



## **Biography of Henry Fenichel**

Henry Fenichel was born April 13, 1938 in The Hague, Netherlands. When he was two years old, the Nazis invaded Holland. Henry's father, Moritz, was arrested and sent first to Mauthausen, then to Auschwitz. One year later, anti-Jewish decrees were enacted in the Netherlands, which took away the basic civil liberties of Jews. A few of these restrictions included curfews, restricted shopping times, and Jewish children could no longer attend school. Jews were forced to wear yellow star badges on their clothing. Soon after, deportations to concentration and extermination camps began. Aware of the danger they were in, Henry's mother, Pessel, made arrangements for them to go into hiding at a convalescence home; a place where people go to recover from illness.

In 1943, Henry and his mother's Jewish identities were discovered and they were arrested in their hiding place and sent to Westerbork, one of two transit camps in the Netherlands. Transit camps were set up to temporarily hold prisoners who were to be deported to extermination or concentration camps. Henry and his mother spent six months there. While in Westerbork, they learned of a prisoner exchange program that could help them immigrate to Palestine (modern-day Israel) if they could prove they had a connection to the land. Years prior, Henry's parents had attempted to immigrate, but had been rejected. Pessel sent word to their neighbors in The Hague, who had been looking after their apartment since Henry and Pessel went into hiding, to find their applications to immigrate. With luck, the neighbors found the paperwork and sent it to Pessel in the camp, but they did not send the rejection letter. Miraculously, Henry and his mother were placed on the transport list with 220 other lucky prisoners.

They were transferred in cattle cars to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany, the same camp where Anne Frank and her sister, Margot, died. From February to June 1944, Henry and his mother awaited transport to Palestine. The conditions in Bergen-Belsen were extremely terrible due to overcrowding, food shortage, and disease. One morning, Henry and his mother were requested to collect their belongings and report for transport. Once on the train from Germany, German soldiers began telling passengers, "We didn't treat you so badly, did we?" in an attempt to keep them from telling others the truth of what was happening. Ten days later, "Transport 222" as it would be called later, arrived in Palestine.

Henry spent the rest of his childhood in Palestine, which in 1948, became the state of Israel. Pessel and Henry had already learned what happened to Moritz. After being transferred to Auschwitz, he was murdered on November 8, 1942. Henry's mother eventually remarried and together, the family came to the United States in January 1953. Henry went to Brooklyn College where he met his future wife, Diana. He later received a PhD in Physics from Rutgers University and the couple moved to Cincinnati, where Henry taught at the University of Cincinnati for 38 years. They had two daughters and four grandchildren.