# GUIDE TO USING THE VISUAL HISTORY ARCHIVE (VHA)

Colin Deinhardt Reader Services & Instruction Librarian E.J. Pratt Library

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# **Visual History Archive: Introduction & Access**

## What is the VHA?

The VHA is a software application that allows you to search and view digital audiovisual testimonies from survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides that are in the USC Shoah Foundation's archive. There are about 55,000 testimonies! The search features of VHA allow you to identify entire testimonies that are relevant to you, as well as specific segments within testimonies that relate to your topic.

The interviews are in 41 languages. There are transcripts for some but not all testimonies. The transcripts are in the language of the original interview and they have not been translated into English. Therefore, be sure to select language when you search or filter your results.

Search the VHA using the Quick Search (for personal names or index terms or synonyms) or use one of the four advanced search types: Experience Group, Index, People, and Places.

# Accessing VHA

There is a publically-available VHA Online that has only a fraction of the testimonies available in the subscription-based resource you get access to via UTL. As such, access VHA through the U of T Library catalogue or use this link to the <u>Visual History Archive</u>.

Log in with your UTORid. You will also need to create a **Username** and **Password** to take advantage of features such as your **Search History** and your saved search results, called **Projects**, in subsequent visits to VHA.

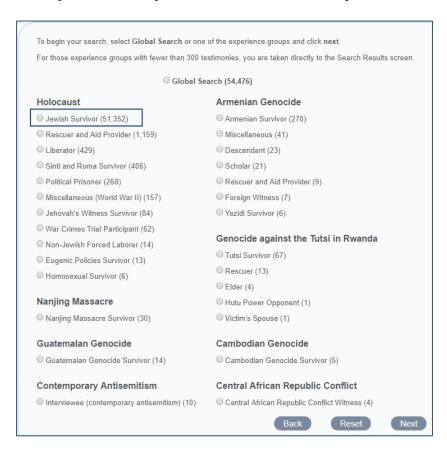
# Planning Your Visit to the Library

You will need headphones to listen to the audiovisual testimonies in the Library. Transcripts are not available for all interviews. Bring your own headphones or confirm that headphones are available to borrow at the <u>U of T Library</u> you want to visit.

## EXPERIENCE GROUPS SEARCH

The Experience Group search allows you to search biographical information (including city and country of birth, religious identity, places of incarceration, etc.) for interviewees categorized within different Experience Groups within a broader collection such as the European Holocaust.

Click **Experience Groups** on the main search screen (shown on cover page) to advance to the Experience Groups search screen. Click the option button next to a specific group.



You will be directed to another search page to select additional criteria (e.g. concentration camps, resistance groups, type of hiding place, etc.) for those specific groups with multiple records. Build your search by selecting multiple criteria. This is done one criterion at a time. See the example for ghettos below. Options include experiences, biographical information, and interview information.

Biographical Information  Name of interviewee	Experiences  Ghettos
☐ Gender of interviewee	☐ Concentration Camps
☐ Date of Birth of interviewee	Hiding, Flight, Resistance, Forced (death) Marches
☐ City of Birth of interviewee	Location of Hiding or False Identity
Country of Birth of interviewee	☐ Type of Hiding Place
☐ Religious Affiliations of interviewee	Resistance Groups
Interview Information	Liberated by
☐ State of interview	Location of Liberation
Country of interview	Aid Giver, Liberator, War Crimes Trials Participant
☐ Language of interview	☐ Other Experiences
Length of interview	

You can search by name of ghetto or by country to generate a list of ghettos for which testimonies exist for your selected Experience Group (in this case Jewish Survivors). To search by name, enter the name of the ghetto, click search, and make your selection in the resulting list. Click next. Back at the search page you can select additional criteria. An *AND* search is the default. Click next to get search results when finished.

