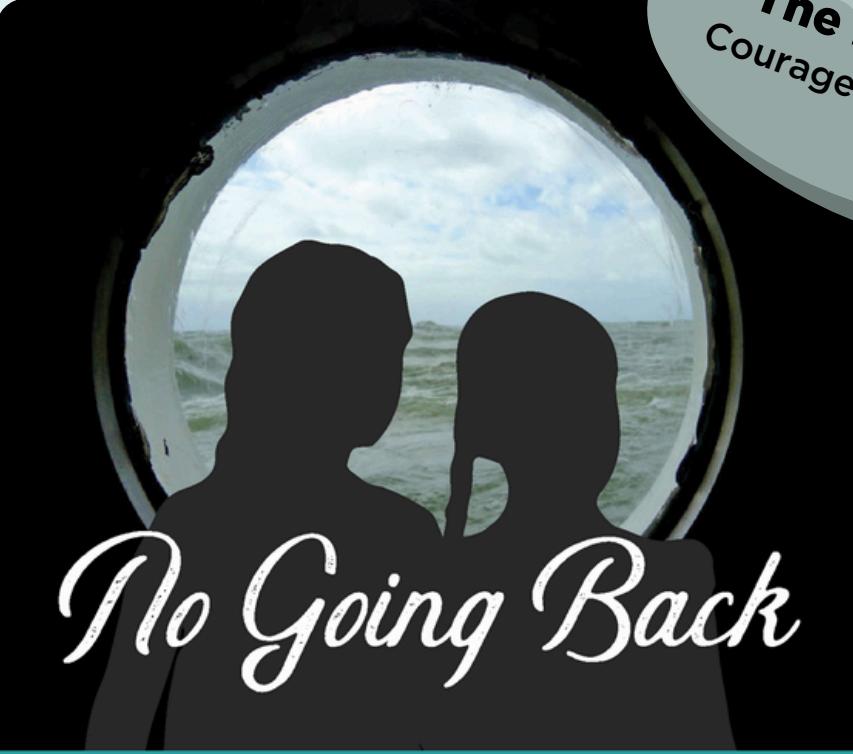




**The Big Idea:**  
Courageous Choices



A black silhouette of two figures, a man and a woman, looking out from a circular porthole. They are facing each other, with their hands near their faces. The porthole is set into a dark, circular frame. Outside the porthole, the ocean and a cloudy sky are visible.

# No Going Back

THE VOYAGE OF THE MS ST. LOUIS

Written by Dwayne Hartford

Directed by Katie McFadzen

Performed by Debra K. Stevens

# About Us

This project was made possible by an Arizona Humanities Grant. Childsplay is proud to partner with the Phoenix Holocaust Association and the Hilton Family Holocaust Education Center (a program of the Arizona Jewish Historical Society) to provide these materials to educators.



Our mission is to ignite imagination, wonder and joy by creating strikingly original theatre and learning experiences that inspire young minds to explore and soar.

For more information: [childplayaz.org](http://childplayaz.org)



**Phoenix Holocaust Association**  
*Survivors, Generations After & Friends*

As a unique, regional resource for Holocaust education and remembrance, PHA promotes human dignity by inspiring people to speak out and take action against hate, bigotry, intolerance, and discrimination. As a partnership of Holocaust survivors, their descendants and the larger community, we honor the memory and legacy of the survivors and victims, promote awareness of the Holocaust, provide education of this and other genocides, and contribute to tikkun olam, repair of the world.

For more information: [phxha.com](http://phxha.com)



Our mission is to be a resource to teach about the Holocaust with the goal of inspiring students and other visitors to become advocates that act to work toward a world without antisemitism, hatred and bigotry. Through interactive exhibits and personal stories, we honor the memory of the 6 million who died at the hands of the Nazi perpetrators and celebrate the resilience and the courage of the survivors who exemplify the value that Judaism places on “not standing idly by” through being an upstander, never a bystander. Join us in exploring this critical chapter in history.

