

911

Medics race time to save lives

Hood

Lake gets its wings for spring

High seize

Coast Guard holds the line against poachers

We Alaskans

Sun

Business

Anchorage Daily News

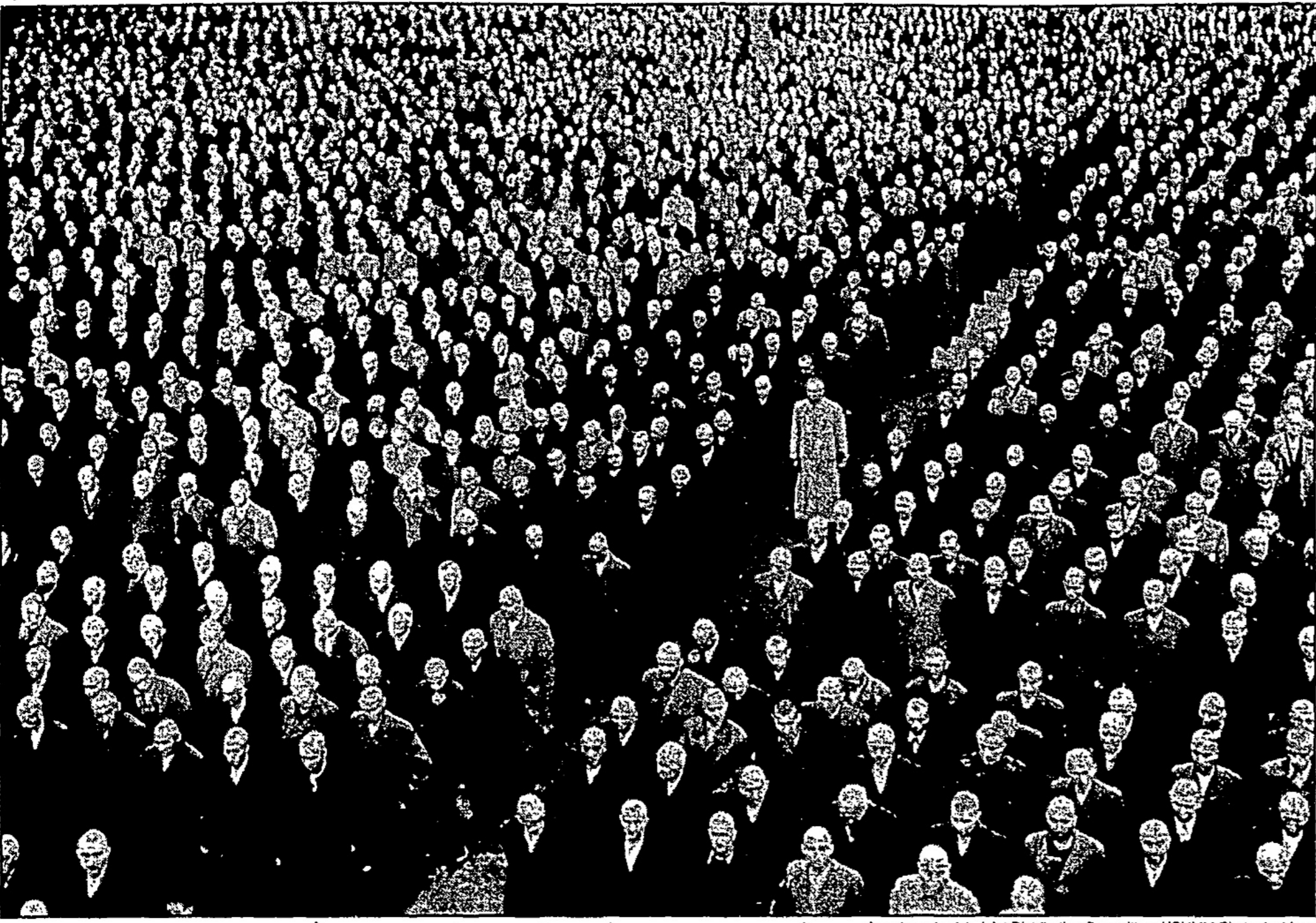
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ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, SUNDAY, MAY 16, 1999

STATE EDITION © 1999 Anchorage Daily News

SANCTUARY

ALASKA, THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS



Bruno Rosenthal and other Neustadt Jews were put to hard labor at the Buchenwald concentration camp in 1938-39.

Beacon of Hope

As World War II approaches, a handful of Jews trapped in Nazi Germany pin their hopes on a U.S. plan to open up immigration to Alaska.

By TOM KIZZIA

Daily News reporter

FIRST OF FOUR PARTS

In the early summer of 1939, as Europe prepared for war, a letter from Nazi Germany arrived in Washington, D.C., at the high-ceilinged offices of the U.S. State Department. The one-page letter had been pounded out on a typewriter with an old, faded ribbon. The return address was a village in the rolling countryside of central Germany.

The writer identified himself as the leader of the Jewish community in the town of Neustadt. He wrote, he said, on behalf of 30 men, women and children, all of them "healthy, strong and energetic," who wished to make an urgent application "for immigration to Alaska Territory."

The prospective immigrants were experts in animal husbandry, the letter said. Some were also "handicraftsmen and mechanics." They vowed to be good citizens of Alaska and obey the laws of the United States.

"We know quite well the difficulties making the rough clime of Alaska," wrote Bruno Rosenthal, "but now we have no other choice, we German Jews."

Please see Page A-6, HOPE



Upon his release from Buchenwald in 1939, Bruno Rosenthal began writing on behalf of his friends in rural Neustadt seeking to move to Alaska.



The series

For weeks now, the news has been filled with stories from the other side of the world about the plight of refugees driven from their homes in Kosovo. Sixty years

ago, on the eve of World War II, the world faced another refugee crisis as Europe's Jews tried to flee the Nazis. Few Alaskans know that one of the

places they hoped to find sanctuary was Alaska. Here is the untold story of Alaska's response to one of the great humanitarian crises of the century.

Palmer officer slain

Force suffers first loss in line of duty

By S.J. KOMARNITSKY

Daily News Mat-Su Bureau

PALMER — A Palmer police officer was fatally wounded early Saturday in a shootout with a man he'd found slumped over the steering wheel of a pickup, Alaska State Troopers said.

James Rowland, 30, was pronounced dead at Valley Hospital in Palmer shortly after the 1:35 a.m. shooting.

The suspect, believed to be a 52-year-old Siana man, was wounded. He was in the intensive care unit of Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage, troopers said. Troopers were attempting to use fingerprints to confirm his identity.

Trooper Capt. Don Savage said he believes the man had been shot in the shoulder.

Savage said he didn't know the extent of Rowland's injuries. An autopsy was expected to be completed today.

Rowland, who grew up in Palmer, joined the force three years ago because he wanted to serve his hometown, said his brother, Tim Rowland. He is survived by his wife, Hallie, and 5-year-old son James.

Rowland was the first police officer killed in the line of duty in the history of the



Rowland

Please see Back Page, OFFICER SLAIN

Human shields will not stop NATO attacks

By CANDICE HUGHES

The Associated Press

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — NATO said Saturday it was attacking a Serb military command post when its warplanes struck a Kosovo village where Yugoslavia reported 87 ethnic Albanians killed and more than 100 injured.

As the death toll rose and TV crews were taken to see burned and mutilated survivors, it remained unclear why the refugees — apparent victims of NATO's most deadly bombing of civilians in the air campaign against Yugoslavia — had stopped in the village, Korisa.

Alliance officials in Brussels, Belgium, accused Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic of using noncombatants as human shields and manipulating Western news organizations to broadcast deceptive pictures of the carnage caused by NATO airstrikes.

They said the latest tragedy suggests

Please see Back Page, KOSOVO

Yeltsin impeachment fails; bid seen as 'key lesson'

By DAVID HOFFMAN

The Washington Post

MOSCOW — President Boris Yeltsin won another victory Saturday over his most tireless opponents, the Communists in parliament, as the lower house failed to launch impeachment proceedings against him for the war in Chechnya and other charges of "high crimes" during Russia's tumultuous recent history.

After three days of debate, members of the State Duma took colored paper ballots into

makeshift booths to vote on five impeachment charges, but none of the counts gained the necessary 300 votes to trigger further proceedings.

The charge with the best chance — accusing Yeltsin of unleashing the 1994-96 war against Chechen separatists in which tens of thousands of civilians were killed — received 283 votes.

The other counts all failed by larger margins. They accused him of destroying the

Please see Back Page, RUSSIA

TODAY

SOME SUN, MAYBE RAIN

High near 65

Low near 40

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Sage of the Rising Sun

Japan under spell of prophet Nostradamus

By JOJI SAKURAI

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Every week, millions of Japanese TV viewers tune in to watch a couple of men building a bunker for the end of the world. It's a race against time. They have to finish before July.

As the end of the century nears, Japan has come under an odd spell: the apocalyptic preachings of 16th-century soothsayer Nostradamus.

Bookshelves are lined with Nostradamus spinoffs. Celebrities com-

ment earnestly on his predictions.

The Internet is awash with thousands of Japanese web sites devoted to the French prophet of doom.

"Will mankind be extinguished in 1999?" one typical web site asks. "This is not an issue to be taken lightly."

Nostradamus, whose prophecies made him so famous in his lifetime that he came under the

Please see Back Page, NOSTRADAMUS

THE SERIES



After violent riots in 1938 against Jews in Nazi Germany, the U.S. Interior Department proposes to open the Alaska Territory to limited numbers of Jewish refugees.



Will the new settlers help develop Alaska? Some top federal officials in Washington, D.C., aren't so sure.



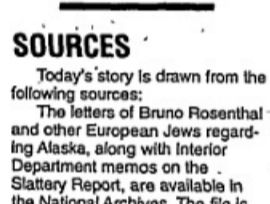
The Alaska Immigration plan draws interest from across Europe. But what do Alaskans think of the idea?



As Nazi policy turns from deportation to death camps, the final decision on bringing refugees to Alaska lies with Congress.



Germany today: A map showing the location of Neustadt and Buchenwald concentration camps.



Sources: A list of sources used in the article, including books, newspapers, and interviews.

U.S. Alaska: A timeline of events from 1933 to 1945 related to the immigration plan.

Timeline: A detailed timeline of events from 1933 to 1945, including the implementation of the immigration plan and the outbreak of World War II.

Hope

Continued from Page A-1

On the eve of World War II, Alaska became an improbable beacon of freedom for Jews still trapped inside the Third Reich.

A handful of Washington officials proposed to pry open America's strict immigration quotas by allowing a certain number of additional refugees to settle in the sparsely populated Alaska Territory.

After six years of American oppression and growing violence, more than 230,000 Jews remained in Germany. There was no place for them to go.

The transit countries of Europe, over-taxed and under attack, were closed to immigrants to the United States.

So the Jews in Neustadt paid attention to the reports and found Alaska on their maps.

After Rosenthal received no answer to his letter, he wrote again in November 1938, days after the pogrom for troubling them again.

Implying the High Department of the Interior was drawing up a plan, Congressional hearings would soon be scheduled.

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operations. Stories of heroes, of the Schindlers and the Swedish rescuers, are being uncovered as well.

The role of the United States in the prewar years is coming under scrutiny. Did Americans do all it could to help the Jews before it was too late?

American's restrictive immigration quotas of 1920 were tangled in larger New Deal politics and Roosevelt's desire to pry open the door out of isolationism.

Criticism of the United States is often tempered because American forces played such a huge role in finally stopping the Nazis.

And now the plaintive staves of ethnic Albanian deportees streaming out of Kosovo give new urgency to the old questions about America's response to Hitler's version of "ethnic cleansing."

The debate over U.S. immigration, then as now, was mostly over humanitarian principles and broad national priorities.

But there was one exception, one specific place where the troubling and complex questions about America's responsibility fall to search history forgotten is Alaska's own story.

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Jewish community offices in Kassel, the city nearest Neustadt, were looted and destroyed during Kristallnacht.

Rosenthal lost his three-story, 25-room mansion under laws requiring Aryan ownership of property.

Rosenthal was 59 at the time, a solidly built man with early tufts of white hair. He was bright and worldly, recalled Pfeffer, who took English lessons from Rosenthal's wife, Bianca, the well-educated daughter of the village's wealthiest Jewish family.

"They were both very likeable and very smart," Pfeffer recalled. Rosenthal worked in his father-in-law's general store. He described himself to U.S. immigration officials as an expert in foodstuffs and furbishers, a sewing machine mechanic and a photographer.

He and Bianca, 53, had no children. Suddenly without property, they moved into a small rooming house.

Younger Jews had begun moving away from Neustadt, either to the large cities of Germany or abroad. But about half the local population remained when the anti-Jewish riots of Kristallnacht broke out on Nov. 8, 1938.

Neustadt had the dubious distinction of being one of the first communities struck by the riots, which were covertly organized to seem like spontaneous "reprisals" against the assassination of a German embassy clerk by a Jewish student. German historians say Neustadt and the surrounding area apparently served as a testing ground for the assaults that

spread nationwide the next two nights.

In Neustadt, according to the local architect and other accounts, Nazi "brownshirt" troops in civilian clothes arrived and began looting and burning Jewish shops. An excited mob of 250 to 300 Neustadt residents joined them. The Jewish-owned businesses were wrecked. Apartments were stripped.

