

# ECHOES and REFLECTIONS

A Multimedia Curriculum on the Holocaust



## Ellen Brandt

Ellen Brandt, born on May 10, 1922, in Mannheim, [Germany](#), was the only child of Mathilda and Guido Friedsam. Ellen's father served in the German military and was a decorated World War I veteran. When Ellen was six months old, the family moved to [Munich](#) where her father bought a paper factory.

Ironically, the apartment in which the Friedsam family settled turned out to be one block away from where [Adolf Hitler](#) was renting a room. One year later, the family became aware that life in Munich was beginning to change. On November 7, 1923, the evening before the Beer Hall Putsch, Ellen's father received the first of what was to become a series of periodic anonymous calls warning him to stay at home and out of harm's way.

Foreseeing Hitler's rise to power, Ellen's father thought it dangerous to continue to own a business. Therefore, in early 1933, less than a month before Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany, the family moved to [Berlin](#) where Ellen's father ran a factory owned by non-Jews. Her father felt this new position offered his family greater anonymity and safety.

In Berlin, Ellen became keenly aware of increasingly limited basic rights for the Jewish community and describes the enactment of the [Nuremberg](#)

## Visual History Biographic Profiles

[Laws](#) in 1935 as a life-altering event. She remembers witnessing Jews being beaten to death on the streets and saw others rounded up and taken away. In 1936, she began to be shunned at school when her schoolteachers were no longer allowed to speak to Jewish children, and Jewish students were forbidden from interacting with non-Jewish schoolmates. Ellen's parents eventually removed her from that school and enrolled her in a makeshift Jewish school.



Before the outbreak of the war, a relative living in the [United States](#) provided Ellen's family with affidavits to flee Germany. Ellen's father was able to expedite the family's departure within twenty-four hours due to his status as a decorated veteran. On April 6, 1938, the family arrived in New York City. Ellen's family eventually moved to Toledo, Ohio, where she attended college.

Ellen later returned to New York City and worked in radio. There she met her husband, George Brandt, a Broadway producer, and they traveled the country, producing stage shows. George died of a brain tumor at a young age, but Ellen continued producing and ultimately moved to Los Angeles in 1975. At the time of the interview in 1996, Ellen had a daughter, Jody (Grotzinger); a son, Geoffrey; and two grandchildren.

To learn more about Ellen Brandt, please go to [Full Visual Histories](#) to view her complete testimony.