For more information: [hfhecaz.org](http://hfhecaz.org)

# What the Play is About

Majka is a girl whose life is forever changed by an ocean voyage. Majka is taken out of school to sail with her parents as they work aboard the St. Louis, a German ocean liner on a special trip in 1939. The passengers onboard are 900 Jewish refugees seeking escape from life under Nazi rule. Majka has been raised in this world, but all she's been taught is now challenged by a growing friendship with a young Jewish passenger, Liesl. Majka must decide which side she is on. Meanwhile, the ship is being denied entry into any port, raising the prospect of the refugees having to go back to the horrors of Nazi Germany. Set during this historic tragic voyage, the play explores themes of friendship, prejudice, antisemitism, heroism, and culpability.



# Themes of the Show

- Friendship
- Identity
- Antisemitism and prejudice
- Culpability



## Talk About It!

### Start a conversation before the show:

- ★ This play takes place during the mass exodus of Jews from Europe in the lead-up to World War II. What factors might have prompted them to leave their homes?
- ★ How do you think the performer of this one-person show will create the world of the M.S. St. Louis in your classroom?
- ★ Have you ever had to choose between being an upstander or a bystander? What did you do?

### Start a conversation after the show:

- ★ This performance featured one performer portraying many characters. What did she do to make each one distinct? How would the experience have been different if there were multiple performers?
- ★ Many of the characters in the play were real people, and we know what happened to them after the St. Louis returned to Europe. Liesl was fictional - what do you imagine her fate was?
- ★ The U.S. government would not budge on admitting the refugees even though they were so close to Miami. Why? What would you have done if you were in a position of power?
- ★ Why is Majka so insistent on being seen as German rather than Polish?
- ★ Why does Majka fail to stand up to Herr Scheindeck for so much of the play? What makes her change her mind?

# Discover It!

## Key Vocabulary



- **ANTISEMITISM** - hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic, racial group.
- **NAZISM** - political principles of the National Socialist German Workers Party, shortened to Nazi. The Nazi Party was a fascist extremist party.
- **NUREMBERG LAWS** - on September 15, 1935, the Nazi regime announced two new laws related to race: The Reich Citizenship Law and The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor. These laws informally became known as the Nuremberg Laws or Nuremberg Race Laws. According to these laws, a person with three or four Jewish grandparents was a Jew.
- **KRISTALLNACHT** - literally, "Night of Crystal." Often referred to as the "Night of Broken Glass," the name refers to the wave of violent anti-Jewish pogroms which took place on November 9 and 10, 1938. This wave of violence took place throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and in areas of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia recently occupied by German troops.
- **CONCENTRATION CAMPS** - Nazi Germany (1933-1945) imprisoned people on a massive scale in a vast network of camps and other detention sites. There were tens of thousands of Nazi camps that belonged to multiple different camp systems. More than 1/3 of the refugees aboard the St. Louis were imprisoned in concentration camps after being sent back to Europe.
- **IMMIGRATION POLICIES** - govern who can enter, stay, and become a citizen.
- **ISOLATIONISM** - a policy of remaining apart from the affairs or interests of other groups, especially the political affairs of other countries.
- **NEUTRALITY** - a country's policy of not engaging in international conflict or war and remaining impartial.
- **REFUGEE** - someone who has been forced to flee their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution, war, or violence. They are unable or unwilling to return due to these threats.
- **DISEMBARKMENT** - the act of leaving a ship.
- **OCEAN LINER** - a type of passenger ship primarily used for transportation across seas or oceans.
- **TRANS-ATLANTIC ROUTE** - the escape route taken by refugees aboard the St. Louis across the Atlantic Ocean (from Europe to Cuba/the U.S.).

# Discover It! True Stories of the St. Louis



## Gustav Schröder, Captain of the MS St. Louis

Captain Schröder was a real person who attempted to save the 937 Jewish German passengers on his ship. He is recognized by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, for being Righteous Among Nations, an honor bestowed to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. His efforts helped to save many lives.



*Pastel portraits of Gustav are found within the Robert Sutz We Remember Collection. Arizona artist Robert Sutz has spent the past 30 years working on life masks, pastel portraits, and description scenes.*



*AZJHS-HFHEC has in its archives a Nazi Captain dagger, identical to the one Gustav Schröder carried.*

### Did you know?

A person who is recognized as Righteous Among Nations is awarded a medal in their name, a certificate of honor, and the privilege of having the name added to those on the Wall of Honor at Yad Vashem in Israel.

