

**AUSCHWITZ JEWISH CENTER FELLOWS
A BRIDGE TO HISTORY PROGRAM - 2009**

Kelsey Bankert

Jaffa and Larry Feldman Fellow

Staunton, VA

San Diego State University

Degree: M.A. Modern European History

Graduation Year: 2009

After her first summer in graduate school, Kelsey was awarded a prestigious fellowship to the Holocaust Educational Foundation's Summer Institute, Northwestern University. She completed a course on Polish anti-Semitism, taught by Christopher Browning, which greatly affected her course of studies and led her to apply to our program. She has been accepted to the Ph.D. Program in Modern European History at the University of Virginia for fall 2009. Kelsey is planning to complete a doctoral dissertation on the phenomenon of "Holocaust tourism," or pilgrimage to sites of Holocaust remembrance. She has served as both a teaching assistant and a graduate assistant at the Department of History at San Diego State University. Kelsey is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the National History Honor Society.

"Oświęcim was, and is, a small, quiet town. And in that small, quiet space, horrible things happened. This is not an anomaly, but rather the rule; extraordinary things can happen in ordinary places. If we ignore the human element of mass murder, or the banal cogs in the wheel of genocide, as towns like Oświęcim were cogs in the Nazi death machine, we can ignore each and every case of modern genocide as an anomaly."

Hinda Mandell

Fred and Nadine Rosen Fellow

Syracuse, NY

Syracuse University, Newhouse School of Public Communications

Degree: Ph.D. Media Studies and Mass Communication

Graduation Year: 2011

Lipper Intern: 2001

Hinda's Ph.D. dissertation will focus on media coverage of Jewish scandals and the role of "insider" and "outsider" in the Jewish community. She feels that the Fellowship will provide an unparalleled opportunity to explore the Jewish history that informs the American Jewish community. In addition to being a student of media studies, Hinda has extensive real-world media experience; she has worked as religion reporter and published articles in *The Boston Globe*, *The Forward*, and *The Jerusalem Report*. She has written on a wide range of topics, including Hebrew schools in the 21st century, Israeli entrepreneurs in Beijing, Holocaust survivors, and philo-Semitism in Germany. Hinda earned a master's degree in Middle Eastern History from Harvard in 2004. She speaks both Arabic and Hebrew and has traveled extensively in Europe.

"As someone who studies media coverage of Jewish scandals, this fellowship relates to my pursuit to understand Jewish fear over negative publicity. Memories and symbols related to the Holocaust continue to influence people's perception of what bad press means for the Jewish people, and shapes how they interpret this media coverage. It is in Poland where I hope all of these interests will converge to address how people look to their history to understand their lives today."

Jessica Silva

Montreal, Quebec
Concordia University
Degree: M.A. Oral History/ Genocide Studies
Graduation: 2009

Jessica's thesis, titled "Graphic Content: Interpretations of the Rwandan genocide through the graphic novel," is based on life-story interviews with a Rwandan genocide survivor now living in Montreal and interprets his graphic novel. Jessica served as the assistant interview coordinator for the CURA Life Stories Project at Concordia. Through her work on this project, Jessica interviewed Holocaust survivors living in Montreal. She has also served as a teaching assistant and exam grader in the History Department at Concordia. Jessica is trilingual, speaking English, French, and Portuguese. Jessica took part in the March of Remembrance and Hope in 2008, during which she traveled to Poland and Germany with Holocaust survivors to learn about the Holocaust through their testimony. Jessica will be attending the University of Toronto/OISE Education program in September, and then will be pursuing a Ph.D. in Curriculum Development at the same university.

"Oral history, I believe, has a pivotal role to play in educating ourselves and our communities about the social preconditions, experiences and long-term repercussions of crimes against humanity. It can provide a penetrating lens into events of the past, a lens that is often telling of the impact that historical events have on people's lives."

Amy Simon**Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture Fellow**

Falls Church, VA
Indiana University
Degree: Ph.D. History with a Jewish Studies Doctoral Minor
Graduation: 2011

Amy's dissertation will examine Holocaust victims' perceptions of perpetrators by looking at Yiddish language diaries and memoirs. Amy has earned two M.A.'s, one in Holocaust Studies at University College London and the second in History from Indiana University. Amy has participated in the Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture, as well as the Vilnius Summer Yiddish Institute in Lithuania. In spring 2008, Amy was the recipient of the Glazer Family Fellowship for research at YIVO, and in September 2008, she was awarded the Leon Milman Memorial Fellowship from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. where she is currently a fellow-in-residence.

"It turns out that the easiest decision is no decision. German and Polish neighbors who looked the other way and Allied countries that knew about the killing and took no action to stop it represented this reprehensible course of action. Reprehensible, I say, yet so common."

Rebekah Slodounik**Allan and Marilyn Glick Fellow**

St. Louis, MO
Washington University in St. Louis
Degree: B.A. German and English Literature
Graduation: 2009

As an undergraduate at Washington University, Rebekah has nurtured a passion for twentieth-century German and Jewish literature, including Holocaust literature. She has also had the unique opportunity to excel in two graduate level literature seminars, *Representing the Holocaust* and *Truth or Fiction: Autobiographical Fiction and Fictional Autobiography*. Rebekah is currently completing her senior honors thesis on the work of the German author, Gudrun Pausewang. Outside of the classroom, Rebekah has worked as a student assistant at the

Faculty of Arts & Sciences at Washington University and as a cultural mentor at the Women's Center at the University of Missouri – Columbia. Rebekah plans to attend the Ph.D. program in German Literature at the University of Virginia in the fall.

“In today's global, political and economic situation, full of uncertainty and potential change, we must not remain uncertain. We must speak firmly and irrefutably on the subject of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. Particularly in an age of technological speed and information sharing, the dissemination of these opinions has the ability to reach more people.”

Meghan Waldow

Floral Park, NY

University of Southern Mississippi

Degree: M.A. European History

Graduation: 2010

Lipper Intern: 2006

Meghan is pursuing a Master's degree at the University of Southern Mississippi in European History with a minor in War and Society. Her Master's thesis focuses on the legacies of the three most influential Polish Judenrat leaders: Adam Czerniakow, Jacob Gens, Mordechai Rumkowski. At Southern Mississippi, Meghan serves as a teaching assistant for a freshman level world history class. She also is a member of the history club and serves as a volunteer with local soup kitchens and orphanages. In 2006, Meghan participated in the Museum's Lipper Internship Program where she visited middle schools and high schools in North Jersey to teach students about Holocaust history.

“There is still so much to be learned, to be taught, and to be understood concerning the Holocaust, sixty-four years after its end. Scholars are still searching for answers to questions that time has not divulged, and controversies, debates, and various historiographies still haunt Holocaust research.”
