The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Database for Holocaust Survivor and Victim Names - Captioning

[Please stand by for realtime captions]

Hello, everyone. Welcome to our webinar, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's database for Holocaust survivor and victim names. My name is Ashley Dahlen, an outreach at the U.S. publishing office. Here with us today is Sarah Kopelman Noyes of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum rkz and she is here today to talk about a database she works with that contains over 12 million records on people persecuted during World War II under the nazi regime. The database also contains information from the museum's collections from other organizations and individual survivor and victims' information. Before we begin, let me give you a bit of background about Sarah. Sarah Kopelman Noyes has been with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum since 2007. For the past decade, she has helped develop and expand the database of Holocaust survivor and victim names or HSV. Her work includes identifying potential collections with names to be included in HSV, coordinating indexing projects and preparing indices to be imported into the HSV database. And with that, I will hand the virtual MIC over to Sarah.

Sarah, are you ready to begin?

Yes, I am ready to go. Can you hear me?

We can hear you.

So thank you, all, for joining us today. As Ashley said, my name is Sarah Kopelman Noyes. I've been at the museum for quite some time. I started as an intern in the archives and then moved to the Holocaust survivors' and victims' resource center in 2010. Over the years there's been some reinstruction now in the digital access division which is responsible for making all the museum's collections data and metadata digitally accessible to all potential users of the collection. Today, excuse me, I'll be talking about the museum's database of Holocaust survivor and victims' names which throughout the presentation I will be referring to as HSV. HSV came into being in 2010 just as I started in the resource center. The consideration which was called name search or CC cat for a claims conference cataloging had been around for a while. It used Microsoft access for cataloging. It was generally pretty clunky for both researchers and catalogers. It was not easy to link names directly to the source records, and we were unable to link images in any way. The new version which became HSV was going to be web based and much more user friendly for everyone involved. You would be able to link lists to images and to names as well. Since I was there at the outset, I was very much involved in the development and testing of the new database. One of the first steps that we had to take was to make clear exactly what names would be included. Who exactly was considered a survivor or victim? On this screen right now, you can see the museum's current definition of victims of nazi persecution. As you can see, HSV can have names of people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. We have names from many different sources, some of them are from the museum's collections, others are from other institutions. They may be primary sourced documents that have been indexed or indexes that were compiled as part of a research project. Later in this presentation, I will talk in more detail about some of the ways that we acquire names to put into HSV. So what is HSV? Here's a snapshot of what exactly was in HSV as of yesterday. We currently have over 12 million names. That number is not unique names, it's not 12 million unique people and could just be as I'm sure anyone who's done any sort of names research