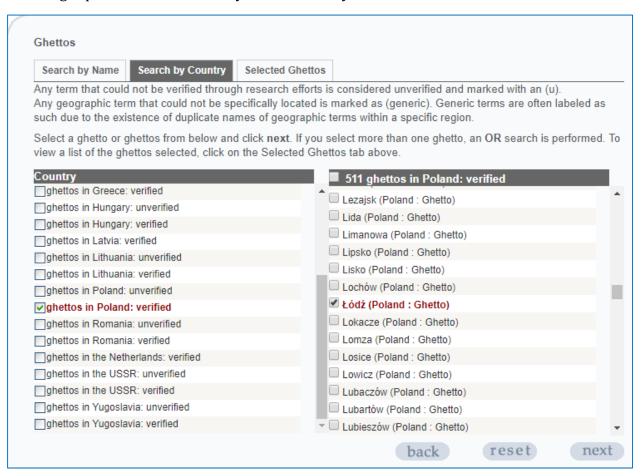


Jewish Survivor					
Selecting a criteria below will take you to the next screen to begin your search. Repeat this step for searching on more than one criteria. If you click next after you selected your search criteria, you will be taken to the search results screen. If you click next without choosing a category, all search results for the particular experience group will display.					
Biographical Information	Experiences				
Name of interviewee	✓ Ghettos				
Gender of interviewee	1 ghetto selected				
Date of Birth of interviewee	☐ Concentration Camps				
City of Birth of interviewee	☐ Hiding, Flight, Resistance, Forced (death) Marches				
☐ Country of Birth of interviewee	Location of Hiding or False Identity				

Note that the number of testimonies updates dynamically at the top left with each selection criteria you have chosen.



Alternatively, find ghettos by country by clicking on the Search by Country tab. A country list appears in the left panel in which you can make your selection(s). A second list appears in the right panel. Click next once you have made your selection.



Back at the search criteria page you can select additional criteria or click next to view your search results.

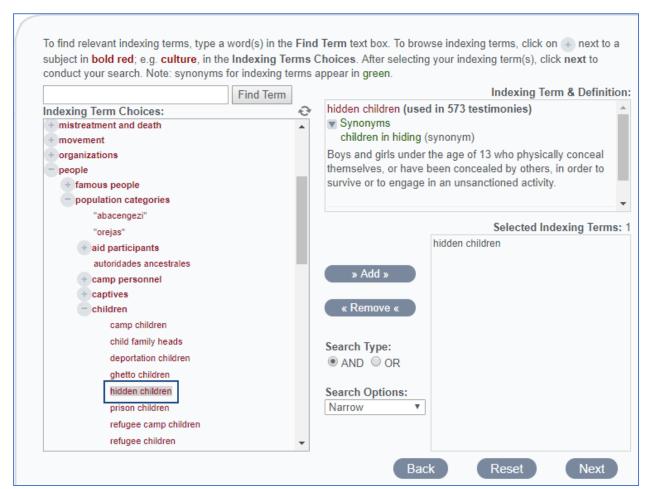
#### INDEX SEARCH

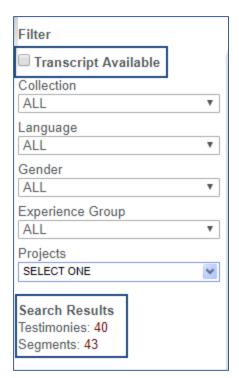
An Index search allows you to search for segments of testimonies (typically 1 minute in length) that discuss specific topics. The index is very detailed—including over 60,000 terms—allowing for a highly targeted search. A topic may be covered in several segments. The index terms are both geographic and experiential (e.g. hiding-related living conditions, wartime diaries, covert economic activities, etc.). The Index search results will take you directly to the relevant segments of the testimony.

You can search or browse the index terms. Use the Indexing Terms Choices tree to browse topics. The example of "hidden children" illustrates the features of an Index Search.

Click the + sign to view subsequent layers of index terms to drill down to more granular topics. Click on your term to add it to the Indexing Terms & Definitions box. Here you can find a definition of the term to make sure it matches the concept you are investigating, a list of synonyms, and the number of testimonies to which that term has been applied.

Click the Add button to add the term to the Selected Indexing Terms box. Add additional terms from the Indexing Term Choices tree, if appropriate. The default is an *AND* search but you can change the search type to *OR* to expand search results.



