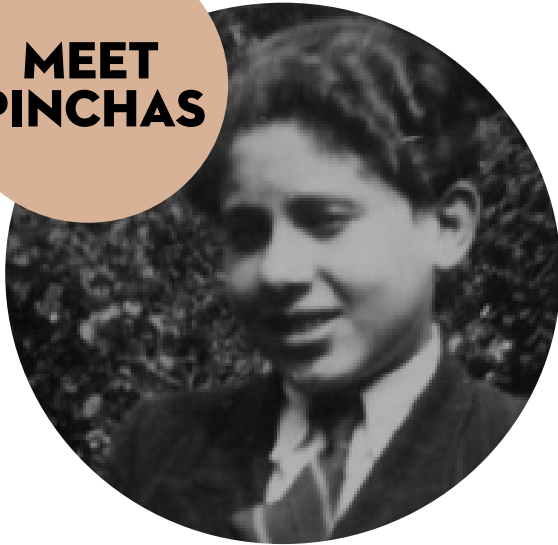


MEET PINCHAS



BIOGRAPHY:

Pinchas Gutter was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1932. He and his twin sister, Sabina, grew up in a loving middle-class family that strictly observed Jewish laws and Hasidic customs. Pinchas was seven years old when the Germans invaded Poland. After his father was brutally beaten by Nazis, the family fled from Lodz to Warsaw, where they were later forced to move into the Warsaw ghetto. Following the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Pinchas and his family were deported to Majdanek, a concentration camp and killing site, where Pinchas's parents and sister were immediately murdered. After two or three months at Majdanek, Pinchas was deported to several other concentration camps, where he had to work as a slave labourer. After surviving a death march, Pinchas was liberated in Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia. As time passed, Pinchas began to be haunted by nightmares and flashbacks. Pinchas's journey after the Holocaust took him to England, France, Israel, Brazil and South Africa before he finally found his true home in Toronto, Ontario.

Pinchas Gutter is a Holocaust survivor who immigrated to Canada after the war and settled in Toronto. You can learn about his experiences by reading his memoir, *Memories in Focus*, or on the digital resource Re:Collection.

Below is some background that will help you understand Pinchas's story.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

Poland is a country in Central Europe, located between Germany and Russia, that had a large Jewish population before World War II. Jews faced **antisemitism** and discrimination in Poland, but many also participated in Polish culture and society. **World War II** began with the **German invasion and occupation of Poland** in September 1939. The German occupiers began persecuting Jews and forcing them into ghettos. **Ghettos** were small, crowded areas with poor living conditions that were guarded by Germans. **Warsaw** was the capital of pre-war Poland, and the Warsaw ghetto was the largest ghetto in Nazi-occupied Europe. In 1942, Polish Jews began to be deported to Nazi camps and killing centres that were located in Poland. In April 1943, some of the Jews still living in the Warsaw ghetto staged an uprising against the Germans, but it was crushed, and all the remaining Jews were killed or deported to Nazi camps, some to **Majdanek**, which functioned as a concentration camp, a labour camp, a transit camp and a killing site. Approximately **3,000,000** Polish Jews were killed in the Holocaust, including Pinchas's parents and sister.

“How anyone could possibly have survived in the Warsaw ghetto is still an absolute mystery to me. In order to survive at that time, my emotions and feelings shut down and to some extent have remained that way to this day. I cannot allow myself to let go, to be spontaneous. I always feel a sense of uncertainty and fear.”

—PINCHAS GUTTER