The town's Jews were rousted from their homes and pushed down a gauntlet of people spitting at them and beating them with sticks, according to accounts gathered by Sieburg, the historian. They were taken to the synagogue, where religious objects were pulled into the streets and trampled. The Star of David was torn from its tower and paraded through town. The synagogue was burned.

Rosenthal was taken to jail, along with Alice Pfeffer's cousin, Max Lilenfeld, who would later join Rosenthal in the effort to reach Alaska. Eight other able-bodied Jewish men joined them in two cells under "protective custody." The younger Jewish women were ordered to clean the jail. Pfeffer's sister, who didn't escape until 1939, was beaten and raped that night by a policeman.

"The scars can still be seen on her body and on her soul," Pfeffer said.

On Nov. 13 the Jewish men were taken to the nearest city, Kassel. From there they were sent to the seat of classical German culture, Weimar,

and placed in a concentration camp called Buchenwald.

The iron gate at Buchenwald was described with the words "To each his due." Some 10,000 Jews were piled into Buchenwald after the November riots. Heads shaved, they spent the winter at hard labor, which the SS called re-education. Hundreds died from overwork, disease or suicide.

Some were allowed to buy their way out by signing their property over to the guards. The last few thousand were released in April 1939, in honor of Adolf Hitler's birthday, and forced to sign a pledge promising to remain silent about camp conditions.

Pfeffer's father, the Iron Cross veteran, was unrecognized to his family when he returned to Neustadt. He later died with her mother in the Holocaust.

"It is only too clear that almost every released prisoner, burdened by the impressions of his experiences and under constant threat, lived on only as a broken man," said an official U.S. government chronicle of the period at Buchenwald, drawn up after the war.

Soon after Rosenthal came home from the concentration camp, he wrote his first letter asking to come to Alaska.

"U.S. response: Open Alaska. In Alaska, the news of Kristallnacht was carried in brief but

prominent front-page stories. The news was outraged. Roosevelt said he "could scarcely believe that such a thing could occur in a 20th-century civilization." The Anchorage Daily Times registered horror at Hitler's "descent into barbarism."

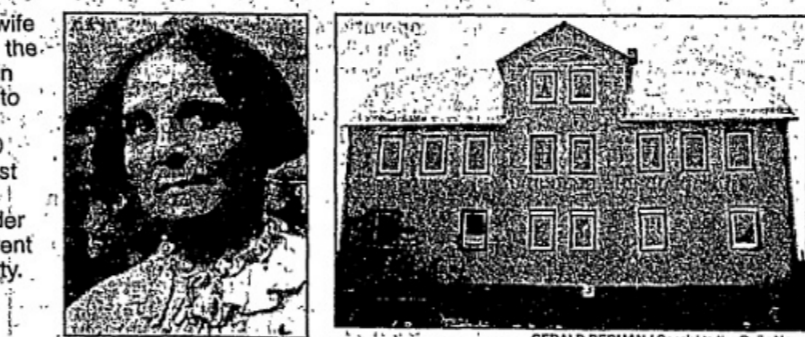
Nazi officials, unmoved by the international reaction, imposed a collective fine on German Jews of \$1 billion marks — equivalent to \$400 million — for cleanup costs after the riots.

On Nov. 18, 1938, Rep. Charles Buckley, D-N.Y., issued an open letter to Roosevelt asking support for legislation that would make the frontier territory of Alaska a haven for refugees fleeing the Nazis. A similar idea had been floated in the press several weeks earlier by Denver businessmen seeking land and backing from the government for a refugee resettlement project.

Buckley's motives were both humanitarian and political — he had a large Jewish constituency in the Bronx — but he assured the president that Alaska with its untapped resources would benefit from the new settlers.

"I am sure that these immigrants will build Alaska as this country was built by immigrants who came to the United States from many lands during periods of persecution in the past," the congressman wrote.

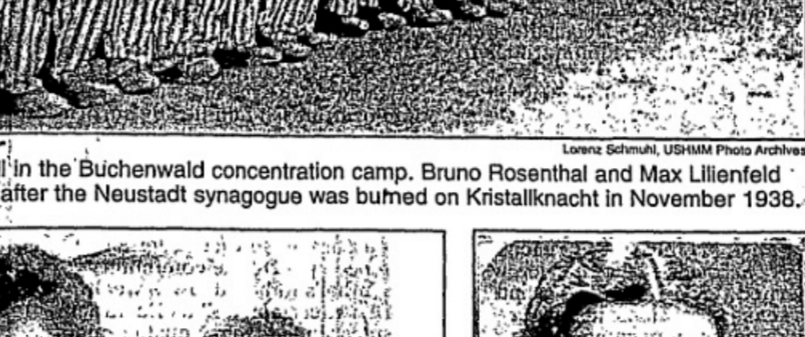
Roosevelt quickly turned him down. The politics of immigration in



Bianca Rosenthal, right, wife of Bruno and daughter of the wealthiest Jewish family in Neustadt, taught English to Jews hoping to emigrate. This is her 1939 police ID photo. The Rosenhals lost their 25-room home in Neustadt, at far right, under Nazi laws passed to prevent Jews from owning property. They moved into a small rooming house.



Prisoners stand at roll call in the Buchenwald concentration camp. Bruno Rosenthal and Max Lilenfeld spent winter at the camp after the Neustadt synagogue was burned on Kristallnacht in November 1938.



Alice Pfeffer, left, and also above in her German passport photo, left Neustadt in 1937 to come to the United States. Her cousin, Max Lilenfeld, was among those attempting to reach the Alaska Territory. Pfeffer saved the photo but tipped up her passport as soon as she became an American citizen.



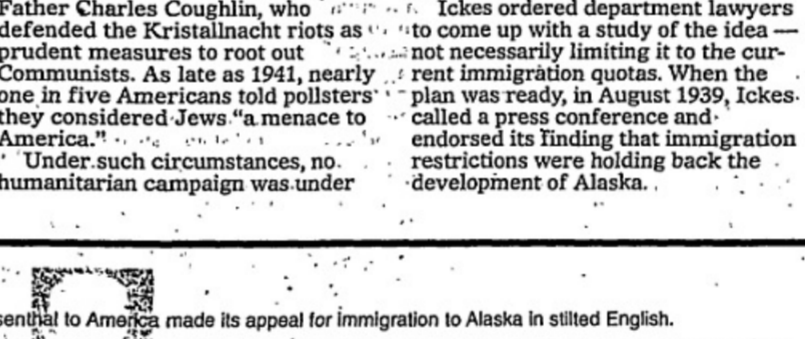
Bruno Rosenthal, right, wife of Bruno and daughter of the wealthiest Jewish family in Neustadt, taught English to Jews hoping to emigrate. This is her 1939 police ID photo. The Rosenhals lost their 25-room home in Neustadt, at far right, under Nazi laws passed to prevent Jews from owning property. They moved into a small rooming house.



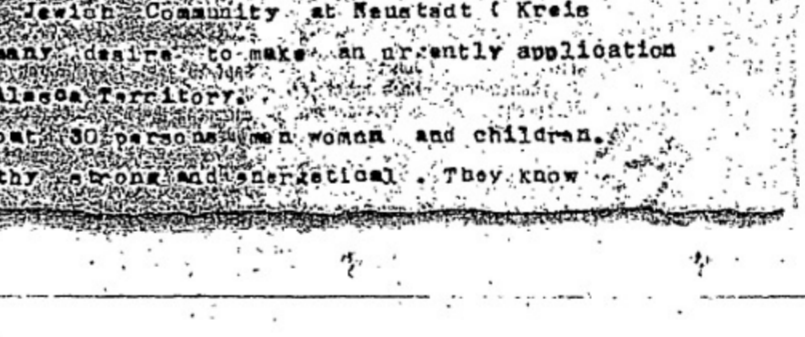
Bruno Rosenthal, right, wife of Bruno and daughter of the wealthiest Jewish family in Neustadt, taught English to Jews hoping to emigrate. This is her 1939 police ID photo. The Rosenhals lost their 25-room home in Neustadt, at far right, under Nazi laws passed to prevent Jews from owning property. They moved into a small rooming house.



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"Men and women with the spirit of our pioneers," Ickes said, "should be given 'the opportunity to enlist in the service of the nation, building cities on our last frontier.'"

News of plan reaches Neustadt. By spring 1939, news that an Alaska plan was in the works had reached the faraway town of Neustadt.

Bruno Rosenthal had returned from the labor camp at Buchenwald to find 44 of the original 119 Jews remaining. The synagogue in Neustadt, burned out during Kristallnacht, had been bought for a pittance by the city. Fire insurance had been paid to the government, not the Jewish community. A farmer bought the synagogue's bricks from the city for a tin to store cow manure.

Ornamented roof beams and doors from the synagogue found their way into some of Neustadt's private homes, according to historian Sieburg.

The local Jewish community was fined 174 marks for the cost of sweeping up the streets after the riots.

In January, Hitler had issued a well-publicized warning in an address before the Reichstag: He blamed Jews, financiers for pushing Europe toward war and predicted that any such war would result in "annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."

A few Neustadt Jews with money and connections in the United States had managed to get last-minute visas. But for most, a wait of a year or more stretched on.

The U.S. diplomatic staff had been told to prolong the application process, making Jews return again and again with paperwork, said Sieburg. Hockberg, a historian with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Applicants' finances were eroding. The U.S. consulate in Stuttgart, where Neustadt residents went to apply, was particularly famous for its delays.

Hockberg said that consulate was famous for more than bureaucratic obtuseness: you could suddenly find someone else. She said that happened to her parents.

"They took great at the American consulate in Stuttgart. It was a relief to see the American officials accepting payoffs."

On July 16, 1939, publication of Ickes' Alaska report was front-page news in the Anchorage Daily Times. In Germany, Rosenthal read the report as well.

The press in Germany were tightly controlled. But a single Jewish newspaper, Judisches Nachrichtenblatt, was allowed to publish, providing a conduit for Nazi propaganda and reports of Jewish resettlement plans.

Rosenthal first learned of the Alaska Territory from the Nachrichtenblatt in May. No he realized his mistake in sending his letters to the State Department. He sat down to type out the first in a string of letters to the Department of the Interior, now preserved in the National Archives.

Rosenthal said he had read that Secretary Ickes promised to give in Alaska. Rosenthal vowed that the Jews of Neustadt would bring "new ideas and old ideals" to the territory.

"We beg imploringly (to) Ickes as to permit the immigration in Alaska Territory. Perhaps you will be good enough to let us know as soon as possible your decision. You know we can no longer stay here."

What Rosenthal did not know was that his opportunity to come to Alaska had already been discussed in Alaska. Within days of Congressman Buckley's first proposal, the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner had interviewed a cross-section of local leaders. The conclusion, in a headline atop the front page: "German Jews Unsuitable For Alaska Settlers Is Prevailing View Here."

LETTER FROM NEUSTADT

May 1, 1939 The first of nine letters from Bruno Rosenthal to America made its appeal for immigration to Alaska in stilted English.

Dear Sir: I am writing you from the town of Neustadt in Germany. I am a Jew and my wife and children are also Jews. We have been living in Neustadt for many years and we are now in a very bad situation. We have lost our home and we have no money. We are very poor and we are very sad. We have heard that there is a place called Alaska and we would like to go there. We would like to live there and we would like to work there. We would like to be happy and we would like to be free. We would like to be with you and we would like to be with our children. We would like to be with you and we would like to be with our children. We would like to be with you and we would like to be with our children.

BASIC TRAINING
Teens tap Army
for career choices
Mon., E-1



AUTO EMPIRE
Germans gear up
in Anchorage
Business, F-1

SWING TIME
Jazz boop
Kings in OT
Sports, C-1

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SANCTUARY

ALASKA, THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS



When Alice Pfeffer left Germany in 1937, she left her parents — shown in the framed photo — behind. More than 60 years later, she still cannot talk about their disappearance. "It goes too deep," she said. Her cousins, the Lilienfelds, shown below in police ID photos, also were left behind. Max Lilienfeld was among those trying to get his family to Alaska.

FRAN DURNER / Anchorage Daily News

'Give us this chance'

As German Jews eagerly await word on their visas, U.S. government officials are split on a plan to bring new settlers to the Alaska Territory

SECOND OF FOUR PARTS

By TOM KIZZIA
Daily News reporter

Walter Lilienfeld, born under Hitler's rule, was 4 years old the day World War II began. He lived in the small town of Neustadt, Germany, with his parents, Max and Rosel Lilienfeld. They were a handsome couple, once prosperous. Both of them were blonde, and his mother had blue eyes.

They wanted to go to Alaska. Walter's father used to work with the farmers in the countryside, buying and selling cattle. But the Nazis wouldn't let the farmers sell to him any more because he was Jewish. Now there was hardly any work for him. Because he was a strong worker, he could sometimes get hired as a day laborer at construction sites. It was better than getting paid to sweep the streets, like the other Jews in town.

Walter's brother no longer lived with them. The previous winter, after the Nazis burned the synagogue in town and his father returned from the Buchenwald concentration camp with his head shaved, 9-year-old Hans had been sent away to Belgium for safety.

But on Sept. 1, 1939, Panzer tanks rolled across Germany's eastern frontier into Poland. The war be-



Hans Lilienfeld



Max Lilienfeld



Rosel Lilienfeld

gan. It wouldn't be long until Hans came home to rejoin the family in Neustadt.

The Lilienfelds wanted to leave Germany, but no country would take them in. The line for visas to the United States had grown longer after the anti-Jewish Kristallnacht riots of 1938.