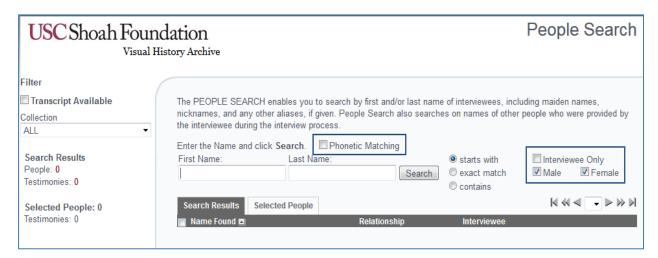


Monitor your search results count at the left to see the number of testimonies and segments and to identify those with a transcript available.

#### PEOPLE SEARCH

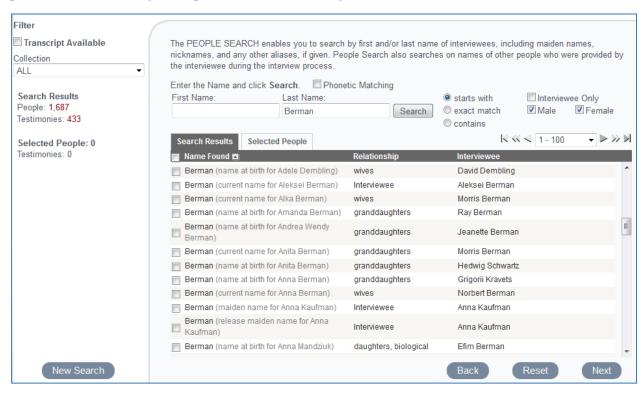
The People Search allows you to search for specific names associated with the testimonies. This includes the name of the specific interviewee as well as individuals referred to in a testimony or in the pre-interview questionnaire. There are about 1.8 million names in total, including maiden names, nicknames, false names, names of family members, acquaintances, and other camp prisoners, etc.

Click **People** on the main search screen (shown on cover page) to advance to the People search screen.



You can search for first or last name, or both. The default search type is *starts with*, but you can also select *contains* or *exact match*. You can also specify gender and restrict your results to interviewees only.

You can also perform a phonetic matching search to find names of people that are pronounced similarly but spelled in different ways.

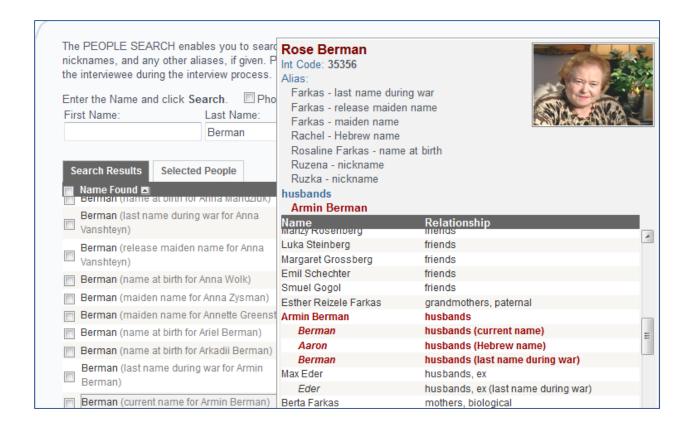


The above search for last name Berman returns 1, 687 results, many of which are the names of individuals mentioned in the 433 testimonies. The *Relationship* column indicates the relationship of that person to the interviewee.

If you place the cursor over the name in the search results table the *People/Relationship Popup Window* appears. It contains a list of people in a specific testimony and their relationship to the interviewee. The example below shows the popup window for Armin Bermin. He is mentioned in the Rose Berman testimonial and is the husband of the interviewee.

Click the checkbox next to individual names to select a subset of results. Click the *Selected People* tab to view only your selected results.

Click next to view your results on the Search Results page. The matching names are listed under the interviewee information.



## **PLACES SEARCH**

The Places search allows you to find segments of testimonies in which geographic locations have been indexed (such as camps, ghettos, cities, and towns) by browsing, searching, or zooming in on a Google Map. Note that the geographic indexing terms for Europe refer to the historical boundaries of the interwar period prior to World War II or prior to Nazi occupation, whichever was earliest.