knows you search in a collection the same name, the same person that might appear multiple times. We're not saying there are 12 million individual people, it's just 12 million names. All lists -- excuse me, all names of list to apparent record which is this list record. We don't have any names that are just in the database by themselves. You are always able to go back and find the source of that name and figure out where it came from. These parent records could just be a description of an index we received from another institution or in the case of collections from our archival holdings, this will include a detailed catalog record describing the originally primary sourced document that contain the names. You notice our names and lists are available to search online by the public. However, you can see that the number of names available on the web not restricted is slightly lower than the number of names total. That is true for list records as well. That is due to the fact that because of restrictions from source archives, there are a few data sets that we are not able to put online. They are only available through the museum's -- if you're on a museum network. Back when the resource center was still working in CC cat, there were a lot of lists that were cataloged without names. That's why you see that the number of lists is so associated with names is significantly smaller than the total number of lists. That was because back in the previous iteration of the names database, before it was HSV, as I said, you couldn't link names to lists. People would just catalog lists that were of use for researchers. This list of lists as we call it in house is very useful for researchers who are looking for names from a specific ghetto or camp. They would look through that list, but then they have to go through page by page sometimes to find the person that they're looking for. We've been trying to go away from these sort of lists because we want people to be able to find the names. So going forward, we've mostly been working with lists that have names attached and are fully indexed, and we can put them on an online link together, and we are trying to go back and flush out some of these older lists and get them indexed and get them into HSV. This last number at the top, the number of names in the survivors' registry refers to the list of Holocaust survivors which seeks all of the names of the Holocaust or nazi persecution. This includes any people, jewish or nonjewish that were displaced, persecuted or criminalized -- excuse me, discriminated against due to the racial, religious, ethnic and social policies of the nazis and their collaborators. The registry now includes, as you can see, over 200,000 names of survivors and their families. We currently go up to fourth generation survivors. So that's children, grandchildren, great-great grandchildren, et cetera. This registry is maintained by the museum. It's completely voluntary, and family members can register survivors posthumously. These names are not available online. They're only available on the network, on the museum network. Finally, as we've developed this new system, this HSV, we decided to focus on names that have digital files. That means a name has an actual primary sourced document directly linked to it, a list, a form, something like that. We want to make it easier for people to find stories of individuals and have the documentation that supports these stories. That's why our focus, as I said, has primarily been digital files the past several years, since HSV has come into -- has been developed. Excuse me. Some of these documents have photos such as registration cards, passports, so on. And we know cases, we've been told that these photos are the only photograph that a family has of a relative that perished in the Holocaust. We have have a video -- when we first started our partnership with ancestry, we did a promotional video and were able to find a photograph of one of our survivor volunteers' father from a registration card from the dome ghetto, and that was the only photograph he had of his father, and that was the last time he had seen his father was before they were sent to the camps from the ghetto. So it's clear that these records are very important to people in having access, easy access to these records is very important. So we've gone over what's in HSV, the numbers, how much we have in HSV. Now I'm going to talk about how you actually can search in HSV and find this information. There are two ways you can search in HSV that are available to the public. You can either search by names or search for list of names. If you're on the museum network, there's also an option to such just the survivors' registry. Searching for names allows you to just type in a name, date, place, prisoner number or nationality and find all names in HSV that and a half. These can come from collections in our holdings

or other institutions. The search for lists of names allows you to search the parent records or list of lists as I called it earlier. These are some of the types of do you wants that might appear on these searches, census records, registration forms, inhabitants' lists, death lists. This is not an extensive list because we can always have correspondence, that sorts of stuff. So using lists of names, you can search for a camp or a ghetto and find any lists that we have cataloged with that camp or ghetto mentioned. It could also be a list that has someone from the camp or ghetto, for example, if it was a liberation list, and it had path of persecution which is basically listing all the camps and getos that a victim might have been to, that name or that camp or ghetto might show up there, so there's multiple ways to find the information you're looking for. One quick note is when you're searching HSV, that does not mean you're searching through all the museum's collections. We have only cataloged a small selection of the millions of archival pages in the museum's collection. We're constantly working to increase the number of names and lists in HSV, but as you can imagine, with hundreds of millions of archival documents, it's a Herculean effort. Our cataloging in HSV is done on the list or document level. It's very granular. To find more information about the greater collections, you would have to go to collections search, just collections that USHMM.org for anyone who's interested. I just don't want anyone to think just searching HSV will get you all the information on a certain camp or ghetto. If you're doing research on something, you should check out the museum's collection search as well. So this is what -- I apologize if it's small. I didn't want to rely on it going out to look at a screenshot. I figured a screen shot would work a little better. But on the left is what a searched for name looks like and on the right is the searched for list. You can see the setup is pretty much the same, but I'll go through and tell you what all the fields are since I know it's a little bit hard to read. Excuse me. So the image on the left is search for names. You can search for -- by last name, first name or maiden name. All the names in the field can be done either with an exact, fuzzy or a sound dex search. The sound dex we find is very helpful in some German or Yiddish names. You can also search by year using plus or minus five or 10 years and places, various places. So all places, birthplace, wartime place or death place. Those can also be done with your sound dex. As you can imagine, with names that change multiple times over the 19th and 20th century, name searching in our database can be a little tricky. So we try and make it as straightforward as possible by using variants from the catalog and making sure variants are captured while one is searching. You can also search for prisoner number and nationality. The search for lists has a very similar setup on the right. You can search all fields which is basically a keyword search, title, either English language or original language. We translate anything that's not English when we catalog just the title. List type, this is an authority list that includes things like death lists, ghetto list, register, financial records, et cetera. You can search by dates, language, persecution status, nationality and place. Several of these fields are linked to an authority list, like anything with the magnifying glass is linked to an authority list, so language and persecution status. So I mentioned before that not everything is available on the internet. I just wanted to give a brief rundown of how search results might vary depending on if you're on the museum network or if you're off the museum network. So as you can see, the main difference aside from the 3 million or so names that aren't available off network, and those from the registry is that most images or documents are only going to be available to view on network. There are a few collections where the images are available to the public, and going forward, we are developing a new data asset management system, and once that is in place, we'll have more flexibility with putting certain documents online that's an ongoing process that will take a little while. But eventually we will have the capability of putting more documents online, just at the moment it's very limited because of restrictions from the source archives. However, there is still a way for people to request those documents. So here is a search I did for koepleman with the exact accuracy, the same search both on a museum network and off the museum network. You can see on the left on the museum network there are three records that don't show up off museum network. They are the two from the survivors' registry and one from names from the 1939 German minority census. This index is from in Germany and they have very tight restrictions. These

