

REMEMBRANCE

Remembrance: Blacks and the Holocaust



African-American League of

Introduction

- **The fate of black people from 1933 to 1945 in Nazi Germany and in German-occupied territories ranged from isolation to persecution, sterilization, medical experimentation, incarceration, brutality, and death. However, there was no systematic program for their elimination.**

Nazi Racial Science

- African German mulatto children were marginalized in German society, isolated socially and economically, and not allowed to attend university. Racial discrimination prohibited them from seeking most jobs, including service in the military. With the Nazi rise to power they became a target of racial and population policy. By 1937, the Gestapo (German secret state police) had secretly rounded up and forcibly sterilized many of them. Some were subjected to medical





DESTINED TO WITNESS

GROWING UP BLACK
IN NAZI GERMANY

Hans J. Massaquoi

Hans J. Massaquoi

- Proudly displays a swastika emblem while standing at attention. He is flanked by other second grade school chums at the end of recess while waiting for the teachers orders to return to class. Hamburg 1933

Valaida Snow

- She was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1903 turned professional entertainer at the age of 15.
- Valaida then went on an extended tour of Europe in 1939. Not keeping informed of the deteriorating situation in Western Europe in the early nineteen forties, resulted in a devastating event in the life of Valaida Snow. While appearing in Denmark with her all-girl orchestra, she was taken prisoner by the army of Nazi Germany and sent to a concentration camp named African-American League of



International Valaida circa 1937
Note the strong, long fingers and the stylish thin eyebrows.



Josef Nassy

- (1904-1976) was a *black expatriate artist* of Jewish descent. Nassy was living in Belgium when World War II began, and was one of about 2,000 civilians holding American passports who were confined in German internment camps during the war.
- The Germans occupied Belgium in May 1940, but Nassy and his wife did not leave. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the United States entered World War II. On April 14, 1942, four months after the United States entered the war, Nassy was arrested as an enemy national in German-occupied Belgium. For seven months, he was held in the Beverloo



THE INTERNEES

"There are about 500 of us here, supposedly Americans, but they are really Poles, Czechs, and all kinds; the true American is rare."

— Letter from Nassy to his wife Rosine



DAILY LIFE

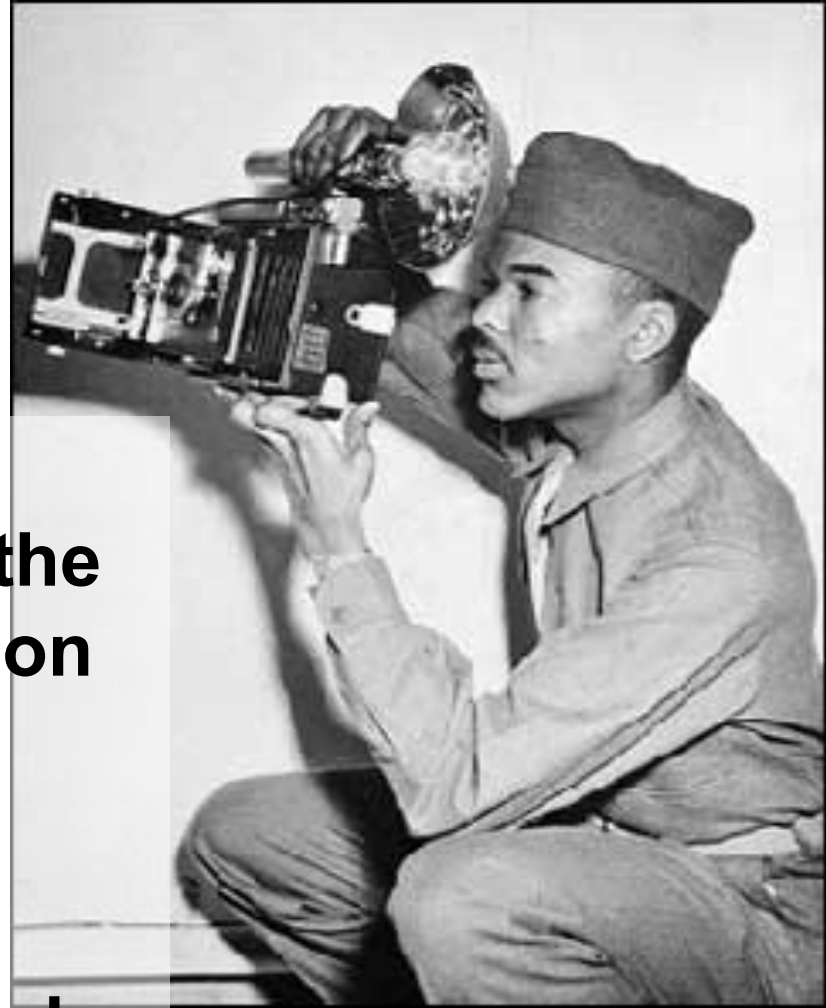
"The days were monotonous and were passed by reading, taking endless walks around the perimeter, discussing the war, sleeping, playing cards, and or a few playing guitars and banjos.... There was also a sudden outburst of painting activity. As I recall, 2 or 3 painters would set up their easels and many an internee had his portrait painted."

— William Kydd, American internee at Beverloo, Laufen, and Tittmoning
(postwar testimony)



Liberators

- African Americans were among the liberators of the Buchenwald concentration camp.
 - William Scott, seen here during training, was a military photographer and helped document Nazi crimes in the camp.
- Alabama, United States,
March 1943.**



Liberators – The Black Panthers Bn

- The 761st Tank Battalion (an all-African American tank unit), attached to the 71st Infantry Division, U.S. Third Army, under the command of General George Patton, participated in the liberation of Gunskirchen, a subcamp of the Mauthausen



Liberators

- **Members of the 12th Armored Division, which included African American platoons, await their orders. Germany, April 1945.**





Warren Capers

- African American soldier Warren Capers was recommended for a **Silver Star** for his actions during the Allied invasion of France. He and his medical detachment aided more than 330 soldiers. **France, August 18, 1944.**

Other Eyewitnesses

- **Adult African Germans** - many Africans came to Germany as students, artisans, entertainers, former soldiers, or low-level colonial officials
- **Lionel Romney**, a sailor in the U.S. Merchant Marine, was imprisoned in the Mauthausen concentration camp.
- **Jean Marcel Nicolas**, a Haitian national, was incarcerated in the Buchenwald and Dora-Mittelbau concentration camps in Germany.
- **Bayume Mohamed Hussein** from Tanganyika (today Tanzania) died in the Sachsenhausen camp, near Berlin.
- **Lieutenant Darwin Nichols**, an African American pilot, incarcerated in a Gestapo prison in Butzbach.
- **Black soldiers of the American, French, and British armies** were worked to death on construction projects or died as a result of mistreatment in concentration or prisoner-of-war camps.
- **European and American blacks** - interned in the Nazi concentration camp system

LIBERATION

"[Nassy's] paintings clearly demonstrate that the human spirit cannot be enchained....The power of the artist Nassy's work springs from the [prisoners'] painful experience, imbuing the paintings with a deep feeling of humanity."

— *Invitation to the YMCA exhibit of Nassy's work, October 19–31, 1946*



Two survivors at Dachau

- **Camp survivors soon after the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp. At the right is African Belgian inmate Jean Voste. Dachau, Germany, after April 29,**