Click **Places** on the main search screen (shown on cover page) to advance to the Places search screen. There are three ways to look for segments: 1. Browsing index terms list arranged by continents or location types, 2. Enter a location to search, and 3. Zoom in on the map.

#### BROWSING GEOGRAPHIC INDEXING TERMS

Navigate through the geographic indexing terms organized by Locations or Types. The Locations option allows you to browse by continent, country, administrative unit, and specific place.

Click the plus sign next to a geographic term to drill down through the hierarchical tree to find more specific geographic indexing terms.



# Browsing by Types

Select the Types radio button to display the Types hierarchy. Click the plus sign next to a term to drill down to more specific location type.

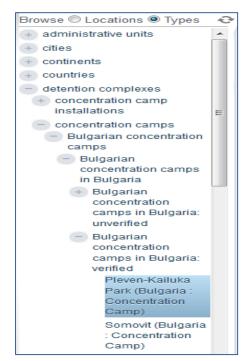
To reset the Locations or Types tree and collapse the expanded layers, click the circular arrows at the top right of the tree.

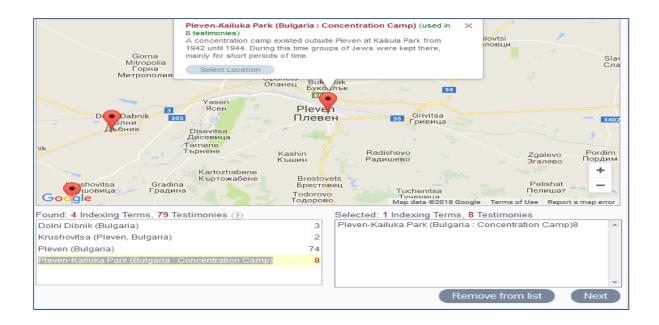
When you select a location or type the map will automatically update to focus on that location. In addition, an information window for the selected location will appear. It provides a historical description along with the number of testimonies in the archive in which that location was indexed.

When a location or type you have selected has more related geographic terms, the map will display all of the descendant locations.

Below the map is a list of retrieved indexed locations, with the location selected in the Locations tree highlighted in yellow. In this case there are four terms from seventy-nine testimonies.

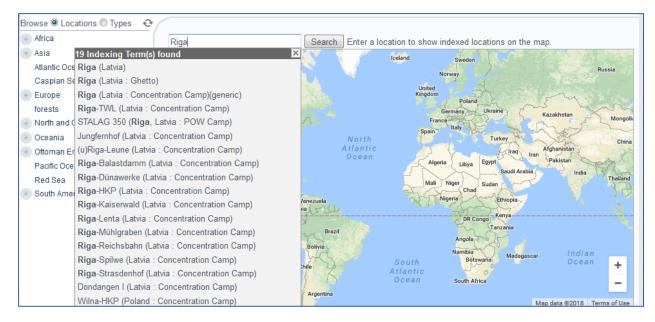
To view the testimonies, you must add the geographic term to the Selected box to the right below the map. Double-click the selected term in the Found box or click the Select Location button in the information window on the map to add it to the Selected box.





## SEARCHING FOR INDEXED LOCATIONS

Enter a location in the search box above the map. A predictive search windows appears with geographic terms related to the entered text, ranked according to best match.



Move the mouse pointer over one of the suggested terms and an information window appears over the map. It provides a historical description along with the number of testimonies in which that location was indexed.



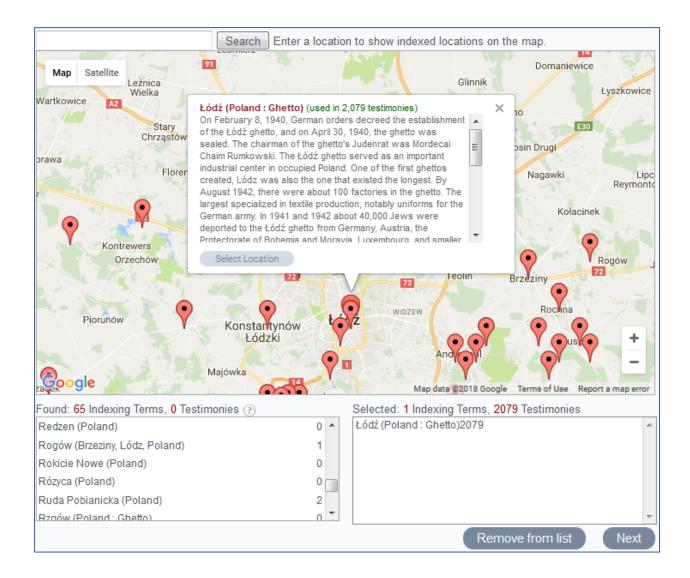
If you click on a location indexing terms the map will update to focus on that geographic location. To add that location to the Selected box to the right under the map, double-click that location in the Found box or click the Select Location in the popup window on the map. Click next to advance to the search results to view the list testimonies.