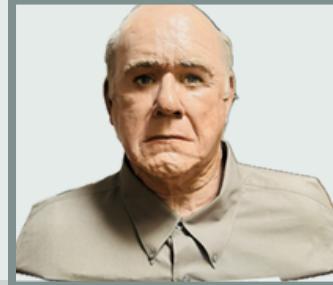


# Discover It! True Stories of the St. Louis



## Rudolph "Rudy" Jacobson, Passenger on the MS St. Louis

Rudy was only an infant at the time of his family's survival experience. The image to the right is his life mask; he sat for AZ artist Robert Sutz on multiple occasions.



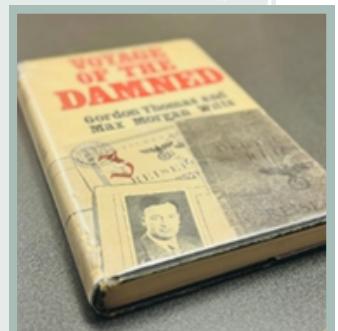
*Photograph of Rudolph "Rudy" Jacobson and his family relaxing in Bamberg, Germany, ca. 1936 (Arizona Jewish Historical Society).*

*Early 1939 Jewish Identification Card for Rudolph Jacobson's mother.*



### Did you know?

Published in 1974, Gordon Thomas & Max Morgan Witts re-created history in this meticulous reconstruction of the voyage of the "St. Louis." Every word of their account is true: the German High Command's motives in granting permission for the "mission of mercy;" the confrontations between the refugees and the German crewmen; the suicide attempts among the passengers; and the attitudes of those who might have averted the catastrophe but didn't.



### Rudy's Story

Rudy shares his copy of the book, along with a detailed account of his experiences, here:

Part 1: <https://youtu.be/LsOpVslnrfs?si=vCQuYRZFfhINXi6o>

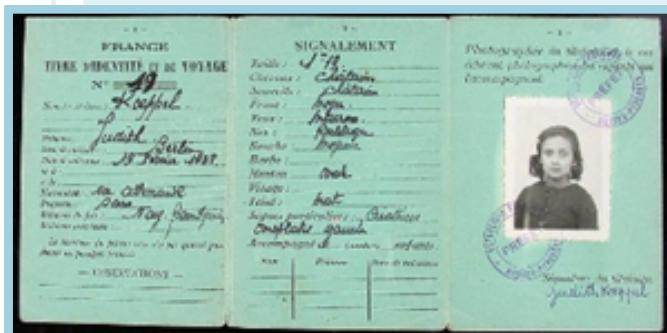
Part 2: <https://youtu.be/A24PM7hCM7E?si=Edx--53gRtDCOOen>

# Discover It! True Stories of the St. Louis



## Judith Koeppel Steel, Passenger on the MS St. Louis

Judith escaped Germany aboard the St. Louis, turned away by Cuba & US – only to be sent back to Europe. She returned to Belgium and was imprisoned in the Gurs internment camp and then hidden by a French Catholic couple who were recognized as Righteous Among the Nations decades later. She resides in New York but her nephew, Micha, lives in Tucson.



Travel documents  
for Judith Koeppel.



### Judith's Story

Watch Judith tell her story here:  
<https://mjhny.org/blog/stories-survive-judith-koeppel-steel/>

# Discover It! True Stories of the St. Louis



## Ruth Blumenstock Mandel, Passenger on the MS St. Louis

Ruth B. Mandel was born in Vienna in 1938 to Mechel Blumenstock (b. 1902-1975) and Lea Blumenstock (nee Schmelzer, 1914-2005). Mechel was imprisoned in Dachau during Kristallnacht, and Lea managed to secure his release by obtaining a visa for him to emigrate to Shanghai. In the meantime, Lea's brother, Gabriel Schmelzer, who was living in New York, arranged for the family to receive Cuban visas and purchased three tickets for them on the MS St. Louis. After the ship was turned away from Cuba, the Blumenstocks sought refuge in England. The Blumenstocks stayed in England until immigrating to the United States in 1947.



Ruth devoted her life to education, activism, and embodying the lessons of the Holocaust. She was the vice chair of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum during its formative years and played a leading role in shaping the institution and launching its educational outreach and genocide prevention efforts.