records are only available to see -- to search on campus. However, record three and on the left and record one on the right are the same exact record. But as you can see on campus, there is a thumbnail for the image, but on the right there isn't. There is a place to click document request form, and I will get to that in a little bit to discuss what that means and how people can request documents. However, from this page, if someone was to click on the image right here, they would get taken to a larger image where they can download or print. So it's not only this search result page that looks a little bit different, but the actual name record, once you click on the name, it'll look a little bit different being on campus or off campus. So on the left, again, is on campus. As you can see, there's a thumbnail. If you click on that thumbnail, you're, again, take tone a larger image that you can print or download. And on the right, again, you see primary media. Is has a document request form. So this top part between where it says Joel koepleman and this line in the middle, that's this name record. The name record is not going to be the same for every person just because it depends on the -- excuse me, on the source. Some collections might have records where it has a lot of biographical information and may even include paths of persecution. It may have family names or families' relatives' names, and often we are actually able to link family members to each other in HSV. In this case we didn't, it just has father's name and mother's name. But in some cases if there was an actual record for the mother or father, that would be hyperlinked, and you could click on it and get taken to that record. Other times because of the material that we just have a record that's just a surname or just the first name and surname. It varies collection to collection. Down here where it says source, this is what I refer to as the list record before. This part only includes the title and the description from the source record, however, if a user clicks on the hyperlink right here, they'll get taken to the source record to get more information. This is the source record. Again, just like with names, the information that's included in a source record can vary collection to collection. So this one is fairly flushed out. It's a collection of death notices from the ghetto. The only difference you'll see between off campus and on campus for a source record is media file. Media file wouldn't show up if you were off campus. If you're on campus and it's a lot of records, you can click on this arrow. It would go down, and you would see all the images. However, this record has over 6,000 images, so we don't allow people to request documents off campus -- if they're off campus, they can't request copies of lists because a lot of our lists are huge, and it would just -- it's not feasible to do that. When I show you our document request system, you'll see it works much better for just requesting images from names because it's automated and just asking for one or two images here or there, works much better than trying to send 6,000 images. However, that's not to say you can't get from a list record to a names record and then request an image. Up at the top for all list records, it had names attached. You can click on view all names in this list or search names within this list. You'll get taken back to the search names, page that we saw earlier. However, it will automatically fill in the limit -- and limit the search to this source record only. It is very useful if you know, oh, I want to look at names in the death lists from this ghetto or this camp, it can limit you to just that record, and you can search there. Excuse me. Alternatively, if you found a list that was interesting but wanted to see more about the collection, you could come down here to where it says from collection and click on the title, and that will take you to the collection record in collections search. We're trying to make it as straightforward as possible to get people to the right level of information that they want, whether they're at the collection and they want to go find a list or a name or vice-versa. We're making it as easy as possible to go back and forth between the different levels of description. So on the names results page, I pointed out the document request form. If someone was to click on it, they would get taken to -- this form would pop up. It would automatically have the name and ID of the -- or the document that you want, and then the user would fill out the information, submit that -- send the request, and almost immediately they'll get an email that has a link to the image, as well as pertinent cataloging information. This service, the instant document delivery service came out of a need because for many years people would find names in the old system or even in HSV and then email either the library reference desk or the resource reference desk and

