken	Gentlessen an 2:12.11. nach: Eilla

3 Find American Financial Sponsor

You also needed to find an American financial sponsor, preferably a relative, since Nazi Germany only allowed Jews to immigrate with a small amount of money and property. That person had to collect and send documents promising to take responsibility for you after you arrived in the United States. You would likely be able to communicate with them only by sending letters, which could take weeks to arrive.

After September 1940, the US government required two sponsors.

Bon. A. C. Frost American Consul General Zurich, Switzerland	Security National Bank Subsect of the second Constant of the second
Deer Sir: Mr. Hormann Fischer, proprietor of the Alt Heidekberg, Inc., Reshington Boulevard, Detroit, Michigan, has called upon me personally this morning with reference to the immigration of his funder, Mr. and Mrc. Dito Conscience, and I denie to state that	TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
I have known Mr. Fischer for a number of years and I know Mr. Fischer to be RECOMMENDATION LETTER , amply able to assist RECOMMENDATION LETTER .	BANKLETTER tify that Mr. Walter S.
UNITED STATES	United States of America State of <u>Illinois</u>
PORTATION UNITED STATES Internal Nervice Page 1 938 INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURN 1938 PORT INCOMES OF MORE THAN SAMO FROM SALARIES, WIGES FROM OTHER SOURCES REGARDLESS OF AMOONTS FOR Calendar (Page 1 938, all coded) of first port heginging This Return and the Intractions Cardidy) (Hefer Page Transmit The Come and the Intractions Cardidy) (Hefer Page Transmit The Come and the Intractions Cardidy) (Hefer Page Transmit The Come and the Intractions Cardidy)	State of <u>Illingis</u> City of <u>Chicago</u> County of <u>Cook</u> 1, <u>Lester J. Lyons</u> age 42 being duly sworn, deposes and says:
Preventy Objanties UNITED STATES Information Prove 1 938 INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURN 1938 FOR NET INCOMES OF MODE THAN SIMP FROM SALARIES, WILLES, DUVENSE, NOT TREEST, AND TRINKINGS, FROM OTHER SOURCES BECARDLESS OF AMOUNTS FOR Calendar Year 1938 of final very beginning, 183, and ended, 189	State of <u>Illinois</u> City of <u>Chicago</u> County of <u>Cask</u>

4 Buy a Ship Ticket

You needed to prove you had booked passage out of Europe. Travel became very difficult after World War II began in September 1939—with ports closing down and German submarines attacking ships in the Atlantic Ocean.

Tickets were expensive, costing the modernday equivalent of thousands of dollars.



5 Collect Transit Visas

You had to obtain stamps in your passport from all the countries you would need to travel through to get to the ship's port of departure. These stamps needed to be collected in a specific order, and each cost money.

One mistake could send you back to the same government office many times.

mits recer VISA DE TRANSIT. Visé sous le No4568 au Consulat Général de Belgique à Vienne pour **TRANSIT VISA**





6 Interview with the American Consulate

When your turn came up from the waiting list, you would be called to the US consulate for an interview. The State Department official would carefully read all of your paperwork to make sure you were financially stable, healthy, and would not be a threat to US national security.

State Department officials often rejected applicants for economic or national security reasons, or told them to return later with more documents. Many documents and transit stamps had expiration dates, so errors could set you back months and cost a lot of money.

7 Acquire Visa and Journey to the United States

If you passed, the official would stamp a visa in your passport. You would fill one of the 27,370 quota slots available to potential immigrants that year.

Immigration Visa THINK 19702 No. Quota NOV 7 1938 dated Fri Issued to **US VISA** American/Consul at

LONG ODDS

Immigrating to the United States was a complicated, expensive process even under the best of circumstances. Hundreds of thousands of people, most of them Jewish refugees, applied at American consulates in Europe but were unable to immigrate. Many of them became trapped in Nazi-occupied territory and were murdered in the Holocaust.

GO TO NEXT SECTION: IMMIGRATION BY THE NUMBERS



100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW Washington, DC 20024-2126 Main telephone: 202.488.0400 TTY: 202.488.0406

Get the Lates		SUBSCRIBE
<u>Plan Your Visit</u> <u>Current</u> <u>Exhibitions</u> <u>Calendar of</u> <u>Events</u> <u>Support the</u> <u>Museum</u>	Learn Teach Collections Academic Research Remember Survivors and Victims	Holocaust Encyclopedia Collections Search Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center History Unfolded Experiencing History
DONATE	<u>Genocide Prevention</u> <u>Antisemitism and</u> <u>Holocaust Denial</u> <u>Outreach</u>	<u>Early Warning Project</u>

FEEDBACK THE MUSEUM

PRIVACY

ACCESSIBILITY <u>LEGAL</u>