### Ruth's Story

Explore Ruth's story through this collection of her papers:

[https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn521784?  
rsc=266028&cv=5&x=1148&y=761&z=2.8e-4](https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn521784?rsc=266028&cv=5&x=1148&y=761&z=2.8e-4)

# Discover It! True Stories of the St. Louis



## Seligmann Family, Passengers on the MS St. Louis

The Seligmanns were the family of Phoenix resident Ralph Seligmann.

Three members traveled on the St. Louis:

Siegfried Seligmann - Ralph's grandfather

Alma Seligmann - Ralph's grandmother

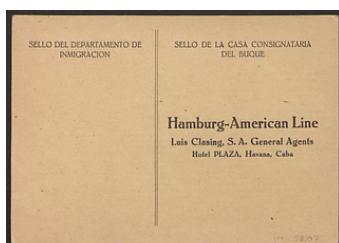
Ursula Seligmann Lowenstein - Ralph's aunt

### Their Story

Ursula Lowenstein was born in Ronnenberg, Germany in 1923 to cattle dealer Siegfried Seligmann and his wife Alma. Siegfried was sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp during Kristallnacht and purchased tickets for the MS St. Louis with his wife and daughter upon his release. When the ship was returned to Europe, the Seligmanns disembarked in Belgium and lived in Brussels until the German invasion. Siegfried was arrested as an enemy alien and transported to the internment camp at Les Milles, France. Alma and Ursula followed him to France to try to find him but were arrested in Paris and detained in the internment camp at Gurs.

In 1941 they received their visas for the United States, were reunited in Marseilles, and sailed from Lisbon for New York that November. They arrived in America just days before the Pearl Harbor attack, settled in Washington, DC, and were reunited with Ursula's sister - and Ralph's mother - Else (1920-2003), who had succeeded in immigrating to America on her own in 1939.

### Photos of the Seligmanns' transit tickets



# Discover It! True Stories of the St. Louis



## Freya Maier, Passenger on the MS St. Louis

Freya Maier boarded the St. Louis in hopes of finding safety. The Jewish refugee made a purchase of a velvet dress. She planned to wear it to a party aboard the St. Louis. Freya, her husband Ludwig, and their daughter Sonja were among the 937 passengers on board fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe. Eventually the family arrived back in Europe and was accepted into Great Britain.



### Freya's Story

The dress was donated to the United States Holocaust Museum by Freya's daughters. Watch a video about Freya, her dress, and her refugee story here:  
<https://www.tiktok.com/@holocaustmuseum/video/7381479818430254378>



# Discover It! World Leaders

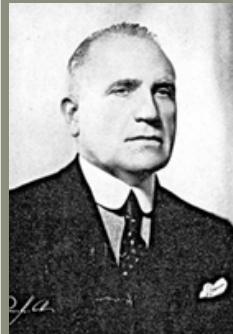


## Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States



Roosevelt sought a solution to the broader refugee crisis but was unwilling to risk his political future by publicly intervening in an unpopular cause. He quietly supported negotiations between advocates for the St. Louis and European governments, but would not bypass U.S. immigration quotas to accept the refugees.

## Federico Laredo Brú, President of Cuba



When the St. Louis anchored in Havana Harbor on May 27, Laredo Brú refused it permission to dock. Weeks earlier, his government had invalidated the Cuban

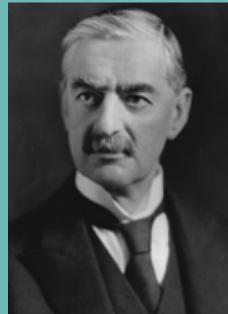
landing certificates held by the passengers. Ultimately, 28 people were permitted to disembark at Havana, with an additional passenger evacuated and hospitalized in Cuba after attempting suicide. Laredo Brú engaged in negotiations over admitting the remaining passengers, but soon ordered the ship to leave Cuban waters. On June 6, he ended the negotiations and the ship sailed back to Europe.

## William Lyon Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada



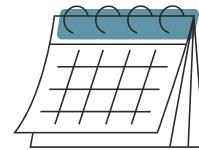
After the St. Louis was turned away from the US, a group of prominent Canadian academics, activists, and clergy tried to persuade King to admit the passengers. King believed they were not Canada's problem, but asked his top advisers to consider the request. Frederick Blair, Canada's Director of Immigration, was hostile to Jewish immigration and persuaded King not to intervene.

## Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of Great Britain



Chamberlain agreed to take in 288 (32 percent) of the passengers, who disembarked and travelled to the UK via other steamers. After the British stepped up, the

Netherlands, Belgium, and France agreed to give refuge to the remaining passengers. All of those admitted to Great Britain survived the war except for one, who was killed in an air raid in 1940. Chamberlain also authorized the Kindertransport program that rescued 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi Germany and Austria following Kristallnacht.



While the escalation of anti-Jewish actions in Nazi Germany unfolded over five years, the voyage of the MS St. Louis transpired in only 35 days. In just over a month, the ship set sail in search of refuge, encountered uncertainty and rejection on a global scale, and ultimately returned to Europe.

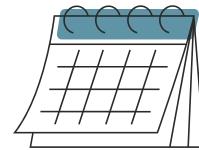
## November 9-10, 1938

Kristallnacht, a nationwide anti-Jewish riot coordinated by top Nazi leaders, takes place across Germany. In just one night, thousands of Jewish-owned businesses and homes are looted and vandalized, more than 1,400 synagogues are burned, 26,000 Jewish men are arrested and sent to concentration camps, and hundreds of Jews are killed. The Nazi regime orders the Jewish community to pay for the damage and imposes an additional fine of one billion Reichsmarks for their “hostile attitude toward the German people and Reich.” Many Jews begin looking for a way out of Germany.

## May 5, 1939

Cuban President Federico Laredo Brú passes Decree 937, which closes a key loophole in Cuba’s immigration policy. Previous policy required a visa and a fee for refugees to enter, but just a landing certificate for tourists - and did not define the difference between the two groups. Director-General of Immigration Manuel Benítez González has been exploiting the loophole by selling landing certificates, which are officially free, and pocketing the proceeds. When other officials catch wind of his scheme, they convince President Brú pass the new decree and subsequently invalidate the permits.

937 passengers have booked passage on the MS St. Louis, which will sail from Germany to Cuba in just over a week. Most are Jews seeking refuge from Nazi persecution. Just 28 hold valid Cuban or U.S. immigration visas; the remainder hold “Benítez Landing Permits” and plan to enter Cuba as tourists and remain there until they can secure U.S. visas. The travelers are not told of the policy change.



## May 8, 1939

In response to reports about the impending voyage, former Cuban President Grau San Martin sponsors an antisemitic demonstration in Havana. The demonstration draws 40,000 spectators, with thousands more listening on the radio. It is the largest antisemitic demonstration in Cuban history. During the rally, Cubans are urged to "fight the Jews until the last one is driven out." It is believed that Nazi agents in the country inflamed rumors that Jewish refugees would steal Cuban jobs.

## May 13, 1939

The Hamburg America transatlantic liner MS St. Louis sails from Hamburg, Germany destined for Havana, Cuba. Of the voyage's beginning, passenger Sol Messinger writes, "We all were standing at the railing looking at Germany getting a little farther and farther away, and my father started crying. And my mother looked at him and said, 'why are you crying? We're finally together, we're leaving Germany.' 'Well of course you're right. But I'm crying because we're leaving so many of our relatives here and God only knows when we'll see them again.'"

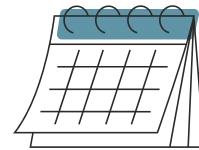


## May 14-26, 1939

The passengers of the St. Louis travel in comfort, dining well and offered recreation including games, athletic activity, dancing and swimming in the ship's pool. Captain Gustav Schröder, who does not sympathize with Nazi sentiment, removes photos of Hitler during prayers and orders his crew to treat the Jewish passengers with respect.

Video footage from aboard the ship:

<https://youtu.be/OrodrSA60gk>



## May 27, 1939



The MS St. Louis reaches Havana, but only the 28 who hold visas - 22 Jewish refugees, 4 Spaniards and 2 Cuban nationals - are permitted to disembark. The rest of the passengers are ordered to stay on the ship. For the next half dozen days, friends and relatives of passengers who are already living in Cuba circle the ship in small boats, offering food and words of encouragement.

