

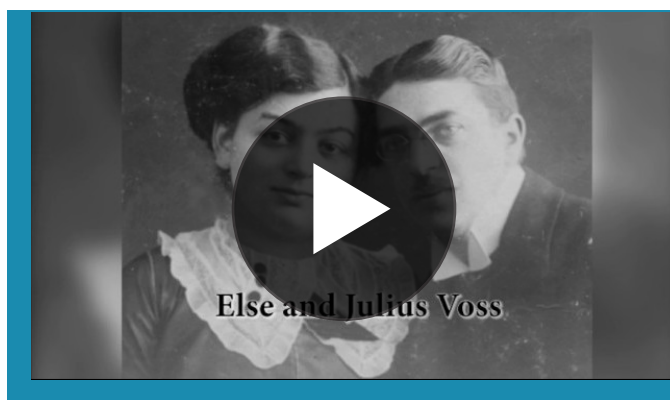
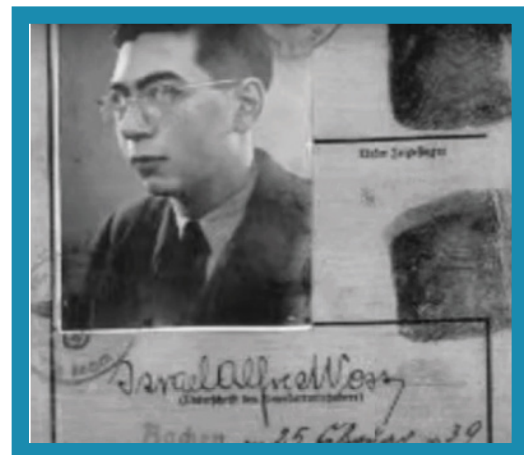
Fred Voss - Refugee Story

CURRICULUM TOPICS FOR REFUGEE STORY

1. Hitler Youth
2. Aachen, Germany
3. Nuremberg Laws
4. Kristallnacht

SUMMARY OF VIDEO #1:

Fred talks about growing up happily in Aachen, a small town in Germany on the border of Belgium and the Netherlands. His parents owned a shop selling textiles. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, life became more difficult. In 1935, Fred was beaten by members of the Hitler Youth and forbidden from going to school. There were signs in store windows 'Germans don't purchase from Jews'. During the following years, Fred's family struggled to make a life for themselves, until Kristallnacht. During Kristallnacht, Fred had luckily received permission from the Gestapo to travel to another town to visit a cousin. At 18 years old, he was enroute the night of the Kristallnacht and describes the experience of not being able to stay with his cousin nor return home in fear of being arrested. Instead, he witnessed all the synagogues in the small towns on fire while travelling back and forth on the train. His family's home and textile store in Aachen were destroyed and his father was sent to a concentration camp for two months. The family wanted to emigrate, but there were no countries willing to take them. In exchange for everything they owned, Fred's mother went to the Gestapo and negotiated an exit visa to Belgium in exchange for Fred's father's release from the camp. The family made it to England in 1939 before the war started. Eventually Fred and his family went to California in the U.S. where they had relatives who were willing to sponsor them. While in England, Fred met his future wife Ilse, and they promised to wait for each other until the war was over. Fred and Ilse married in New York in 1946, spent much of their life in Pennsylvania, raised two children, and moved to Ithaca in retirement to be close to their grandchildren.





Curriculum Refugee Story

Topic #1: Fred was harassed and beaten by members of the Hitler youth.

Resources:

- [How the Hitler Youth Turned a Generation of Kids Into Nazis](#)

Discussion questions:

- Who were the Hitler youth and what role did they play?
- Why do you think they were so easily influenced by Hitler?

Topic #2: Aachen, Germany - Fred grew up in Aachen, where members of his family were persecuted, robbed, and arrested under Hitler's regime.

Resources:

- [German forces enter Aachen](#)
- [Ruins of the old synagogue in Aachen](#)

Discussion questions:

- How did different members of Fred's family respond to the Kristallnacht? What kind of life do you think Fred led in Aachen before this happened?
- What considerations would make it difficult for you to decide to leave your home and possessions if you had to escape? Where would you go?

Topic #3: Nuremberg Laws - The Nuremberg Laws changed the ways that Jews were treated across Europe.