One of the Lilienfelds' cousins, Alice Pfeffer, had managed to get a U.S. visa and left Neustadt in 1937. Pfeffer lives in New York City today and remembers the growing panic of the relatives she left behind.

Her cousin Max, she recalls, had fought for Germany in World War I. He grew up as an only child after his sister died of scarlet fever. He met Rosel, from Thuringen, through

relatives. Their son Hans was an unusually bright young boy. And Walter, even as a 2-year-old, had formed a special attachment to his cousin. "How that little boy loved me," Pfeffer recalled recently.

By 1939, there could be no school for Jewish children. In a rush of new laws after Kristallnacht, Jews had been expelled from schools, excluded from libraries and theaters, and barred from driving automobiles. Their property had been confiscated.

And so the Jewish families of Neustadt prepared for a hungry winter as they waited for word on their bid to reach Alaska.

Please see A-7, CHANCE

Suspect faced 1997 weapon rap

Judge freed man who fought with slain Palmer policeman

By LARRY CAMPBELL
Daily News reporter

The suspect in the shooting death of a Palmer police officer Saturday had been in trouble two years ago on a weapons violation until a judge let him go.

Alaska State Troopers on Sunday identified Kim M. Cook, 52, as the man officer James Rowland struggled with in a Palmer parking lot. Rowland later died of a gunshot wound at nearby Valley Hospital.

Rowland was shot about 1:35 a.m. outside Carrs Quality Center. He'd stopped when he found Cook slumped over the steering wheel of his blue Dodge pickup. Troopers said a struggle ensued between the men, ending with both being shot.

Cook had not been charged Sunday. But the Glennallen-area resident had at least one other run-in with police two years ago, on the University of Alaska Anchorage campus.

On Feb. 4, 1997, university police confronted Cook in the

Student Center after getting a report of a man bleeding from the head in the adjacent Sports Center. Cook had been seen shaving his head in a men's rest room in the center and had cut himself.

According to a story in the campus newspaper, The Northern Light, campus officer Ronald Sands took a gym bag from Cook, frisked him and found a loaded revolver in his coat pocket. Sands and another officer arrested Cook after struggling with him and using pepper spray to subdue him.

Campus police also searched Cook's vehicle in a parking lot and found a semi-automatic weapon behind the seat and what appeared to be bomb-making paraphernalia, according to court documents.

Anchorage police and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms were called in to assist in the subsequent investigation and

Please see Back Page, SUSPECT

U.S. crime drops 7 years straight

By ERIC LICHTBLAU
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — Crime plummeted nationwide in 1998 for a record seventh straight year, falling 7 percent, according to FBI figures released Sunday.

In all regions of the country, cities and rural areas alike, fewer Americans were robbed, burglarized, assaulted, raped or slain last year than the year before, the FBI data showed.

Nationwide, homicides fell 8 percent from the previous year.

"Today's report is simply great news," U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno said. "For seven straight years, each and every year, serious crime has fallen. That means safer streets, fewer victims and greater peace of mind for all Americans."

ON THE WEB: You can see the FBI's full crime report on the World Wide Web at <http://www.fbi.gov>

Law enforcement experts credited several factors, including a booming economy and declining unemployment, greater attention to community-based policing, more prison beds and tougher sentencing in some areas. They stressed that no single factor can explain the downward spiral.

President Clinton, in a statement, called the seven-year trend "remarkable." "More community police on our streets and fewer guns in the hands of criminals

Please see Page A-8, CRIME

Netanyahu loses edge as Israel race narrows

By LAURA KING
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — In a stunning turn of events, Israel's divisive campaign for prime minister narrowed on election eve to a two-man race, pitting beleaguered Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against Ehud Barak, a career military man likely to revive peacemaking efforts with the Palestinians.

With the last two minor candidates dropping out Sunday, the contest was to be settled in a single ballot today. Netanyahu had hoped to push the race into a runoff, giving him two more weeks to campaign.

Trailing in the polls, a combative Netanyahu nonetheless insisted: "I think we're gonna win ... I know we're going to win." He lashed out at Barak, accusing him of running a dirty race and making underhanded deals with enemies of Israel.

Barak, surrounded by cheering supporters at a sunlit open-air news conference in a Tel Aviv suburb, promised to "lead to a better future for Israel, to change and hope."

He denied any deals with candidates who dropped out, but made a point of praising centrist Yitzhak Mordechai.

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TODAY

MOSTLY SUNNY
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Low 40
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Bay Area renters hit bottom

Spot on floor costs \$180; every day, it's get up, get out

By JENNIFER MENA
Knight Ridder Newspapers

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Ricardo Ramirez would walk 17 miles home from his night restaurant job whenever he worked so late that he missed the last bus. After many nights of making the grueling trek till dawn, he finally found a cheap place to live closer to work.

He rented a floor. For \$180 a month, he got a corner of a San Jose living room for about eight hours a night.

Renting floor space has become the last resort for some desperate renters in Silicon Valley, which has some of the nation's most expensive housing. That trend leaves some people — even veteran code enforcement officials — stunned.

"Renting the floor is something new to me," said Jamie Matthews, San Jose's code enforcement supervisor. "And I've heard it all — attics, basements, storage sheds. It just shows you the type of pressure on the housing market."

Renting the floor is not new. At the turn of the century, immigrants in the squalor of New York City's lower east side paid a nickel a night to sleep on a floor. But Bay Area officials find it hard to believe that this is what the area's real estate market has come to.

Those who work closely with the Bay Area's poor say they believe the practice has become even more common in the past three years.

"People take over a lease and become master tenants and rent out every space in the place," said Paul Cohen, an attorney who represents tenants for La Raza Centro Legal, a community law center that operates in Redwood City and San Francisco. "It's happening more because people are being pushed out of legitimate housing because of rising prices. It's the housing crisis in motion."

It's also a symptom of desperation. "In most Latin countries, in Mexico, fami-

Please see Page A-8, FLOOR

SANCTUARY

ALASKA, THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS

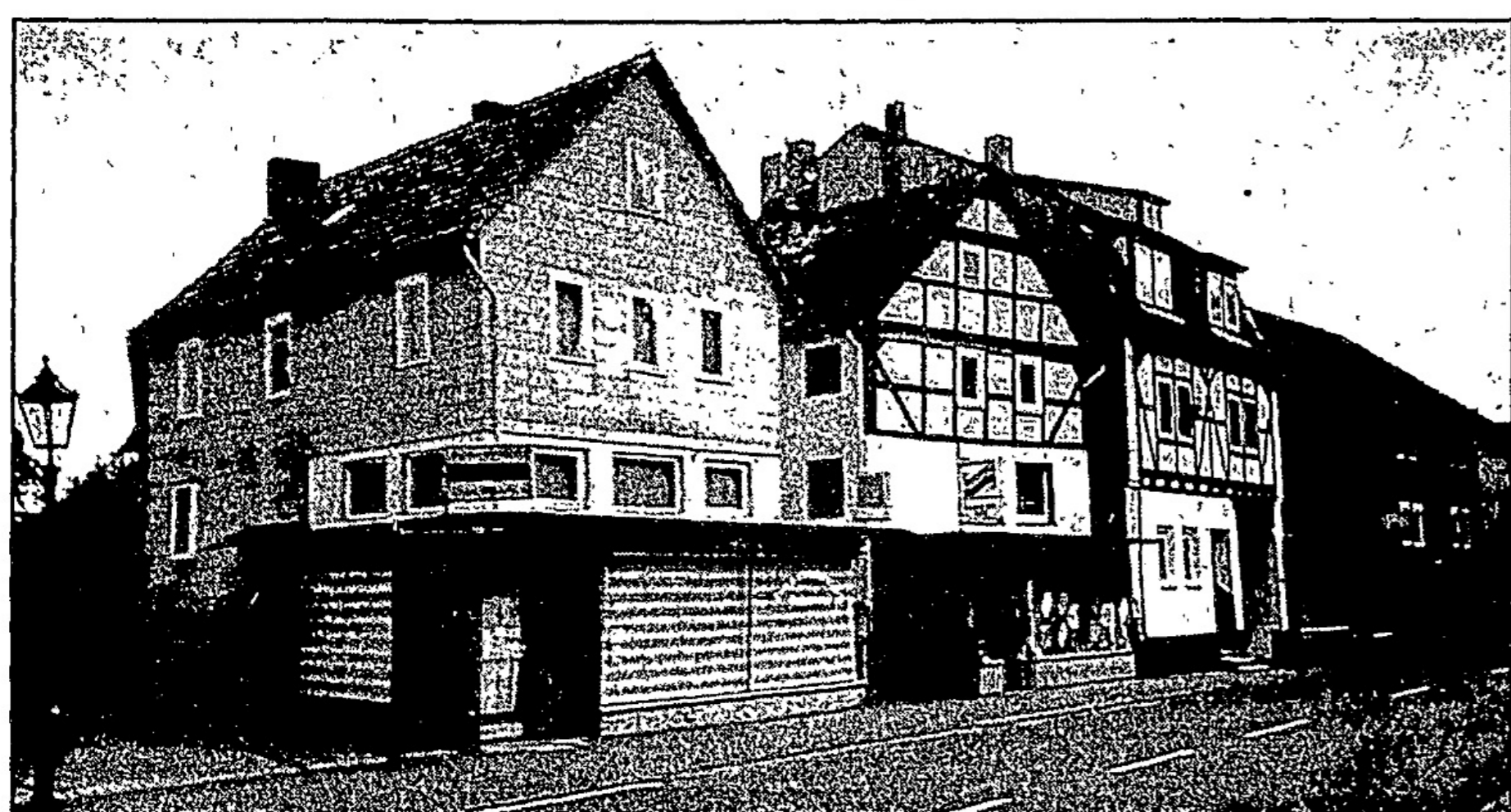


Photo courtesy Alice Pfeiffer

The comfortable Lilienfeld home in Neustadt, left, had been turned into a streetfront store by 1993. As a Jew, Max Lilienfeld was banned from his prosperous cattle trading business.

Chance

Continued from Page A-7

ing, like myself, to bear with courage, energy and patience our heavy destiny, us awaiting in Alaska."

If the list seemed too long, Rosenthal wrote, perhaps numbers 1-13 could go in the first "pioneer wave" and the others could follow a little later.

"So I beg once more imploringly the High Government of the United States in the name of us all, not to delay our hope and to permit us the entry into Alaska as soon as possible, into this land, which, as I read in the 'Report on Alaska' is loud crying for mankind."

Interior's reply, written in December 1939, took three months to reach Germany. A single paragraph informed Rosenthal that the matter was still under consideration.

Gruening takes a stand

When Interior Secretary Ickes wrote a preface to the Slattery Report on Alaska, one key name was missing from his thank you list: Ernest Gruening, director of Interior's Division of Territories and Island Possessions.

Gruening was a Harvard-trained doctor, crusading journalist and veteran New Dealer. He had been the Washington bureaucrat directly in charge of policies for Alaska as well as possessions like Puerto Rico. Now he was in the process of being named governor of the Alaska Territory. He would go on to play a major role in the statehood drive and win election as one of Alaska's first two U.S. senators.

As editor of The Nation, Gruening had issued some of the earliest warnings about Hitler's rise to power. He had served on the board of New York's University in Exile, which had given a

home to scholars who had fled the Nazis. Both of Gruening's parents had been German Jews.

But the new governor of the territory saw nothing but problems with the refugee resettlement plan.

"This provision would be universally resented in Alaska," Gruening wrote to Ickes in October 1939.

Why not start with a smaller project, Gruening asked Ickes, by bringing up immigrants who had already come to America? Admission of immigrants outside the normal quota would be a mistake. It would make Alaska a special case, stir resentment in the territory and arouse national opposition to Alaska development in general. Moreover, a new enforcement agency would be necessary to make sure the immigrants did not sneak away to the mainland. The plan, he wrote, would turn Alaska into a virtual "con-

centration camp." Gruening's reasons for opposing the refugee plan could have been partly personal. If Ickes was for something, Gruening was likely to be skeptical. They were stubborn men with strong opinions. After a staff meeting on the Alaska refugee plan, Gruening wrote in his journal that Ickes refused to tolerate opposition even when he invited his staff to speak frankly. "The freedom of expression that (Ickes) sought he would be as likely to get as Hitler would when asking his generals to make comment on a policy he had already announced."

For his part, Ickes eagerly endorsed Gruening's appointment as Alaska governor to get him out of Washington. The Alaska post was seen as "exile to Siberia," writes Robert David Johnson, a historian at Williams College, in a new biography of Gruening. (In his index, Johnson lists only three categories under Ickes' name: "alienation from Gruening," "attempts to oust Gruening," and "tensions with Gruening as governor.")

During his five years at Interior, Gruening had visited Alaska only twice, compared with 60 visits to Puerto Rico. But Gruening had powerful friends and couldn't be fired. Alaska was the greatest humiliation Ickes could not give.

Gruening's motives on the refugee plan were largely political, Johnson said in a recent interview. Reluctant as he was to take the Alaska post, he knew it was his last chance for a political career, and he recognized that it would be political suicide to push a plan that was stirring opposition in Alaska.

Then, too, Gruening was

an atheist who later, as a senator, had an aide call up magazines to complain if they identified him as "Jewish." He may have been afraid of losing votes if he were associated with a Jewish cause, given his parents' heritage, his biographer said. "His reaction to the refugee question was not one of the high points of his career," said Johnson, noting that Gruening had written sympathetically of the refugees' cause in his private journal before getting the Alaska appointment.