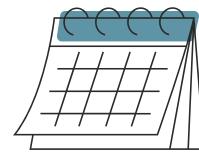
## May 28, 1939

The passengers are told that Cuba has invalidated their visas. A representative of the US-based Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), a private relief organization, arrives to negotiate with President Brú, but is unable to convince him to admit the remaining passengers.

## June 2, 1939

President Brú orders the St. Louis to leave Havana Harbor. For four days, the ship meanders along the Florida coast as negotiations continue. Captain Schröder considers running ship aground to allow the refugees to escape, but the U.S. Coast Guard shadows the ship and prevents this. The passengers wire a plea to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt for his intervention. FDR does not reply, and the U.S. State Department stands by its position that the passengers will have to wait their turn for American visas. Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King also denies appeals.

Sol Messinger recalls seeing Miami, just 90 miles from Cuba, from the ship: "I remember it was dusk, and my father and I were standing at the railing. I saw some lights in the distance, and I said to my father, 'What are those lights?' And he said "Oh, that's a city in the United States called Miami.' So, I've been in Miami since then and whenever I walk along the beach and look out at the water, I get this very strange feeling because now I'm where I was dying to be in 1939."



## June 6, 1939

The St. Louis begins its voyage back toward Europe. One passenger writes: "The resolve of most people on board is to die rather than to see Hamburg again." Captain Schröder, pained to consider the idea of returning his passengers to Germany, considers running the ship aground off the coast of England or France.

## June 7, 1939

The New York Times publishes the following item: "One of 'the saddest ship afloat today' - the Hamburg American liner the St. Louis reverses course back toward Germany after a tragic week of frustration. No plague ship ever received a sorrier welcome. At Havana, the St. Louis's decks became a stage for human misery. There seems to be no help for them now. The St. Louis will soon be home with her cargo of despair."

## June 7-16, 1939

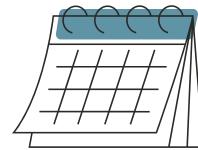
As the MS St. Louis navigates back to Europe, the JDC negotiates with European nations. They secure the vast sum of \$500,000 (nearly \$10.4 million today) to convince England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands to each accept a portion of the passengers. "Our gratitude is as immense as the ocean on which we are now floating," the St. Louis passengers cable in response.



## June 17, 1939

The St. Louis docks in Antwerp, Belgium with 907 remaining passengers. No one is ultimately forced to return to Germany.

- Great Britain takes in 288 passengers
- The Netherlands admits 181 passengers
- Belgium accepts 214 passengers
- France provides refuge to 244 passengers



*Map showing the voyage of the St. Louis - May 13-June 17, 1939*

## **The Aftermath**

254 of the passengers who make it through the St. Louis ordeal are later killed after the German military invades the nations in which they have resettled and they are deported to concentration and death camps. This number includes:

- 84 who had been in Belgium
- 84 who had found refuge in Holland
- 86 who had been admitted to France

## **March 11, 1993**

Yad Vashem recognizes Captain Gustav Schröder (posthumously) as Righteous Among the Nations. Had the St. Louis headed straight back to a German harbor, its Jewish passengers would have all certainly ended up in Nazi concentration camps. It was, thus, primarily thanks to Captain Schröder's courage and determination not to abandon his Jewish passengers to their fate that many of them survived.

# Create It!



## Captain's Journal Entry

Imagine you are Gustav Schröder, Captain of the M.S. St. Louis. How would you describe the journey and the choices you made along the way? Write a journal entry that gives a glimpse into your inner life. You can use the Timeline of the Journey to decide when your entry is being written. For an aged and “authentic” look, use tea to age your paper!

You will need: ★ 2-4 black tea bags

★ Paper

★ Pens, paintbrushes, and cups

★ Paper towels

1

Soak the tea bags in some water. Use paintbrushes to paint the tea onto paper. For an added effect, you might choose to crumple and then flatten out your paper.

2

While the paper dries, brainstorm and draft what Captain Schröder might write in a journal entry.

3

When you're ready and the paper is dry, use your best handwriting to write your final draft on the stained paper in pen! Optional: share your journal entry with a friend.