that's for copies of documents. This was very -- it could be very time consuming and often dupe la indicateitive because they would reference desks not knowing who the person was, and then both teams would be working on the same request. So in 2015, we decided to start streamlining the process. We created an email that people would use to request documents from HSV. Eventually we turned this into the automated system that we have today. We currently average about 3,000 requests per month. We've received close to 200,000 requests. We delivered over, excuse me, a quarter of a million documents to people from 126 different countries. As I said, it's about 3,000 requests per month. We haven't done any real advertisement for this service. It's usually just word of mouth. We do have some list serves that post, especially when we have a new collection imported. We have volunteers who are very active in jewish gen which is a jewish genealogical society, very active in there. So he will post on there which will drive up numbers. We've noticed that anytime we import a new index and post one of those listserve updates that we have a slight uptick in traffic. So this is what the email will look like when someone sends a request. Here is a link to the name record, here's a link to the image that they can download, and then here is a link to the actual source list record. We also include information about the survivors registry and additional research tools available for the museum. You just want to make sure -- we figure anyone who has used the IDD, the instant document delivery service and requested something through HSV is interested in more research, so we're trying to give them as much information that we can that could be useful to them. So going through the HSV front end is not the only way people can find information in HSV. As I mentioned before, we link HSV to collections search, and it works the other way around. So this image on the right is from collections at USHMM.org. It's kind of hard to see, unfortunately, but this button right here says view names of survivors of victims in this collection. So if there are any collections that have either a list or names associated with it, that button will show up, and people will be able to click on it and get taken to the names in HSV. It will take you directly to a list of all the list records in that collection, and then you can do the search the names in these lists or just browse through the names in these lists as well. On the left, these are Google search results. HSV is regularly by Google, and oftentimes someone searching for a name, HSV results will be the first ones there. For example, this example on the left, I searched for hennia koepleman, and these are the searches that popped up in Google. Google is the largest traffic source for HSV with over 75% of visits for the past few years coming from Google. So we know it's important to get our information by Google to make sure people can search and find because as our traffic shows, sometimes this is the only that people get to HSV. It's much easier for people to get to HSV through Google, unless you happen to know that the website is USHMM.org/HSV. Unfortunately, anyone who's used the museum's website know it can be a little hard to navigate sometimes to get from the main page to HSV. There's I think at least five clicks you need to do to get to it. So having the names searchable through Google is very important to make sure people can find the information that they want. So I've gone through how to search in HSV. Now I'm going to briefly talk about where we get this information, where we get these names. So first and foremost I would say one of the most important sources for names is the World Memory Project which is our partnership with Ancestry. So we index an sesry. The collections from our archives and the data is then made available in both HSV and on the An sesry website, but on An sesry, any of our collections are free. This 340E68 covers or international archival copied collections which are the collections that are copies of collections. Sorry, I just did collections like five times in a row, from international archives. Basically we find the collection of interest in an international archive, we get a copy, either microfilm or digital, and then we have a copy in our archives as well, and then we get their permission to get it indexed by Ancestry, and names are available on HSV. We also get indexes by other organizations or from individuals like Jewish Gen. I've already discussed the registry and how that is an important source of names. And finally we have ingested a lot of names through our discovery tool. These names are from other international Holocaust-related institutions. These names appear in HSV, but when a user clicks on a result, they'll be taken to the source archives. I'll show you what that looks

like here. So at the bottom you can see what one 6 these results would look like. We've added close to 4 million names thanks to this name discovery tool from seven different institutions around the world. One of the reasons a lot of institutions are interested in sending us their names is because -- as I showed you, our names are very easy to find through Google. A lot of these institutions aren't able to do that or don't -- their websites aren't regularly because the language issues, various reasons, restrictions, but they're able to send us the names, the names are then searchable through Google through us. However, we then send any traffic to them. So if you were to click on the results that I have at the bottom of the page, that will take you to -- that will then take you to Flossenberg's website, so we're not taking any traffic away from any international archives. We've all done this in cooperation with them because they know we have so much more traffic than they do that anything we can do to help send traffic to them is useful. So that is all I have. I know it's a quick introduction to HSV. But I'm happy to answer any questions any of you might have.