Not that there weren't practical problems with the refugee plan. In public, Gruening dismissed the Slattery Report as "wishful thinking" by bureaucrats. The report was actually written by two Interior Department lawyers: Nathan Margold, Interior's solicitor, and the Indian law expert Felix Cohen, dismissed by a friend of Gruening's as an "unbalanced enthusiast" who gets swept away by causes. None of the federal bureau heads in Alaska supported the plan, Gruening noted, and Assistant Secretary Oscar Chapman refused to release the report under his name. Undersecretary Harry Slattery was called in to sign it instead.

Slattery had come to Interior from the National Conservation Association, making him one of Interior's leading pro-conservation voices. But the report that bore his name alarmed some conservationists. In fact the Roosevelt administration's most famous voice for Alaska wilderness protection spoke out loudly against the refugee plan.

Robert Marshall, chief of recreation for the Forest Service and founder of The Wilderness Society, had outraged many Alaska business

leaders when he proposed in 1937 that the Brooks Range north of the Yukon be preserved as a roadless frontier, open only to small-scale homesteading, trapping and gold panning.

Marshall had spent a year in the village of Wiseman and wrote a book about that idyllic "pre-industrial" community, where popular topics of conversation ranged from the rise of Hitler to "the curse of Rah and its devastating effect among the Tutankhamen excavators." Marshall hoped to preserve such "pioneer conditions" for future generations.

Like other proposals to promote development in Alaska, the refugee plan was a "dodge," Marshall wrote in The New Republic. Once again, politicians were avoiding the nation's real economic problems with talk of a new frontier.

His article, which appeared shortly after his sudden death of a heart attack at 38, concluded that federally sponsored settlers would diminish the opportunity for individualism and self-sufficiency that still flourished in the isolated, unmapped expanse of the north.

Marshall surely understood the plight of the European Jews. His father was Louis Marshall, a prominent New York constitutional lawyer and the longtime president of the American Jewish Committee, a quiet, elite pressure group.

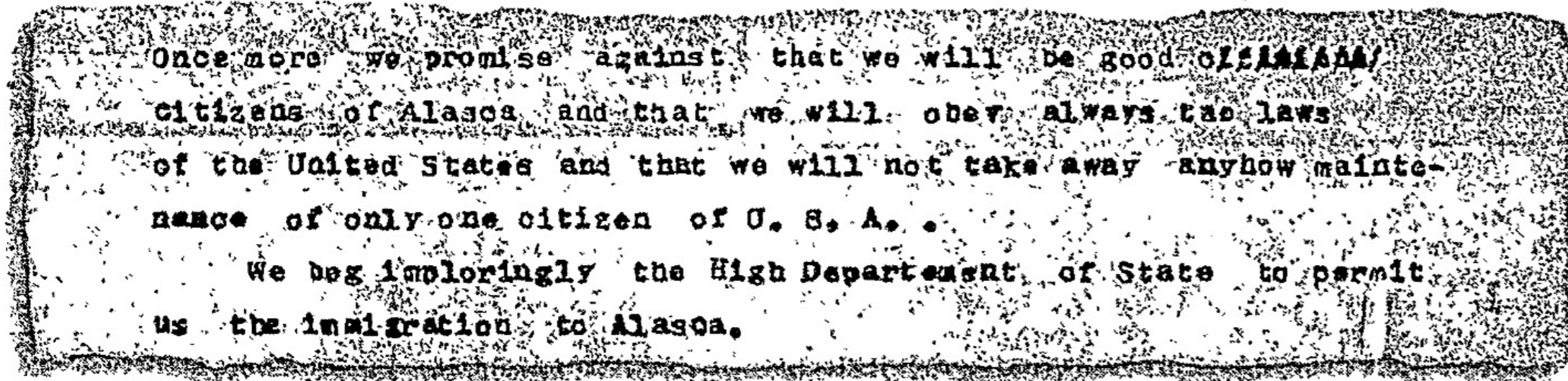
Like Gruening, Marshall was ready to put humanitarian concerns second to his more immediate programs for Alaska.

In fact, most of the Alaska hands in prewar Washington seemed to feel there was little they could do to help the German Jews. That was the sentiment around the dinner table one night in 1939 at Marshall's house, where the guests included Gruening and Anthony J. Dimond, Alaska's delegate to Congress.

Gruening wrote of the dinner party in his journal: "The conclusion seemed to be that refugee problem could be solved only by defeating the Fascist forces which originated it. But otherwise the problem was quantitatively too overwhelming. Later Bob showed us the movies of his trip to Alaska last summer and his unsuccessful effort to scale Mt. Dunorok."

LETTER FROM NEUSTADT

Nov. 10, 1939 In his letters, Bruno Rosenthal stressed the idealism and initiative of the prospective pioneers from Neustadt.



FLOOR: The rent's cheap, but you can't live here

Continued from Page A-1

lies live together, but it's to enjoy each other. Here people are doubled up to survive. It takes its toll," said Rosana Medina, housing coordinator at Sacred Heart Community Service in San Jose. Because the practice is usually illegal — violating the terms of most leases — no one knows just how many people are renting floors in a valley where prices for apartments are always rising.

In Spanish-language newspapers, signs in Laundromats and chitchat among neighbors spread the open secret about floors for rent. The newspaper ads and signs read, "Se renta piso," or floor for rent, or a euphemism, "Se renta sala," or living room for rent, which really means nightly use of the floor.

In a recent two-week period, there were 35 advertisements in three area Spanish-language papers advertising floors from \$150 to \$200 a month. The practice of renting floors cuts across ethnic lines and consists mainly of people who are trying to survive on meager incomes in the valley.

Ramirez knows about struggle and the high cost of housing here. His \$180 a month got him floor space in a San Jose apartment rented by a couple, their child and the wife's sister.

At night, he was so tired from being on his feet for 10 to 12 hours at his Cupertino restaurant job that he would fall dead asleep even without a mattress. Sometimes his stomach and chest ached in the morning from lying on the hard surface.

He often awoke to the crying of the 9-year-old girl. Or he'd open his eyes and see the white plastic wheels of her toddler car as she raced about the one-bedroom apartment. The mother was tidying up the place. It was time for him to take a shower, roll up his blankets and put his belongings back in the closet. "Whenever you get up, you have to get out," Ramirez said. "You don't really live there. You just sleep there. You feel very lonely."

Rogelio Escobar, a floor renter in San Jose, often wakes up yearning to eat breakfast with his family at the kitchen table back home in Mexico. Instead the 24-year-old construction worker gathers

"For us, this is the way to survive, to get by. It helps people who can't afford their own place. (The man who rents our floor) comes late, sleeps and leaves. We don't see him much."

— Rogelio Escobar, landlord

his possessions off the floor and bolts. "I see this as a temporary situation. That's the only way I can tolerate it," Escobar said.

Sandra Martinez, a single mother of an 8-year-old girl, began renting out the floor of her one-bedroom Redwood City apartment this month because she couldn't pay the \$1,000 rent. "For us, this is the way to survive, to get by. It helps people who can't afford their own place," she said. The man who rents their floor "comes late, sleeps and leaves. We don't see him much."

Renting floors is usually illegal because it violates the terms of most leases that limit the number of tenants and require the names of all occupants. Landlords can evict tenants if there is overcrowding.

Ramirez has never encountered a legal problem for renting floor space. For five of his nine years in the United States, he has rented different floors, at one time sharing the floor with two other men.

When he left Mexico for the United States in 1990, he never imagined he would be sleeping on the floor.

But where he slept was less important than his dream to save \$15,000 and return to Mexico to open a deli.

Ramirez began as a dishwasher earning \$3.25 an hour. It took him more than 100 hours of washing dishes to pay his monthly rent.

In 1994, he found a better job at a Cupertino restaurant as a busboy, making \$4.25 plus tips. But he discovered the

buses stopped running before he got out of work some nights. That's when he rented a floor, which was on a different bus line that ran late at night.

Ramirez was better off than before, when he spent nights plodding down Stevens Creek Boulevard from Cupertino to San Jose to get to a room with a bed, which he rented for \$350. That journey was 17 miles, and it usually took him six hours to get home, often at daybreak. His floor space cost half that much. Off the floor in the mornings and out of the apartment, he would window shop or sit in a park to pass time.

"I'd sit on the bench and cry. I'd think, 'Why am I here alone when my family is in Mexico?'" he said.

Despite the passing years, Ramirez held on to his dream. He didn't mind the long nights much, when he tried to pretend the hard floor was his bed in his mother's four-bedroom house in Mexico. "You have to swallow your pride and think forward, not look back," Ramirez said.

In 1997, his old girlfriend from Mexico showed up in San Jose. The couple moved from the floor in the living room to the floor in the dining room. Same price, more privacy.

With his spare cash, Ramirez bought items to decorate the apartment he dreamed about but could not afford. He stuffed the plastic flowers and ornamental mirrors in a suitcase with his other possessions in the apartment closet with his blankets.

By last year, he still had not found anyone to rent him an apartment. Time was running out. His girlfriend, now his wife, was pregnant.

Just before the baby came, Ramirez grew worried about how he would raise a baby on the floor.

A friend who lays carpet recommended Ramirez to the owner of an apartment. The \$900 rent for a one-bedroom was low for Silicon Valley but steep for Ramirez.

He knew just how to make ends meet. After he got his flowers and mirrors set up in his new place, he promptly rented out the living room floor for \$200.

CRIME: 7-year plummet

Continued from Page A-1

have helped make our communities the safest they have been in a generation," he said.

The FBI began collecting crime data nationwide in 1930. But never before has there been such a prolonged period of declining crime, said Mary Victoria Pyne of the bureau's Uniform Crime Reporting program.

For all the encouraging signs, the new data only underscored the schism between the statistical trends on crime and the perceptions of a public still very skittish over the issue.

Though some polls show public fears easing in recent years, a Gallup survey in October found that 56 percent of people polled believe there is still more crime in the United States than there was five years earlier. Such sentiments have helped drive anti-crime and gun-control initiatives, an effort redoubled by the Littleton, Colo., massacre.

Nationwide, robbery saw the biggest decrease of any of the eight crimes of property and violence tracked by the FBI, declining 11 percent. Vehicle thefts dropped 10 percent from 1997 levels. Rape and aggravated assaults were down 5 percent. Burglary and arson figures were each 7 percent lower, officials said. Larceny-thefts fell 6 percent.

The numbers reflect preliminary FBI crime totals for 1998 from the bureau's survey of more than 10,000 city, county and state law enforcement agencies. Final totals, including crime rates per 100,000 inhabitants, showing which cities are

considered safest will be reported in fall.

One of the few blips came in suburban areas, where homicides increased slightly in 1998 despite declines in every other type of crime.

The Justice Department said overall declines of 8 percent were reported by law enforcement agencies in Northeastern and Western states. The South reported decreases of 6 percent, the Midwest 4 percent.

The number of homicides dropped in all regions, led by 11 percent declines in the Northeast and West.

Also, the number of serious crimes fell in cities of all sizes.

Republicans have said there remains too much crime despite recent declines.

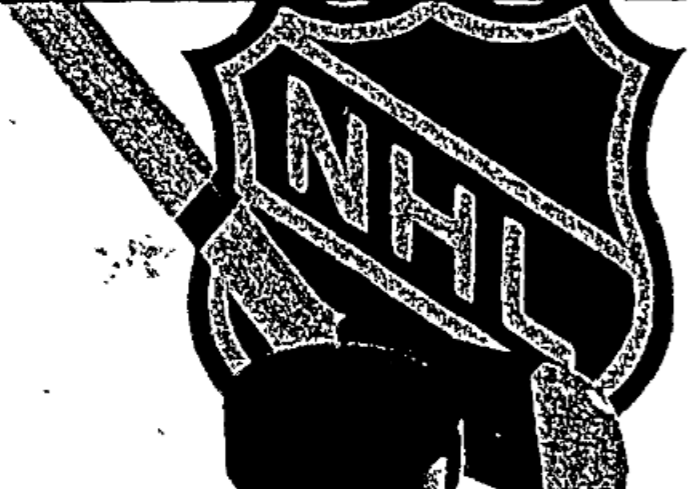
For example, when Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, unveiled a \$17.4 billion GOP crime bill in March, he said crime still is "significantly high by historical standards."

Hatch, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, called on Congress to restore millions of dollars to Republican-backed crime-fighting programs Clinton has proposed eliminating.

Some gun-control advocates said the figures show that efforts to tighten gun control are working but more needs to be done.

"What we need to do is plug the loopholes that are still allowing criminals and children to get guns. Sensible people agree that if you have to go through a background check to buy a gun in a gun store, you should have to do the same at a gun show," said Naomi Paiss, a spokeswoman for Hangun Control Inc.

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Anchorage Daily News

50 CENTS
VOL. LIV, NO. 138

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, TUESDAY, MAY 18, 1999

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Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak vows to heal Israeli divisions.

Israelis choose Barak

Soldier wins on platform of Mideast peace

By KARIN LAUB
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Ehud Barak, a former general who promised to resume Mideast peace talks, on Monday unseated Benjamin Netanyahu, the hard-line prime minister who slowed peacemaking and froze Israel's budding ties with the Arab world.