### When writing, consider:

- Schröder's empathy for Jewish refugees and his sense of responsibility
- Refusal of governments to accept Jewish refugees due to antisemitism, anti-immigration policies, indifference, and internal politics
- Schröder's commitment to finding a safe haven for his passengers

# Imagine It!



## Object Pantomime: One Treasured Object

Use pantomime to explore an imaginary object with detail and emotion to strengthen students' connection to the world of the play.

1

### Introduce the pantomime prompt

"In "No Going Back," passengers on the MS St. Louis had to pack their entire lives into just a few suitcases as they fled Germany. Imagine you had to leave home quickly and could bring only one treasured object. What object would you choose, and why does it matter to you?"

2

### In their own space, guide students through discovering and examining an imagined personal object:

- Lift or uncover it from behind or beside you.
- Hold it with emotion—feel what it means to you.
- Define its size and shape using your hands.
- Explore sensory details: How does it look, feel, smell, or sound?
- Show how you interact with it or why it matters.

3

### Optional sharing

Invite a few students to briefly show or describe their object using pantomime. Emphasize clear physical choices and emotional connection.



4

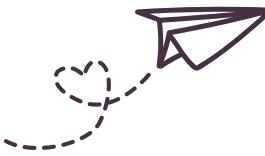
### Pack the suitcase

Ask students to imagine a suitcase in front of them—the one they'll take as they begin a new life. They should:

- Carefully place their treasured object inside.
- Close and secure the suitcase with intention (zip, latch, lock).
- Place the suitcase somewhere "safe" in their personal space (under seat, beside desk, etc.).

# Share It!

1



## One Treasured Object Poetry

Dig deeper into your thoughts and feelings about the treasured object you pantomimed during the “Imagine It!” activity and use it as inspiration for a poem!

1

On a piece of paper, write down the first thing that comes to mind in response to these prompts about your treasured object. Short notes are fine, it does not need to be complete sentences. Use your pantomime experience as inspiration!

- What is your object? (use adjectives i.e. a smooth glass ball, a bent Pokemon card)
- Describe it using your senses (It looks like...feels like...sounds like...)
- How did you get it?
- Why is it important to you?
- Why is it the one thing you would take with you?
- How would you feel if it was lost or broken beyond repair?

2

Take 3 minutes to write 3 sentences about the object using your notes.

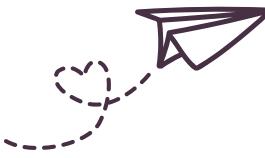
- Example: My father was obsessed with strange things, like suitcases, lighters and watches. He gave me his watch with a real leather strap which was a luxury in those days. He told me he'd bought it from a man in a pub and discovered it was from a jewelry shop robbery in London.

3

Now find and remove the "little words" (prepositions, conjunctions) and unimportant words (in this situation). Remove everything other than the bigger important words in your sentences. You will be left with fewer words that convey the most meaning and can begin to be arranged into a poem:

*My father  
Obsessed  
Strange things  
Suitcases; lighters; watches  
a real leather strap  
a luxury in those days  
bought in a pub  
discovered  
A jewelry shop robbery  
in London*





## One Treasured Object Poetry - continued



Take a few minutes to rework your phrases. Add punctuation and a few additional words where needed, creating an object poem that conveys its personal importance and meaning.

*My father's strange obsessions:  
suitcases;  
lighters;  
watches -  
the one  
with the real leather strap -  
a luxury in those days -  
bought in a pub from the robber  
of a jewelry shop  
in London  
and pressed into my hand.*

### Optional Extension:

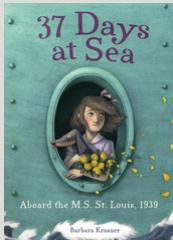
Poetry is designed to be read out loud and heard! In pairs or small groups have students share their treasured object poems with one another.



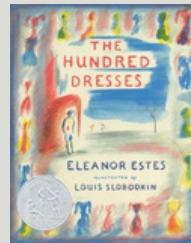
# Read About It!



Keep the conversation going! Check out this list of books connected to the ideas and themes in 'No Going Back'!