Okay. No questions have come in just yet. But I do want to give people a chance to type any questions out. And while we're waiting for questions to come in, I just want to give you guys a quick overview of some upcoming training opportunities. So some of those upcoming webinars include on May 24th, a webinar called a month for that, exploring government resources for diverse monthly celebrations. And I do see a question from burt Chapman. Do you have access to records from Berlin's Holocaust museum?

I believe we do. I couldn't tell you off the top of my head which ones we do. But they are not currently part of the name discovery tool. If we have any of their information, it would be because it was indexed, and we have a copy of the index. It's not part of the name discovery tool where we link directly from our website to their website.

From Eric, might records of Gestapo arrests also be included in the HSV?

They might be. It depends on -- I know a lot of the Gestapo records are from the Buddhist archive, and right now we are not able to put any of those records online. We do have a few that are in trunnant only, but even then they don't want us to put too many of their records into HSV. But I know there are some Gestapo records that show up in other institutions' archives, and we do have those. I believe we have some that were in, I want to say Eureka archived, but don't quote me on that. I'll have to double check. There are Gestapo records that are in our collection and a few that are in HSV.

Very good questions. Keep them coming if you have them. From Debra, if there's a document from arHson archives for a record for great grapes from Warsaw, I did not find them on the site. How can I get assistance to further delve into this?

So what you can do is -- the resource center specializes in this ITS research or the Arolson research. You can email them, registry -- not registry. Resource center at USHMM.org. Or if you go to our website or just Google resource center USHMM, that should take you to a website where you can submit a request, and they should be able to help you out there. I know they have some of their documentation online, but I also know that it's a little bit hard to do research on it even with it available online, like the people in the resource center have been working on this stuff for over a decade, so they sort of know the ins and outs of the different collections because sometimes things don't make sense, and documents that should be one place got moved to another place because the ITS which is the International Tracing Service, used to be part of the Red Cross, now it's in Germany, for those of you who haven't heard of it before, it's been moved around a lot, the records have moved around a lot, so things don't always show

up where they're supposed to. But the resource center, they know what they're doing, so I would just reach out to them, and they should be able to help you out.

Okay. I do have a private request for an email address, and I'm getting clarification on which email that was specifically for. When I know which email address you're looking for, I will definitely pop it in there. The one just mentioned -- okay. I believe that is Debra's -- sorry. I'm getting -- my eyes are bugging out on me. Sarah, can you put your email address? I think that's the one that was just mentioned.

My email address is on the screen. I want to make sure I give you the right one for the resource center because there's a hyphen in it some place. There's an underscore one and a hyphen one, and I want to make sure I give you the right one because one is for a staff list, and one is for -- give me one second. This is their website. That gives information about research services -- and, here. I found it. Sorry I used to be part of resource center, and I learned this, but I moved departments, so now I can never remember which is staff email list and which is -- there we go. That is the research center mailbox, multiple people check that, so if you email them, they should be able to help you out.

Awesome. Thank you very much. Again, keep the questions coming in. I'll just continue on with descriptions of some upcoming webinars. June 14th, what works in education, using what works clearinghouse to find high-quality education research. And there are some other webinars that are in the works. we're getting ready to advertise them, so keep your eye out for future webinar announcements or go to FLP.gov on our website here, and you can view a list of upcoming training events. I do not see any more questions. I am going to put out a webinar survey. If you could fill that out, we would be very grateful. Sarah has actually added some [Inaudible] information she's interested in particular about hearing back from you all. So if you could please take the time to fill that out, we would be grateful. Giving one last minute here for any additional questions to come in. Okay. I'm not seeing any additional questions. So, please, again, fill out that member survey. We appreciate your feedback. And thank you very much to our webinar presenter today, Sarah Kopelman Noyes. And thank you, audience viewers, for participating in our webinar today. Have a great rest of your day.