■ EHUD BARAK: Israel's prime minister-elect is a former general who traded in his uniform for political garb four years ago. **A-10**

ceded defeat just half an hour after exit polls projected Barak winning by a wide margin in Monday's elections, and he said he also would step down as

leader of the Likud Party. Barak promised to heal the divisions among Israelis and be a leader for all the people.

"It is my intention to be everyone's prime minister. Whatever the differences of opinion between us, we are brothers," he told supporters at



Netanyahu in defeat

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Shooting suspect charged

Palmer residents pay tribute to officer

By S.J. KOMARNITSKY
Daily News Staff Bureau

PALMER — While flowers piled up in front of the local supermarket in honor of slain police officer Jim Rowland, Alaska State Troopers arrested his suspected killer Monday at an Anchorage hospital and charged him with first-degree murder.

Kim M. Cook, 52, who is scheduled to undergo surgery today at Providence Alaska Medical Center, is accused of shooting Rowland early Saturday after a confrontation outside the Carrs Quality Center here. The two engaged in a shootout after Rowland stopped to check on Cook, who was slumped over the wheel of his truck, troopers said. Rowland was shot once in the chest and Cook was hit twice in the upper left arm, according to court documents filed Monday.

What led to the confrontation is still unclear, but charging papers filed by prosecutors provided a few more details, including that Rowland was killed despite wearing a bullet-proof vest and that Cook was carrying three guns in his truck.

According to the court documents, Rowland stopped to check on Cook, who was parked in a driveway leading to the parking lot of the store at the Glenn and Palmer-Wasilla highways.

He took Cook's driver's license number and asked dispatchers to run it through a statewide criminal computer data base.

The dispatchers told Rowland that Cook, from the Glennallen area, had no warrants for his arrest but that officers had stopped him in the past and found him carry-

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SANCTUARY

ALASKA, THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS

German Jews Unsited For Alaska Settlers Is Prevailing View Here

Interviews With Local Residents on Buckley Proposal

Widespread interest has been expressed among Alaskans by the

full development of our economic possibilities. It is impossible at the present time for Alaska to assimilate into its economic structure any large mass immigration of German Jews or any other

'Alaska wants no misfits'

As the Nazi grip tightens and Jews try to flee, Alaskans make their views on refugees perfectly clear

By TOM KIZZIA
Daily News reporter

As members of the small Jewish community in Neustadt waited through the early months of war for word on their application to immigrate to Alaska, they learned of a frightening proposal by the local Nazi authorities.

The Jewish cemeteries in the region could be flattened and plowed under for agriculture. The tombstones would make excellent sharpening stones, one official said.

Even for Jews who had remained in Germany through the first waves of emigration, hoping things would get better, the message about the future was plain.

But in America, where the debate over opening the Alaska Territory to immigrants gathered steam in the first months of World War II, nobody spoke of saving people from death chambers.

At the beginning of 1940, annihilation of the Jewish population was not yet German government policy. In fact, some Nazi officials were weighing plans to deport the



On July 4, 1940, Alaskans paraded down Anchorage's Fourth Avenue. Many in the state wanted to stay out of the European war.

Jews en masse to a new colony carved out on Poland's eastern frontier or to the African island of Madagascar.

Despite the outbreak of war, sealed trains carrying emigrants with visas ran from Berlin through Paris to the Atlantic port of Lisbon. Concentration camps were filling with

Communists and other "undesirables," but they had not yet become machines for extermination. Hitler had publicly threatened far worse. Yet for now, official policy was forced emigration of the nation's remaining 200,000-plus Jews —

Please see Page A-7, MISFITS

Fiscal plan agreement is elusive

Lawmakers are racing to Wednesday deadline

By ROBERT KOWALSKI
Daily News Juneau Bureau

JUNEAU — Gov. Tony Knowles and legislative leaders met Monday and tried to agree on the best way to ask Alaska's voters if the state should tap the Permanent Fund to pay for state government and reduce annual dividends in the process.

Using the fund would turn a corner in Alaska history and is at the heart of long-range fiscal proposals the Legislature is considering. Just two days remain until it adjourns.

By Monday evening, lawmakers and Knowles still hadn't made a deal on the fiscal plan or on how the issue would be presented in a statewide advisory election.

"We talked about that last night, and there was no consensus," said Senate President Drue Pearce, who joined Knowles and other lawmakers Sunday at the governor's mansion for last-minute negotiations.

"Everybody's gone back to their corners," Pearce, R-Anchorage, said Monday afternoon.

Today, the full Senate is expected to take its first crack at a long-range plan to offset the huge revenue shortfall the state is facing because of low oil prices and production.

The House and Senate are proceeding with plans that are similar in that they would use the earnings of the Permanent Fund but differ in how that would affect Alaskan's dividends.

"I think we'll be disappointed if all that happens is the House passes a version, and the Senate passes a version and it all just dies on the table," Knowles' chief of staff Jim Ayers said Monday.

Were that to happen, the Legislature could

Please see Page A-8, STATE BUDGET

PENINSULA TODAY

MOSTLY SUNNY
High 55
Low 35

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Printed on recycled paper. Alaska

Makah whalers elude protesters, kill first gray

■ BOIL IT, ROAST IT? By SAM HOWE VERHOVEK
The New York Times
NEAH BAY, Wash. — With repeated thrusts from steel harpoons and two finishing shots from a .50-caliber armor-piercing assault rifle, the Makah Indian tribe on Monday conducted the first

legal killing of a gray whale in American waters in nearly 75 years.

It was described by tribal leaders as part of the proud resurrection of the Makahs' great seafaring traditions, but the killing of the juvenile whale also enraged environ-

mentalists who had gathered in protest boats nearby and provoked a media spectacle, with the event captured live by television crews from Seattle hovering in helicopters.

The whaling crew, with a young fisherman at the bow,

eluded protesters by slipping out of the harbor before dawn and launched three harpoons into one of three whales swimming in the area as part of the gray whale's annual West Coast migration.

Please see Back Page, MAKAH

SANCTUARY

ALASKA, THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS

THE SERIES

SUNDAY



After violent riots in 1938 against Jews in Nazi Germany, the U.S. Interior Department proposes to open the Alaska Territory to limited numbers of Jewish refugees.

MONDAY



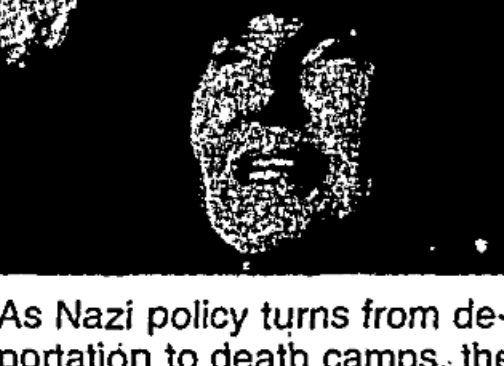
While the Jews of Neustadt appeal repeatedly for admission to Alaska, federal officials debate the plan.

TUESDAY



The Alaska immigration plan draws interest from across Europe. But what do Alaskans think of the idea?

WEDNESDAY



As Nazi policy turns from deportation to death camps, the final decision on bringing refugees to Alaska lies with Congress.

GERMANY TODAY



RON ENGSTROM / Anchorage Daily News

SOURCES

Today's story is drawn from the following sources. Alaska's reactions to the Slattery Report are drawn especially from 'The Anchorage Daily Times and the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, 1938-1940.'

ALASKA VOICES

Excerpts from the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

Nov. 17, 1938

be expected to unfold gradually—but one thing is certain Alaska wants no misfits and is unprepared to care for dis-

Nov. 21, 1938

Mrs. Emma de la Vergne, from the office of the United States Commissioner in Fairbanks and an old-time resident of the North...

Nov. 25, 1938

Let us solve the Jewish problem, let us for Alaska open the way for her to march on toward statehood with a people schooled in American traditions and such as she can assimilate and with whom she can build from the ground up with security and solidarity.



American soldiers, like these marching down Anchorage's Fourth Avenue near E Street, poured into the territory during the prewar military buildup.

Misfits

Continued from Page A-1

an early variant of what would later come to be known as "ethnic cleansing."

Not that the Germans made it easy for them to leave. Applicants were stripped of wealth that might make them more appealing as settlers in a new land.

Nor was it easy to find somewhere to go. There were 309,782 applications for U.S. visas from Germany and Austria in the spring of 1940, according to a news wire story that appeared, among other places, in The Anchorage Daily Times.

The start of fighting created further obstacles. German U-boats sank 110 merchant ships in the first four months of war.

As millions of additional Jews fell under German authority in the Reich's sweep through Eastern Europe, the grand Nazi resettlement schemes were quietly abandoned.

In the midst of all this, the Alaska settlement plan appeared as a peephole of light.

Joachim Hein wrote the Department of the Interior asking to immigrate to Alaska with his wife, Anna, and daughter, Henny.

"We shall in no way a burden for the country, because we take our electric machines from here and furnish a manufacture in aprons and linen, like we have had here.

Hein added that his daughter had "studied philosophy and is a teacher and she is musical too."

Moses Rudman wrote from the Bronx, N.Y., where he was staying with relatives on a visitor's visa that would soon expire.

In the central German town of Neustadt, Bruno Rosenthal continued to wait for a reply to his inquiries on behalf of his family and friends.

Finally, a letter from the Department of the Interior arrived, on March 27, 1940.

"We are trying to find out from the appropriate Governmental authorities what disposition can be made of your request for permission to immigrate to Alaska.

Rosenthal replied at once: "We... are registered by the American Consul for entering into the United States and we are waiting for calling off. But we all have to wait about one year and it is not possible to stay here longer.

From Breslau, Germany,

"Is it possible, to deliver my request as an Immediate Request on Mr. President?"

'Dumping Ground'

Mrs. Emma de la Vergne, the U.S. recorder at Fairbanks and an "old-time resident of the North," was receptive when the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner asked her about the new refugee idea.

"Let the German-Jew refugees come to Alaska, if they want to. Alaska is a big country. Give them a chance. If they cannot make a go of it, they will leave."

But Mrs. de la Vergne, the widow of a beloved doctor, was in the minority. Most other Fairbanksans quoted by the newspaper in November 1938 criticized the idea.

For the next three years, it was hard to find anybody in Alaska with anything favorable to say about opening the territory to refugees fleeing Europe.

"No use to make a dumping ground of this country," said Frank Frates, a local miner.

Fairbanks Mayor Leslie Nerland said the idea had as much appeal among Alaskans as the old proposal to turn Alaska into a penal colony.

"They are not the type of hardy Scandinavians who have had so much to do with development of Alaska on their own initiative," said postmaster Robert E. Sheldon, president of the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce.

"Alaska wants no misfits and is unprepared to care for discards," concluded an editorial in Cap Lathrop's

News-Miner. The Chambers of Commerce in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and Valdez passed resolutions opposing the refugee plan.

The Anchorage Chamber feared a colony made up entirely of immigrants, which would "stifle assimilation and will prevent them from becoming Americanized."

The Juneau Chamber, citing recent experience with the federal agricultural colony in the Matanuska Valley, predicted a heavy tax burden would fall on the territory to support roads and schools.

A few small-town chambers went the other way. Skagway and Petersburg endorsed the Interior Department settlement plan, eager to develop Alaska by any means possible.

One strike against the plan was that its chief backer, Ickes, was widely distrusted in Alaska. It would not have come as a surprise to many territorial residents if Ickes had dreamed up such a scheme not for humanitarian reasons but simply to stir up his political opponents in the North.

Critics questioned the Slattery Report's glib economic predictions. They said unemployed workers were

already swarming north looking for jobs in military construction, overloading relief agencies. They complained that subsidies would be necessary — a possibility of special concern to the Alaska Miners Association, which noted that its members would likely carry much of the new tax burden.

Some critics professed concern for the immigrants themselves, saying they would suffer from "forced" colonization. Others predicted practical problems from having a special class of citizen unable to travel freely to the states.

Though all ship passengers from Alaska routinely passed through customs at Seattle, they complained that Alaskans would face the humiliation of carrying special identification cards.

The most common complaint in Alaska, however, was that the potential immigrants — "of wholly alien racial and religious character," as one business group put it — would not be able to adapt to harsh frontier conditions.

Ickes' clever ploy, pitching the program as an effort to build Alaska's economy, had forced Alaskans to abandon their comfortable pro-development rhetoric.

Years later, University of Alaska historian Orlando Miller wrote that Alaskans seemed almost forced into adopting anti-Semitism as a strategy because a full discussion of the problems of new settlements would contradict the old boosterism and faith in the frontier's promise.

"Our campaign to bring the needs of Alaska to the attention of the Nation has succeeded almost too well," wrote the Juneau Empire. "Now we appear to be in danger of being run over by a juggernaut of unwise and hasty schemes for colonization."

Please see Page A-8, MISFITS

Timeline of events from 1938 to 1940, including immigration proposals, Nazi actions, and the Slattery Report.

SANCTUARY

ALASKA, THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS

Misfits

Continued from Page A-7

tion." "The question," Miller wrote, "was turned from whether Alaska was good enough for refugee settlers to whether the settlers were good enough for Alaska." Hence the Anchorage Pioneer Igloo said the aliens would be "a menace to our American civilization" and the Fairbanks News-Miner said the proposal was "enough to make any true American and particularly Alaskan think twice. ... Keep Alaska American."