#### ZOOMING AND MOVING THE MAP

Zoom in and move the map to reveal indexed locations. Indexed location will be listed in the Found box below the map. Click on a location's icon on the map to get information about that location and the number of associated testimonies.

If the focus area on the map contains too many locations to display individually, the locations will be aggregated and displayed in yellow circles. Continue to zoom in to see the red icons that refer to specific location.

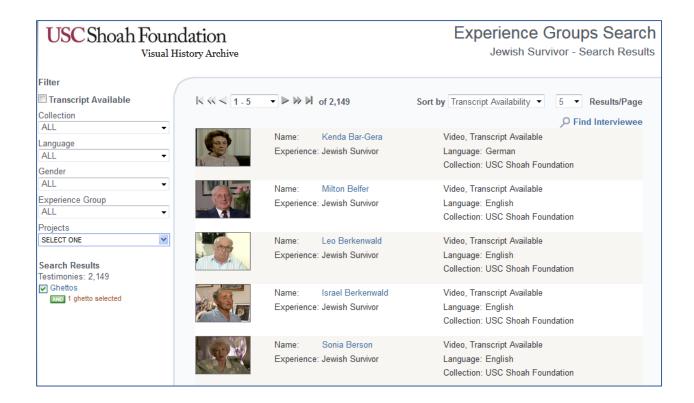
Add your terms to the Selected box as above and click next to advance to the search results to see the testimonies.



#### SEARCH RESULTS SCREEN

After performing a Quick Search or one of the four advanced searches with all of your search criteria selected, click next to view your search results. Five (5) testimonies appear but you can modify the number of results per page or use the paging option to jump to another set of testimonies.

Each of the results includes a small photo of the interviewee, the name of the interviewee, the language of the interview, and the transcript and/or video availability.



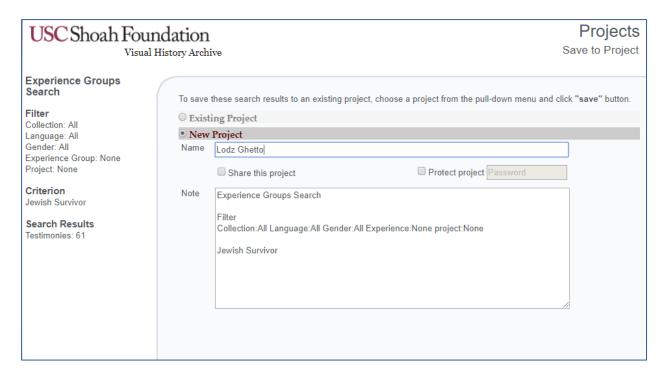
On this page you also have the option to further refine your search by using the filters on the left. Here you can limit to those with transcripts available or by gender or language. Recall that transcripts are in the original language spoken in the interview. Indexing terms may also be available in the search results page for each testimony.

Click on the photo or the interviewee name to advance to the Viewing Screen to see the testimony. You can also save your results to a **Project** which allows you to easily return to them at a later time.

# **SAVING YOUR RESULTS TO A PROJECT**

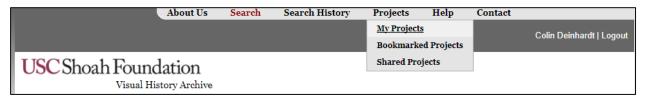
One feature on the results screen allows you to save your customized search results to your own *Project*. You can create several *Projects*. Click the **save to Project** button and save your results to an *Existing Project* or in a *New Project*. Give a new project a name that describes the search results. You can save entire testimonies or only select segments.

