

influence and experience of the wars on the community; specifically, the Norwegian Naval camp which was reputedly located at Lunenburg to ensure the allegiance of those with German ancestry. However, these are minor omissions even though they might bring a more human balance by focussing on elements of the area's past that were not entirely positive.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for NSARM in creating this site was to gauge the audience. How do you make a site interesting and informative for native Lunenburgers as well as viewers from elsewhere in the country and around the world? The community truly has drawing power out of all proportion with its size (approximately 2600 people). Since it is also the homeport of the famous schooner, Bluenose, and recently in the *New York Times Magazine* shared top billing with Beijing, Costa Rica, and Seville, it clearly has a global audience.

Truth be told, NSARM did a terrific job. They consulted with the curator of the local Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, Mr. Ralph Getson, and prepared a very detailed bibliography for online users. However, a number of the pictures of houses and public buildings had me scratching my head. [Was this because they were poorly identified?] I kept trying to figure out where the structures were located or why they did not look familiar to me. Ultimately, I have decided that change is a constant even in tradition-steeped Lunenburg.

The exhibit's title of "Challenge and Change" is effectively represented in the content and NSARM effectively has recounted the story of the town that has long purported to be the "fishing capital of Canada." The exhibit's title fits "some good you"³ as the old time Lunenburgers would say.

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Open Hearts – Closed Doors. CANADIAN HERITAGE INFORMATION NETWORK VIRTUAL MUSEUM WEB SITE.

<<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/orphans/english/index.html>>, ongoing.

The viewer who chooses to navigate the many avenues of "Open Hearts – Closed Doors" will be richly rewarded for the time spent doing so. This is an exhibit that instructs on many levels, using a wide variety of approaches to the subject matter, and employing a roster of sophisticated Web design techniques.

The goal of the exhibit is to tell the story of the immigration to Canada of over 1000 orphaned Jewish survivor youths immediately after the Second

3 Lewis J. Poteet, *The South Shore Phrase Book* (Hantsport, N.S., 1983).

World War. During the war years, Canada's restrictive immigration policies kept out of Canada all but a fraction of the persecuted Jews attempting to flee the Nazi regime. These European teenagers, who had spent the war in hiding or in concentration camps, were finally admitted to Canada in 1948 under a special Order-in-Council negotiated as a result of lobbying by the Canadian Jewish Congress.

The story of the Canadian Jewish community's struggle with Canadian immigration policy has been thoroughly exposed by Irving Abella and Harold Troper in their well-known book *None is Too Many, Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933–1945* (Lester and Orpen Dennys, Publishers, Toronto, first printing, 1983.) The experiences of the orphans, first addressed by Ben Lappin in his book *The Redeemed Children*, published in 1963,¹ were described in much greater detail in the 1996 book by Vancouver author Fraidie Martz called *Open Your Hearts: The Story of the Jewish War Orphans in Canada*.² It was Martz's work that led to the creation, at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, of the "Open Hearts – Closed Doors" museum exhibit that formed the basis of this virtual exhibit. Soon after the launch of the Vancouver exhibit, in 2000, Jack Kuper, one of the orphans himself and the author of two books of wartime and post-war memoirs, completed his film *Orphans of the Storm*, a ninety-minute exploration of this story featuring interviews with several of the group.

"Open Hearts – Closed Doors" draws on all the above sources, even using clips from the Kuper film to enhance the biographical segments. The approach taken by the site creators highlights the personal experiences of the members of the group, using the testimonies of eight of the orphans as the central core of the narrative.

The site (<<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/orphans/english/index.html>>, or in French, <<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/orphans/french/index.html>>), opens with a brief but evocative statement of the exhibit theme: "During the horror of the Nazi Holocaust, European Jewish families were torn apart ... After the war, a group of young Jewish orphans immigrated to Canada from the devastation of Europe as part of the War Orphans Project. Using their own words and artifacts, this virtual exhibit tells the story of the orphans' courage and resilience and of the tireless efforts of the people who helped them." This is immediately followed by a universalistic statement that, unlike many other attempts of this nature, manages to sound a meaningful note: "It is as much a story about the present as it is about the past. It is a warning against human indifference and the inaction of the world. Over half of the world's more than 20 million refugees are children."

1 Ben Lappin, *The Redeemed Children: The Story of the Rescue of War Orphans by the Jewish Community of Canada* (Toronto, 1963).

2 Fraidie Martz, *Open Your Hearts: The Story of the Jewish War Orphans in Canada* (Montreal, 1996).

As noted above, the content of this Web site is derived from the exhibit *Open Hearts – Closed Doors*, which was opened at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre in 1997, curated by Roberta Kremer, Fraidie Martz, and Frieda Miller.³ It is indubitably due to the pre-existence of such a strong base of “museum-ready” information that the site is as good as it is. With an established storyline already edited for clarity and conciseness, and with informational content that was already discussed and tested, the designers of the site were able to turn their energies to what is unique about a virtual museum. This is a medium that allows for cross-referencing linkages to be made immediately to related themes, and for explanatory notes to be attached without breaking the flow of a sentence. Elements can be brought forward or sent to the background of the viewing experience based on the user’s interests. Photo captions are available with the wave of a mouse, rather than laboriously accessed on a numbered page and all photos are easily enlarged so that they can be studied without strain.