Jewish voices unheard

Jewish miners and traders had long played a role in the life of the territory, of course. In fact, four of the seven partners in the San Francisco firm that bought out the assets of the Russian American Co. in 1867 were Jewish — as was Benjamin Levi, the young U.S. soldier who raised the American flag over Sitka during the ceremony taking control of Alaska from Russia.

Critics of the colonization plan sometimes prefaced their remarks by expressing indignation over "the brutalities heaped upon the Jews by Germany." But resettlement efforts should point the European Jews toward warmer climes, they said.

"Let others settle the Jewish problem," said the News-Miner, "but as for Alaska, open the way for her to march on toward statehood, with a people schooled in American traditions and such as she can assimilate and with whom she can build from the ground up with security and solidarity."

Throughout this time, Alaskans never heard the voices of people like Bruno Rosenthal. They did not personally close the door in the face of Rosel Lilienfeld and her sons. Many Alaskans seemed proud of their insular lives, and their newspapers did little to drive home the plight of the individual European Jew.

"Editorials, news stories and the comments of businessmen and politicians showed interests that rarely ventured beyond the territory," Miller wrote, "that centered on the gossip and trade in the small towns, the level of gold production, the size and value of the salmon catch, the high freight rates, and the continuing wicked neglect of Alaska by the federal government."

One of the few personal accounts from Germany to run in The Anchorage Times was an interview with the U.S. Commissioner from Yakutat, who returned from a vacation in Germany with his wife and children in 1939 to report the people were "happy, well fed and with a



Condemned to drift, the Jewish refugees on the St. Louis could see the lights of Miami. Many of those turned back from America eventually died in concentration camps.



Parents on the ocean liner St. Louis tried to keep life normal for their children during the long voyage.

Salvation so close, yet mercy so far

The ocean liner St. Louis, which carried about 900 Jewish refugees on an epic 1939 voyage from Europe to the United States and back again, has become a lasting symbol of America's callous response to the plight of Germany's Jews. Departing from Hamburg, Germany, 60 years ago this month, the St. Louis carried refugees bound for one of the few countries that would take them: Cuba. They had paid \$160 each for "landing permits" in the Caribbean nation. But once they reached the Havana harbor, they were not allowed to go ashore without real visas, which only a few dozen passengers had.

strict limits on the number of immigrants from each country, and the passengers on the St. Louis would have to return to Germany and get in line.

After five days, the German ship started back across the Atlantic. European nations scrambled to strike a deal while a sympathetic German captain sailed slowly to the east. In the end, the passengers were divided among England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, so they did not have to return to Germany. Soon after, however, with the outbreak of war, many of the former passengers fell into Nazi hands.

About half the passengers turned back from America on the St. Louis eventually died in Nazi camps and massacres, according to researchers at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., which is holding a special exhibit on the St. Louis this summer.

— Tom Kizzia

great deal of freedom." "You read all sorts of stories in this country about Germany which are not the least bit true," Hardy Trefferger told the Times. "Nobody hated Hitler more than I before we went to Germany, but when I saw how things were, I changed my mind."

To be sure, The Anchorage Times took no such position on the editorial page, denouncing the Nazis' anti-Jewish actions as "savagery." But to Robert Atwood's Times, as to many Americans, such barbarism was a European problem. Even as news of the latest German Panzer attacks filled the Times' front page, the newspaper campaigned

to keep America out of the conflagration.

"We're staying out of this war," the paper wrote in 1940, addressing Britain's leaders. "Did you get that? We're staying out."

The Anchorage Times was editorially silent on the refugee plans, quoting instead the mostly negative views of other papers. A skepticism came through in headlines referring to "German Cast-Offs" and foreigners ready to "invade North." Atwood reprinted the entire Slattery Report, which had underplayed the controversial refugee angle and mentioned Jews only once, under an introduction titled "Jews for Alaska?"

In the spring of 1940, as

Congress prepared for a showdown over the Alaska refugee plan, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce president Clyde R. Ellis composed a report summarizing what he said were Anchorage's objections to the plan.

"Subsidized foreign refugees competing with American businessmen and American citizens would create a race prejudice such as has been practically unknown in our country during its history," predicted Ellis, a lawyer and one-time territorial commander of the American Legion.

The biggest objection in Anchorage, he said, was that these new foreigners would be difficult to assimilate. Just look at how they had failed to

mix with the German population, bringing such trouble down upon themselves, the chamber president said.

"Without casting any reflection on that race in our country which are of the same faith religiously as the refugees which the colonization plan is meant to embrace," Ellis wrote, "we can safely say without fear of contradiction, that those refugees have proven their non-assimilability which has resulted in the disaster which has overtaken them."

Tolerance and democracy

President Roosevelt did not respond personally to Bruno Rosenthal's request, as Rosenthal had asked in

March 1940.

Instead, a legislative circular regarding the upcoming debate in Congress over a bill providing for the settlement and development of Alaska was mailed to Germany. Four months later, at the end of August, it reached Neustadt.

"I am quite informed about the economic conditions and problems of Alaska," Rosenthal wrote back. And then he opened his copy of the Slattery Report and quoted back to the Interior Department the words on which the Jewish families of Neustadt had pinned their hopes of survival.

He wrote: "As 'tolerance and democracy are natural products of the frontier where a man is appraised for his worth and not for his ancestry,' as written in the Dep. Report on 'The Problem of Alaskan Development,' Page 70066/85, 'and it makes little difference whether this population comes from the United States or from abroad,' and as we applicants are such men as the Alaskans are fond of, I hope, I shall be advised as soon as possible that I have the permission to immigrate to Alaska, as requested since May 1939 till to-day."

By the time he wrote those words, however, the debate was over and the fate of Neustadt's last Jews was sealed.



LETTER FROM NEUSTADT

March 28, 1940 As the war spread, the urgency in Bruno Rosenthal's letters gave way to a note of barely restrained panic.

We all have to wait about one year and it is not possible to stay here longer. We are anxious to go abroad immediately. I requested for permission to immigrate to A l a s k a , because we are short of time - Is it possible, to deliver my request as an immediate - Request on Mr. President?

STATE BUDGET: Facing Wednesday deadline, lawmakers find agreement elusive

Continued from Page A-1

draw about \$1 billion from the Constitutional Budget Reserve to pay for next year's spending and go home, leaving a long-range plan to future Legislatures. Or it could result in this Legislature coming back to Juneau for a special session this year.

Sen. Tim Kelly, R-Anchorage, was optimistic the House and Senate can reach a compromise before midnight Wednesday. "We are closer together than we were two months ago or one week ago," he said.

Alaska has not used the Permanent Fund to pay for major state government costs since the fund was formed in 1976.

Both the House and Senate would combine earnings of the Permanent Fund with money in the budget reserve and use the new ac-

count to pay dividends and help balance the state budget. Both proposals also would put a plan before voters in a statewide advisory election on Sept. 14.

Both plans call for additional cuts in state spending of about \$100 million over two years.

And both assume the state will find at least \$100 million in new revenue annually, starting as early as next year. But neither identifies a source of that money.

The House plan would cap dividends at \$1,000 this year and the next two years. The amount of dividend payments would gradually increase after that, according to the proposal's supporters.

The Senate plan calls for dividends of about \$1,700 this year and next and then would calculate dividends based on the mar-

ket value of the Permanent Fund and its earnings. That would produce dividends of about \$1,250 in 2001, according to plan supporters.

Last year, the dividend was \$1,541. This year it is expected to be between \$1,600 and \$1,700, without a new financing plan.

The House approved its plan Saturday. The Senate Finance Committee approved the Senate proposal last week.

The House plan proposes an election ballot that would give voters a choice between approving or rejecting only its plan.

The Senate proposal would give voters that choice on two options: a "yes or "no" vote on the Senate plan and on a proposal Knowles made in January.

Knowles suggested enacting a personal income tax to raise \$350 million a year and us-

ing Permanent Fund earnings to help pay for state services. Ayers said Knowles is willing to accept a plan that is silent on the source of new revenue, rather than specifying an income tax as the source.

"We believe that the public will demand to know that this works," he said.

But Ayers said the dividend payments in the House plan are too low. A fiscal plan should guarantee residents a dividend of at least \$1,200, he said.

Ayers also said the administration prefers voters have just one fiscal plan option to vote up or down. "That's what the public wants, a simple question," he said.

Reporter Robert Kowalski can be reached at rkowalski@adn.com.

AVALANCHE WIN

No three-peat for Detroit

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Bethel police intercept teen

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JICAMAS

Tasty tubers take on 'taters

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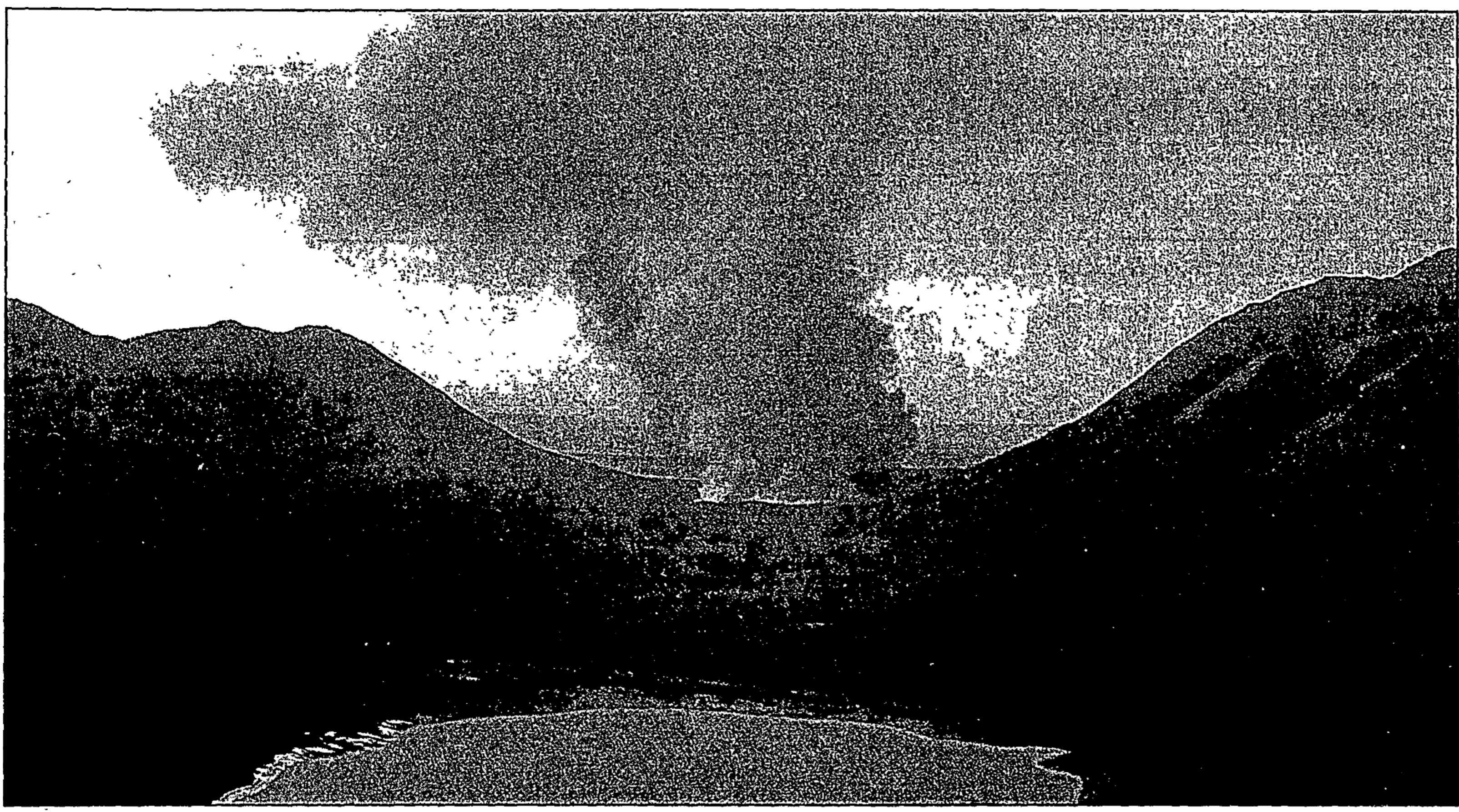
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Fires erupt, threaten homes



Smoke billows from a wildfire in the valley west of Eklutna Lake on Tuesday evening.

Dozens flee homes near Palmer

By DON HUNTER, NATALIE PHILLIPS and S.J. KOMARNITSKY
Daily News reporters

Gusting winds whipped nearly a dozen wildfires to life across Southcentral Alaska Tuesday, with one threatening about 50 homes near Palmer and another burning across an estimated 200 acres of dense woods in Anchorage's Eklutna River Valley.

On the Kenai Peninsula, crews raced to put out four smaller wildfires — one near Skilak Lake, one in Kenai and two at Homer. Other brush fires were reported in the Mat-Su and in Anchorage.

"We're in high fire danger now," said John LeClair, state forestry's fire management officer for the Peninsula. As in the rest of Southcentral, the state has prohibited brush burns on the Peninsula for as long as the dry, windy conditions persist.

The fires outside Palmer and near Eklutna were by far the worst, with large, dark plumes of smoke spreading across the sky and visible for miles.

In the Palmer area, below Lazy Mountain off Clark-Wolverine Road, dozens of residents were evacuated Tuesday afternoon and evening, and Alaska State Troopers barricaded roads leading into it. More than 100 acres were ablaze there by Tuesday night.

