

Echoing Voices: Bella Ouziel

Key Highlights of Bella's Story

- Provides the perspective of a young Greek girl who experiences ghettoization, concentration camps, and a death march.
- Bella's story provides examples of spiritual resistance and camp families:
 - *Spiritual resistance* refers to attempts by individuals to maintain their humanity, personal integrity, dignity, and sense of civilization in the face of Nazi attempts to dehumanize and degrade them.
 - *Camp families* refers to women who bonded with one another in the camps, forming an ersatz family unit in the wake of having been separated from or having lost members of their biological families.
- Describes the heartbreaking process of returning home and ultimately facing antisemitism yet again as well as the painstaking process of rebuilding one's life after the Holocaust.
- Bella fought to legally regain possession of her childhood home with the help of a family friend who was a lawyer.
- Bella married fellow Holocaust survivor, Sam, who was also in Bergen-Belsen.
- Process of immigrating to the United States and rebuilding one's life.

Suitcase Contents

- Photograph; pre-war, Bella Ouziel's father and aunts. This is the only photograph Bella has of her family before the war.
- Greek Star Badge; beginning on February 6, 1943, the Jews of Salonika were required to wear a star badge on the outermost layer of clothing to identify one as Jewish. Bella's father refused to wear his star badge in an extreme act of defiance.
- Auschwitz Work Detail Paper, handwritten; Bella's name and prisoner number (40018) appears on this list in space number 197.
- Auschwitz Prisoner List, typed; includes the name of Bella's sister, Sylvia, in space number 96.
- Shoe; represents Bella's forced labor in Auschwitz-Birkenau where she disassembled shoes for recycling to Germany.
- Spool of Thread; represents Bella's forced labor in Auschwitz I where she sewed German military uniforms.
- Photograph; post-war, Sam and Bella's wedding portrait. Sam and Bella were both Holocaust survivors that met in Bergen-Belsen after the camp was liberated by the British on April 15, 1945.
- Photograph; post-war, Bella Ouziel in 2015.