

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

The Nazis believed Germans were part of the “master race” and thus “superior” above all others. This concept justified the Nazi quest for dominance over Europe which included a system meant to rid society of “inferior races.”

While Jews were the primary targets, other groups were also targeted for racial, ethnic, or national reasons, such as: Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), people with mental or physical disabilities, and Poles. Many more, including homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered oppression and death under Nazi Germany.

Who was Jewish?



Although discrimination against the Jews in Germany by the Nazis and their supporters began in 1933 upon Adolf Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor, it was not until 1935 that the Nazis defined who was a Jew with the Nuremberg Racial Laws. According to Nazi racial ideology, a Jew was someone with at least 3 Jewish grandparents. If a Jew married a non-Jew, their children were considered Jewish. Since this definition was based on lineage and not religious practice or beliefs, many Germans who had not practiced Judaism found themselves targets of the Nazi regime. In many German -occupied countries, Jews were forced to wear an identifying badge such as a yellow Star of David.

To receive updates with news and upcoming events, please subscribe to our e-newsletter.

www.holocaust.georgia.gov/subscribe

WITNESS TO THE HOLOCAUST

WWII Veteran William
Alexander Scott III at Buchwald

An exhibit by the Georgia
Commission on the Holocaust



WWW.HOLOCAUST.GEORGIA.GOV



GEORGIA
COMMISSION
ON THE
HOLOCAUST

The Georgia Commission on the Holocaust
is a secular, non-partisan state agency.

Connect with us:

www.facebook.com/hologeorgiagov

[@holocaustgagov](https://twitter.com/holocaustgagov)

DURING WORLD WAR II

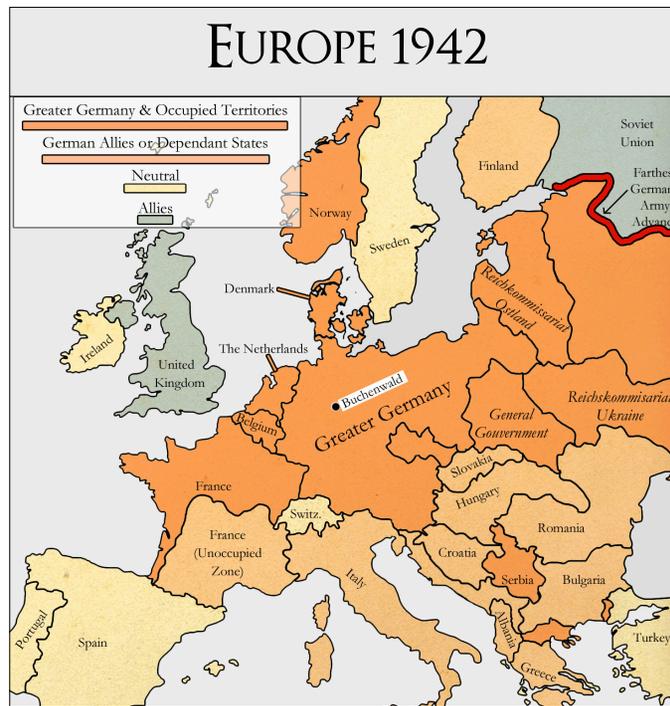
the United States Army was segregated, like much of the nation itself. As a soldier of an all-black battalion, William Alexander Scott III ("W.A." as he was known) and his comrades were fighting for rights they themselves could not enjoy. This fact was magnified as the Allies began to witness first-hand the treatment of the Jewish people and other targeted groups in camps such as Buchenwald.

“Because my father witnessed the horrors of the Holocaust and was experiencing the injustice of racial discrimination back at home, he was determined to do what he could to change things....He realized, in coming back to combat it here, that you cannot fight hate with hate.”

— Alexis Scott, publisher of *The Atlanta Daily World* newspaper and W.A.'s daughter



Photo: William Alexander Scott II, Alabama, March 1943.
— United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



THE BUCHENWALD CONCENTRATION CAMP

was one of the largest camps established within German borders, about 185 miles southwest of Berlin. It was opened by the SS in July of 1937.

The first prisoners were political opponents of the Nazi party. However, after Kristallnacht (the “Night of Broken Glass”, a pogrom in 1938 targeting Jewish businesses and synagogues in Germany and Austria) nearly 10,000 Jewish males were arrested by the SS and German police then sent to the camp. Jehovah’s Witnesses, Gypsies (Roma and Sinti), resistance fighters, former government officials from occupied countries, criminals, “asocials” and German military deserters were incorporated into the internment system of the camp. Women began arriving in late 1943 and early 1944.

Photo right: Entrance to Buchenwald. Courtesy of Edith Benson, wife of veteran Frank Benson who visited the camp in May 1945.

Medical experiments were performed at Buchenwald on prisoners by physicians and scientists beginning in 1941. The majority of these experiments were designated to find cures for contagious diseases such as typhus, typhoid, cholera, and diphtheria, all of which were common in concentration camps as a result of the terrible conditions.

As U.S. forces moved closer and closer towards the camp in early April 1945, the Nazis began to evacuate some 28,000 prisoners from Buchenwald and its subcamps. These prisoners were forced to walk on foot on so called “death marches.” In expectation of liberation, the remaining prisoners stormed the watchtowers to seize control of the camp on April 11, 1945. The camp was liberated that afternoon by U.S. forces — the 6th Armored Division of the Third Army. More than 21,000 people were in the camp.

While Buchenwald and its environs did not contain a gas chamber, approximately 56,000 male prisoners were murdered there, some 11,000 of whom were Jews.

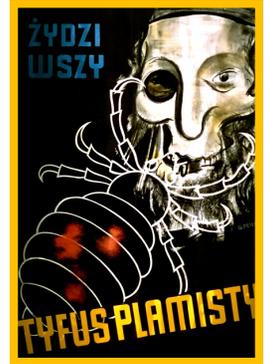


Photo: Antisemitic poster published in Poland in March 1941. The caption reads, “Jews are lice; They cause typhus.” — Historical Museum of Rzeszow