More than 120 firefighters, including a crew and trucks from Anchorage and smoke

Southcentral primed to burn, officials warn

By KAREN AHO
Daily News reporter

Fire officials suspended open burning across Southcentral Alaska Tuesday morning and put fire crews on heightened alert as dry, windy conditions turned grass and shrubs into virtual match sticks.

"You could probably put a match to it and watch it burn," said Sam Albanese, a fire weather forecaster with the National Weather Service. "And that's in live plants."

Tuesday morning, before the first of several fires were reported in the area, the Alaska Division of Forestry began diverting resources to the region, shipping a fire-retardant air tanker from the Lower 48 before schedule, putting Fairbanks-based smoke jumpers on alert, hiring two emergency firefighting crews, and holding back a McGrath-bound helicopter.

Officials said they haven't seen such prime wildfire conditions since the Big Lake/Millers Reach Fire of 1996, which burned across about 35,000 acres and destroyed 400 houses and other structures.

Tuesday's conditions were the result of an arctic cold front moving south, a weather anomaly in Alaska that brought to the region the unusual combination of extremely dry air and relatively stiff winds.

"Those conditions would indicate kind of the worst-case scenario that we experience in fire weather, certainly in southern Alaska," said John See, the state Forestry Division's coastal region fire management officer.

Please see Back Page, PRIMED

Session down to wire; Senate grapples with budget

By ROBERT KOWALSKI
Daily News Bureau

JUNEAU — The fate of a long-term fiscal plan for the state, and the future of the Alaska Permanent Fund, lay in the hands of the state Senate late Tuesday, as the remaining hours of the legislative session ticked down.

The Senate was preparing to debate a proposal that would use earnings of the fund to offset a huge shortfall in the state budget and to pay out Alaska's annual dividends under a new formula.

To do so would be a far-reaching policy shift for Alaska, with ramifications for everything from the state's reliance on revenue from Prudhoe Bay oil to the household needs of all Alaskans.

A substantial number of lawmakers have said Alaska voters should have a say in the matter. Plans approved by the House and pending before the Senate call for a statewide advisory vote on the issue on Sept. 14.

The Senate moved the matter to the end of its daily calendar Tuesday, postponing the debate and leaving an underlying tone of anticipation in the Capitol, as it took up numerous other bills and resolutions.

"It's probably the most important single thing facing the state in a decade," said Sen. Dave Donley, an Anchorage Republican. "I think we should work until we get it right."

Throughout the day, legislative leaders were working to find a ballot question to put before voters.

Still unclear was whether the

Please see Back Page, SESSION

Belgrade may be ready to 'cut deal' on Kosovo

By CANDICE HUGHES
The Associated Press

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — Proclaiming moral victory, a senior Yugoslav official said Tuesday that Belgrade is ready to "cut a deal" on Kosovo despite unspecified "reservations" about the formula put forward by the United States and its major European partners.

In the meantime, NATO renewed its attacks on Yugoslavia in words and bombs. Alliance missiles hit at least four cities in raids that Yugoslav media said killed one woman and injured 12. Six bombs slammed into Mount Fruska Gora, near Novi Sad, Yugoslavia's second-largest city.

Late Tuesday, NATO missiles struck an empty fuel storage depot a mile southwest of Belgrade's city center, witnesses said. No fire or injuries were reported.

At NATO headquarters in

Please see Back Page, KOSOVO

ALASKA, THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS

As Congress tackles the Alaska refugee question, a final plea comes from the Jews of rural Germany

'Are There No Exceptions?'

FOURTH OF FOUR PARTS

By TOM KIZZIA
Daily News reporter

Several days after Christmas in 1984, Gerald Berman stepped off the train in the small town of Neustadt. He felt he had stepped back into Germany's past.

Berman taught sociology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He had traveled to Germany before. To him, Germany was a global economic powerhouse, the nation of modern cities like Munich, Bonn and Frankfurt, where he'd boarded the train.


Now here he was in a historic village in the tidy rolling countryside of the state of Hesse, an old center of the Catholic Church and conservative politics.

Neustadt was picturesque, but not the kind of place that ever saw tourists. There were no foreign newspapers for sale, very few English speakers. As Berman walked self-consciously down the snowy street, drawing glances from passers-by, he felt he'd left modern Germany behind.

Berman had come looking for the past.


In Fairbanks, he had come across the letters of Bruno Rosenthal written from Neustadt before World War II. They were part of a trove of documents about the Alaska immigration plan dug out of the National Archives by a colleague. Moved by the letters, Berman had

Please see Page A-4, EXCEPTIONS



CLEMENS NIEDENTHAL / Special to the Daily News

A Catholic church dating from the 1500s sits in the historic center of modern Neustadt.



PENINSULA TODAY

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THE SERIES



After violent riots in 1938 against Jews in Nazi Germany, the U.S. Interior Department proposes to open Alaska Territory to limited numbers of Jewish refugees. Alaska's location of freedom brings hope to Jews in the small rural town of Neustadt, who face a dis- propositly long wait for normal U.S. visas.



While the Jews of Neustadt appeal repeatedly for admission to Alaska, federal officials debate the plan. Interior Secretary Harold Ickes opposes the plan, but among the leading opponents is Territorial governor Ernest Gruening, who is himself of German Jewish heritage.



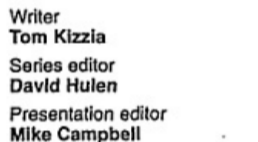
In Neustadt, the Nazis order the Jewish cemetery flattened. But as inquiries from across Europe reach America, the plan to settle Jewish refugees in Alaska meets strong resistance from Alaskans themselves.



As Nazi policy turns from deportation to death camps, the final decision on bringing refugees to Alaska lies with Congress.



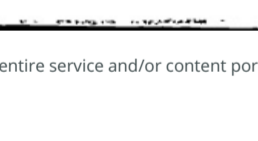
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Exceptions

Continued from Page A-1

decided to stop in Neustadt to find out more about the Jewish community there, on route to a year's sabbatical in Israel.

"I don't know where I got the chutzpa to call the mayor, the soft-spoken, graying professor said recently, recalling his 1984 journey.

During a wedding stay as the city's guest, officials introduced him as "the professor from Alaska." Later he learned that around town they were calling him "the Jewish professor."

A native of Detroit who had taught in Fairbanks for nearly a decade, Berman was then in his 50s and had come to feel Alaska was home. He enjoyed the informality, the sense of possibility, even the local pride. Like people in Israel, where he had also lived, Alaskans often prefaced their public remarks by noting how long they'd been around.

On the other hand, he'd encountered what struck him as a troubling provincialism in Alaska. Many of his colleagues seemed unaware of important events taking place in the larger modern world — to say the least, of the time before World War II.

Berman spent his first night in Neustadt with a chair wedged under the doorknob to his bedroom.

At the first inn where he tried to check in, he had been told there was no room available. At the second inn, the innkeeper's friendly wife warned him that he would be late. She was a Protestant, she confided, and that made her an outsider, too.

The tavern downstairs filled with young German men that night, drinking steadily and singing loudly while Berman lay awake with his door blocked.

By the light of morning, his fears seemed ridiculous. City officials were all men. Their towns were friendly. They also seemed Bruno Rosenzthal, vaguely, as a nice man, wealthy in his time — his wife's family, the Bachrach, had been one of the richest families in town. But no one remembered much.

Later, a newspaper reporter from a nearby town explained to Berman that people feared he had come to research property claims on behalf of descendants of the town's Jews.

Berman was introduced to a local high school chemistry teacher, Dankward Sieburg, who had taken it upon himself to research the history of Neustadt's Jews. Many German towns now had people like this, Berman was told, amateur historians obsessed with building family trees and documenting what their hometowns had done to the Jews.

Sieburg had started his research on Neustadt in the 1960s. He gave up in 1973 after receiving threats against his family, he once told German reporters. He lost his job as the city's architect, but he kept his own copies of records — reports that apart from Jewish population that later disappeared from the city's official files.

By 1986, Sieburg had begun his research again, this time with help from his students at the local school. The students were upset because neo-Nazi skinhead violence was the rage in Germany. Somebody had vandalized the surviving Jewish cemetery, toppling some historic tombstones and carving swastikas on others.

After researching records on the Kristallnacht riots and the burning of the local synagogue, the students went out into the community to interview Neustadt grandparents' generation. They came back to class seething. Some old people told them a few windows might have been broken that night, nothing more. Others said any Jews who once lived in Neustadt had moved away by November 1938.

In 1988, Sieburg and his students erected a public display of their findings for the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht. They received a letter of commendation from the West German president. Five years later, Sieburg published a 767-page history of the local Jewish community, from the 13th century through the Nazi period, titled "Die Synagogengemeinde zu Neustadt." The Synagogue Community of Neustadt. Even 50 years after the burning of the synagogue, Sieburg noted in his book, the city refused to erect so much as a plaque at the site.

By that time, Sieburg had been forced to move to another town, citing threats he'd received. Like others in Neustadt, Sieburg had been wary of sharing his secrets with the visitor from Alaska. He said it was not safe to speak out — though there were no tourists around. But Sieburg was intrigued by Berman's story and was intrigued by Berman's story and was intrigued by Berman's story.

In the end, Berman was able to provide an important service to the Neustadt historians, an relied on the Alaskan to translate tombstone inscriptions in the old Jewish cemetery. The inscriptions were in Hebrew, and there was no longer anyone in the Neustadt region who could read them.

The city provided a car, chauffeur and a translator, who had learned to speak English as a prisoner-of-war on an island in the English Channel. The translator showed up with a meticulously researched list of dietary restrictions that their guests, as a Jew, would need to follow. Berman graciously explained that he did not follow the kosher laws.

On behalf of the town, the young mayor read a long formal apology to Berman for the Holocaust. He gave his visitor a plaque. But if the people of Neustadt were friendly, they also seemed Bruno Rosenzthal, vaguely, as a nice man, wealthy in his time — his wife's family, the Bachrach, had been one of the richest families in town. But no one remembered much.

Humanitarian smoke screen

In May 1940, as the German army invaded France, the Alaska resettlement plan finally came up for hearings before a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs.

Legislation passed the Senate Report into law had been introduced by Sen. William H. King, D-Utah, and Rep. Frank Havenner, D-Calif. The bill provided for the creation of government-chartered, privately financed corporations to undertake select types of economic development projects like mining, for farming or manufacturing in Alaska. The new settlers would be both unemployed workers from the United States and qualified immigrants allowed into the territory in excess of the nation's quotas.

Interior Secretary Harold Ickes continued to present the King-Havenner bill as a plan to develop Alaska. He claimed that 338 newspapers had editorialized in favor, including the Des Moines Register, which said, "Our own Nation is actually the product of such a mass migration."

Ickes said the opposition came mainly from a handful of white Alaskans worried that their "monopoly of Alaskan resources would be threatened by an increase in immigration."

But hostile senators on the subcommittee were not distracted from the refugee question. They saw the bill as a "smoke-screen" attempting to slip thousands of aliens into the country through America's "back door."

Interior officials who lined up to testify about Alaska development were forced to concede that apart from admitting refugees, the bill allowed nothing that private industry couldn't already do on its own. The legislation itself was vague as to how

many refugees might be allowed. Interior lawyer Felix Cohen argued that the presence of Europeans with technical skills would attract investment capital to Alaska that would otherwise go elsewhere.

But even that argument seemed to undermine the notion that the bill had more to do with philanthropy than with developing Alaska.

"Do you not know this bill is almost wholly humanitarian in its impulse?" Cohen was asked by Sen. Homer H. Bone, D-Wash. "The moment this bill emerges on the floor of the Senate, the immigration feature will be the point around which the argument will revolve."

Ickes himself captured the isolationist, anti-immigrant tenor of the times in his opening testimony. He concluded to the senators that "the word 'humanitarian' is in bad odor these days."

But, he said, "if a proposition is good for business, and good for the national defense, and good for the American people, we ought not to turn it down merely because it has some humanitarian by-products."

The Alaska bill drew opposition from anti-immigration lobbyists like the American Legion, which warned of secret agents and "fifth columnists" sneaking into Alaska under the guise of refugees. Why should America extend itself even for legitimate refugees, asked national League leader Col. John Thomas Dwyer, "who lacks the courage and patriotism to stay at home and fight their own battles?"

The main arguments against the bill were presented to the subcommittee by Anthony J. Dimond, Alaska's nonvoting delegate to Congress.

Dimond began by evincing sympathy for the persecuted minorities of Europe and defending Alaskans against charges of anti-Semitism. "There is less race and other prejudice in the Nation," he insisted.

But it was completely unaccustomed to wall off Alaska as a special place for a caste of non-citizens unable to travel to the states, Dimond said.

"Anyone traveling from Alaska to the States would be obliged to show that he was not a member of one of the restricted alien settlements which are proposed to be set up in Alaska under the bill, and that would be considered

intolerable," Dimond said. "Territorial Legislature passed a resolution on the matter, it objected particularly to the special immigration quotas, which the Legislature said would turn Alaska into 'the world's largest and most expensive penal colony.'"

After recounting various other practical concerns, Dimond told the subcommittee that if the federal government truly wanted to develop Alaska, all it needed to do was build more roads.

While Dimond shrewdly avoided anti-alien rhetoric, he did pass along a resolution calling foreign refugees "a menace to our American civilization" that had been approved by the Anchorage Igloo in the Pioneer of Alaska. Dimond told the senators that the group consisted of the old-timers of Alaska and was "perhaps the one organization of Alaska that ought to be listened to above all others."