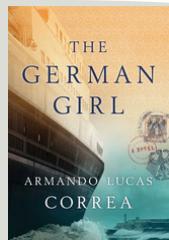
**37 Days at Sea: Aboard the M.S. St. Louis, 1939**  
By Barbara Krasner  
Ages 8-13



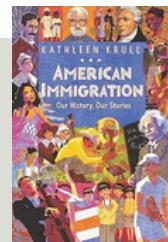
**The Hundred Dresses**  
By Eleanor Estes  
Ages 8-10



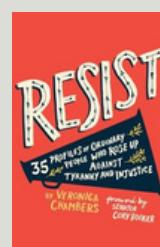
**Refugee: The Graphic Novel**  
By Alan Gratz  
Ages 9-12



**The German Girl**  
By Armando Lucas Correa  
Ages 14+

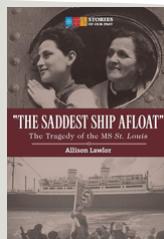


**American Immigration: Our History, Our Stories**  
By Kathleen Krull  
Ages 8-12



**Resist**  
By Veronica Chambers  
Ages 8-14

## Teacher Resources:



**The Saddest Ship Afloat: The Tragedy of the MS St. Louis**  
By Allison Lawlor



**Refuge Denied: The St. Louis Passengers and the Holocaust**  
By Sarah A. Oglvie

# Extend It! Additional Resources

Direct link:  
<https://bit.ly/4phbfDD>

The play is just the beginning - there's always more to learn. Scan the QR code or explore the links below to dig deeper into what interests you!



## Timeline Resources

- ★ [Voyage of the St. Louis | Holocaust Encyclopedia](#)
- ★ [Interactive: Voyage of the MS St. Louis | The U.S. and the Holocaust | Ken Burns | PBS](#)
- ★ [The Story of the St. Louis | A Holocaust Timeline Activity for Grade 6 - Yad Vashem](#)
- ★ [The Voyage of the St. Louis | Facing History & Ourselves](#)
- ★ [MS St. Louis | History, Summary, & Facts | Britannica](#)
- ★ [Holocaust Memorial Day Trust | The SS St Louis](#)

## Other Resource Materials

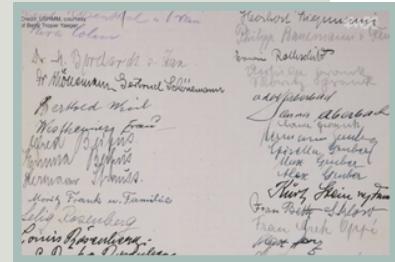
- ★ [History Unfolded - Newspaper Search of USHMM Database](#)
- ★ [Arizona-Specific Reporting on the St. Louis](#)
- ★ [DBQ Resource - American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - June 15, 1939](#)
- ★ [Additional Primary Sources - JDC Archives](#)
- ★ [Recall, Connect, & Extend - St. Louis Legacy Project](#)
- ★ [Post-St. Louis Asylum Policies - 1951 Refugee Convention](#)

## Extend It! Additional Activities

Looking for additional ways for your students to engage with this content? Consider using some of these prompts.

## **Document Investigation**

- How was the tragedy of the St. Louis reported in American newspapers at the time? How was it reported in Arizona newspapers? Use the links on the previous page to dig in.
- How did the St. Louis become a catalyst for our country's asylum policies? Explore how the 1951 Refugee Convention (linked on the previous page) laid the groundwork for a world in which the forcibly displaced would not be returned to their persecutors.
- Using the primary documents from the JDC documents and applying what you know now - if you could go back in time, how would you form an argument on admittance of the passengers to Cuba and/or the United States?
- Personify one of the world leaders from the “Discover It! World Leaders” page of this guide. Consider the underlying factors that impacted their decisions and engage in a discussion in character.
- After reading the “Discover It!” passenger profiles, discuss connections between the real people who were on the ship and the characters that were portrayed in the performance. Can you make any comparisons? Consider things like age, gender, religion, hopes/fears, and reasons for leaving Europe.



## Critical Thinking Questions

- Analyze: What pressures and motivations may have affected decisions made by Cuban and US government officials about the St. Louis?
- Make Connections: Investigate the arrival of other refugee ships in Havana in 1939. Was the St. Louis experience typical for arrivals, or was it an exception?
- Advocate: What responsibilities do (or should) other nations have regarding refugees from oppressive regimes?