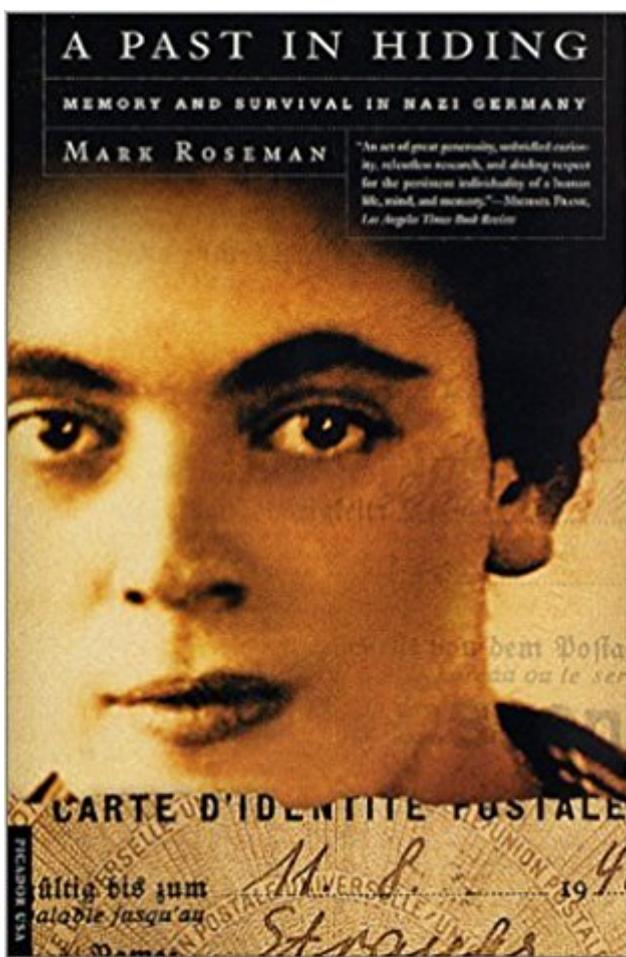


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A Past In Hiding: Memory And Survival In Nazi Germany



Synopsis

Winner of the Mark Lynton History PrizeA Los Angeles Times Best BookA Koret Jewish Book Award FinalistA Past in Hiding is a survivor story and historical investigation that offers new insight into daily life in the Third Reich and the powers and pitfalls of memory. At the outbreak of World War II, Marianne Strauss, the sheltered daughter of well-to-do German Jews, was an ordinary girl, concerned with her studies, friends, and romance. Almost overnight she was transformed into a woman of spirit and defiance, a fighter who, when the Gestapo came for her family, seized the moment and went underground. On the run for two years, Marianne traveled across Nazi Germany with false papers, aided by a remarkable resistance organization, previously unknown and unsung. Drawing on an astonishing cache of photographs, letters, diaries, and documents, as well as interviews on three continents, historian Mark Roseman reconstructs Marianne's odyssey and the fortunes of her friends and family, revealing aspects of life in the Third Reich long hidden from view. Here are letters from Marianne's fiance, deported to the little-known Izbica ghetto; Gestapo records of the special protection that the Straussses and other well-placed Jews received from the Wehrmacht's intelligence division, and of Adolf Eichmann's decision to deport them nonetheless; Marianne's diary of her years on the run; and rare communications from Thereisenstadt and Auschwitz that track the fate of her parents. As Roseman excavates the past, he puts forward a new and sympathetic interpretation of the troubling discrepancies between fact and recollection that so often cloud survivors' accounts. A detective story, a love story, a story of great courage and survival in the harshest conditions, A Past In Hiding is also a poignant investigation into the nature of memory, authenticity, and truth.

