

Title: “The Forgotten Genocide”

Synopsis:

Memories of a painful secret held for over fifty years are now finally being brought to light. THE FORGOTTEN GENOCIDE: The Expulsion *after* WWII, is an in-depth, feature length documentary that examines the sufferings put upon Ethnic Germans living behind the Iron Curtain. Through interviews with survivors and examinations of relics of the era, the students of St. Louis Community College-Meramec aim to preserve the memory of this sad period in human history, and hopefully give peace to the almost 15 million souls lost.

Abstract:

History is vital to our understanding of who we are as a people, but it becomes confusing because of unanswered questions and untold stories. Millions of German people who never lived in Germany, never hated Jewish people and suffered as many ethnic groups have and yet no one ever knew about it. The good and bad in all needs to be brought to light, especially regarding the largest nationality in St. Louis. A large group of survivors from the ethnic German cleansing live among us and has been a major part in building the St. Louis we know today. We need to know this history to bring us to a better understanding of who we are.

Project Story:

Most of the people I have spoken do not know about the mass genocide that took place at the end of WWII. I am part of a group of students producing a documentary, entitled The Forgotten Genocide. It exposes this horrific ethnic cleansing at the hands of the Soviets. Though it would be a shock to find that someone did not know about the Holocaust-you would think such brutality on such a massive scale couldn't possibly go unknown to the general public-I have come to expect people's surprise when they learn of the equally tragic, widespread events that occurred on the same continent, at almost the same time.

In this forgotten genocide, the victims were ethnic Germans. These were people living in various Eastern European countries, as their families had for generations, until the victorious Soviet government declared them enemies because of their descent. Thus began what would be one of the worst genocides of all time.

I didn't know anything about these events until last spring, when Professor Pam Garvey assigned my Honors College Composition II class to come up with a service learning project.. These projects are part of a program that St. Louis Community College-Meramec participates in, in which teachers incorporate a community service experience into their curriculum.

During a brainstorming session my fellow student, Ann Morrison, mentioned that she was a part of the St. Louis German Cultural Society, and suggested that we interview survivors of World War II concentration camps. I assumed that she meant the Holocaust, but my classmates and I quickly found out that, no, we would not be speaking with survivors of that infamous tragedy. Instead, we would be speaking with people who had survived conditions just as barbaric, suffering through events that, tragically, are little known.

It was, of course, disturbing to learn of a brutal ethnic cleansing that tore apart families, destroyed entire villages, and ended thousands of innocent lives. But I was also disturbed that I had never heard any mention of it before. Our group also included students Lilian Aimeida, Alex Tran, and Michael Puckett, all of whom had similar reactions. We decided these were stories that needed to be told.

Learning that this genocide took place at all was eye-opening. Still, it was nothing compared to hearing these unbelievably strong, determinedly positive people speak of their experiences. They told us about their lives before the genocide, the armies invading their homes and killing and kidnapping their family, their neighbors, themselves. They described the impossible conditions of their imprisonment-the cold, the starvation, the forced labor, the brutality, and the death. All unexplained, all unjustified.

Though these stories are hard to hear, they should not remain unspoken, and nobody could tell them better than the ones who lived through it. Over the summer, Ann continued to work on the project, and while she was often met with surprise or confusion when she explained the nature of it, she also found people-in growing amounts-who knew about the tragedy that took place and wanted others to know as well. She met with people from all over the country, began communicating with people internationally, and the project grew into something bigger.

Now the group working on this project consists of Ann Morrison, Emily Curry, Scott Dorough, Adam Groerich, and myself. In addition, there are many others who have contributed by volunteering their time, talents and effort. Together we are working to produce a full-length documentary to be shown at the Meramec campus on the evening of February 27th. It is entitled The Forgotten Genocide, and it is a historical account told through the stories of those who lived through an atrocity that never should have been lost to history, and should never be forgotten.

Project Timeline:

November 13	Editing for Chapter 1 due
November 14	Completed Chapter to Gary Gacksetter
November 18	Group Meeting 12:00pm
November 18	Budget Meeting 4:00-4:30pm
November 20	Editing for Chapter 2 and 3 due
November 21	Completed Chapter to Gary Gacksetter
November 21-22	Interview and Speaking Engagement in Cincinnati Ohio
November 25	Group Meeting 12:00pm
November 25	Editing for Chapter 4 due
November 25	Completed Chapter to Gary Gacksetter
December 2	Group Meeting
December 3	Interviewing by Tom Sunic of Reason Radio
December 4	Editing for Chapter 5 and 6 due
December 4	Completed Chapter to Gary Gacksetter
December 5	Speaking at the German Appreciation Dinner
December 9	Group Meeting
December 11	Editing for Chapter 7 and 8 due
December 12	Completed Chapter to Gary Gacksetter