Resources

- [The Nuremberg Race Laws](#)
- [US Holocaust Memorial Museum Online Exhibition about Nuremberg Laws](#)
- [Anti-Jewish Legislation in Prewar Germany](#)

Discussion questions:

- How did these laws impact Fred and his family?
- What was the purpose of the Nuremberg Laws? Why did Hitler put them in place?

Topic #4: Kristallnacht - Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, refers to the attacks on the Jewish population in Germany. Throughout these attacks, Nazis burned synagogues and looted Jewish businesses.

Resources

- [History.com overview of Kristallnacht](#)
- [US Holocaust Memorial Museum overview of Kristallnacht](#)
- [Jewish-owned businesses damaged during Kristallnacht](#)

Discussion questions:

- What were the outcomes of Kristallnacht? How did Kristallnacht affect Jewish culture and livelihood?
- How did Kristallnacht change Fred's life?

Fred Voss - U.S. Military Story

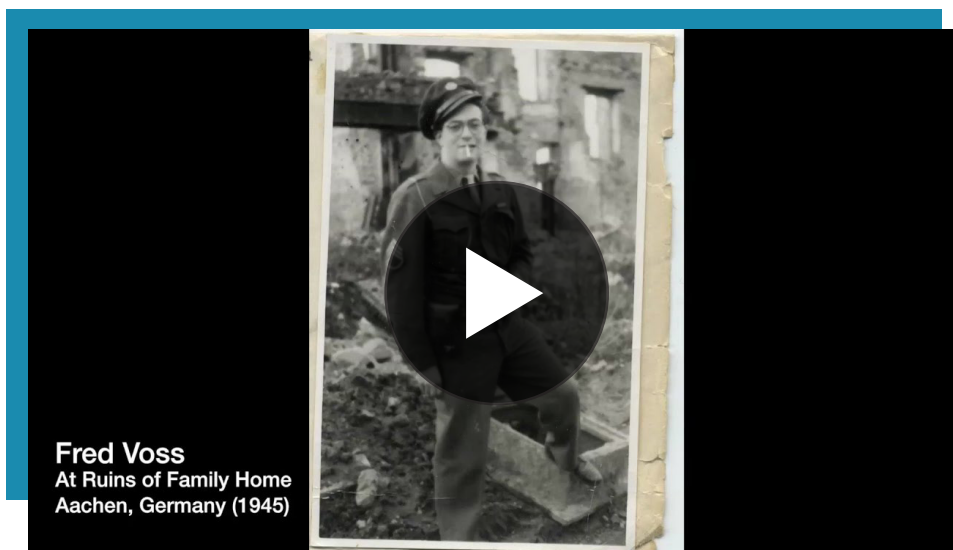
CURRICULUM TOPIC FOR U.S. MILITARY STORY:

1. Resistance

SUMMARY OF VIDEO #2:

The U.S. entered WWII after Pearl Harbor in December, 1941. In 1942, the draft went into effect, and Fred and some of his refugee friends decided to enlist to serve in the army. They were told that they could not serve at that point, because they were still considered German citizens. In 1943, the law was changed and Fred enlisted and began training as a Combat Engineer in March of that year.

Fred describes the experience of becoming a G.I. and not knowing that he was being sent overseas to Europe. He was part of an American convoy that drove through London to a large movie theatre only a few days after D-Day. The soldiers were briefed, examined and had their equipment checked, then boarded a ship to Omaha Beach on the Normandy Coast of France. As a combat engineer, he was assigned to clean up minefields, and collect personal effects from soldiers who had died during the invasion of Normandy. He had the opportunity to transfer to other duties, as he found the work difficult, and when the Lieutenant found out that he spoke French, became a translator instead. Fred's recording has several anecdotes during that time, which are interesting for all of us who consider this distant history.





ORAL HISTORIES

OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

—HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Curriculum U.S. Military Story

Topic #1: Resistance - Fred's service in the US military demonstrated his desire to "fight back" against Nazism and his belief in the free world.

Resources:

- [D-Day | The Holocaust Encyclopedia](#)

Discussion questions:

- Why did Fred feel compelled to join the military? How would describe Fred's actions? What personal characteristics did Fred demonstrate?
- Discussion question 2: Why is D-Day important? How did you feel hearing Fred's story about being in the military follow-up to D-Day?



ORAL HISTORIES

OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

—HOLOCAUST EDUCATION