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Customer Reviews

HPart detective story and part tragedy, this retracing of one Jewish woman's survival in Germany during the Holocaust is a riveting story told by a master. A professor of history at the University of Southampton in England, Roseman first learned about Marianne Strauss's experiences in the late 1980s. He contacted Strauss and interviewed her, but he was unsatisfied with the results, in part because of Strauss's reticence about her past. So after her death in 1996, he journeyed across the world to find those who knew her in order to flesh out Strauss's recollections. What comes through in his interviews and readings of Strauss's extraordinary letters and diaries is the desire of a strong, graceful woman to preserve normalcy in the face of despairDduring the early years of the war, Strauss attended teacher training and passed her licensing examsDand the mixed motivations of Germans who helped Jews like Strauss survive. He argues, for instance, that Strauss's well-off father used his connections, and his money, to persuade the counterintelligence unit of the German army to protect his family. Roseman builds the tension regarding the ultimate fate of Strauss's family with the skill of a novelist. And using extensive oral history, he retraces the private lives of Strauss and her friends and family as they attempted to grapple with painful decisions, most notably, Strauss's own decision to escape by herself as her family was being arrested. By comparing the accounts of people who knew Strauss with her own account, he also offers a fascinating behind-the-scenes glimpse of how historians operate. Photos. (Feb.) Forecast: Roseman will visit the U.S. to do national publicity. The publisher will do targeted mailings to those with an interest in Judaica and psychology, which should boost sales. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.
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Roseman (modern history, Univ. of Southampton) examines the life of Marianne Strauss Ellenbogen, a German who survived the Holocaust. Through the heroism of a German officer, Ellenbogen got word from her fianc in the Izbica ghetto about conditions in the ghettos and camps, and when the Nazis came for her family, she used a diversion to escape. The rest of the family perished at Auschwitz. Ellenbogen emigrated to England after the war, where she had some preliminary conversations with Roseman before her death in 1996. Most of the book consists of Roseman's effort to reconcile Ellenbogen's memory of events with diaries, letters, and interviews. Several remarkable stories will fascinate readers, including a July 1944 BBC broadcast about mass murders at Auschwitz that Victor Klemperer corroborates in *I Will Bear Witness* (LJ 2/1/00) and

Ellenbogen's efforts through the Communist Party to reform postwar Germany. Roseman loses his focus when he adds psychological commentary regarding the difference between memory and the written record, and his extensive first-person commentary about his research seems informal for a scholarly book. Still, this compelling work offers a remarkable cache of information that will be required reading for any Holocaust scholar. Recommended for all libraries. DRandall L. Schroeder, Wartburg Coll. Lib., Waverly, IA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is the story of Marianne Ellenbogen and how she survived the Holocaust as a German Jew in Nazi Germany. Marianne was from the Strauss family, a Jewish family with a sterling history, lots of wealth and lots of power. As many advantages as her family had, Marianne never really got along with her parents. She thought her father favored her younger brother, Richard. As the 1930's went along, life became more and more difficult for Marianne's family. After Kristallnacht , Marianne's family tried desperately to leave Germany, but were still trapped. Going into the 1940's things took a different turn for the Strauss family. I don't want to give away the most intriguing parts of the story, suffice to say, the story is amazing. Marianne was one of the few of her family to make it through the war, she survived the last few years in Germany as a hidden Jew, but always on the run. You really had to be a special type of person to survive that way, most people couldn't do it. I give the author of this book a lot of credit, he had to go through so much material and so many twists and turns to write the story. It also shows how memory is such a fascinating thing, and absolute marvel and a real mystery. Also, be prepared to read for a while, this book has over 400 pages. I really did like A Past in hiding, I gave it four stars just because the book is so marked up in so many ways and so many places, that at times it was difficult to just read. Still a good read though.

Well researched.

Well written account of an incredible life.

Interesting; written with much detail. A love story intertwined with some mystery. Only discouraged by the size (a lot of pages)

a few interesting things, but mostly just rambles too much.

We were very pleased with purchase.