There is also a *Note* section. It describes basic information about the search results (search type, filters, and search terms. However, you can edit it to enter your own notes for each Project.



Clicking the Share this project checkbox allows all VHA users to view but not edit or delete your project.

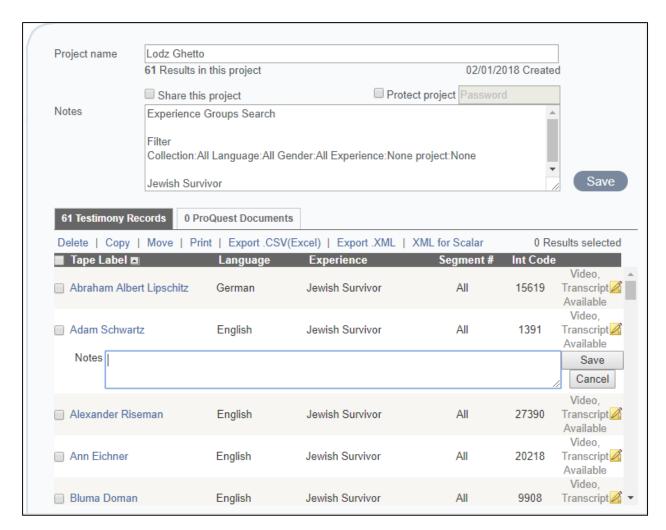
To access your saved projects, mouse over the Projects tab at the top.



The Projects page lists all of your saved results in the projects table, which contains basic information about each project: the name you have assigned, the date of creation, the results count, and the notes.



To view the results that are saved in a project, click on the project name. The testimonies or segments are displayed in another table.



Sort results by clicking on the column headers. You can also delete, copy, or move select results. However, the print and export to Excel options apply to the entire results list and not to selected results.

## **VIEWING SCREEN: WATCH A TESTIMONY**

From the results screen, click on the photo image or the name of an interviewee to go to the viewing screen where you can watch their testimony.



The main functions of the Viewing Screen are the same for each search approach you used. Indexing data is displayed below the Viewing Screen.

The default display lists the various **segments** of the interview, along with the indexing terms and names of people associated with each segment. Move the cursor over the indexing term to see a popup description of the index term. To view a segment on a particular topic, click on the segment number that contains the indexing term of interest. To save a segment to a project, click the plus sign next to the segment.

The **Biographical Profile** contains information about an interviewee that was obtained in the pre-interview questionnaire or during the actual interview.

The **Transcript** link displays when a transcript is available. Transcripts are in the original language of the interview and have not been translated into English. The Auto-Scroll option tracks the words spoken in the interview by highlighting the text in red.

The **ProQuest Search in Bio Profile** shows results from article databases that are related to the biographical profile information. Useful for finding secondary sources related to your primary source interview. Use the filter icon to restrict results by language and source type.

The **Proquest Search in Segment** shows results from article databases that are related to the indexing data for the testimony segment being viewed. Use the filter icon to restrict results by language and source type.

Click the plus sign next to an article to save it to a Project for either the **Proquest Bio Profile** or **Segment** results.

## **GETTING RESEARCH HELP**

#### 1. Book a Research Consultation

Book a research consultation with a librarian, either for help using the Visual History Archive or locating a scholarly monograph for your VIC102 term paper. Typically, research consultations are approximately one hour. Contact Colin Deinhardt at <a href="mailto:colin.deinhardt@vicu.utoronto.ca">colin.deinhardt@vicu.utoronto.ca</a> to schedule an appointment.

# 2. Attend a Library Workshop

Several workshops are offered by the University of Toronto Libraries. Check the <u>Workshop</u> <u>Calendar</u> for details and registration.

## 3. Chat with a Librarian

You can get research help by chatting with a librarian in real time. Look for the widget below on the <u>University of Toronto Library website</u> to launch a chat session. The hours of operation are Monday-Thursday 10:00 am – 10:00 pm, Friday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm, and Saturday-Sunday 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm.

