

Klaus Stern

Berlin, Germany
1923 – 2013



1936:

Every day after school, 13-year-old Klaus helped his best friend Walter clean his parents' restaurant so they could go out and play. The two were inseparable, until one day in 1936 Walter told Klaus he couldn't play with him anymore. Walter had joined the Hitler Youth and feared being seen with a Jew.

1943 - 1945:

In August 1942, at the age of 20, Klaus married Paula. They agreed that if they were separated they would meet in Paula's hometown, Arnstadt, Germany after the war.

In April 1943, Paula and Klaus were rounded up and loaded into crowded cattle cars. They travelled a day and a half with no food, no water, and nothing but straw on the ground for the bathroom. The train arrived at Auschwitz. Klaus and Paula were separated. By the time Klaus was liberated in May 1945, his weight had dropped from 165 lbs to only 96 lbs. He was hospitalized with typhus.

1945 - 1946:

Fewer than 1 in 10 survived Auschwitz, but Klaus clung to the hope that Paula had also survived. They had been apart for 28 months. After 8 weeks in a hospital, Klaus set out on foot to find her. He walked from village to war-torn village for over 3 and a half weeks, until he reached Arnstadt, where they were reunited. They immigrated to the United States in 1946 and became the first Holocaust survivors to settle in Seattle.



Paula and Klaus Stern,
September 1946.

The artifacts on display were donated by local survivors and their families.


Explore the Holocaust Center for Humanity's artifact collection to learn more about Klaus's experience.

- Pre-war Jewish items
- German-Jewish passport
- Photo of Klaus and Paula (on hanging banner) the year they were married, 1942, in Germany
- Auschwitz blanket
- Artifacts from Auschwitz

Learn more about Klaus and other survivors who came to the Pacific Northwest at:

www.HolocaustCenterSeattle.org/survivor-voices


Klaus' memoir *My Legacy: Blessings, Love, and Courage* is available in the Holocaust Center for Humanity book store.



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