A Past in Hiding is the story of Marianne Strauss-Ellenbogen and her extraordinary survival during the Holocaust. Presenting us with one young woman's real life story, Roseman does not paint a picture of a saint but that of a real flesh and blood person who, like us all, had great strengths and also weaknesses. She was, after all, in her teens when she was confronted with events too difficult for her to comprehend. She was only a couple of years older than Anne Frank, but what a different reality! Roseman's investigation into Marianne's history engages us deeply in the day-to-day life of herself, her family and friends. We can follow how and why they misjudged the increasingly dangerous environment they lived in. The book has a lot more to offer than that. Given Roseman's extensive knowledge of modern German history, he is able to draw a multi-layered picture of every day life for the Jewish community in Germany during the Nazi period. The investigation into the role of the Abwehr in protecting selected Jewish Germans is pertinent for the recent debate around the complicity of the regular army with the SS and Gestapo. Moving between historical chronology and present day commentary and personal reflection on Marianne, the author pieces together a mosaic like a jigsaw puzzle. For most readers it will shed new light on the complexities of this period in recent history like very few other books I have read. Roseman writes in a style that combines the historical with the intimate personal. He conveys his assessment of the characters and situations with empathy for their situation and struggles. At the time he reflects on discrepancies in their statements and recollections of the past. One of the most dramatic documents in the book is the diary of Marianne's fianc , Ernst. He was able to smuggle it out of the concentration camp Izbica thanks to an unconventional courier. One of the family acquaintances with probable links to the Gestapo, was nevertheless willing to act as courier for parcels from Marianne to Ernst; he also brought back this very rare contemporary account of life in the camp. Roseman digs into historical records to verify and complement the description. As part of his investigation, he interviewed the courier's widow as well as others who could add to the story. I started reading A Past in Hiding primarily because, as a child growing up after the war, I knew some of the people connected with Marianne and the "Bund". It was Bund members who provided shelter to Marianne while she was on the run from 1943 to 1945, thus risking their own lives and security. The Bund was a small but committed group of humanitarians and socialists who helped numerous victims of the Holocaust. One of the survivors protected by the Bund, Lisa Jacob, became a friend of my family. She influenced my life more than she ever knew and also much more than even I understood for many years while growing up. However, my interest in this extraordinary book grew with each page that I

was reading. It was difficult to put down. A Past in Hiding has a lot to offer to the reader. Roseman's research into the life and times of Marianne brought him together with her and her family members as recent as the late 1990s. He also interviewed numerous other "witnesses" of her life and survival during the Nazi period. It was fortuitous that so many family documents as well as official records survived. Roseman studied diaries, correspondence and countless historical documents. His notes and the comprehensive bibliography reflect the thorough research that has gone into the book. As a result, at some level A Past in Hiding reads like a detective story, fully absorbing and dramatic. At another level, it is a very personal and critical account of Marianne and her contemporaries. At a third level, it is a study into the changed memory phenomenon, which can occur as a result of traumatic experiences. Last but not least, Roseman introduces the reader to the almost unknown movement of the "Bund" and their role in supporting victims of the Holocaust. An extraordinary book that should have a place in the mind and heart of many people.

Of all the stories I have read about U-boat Jews, this one surprised me the most. A daughter of privilege, Marianne Strauss watched as little by little her family's position--initially protected by Nazi contacts--and fortune diminished until every avenue of escape was closed. When the SS finally came for her, her parents and brother, she managed to escape and began two+ years of hiding in plain sight, successfully aided by an organization called the Bund (no relation to Kulturbund) as well as her own seemingly limitless daring and resourcefulness. Having survived the war, one of her first tasks was to help disillusioned, emotionally crushed German youth. Shortly thereafter, she was contacted by a British military physician regarding the location of some of her surviving family--and Captain Dr. Basil Ellenbogen soon asked her to marry him. Marianne eventually settled in England with her husband where they raised a son, who later helped author Mark Roseman complete his research for this book after Marianne died in late 1996, and a daughter, who succumbed to anorexia at 18. But what distinguished Marianne from other U-boats was how she came to see herself NOT as a pursued Jew but rather as just another German struggling thru the last days of the war--she never gave herself away because she completely removed the frightened look of the persecuted from her demeanor. She openly did everything forbidden to the Jews--road public transit, ate in restaurants, walked when and where she chose, went to the air raid shelters along with everyone else where she nursed the ill and cared for children, even obtained food rations--all without any official identification papers! Her boldness got her out of some very tight situations when she would laugh and joke with, or confront, as the situation required, Nazis or their citizen sympathizers. She was wary but she never cowered, and thus her "disguise" proved impenetrable. Even after the war

and for the rest of her life, she never drew attention to herself as a victim or sought its special status. This is the story of an amazing journey, and well worth the time it will take to read it.

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