This being said, some of the technical tricks that accomplish these feats can be a jump ahead for the less agile reader. Frequent use of the mouse-over feature on the site makes it very dynamic, changing constantly as the viewer passes the cursor over the texts and links. At times this responsiveness can be a little disconcerting, especially when viewing details of the images linked to the biographies and themes. With almost no encouragement from the user the image caption alternates with an enlarged version of the image, a translation of the image text, or a view of the image’s reverse side. It also appears to be impossible to capture and copy or print these mouse-over captions.

The site uses QuickTime, Acrobat Reader, and Flash technology. Although, like any new site, it is optimal to view it on an up-to-date computer system, it also loads fairly quickly using a slower connection speed, and most of the site “works” for a viewer not running Flash. The information on the site is easily accessed, with navigation further facilitated by a link on the home page titled “Finding your way through this site.” This page explains that the site consists of three sections: the Orphans’ Own Stories; “Themes,” which describe the historical context of their stories and display images – most of them from the orphans themselves – that illustrate and personalize the historical events; and finally, “Learning Resources for Teachers.” The orphans’ biographies are presented in short linked segments. At least one photograph or illustrative document accompanies most of these segments, adding additional depth and poignancy to the brief words in the testimonies. Each testimony covers the pre-war period, various stages in the individuals’ war experiences, the immediate post-war and immigration periods, and some comments about their subsequent life in Canada. Here are a few excerpts in the orphans’ words:

³ Information about this exhibit can be found on the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre Web site at <http://www.vhec.org/exhibits/past/open_hearts.html>.

I was eight years old in 1939 when my city was bombed and occupied by the Nazis. I thought that it was a game until I saw a man shot to death. I matured forty years in that instant. (Robbie Waisman)

I was dragged out of my bunk by two large prisoners. ... They gave me a metal dish, ordered me to get in line every time I saw food being given out and to eat it all no matter how vile it might be. They also told me to never cry again. I was petrified of them. When they were satisfied that I was really paying attention, they softly told me that I looked like a strong and resilient boy and therefore I must do everything in my power to survive and tell the world what happened to our people in Auschwitz-Birkenau. (Bill Gluck)

We arrived in Regina on a brilliantly sunny and cold day. We were met by several of the city's "pillars of the community," who took us to breakfast. When we were served half-grapefruits, all we could do is look at them. We had never seen grapefruits before. None of us knew what to do with them. (Celina Lieberman)

The "Themes" section of the site depicts the historical context in more general terms, using a series of linked artifact and document images to enhance the content of each concise segment. A section called "Canadian Immigration Overview" is included in order to present this particular immigration story in its socio-cultural perspective. Here a timeline briefly illustrates the experiences of some of Canada's other major immigrant groups over the past century, and includes short references to the discrimination faced by Chinese, East-Indian, and other groups.

Under the section of the site titled "Learning Resources" one finds a wealth of resources which present the material on the site in handout and flashcard form suitable for use in a classroom setting. Each artifact and photograph on the site is given fuller treatment here, thus adding significantly to the amount of information on the Web site. This section also provides a good bibliography, as well as links to related resources.

Another educational feature of the exhibit's texts is the glossary function, which links certain words in the text to a sentence or paragraph of explanation which is accessed by passing the cursor over the highlighted word. Glossaries are a common feature of the Virtual Museum Web sites supported and hosted by the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) at <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/>, but each site has found its own way of conveying this information. The mouse-over solution chosen for the "Open Hearts" exhibit is the most easily accessible, as the viewer does not have to leave the page to see a definition, but needs only read and close a small pop-up box. The definitions include place names of concentration camps and Displaced Persons facilities, Nazi era phrases such as "S.S.," and many Jewish terms. The definitions are for the most part short, clear, and useful. My one quibble is that a few of the

Jewish terms selected, such as “Jew,” “Hebrew,” and “synagogue” seem, even for the non-Jewish reader, to be so well known as to be rather unnecessary. But perhaps it is better not to assume any prior knowledge by the Web surfing reader, in a time where a young student may know how to maneuver a mouse and look up information on the Web long before having the background to understand what he or she is reading.

On the credits page the site’s design team is listed as “Multi-Media Production, 7th Floor Media, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia.” The implication is that this is a student-based team using the newest Web design techniques and the enthusiasm of young designers at the start of their careers. This spirit comes through in the look and feel of the site.

I often find that virtual museums let the viewer down once the first frames are past. Rare is the on-line museum that can educate and move a viewer as much as a physical, three dimensional museum experience can. “Open Hearts – Closed Doors” is an on-line museum exhibit that does fulfill this goal, and then goes beyond the museum itself to further educate the viewer and assist the teacher.

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