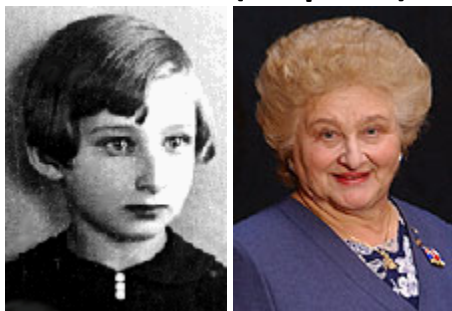


Nesse Godin (Galperin)



Born March 28, 1928, Siauliai, Lithuania

Nesse Galperin was born on March 28, 1928 to Sara and Pinchas Galperin, an observant Jewish family in Siauliai, Lithuania. Sara owned a dairy store and Pinchas worked at a shoe factory. They spoke often to Nesse and her brothers, Jechezkel and Menashe, about the importance of community and caring for others. Siauliai was home to a Jewish community of over 10,000 members which supported cultural and social organizations and over a dozen synagogues.

**First Person
Today at 1:00pm**



The Nazis invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Three years later on June 26, 1941, Siauliai was occupied by the Nazis. Antisemitic laws were put into effect almost immediately, including that all members of the Jewish community wear a yellow Star of David. Jewish children were prohibited from attending public school, and Jewish businesses were confiscated. In the weeks that followed, *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing units), and Lithuanian police and military officials rounded up 1,000 Jewish men and boys under the pretense of cleaning up the damage done to the city as a result of the occupation. They were taken to the nearby Kuziai Forest and forced to dig a large pit before being told to take off their clothes. They were shot and their bodies buried in the pit. In August 1941, Nesse and her family were among the Jewish population forced to move into the Siauliai Ghetto.

On November 5, 1943, approximately 1,700 people, including Nesse's father Pinchas Galperin, were deported to Auschwitz: 1,000 of the deportees were children. Nesse, her mother, and her brothers managed to avoid the Kinderaktion (children's selection) because they worked outside the ghetto. In 1944, the few Jews remaining in the Siauliai ghetto were deported to the Stutthof Concentration Camp. Nesse became prisoner number 54015 and was separated from her mother and brother. She was looked after by Jewish women who protected and advised her on how to survive. She was deported to four other slave labor

camps until January 1945 when she was in a group of 1,000 female prisoners sent on a death march. Only 200 women were still alive when the group was liberated by the Soviet Army on March 10, 1945.

Nesse spent six weeks recuperating in a makeshift hospital in Chinow (Chynowie), Poland and was then assigned a foster mother to help her. They traveled to Lodz, Poland where Nesse met a woman from Siauliai who told her that her mother, Sara, was somewhere on the border between Germany and Poland. Nesse left the care of her foster mother to search for her own mother. By the time Nesse reached the border, Sara--having learned that Nesse was alive-- had left to find her in Lodz. After weeks of traveling and searching, they were reunited. In order to begin rebuilding their lives, Sara decided that either she or Nesse would need to marry. Nesse was 17 when Sara asked Yankel (Jack) Godin, a survivor from Poland, to marry her daughter and join their family. Yankel and Nesse were married shortly after. The Galperin/Godins relocated to the Feldafing Displaced Persons Camp in Bavaria where they were reunited with Jechezkel.

In 1950, the Galperin/Godins immigrated to the United States and settled in Washington DC. Nesse and Jack have three children, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. In honor of the women who saved her life, Nesse is a passionate advocate for Holocaust education and awareness and has been a volunteer with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum since prior to its opening.

Hear the words of Holocaust survivors in the First Person podcast series:
<http://www.ushmm.org/learnfromsurvivors>