December 16	Group Meeting
December 18	Editing for Chapter 9 and 10 due
December 19	Completed Chapter to Gary Gacksetter
December 23	Group Meeting
January 6	Group Meeting
January 10	Dr. Brigitte Neary Arrives
January 13	Group Meeting
January 14	German World Alliance
January 15	Dr. Brigitte Neary Departs
January 20	Group Meeting
January 27	Group Meeting
February 1	R.S.V.P. For Invitations
February 3	Group Meeting
February 10	Group Meeting
February 15	Last Day For Invitations
February 17	Group Meeting
February 24	Speaking Engagement at Maremec/Survivors from Death Camps
February 26	5:00pm Pres Conference
	6:00pm Reception
	6:15pm Performance by German Youth Group
	7:00pm Speaker
	7:15pm Screening
February 27	11:30am Luncheon
	2:00pm A.B. Tour
	4:00pm Greet and Meet at German Cultural Society Hall
	7:00pm Screening

Team Biographies:

Ann Morrison (Producer/Director) - Growing up in St. Louis and moving away made me understand what a wonderful place it is for raising a family and building friendships. My husband, Ron and I decided to come back to St Louis in 1990 after the birth of our first child Brad. He was soon followed by two sisters, Brooke and Blaire. I followed my dream of being a Domestic Coordinator for fourteen years while being room mother, scout leader, library lady and a host of other volunteer opportunities. Never finishing a college degree I knew someday I would return to school. One day while swimming with a friend Karen Schmit she said "I'll watch the kids while you sign up for a class" that's when I began my quest for a college education. In the mean time I became a Jazzercise instructor after being a student for ten years. My children are now in high school and college and we have hosted 13 exchange students to date, which means we've had four children more than we've had three. Eight years have passed of taking a class here and there never realizing how much it could change everything in my life. The Service Learning Project idea I brought up in my Honors English Composition II class has been received in a positive, supportive way among the professors and the students who chose to work with me. I have stepped into a world I never would have known without the many people, reports and projects that have brought me to where I am today.

Emily Curry (Line Producer)- Emily Kathryn Curry is an independent filmmaker from St. Louis, Missouri. Her projects include multiple shorts, documentaries, music videos, commercials, feature films and television. Over the past five years, her work has received numerous awards. A few of these include *Best Production Value* at the WYSIWYG San Francisco International Film Festival, *Audience Choice Award* at CCM's Annual Influence Competition, and *The Independent Spirit Award* from Samsung Fresh Films Scholarships. Her favorite part of the filmmaking process is getting to travel and meet people from all walks of life. While most of her experience comes from directing and running camera, she is thankful to have the opportunity to serve as Line Producer for *The Forgotten Genocide* documentary. This process has taught her a lot about staying organized, running meetings, and communicating between different departments. Emily is currently enrolled at St. Louis Community College Meramec working toward a degree in Broadcasting. She plans to graduate in the spring in order to pursue even more freelance projects.

Michael Puckett (Editor) – Michael Puckett is currently a student at STLCC-Meramec. He is 18 years old, and is currently in his second semester of college working towards an A.A. in Microcomputer Support. He enjoys many technical hobbies, classical music, and literature. He began working on this project because of the impact it would make on the people who lived through it.

Sarah Marino (Communications, Research Coordinator) – I help with Communications for the documentary project. I was part of the group that Ann originally presented the idea to, and I helped with some of the first interviews. Now my role is to keep those interested or involved our documentary up to date. I plan to major in English/Creative Writing at Missouri State University starting next semester. I am proud to be a part of this group.

Adam Groerich (Public Relations Coordinator) – Adam Groerich is a student at St. Louis Community College – Meramec. He is currently in the process of earning an A.A. in Communications Arts with a focus in Public Relations and Advertising. After graduating from Meramec in spring of 2010, Adam plans to go on to Webster University in St. Louis to pursue a bachelor's degree in Public Relations. He has joined the group to run the external communications aspect of the project. He is very excited to be welcomed in to an extraordinary team of students.

Other Participants Include:

- Elizabeth Byrd (Graphic Arts Student) – Composed Timeline for Library Display
- Prof. Pam Garvey (English) – Honors Comp II Instructor
- Prof. Scott Dorough (Communications) – Video Production Instructor
- Prof. Jo Aerne (Graphic Arts) – Mentored Elizabeth Byrd
- Prof. Sue Hunt Bradford (Public Relations) – Intern Coordinator for Adam Groerich
- Prof. Eric Meyer – Honors Coordinator
- Prof. Gary Gackstatter (Music) – Score Composer

- Prof. Gudrun Sherman (Foreign Language) – Dialect Coach
- Donna Halsband – Service Learning Coordinator
- Paul Talaski – Media Services Coordinator
- Bonnie Sanguinet – Library Services Coordinator
- Dr. Steven Petersen – VP, Student Services
- Toni Oplt – Community Relations Coordinator
- Rouzell Porter, Amanda Willerford, Jenn Bach and Kevin Stroup – Professional Voice Actors
- Monica (Artist) – Designed the Art for the DVD Cover and Poster
- Tenil Kellermann (Lawyer) – Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants Association Rep
- Tom Rogers (CBS) – Media Consultant
- Hundreds of Interviewees, Survivors and Interested parties from the US and Europe, including Herta Muller (Nobel Literature 2009) and Alfred deZayas (UN Human Rights Commission)