High school teacher Dankward Sieburg, right, published a history of the Neustadt Jews from the 13th century, with special attention to the Nazi period. Sieburg moved from Neustadt to a neighboring town after receiving threats because of his research. Neo-Nazis have vandalized the Jewish cemetery in present-day Neustadt, far right. Sieburg was finally able to obtain translations from the headstones after he met Gerald Berman.

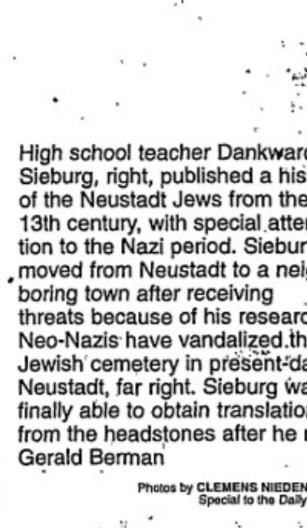


PHOTO BY GERALD BERMAN FOR THE ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS



The Neustadt synagogue, which was burned during Kristallnacht and later torn down by the city, is depicted in a sketch. Left, Timbers and wood shavings from the building ended up in private Neustadt homes. The synagogue site is now occupied by a building, above, erected in the 1960s. No commemorative plaque marks the location.



PHOTO BY GERALD BERMAN FOR THE ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

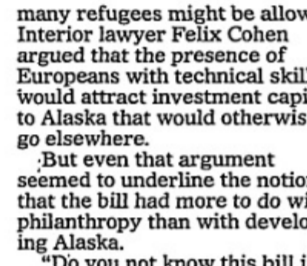


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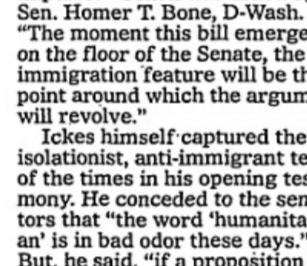


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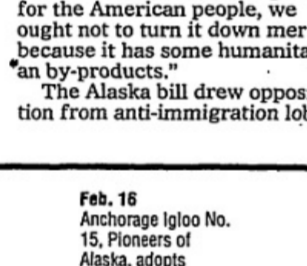


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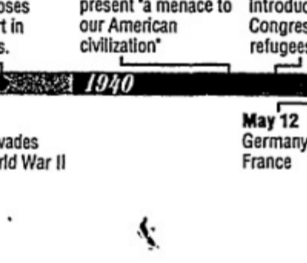


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ALASKA, THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS



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The Neustadt synagogue, which was burned during Kristallnacht and later torn down by the city, is depicted in a sketch. Left, Timbers and wood shavings from the building ended up in private Neustadt homes. The synagogue site is now occupied by a building, above, erected in the 1960s. No commemorative plaque marks the location.

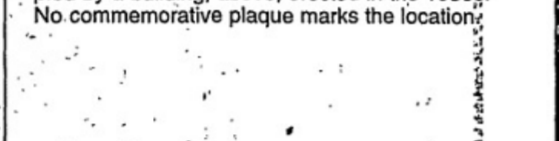


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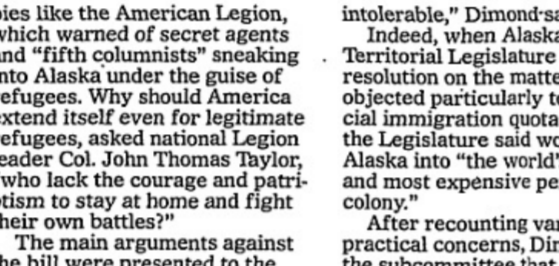


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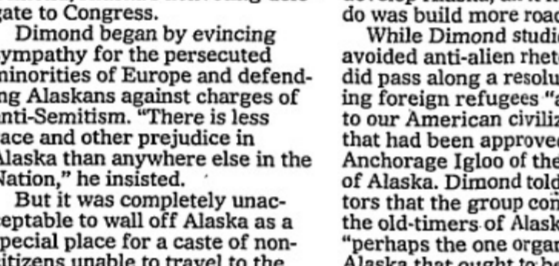


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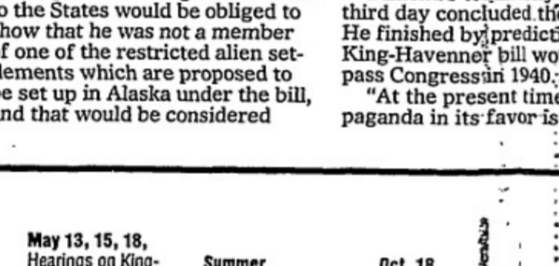


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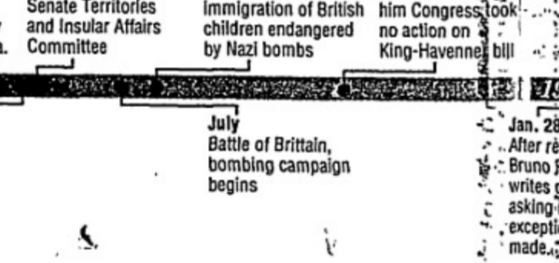


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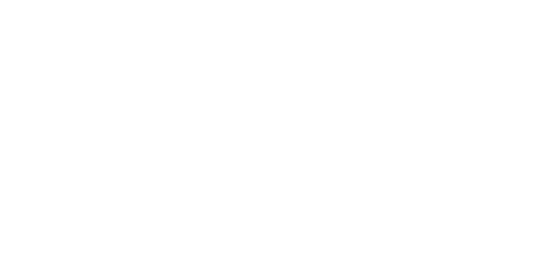


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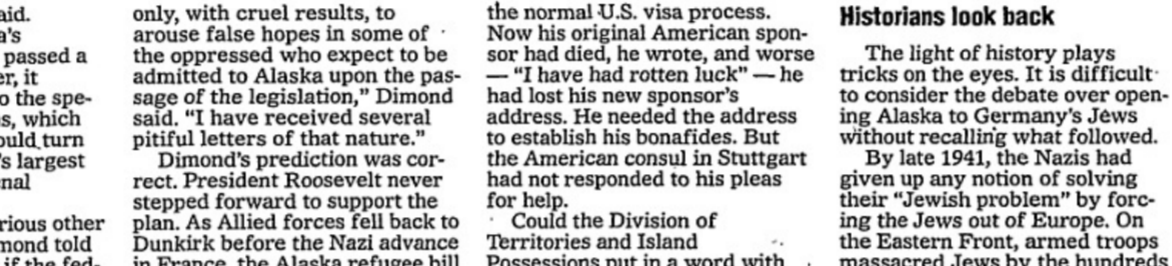


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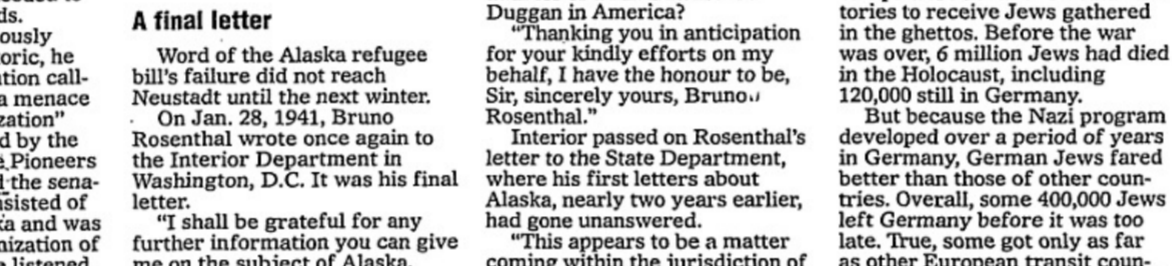


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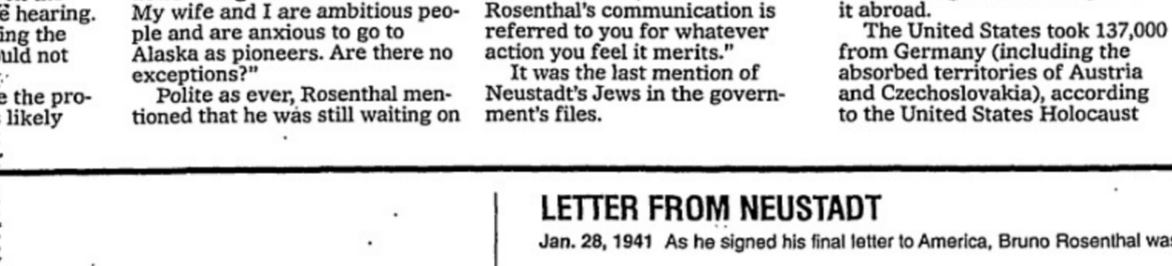


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Memorial Museum. That was more than any other single country accepted. But largely because of obstacles erected by the State Department, it was only after the limit passed by under Hitler's rise to power.

"Today, historians and ethicists ask if the United States did enough. The question has special poignancy for Alaska, which was the only place in the nation where a specific proposal was aimed at saving the Jews.

"Historians are always trying to teach you can't use the moral judgments of a later stage of culture to judge an earlier stage of culture," said Stephen Haycox, a longtime history professor at University of Alaska Anchorage. "And yet it's almost impossible not to do so, especially on an issue where the culture feels a profound sense of guilt."

English professor Michael Schulzinger has taught a course on the Holocaust for seven years at the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. Schulzinger, whose mother is from his entire family culture to judge an earlier stage of culture, said Stephen Haycox, a longtime history professor at University of Alaska Anchorage. "And yet it's almost impossible not to do so, especially on an issue where the culture feels a profound sense of guilt."

Schulzinger said of the student's "Schindler's List." But every year, when Gerald Berman visits the class to tell them about Alaska's own story, they are shocked.

"I think there's some embarrassment," Schulzinger said of the student's "Schindler's List." But every year, when Gerald Berman visits the class to tell them about Alaska's own story, they are shocked.

"I take on symbolic proportions, this lack of response. There is a kind of meanness there, isn't there? It wasn't as if these individuals were going to have to lift a finger. It seems like it would have been easy."

The entire episode appears to be forgotten today, except by a few scholars who have dug into the prewar territorial period. (A Chugiak High School student, Hannah Milson, won a statewide competition a year ago with a paper on the King-Havenner debate.) Historians say that Alaskans of the time, grossly cut off from the world and preoccupied with their own economic affairs, showed little understanding of the suffering of European Jews.

The episode raises uncomfortable questions about our reaction to world events today, says University of Alaska historian Claus-M. Naske, who first unearthed the Neustadt letters from the National Archives. The author of a school text on Alaska history, Naske is himself a post-war immigrant from Europe.

The lack of empathy for Germany's Jews was "a typical small-town reaction," said Naske, whose mother was Jewish and lost her family to the Holocaust. Naske's father, a Catholic, served as an officer in the German army and managed to save his wife and children.

In Iowa, people are more concerned with the price of hops. People are not much concerned with foreign affairs. Look at Cambodia and the killing fields. We let that happen. Look at the Nazis and the Hutus. What should the international community do?"

Though the current NATO intervention in Kosovo seems to suggest a changed attitude, Naske says he doubts many Alaskans support such an active role.

Still, Alaskans can say that in 1939, they didn't know about the death camps. Their opposition to refugees was often based on practical objections.

"The plan itself was a flawed plan, and I think the criticisms from the Alaskan point of view were fairly well-taken," said Gruening biographer Robert David Johnson, a professor at Williams College in Massachusetts. "It can be dangerous to judge events of the 1930s knowing what we know today — though in Gruening's case, we can be harsh, because he had been so outspokenly critical of the Nazis in the 1930s."

In addition to Berman, three historians have discussed the politics of the Report — either in scholarly articles or as part of books on broader topics. They are: four a number of factors weighing on opponents, economic exigencies caused by the Great Depression. But all three also found what historian Orlando Miller called "a broad streak" of anti-Semitism running through the opposition in Alaska.

For Naske, the episode challenges the conventional image of the frontier as a place of tolerance and democracy. "We have this myth about the frontier that we continue to mouth in Alaska and it has no relation to what is really here."

—Claus-M. Naske, Alaska historian

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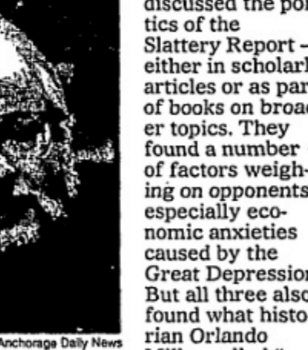


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SANCTUARY
ALASKA, THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS

Exceptions

Continued from Page A-5

time, the immigration plan didn't seem like such a good idea.

"I have to admit, that unless you came up like my Dad did with the joy of adventure, and he loved it so he stayed and stayed, Alaska would be a tough place for them to live. The high cost of food, splitting the wood and keeping the fire going. But — any port in a storm."

It could have been different if Fairbanks realized what was at stake, she said.

"We knew there were refugees. But we knew nothing about the concentration camps and the sadism at that point. I think if Les Nerland and Vic Rivers had known about those camps, I think a lot of those people would have felt differently. We just didn't know."

"Oh, but I'm happy to hear about Emma de la Vergne. I feel so proud of her."

Train to the east

The Jews of Neustadt never made it to Alaska.

Two months after Bruno Rosenthal's last letter, all emigration permits in the region covering Neustadt were suspended by the Gestapo in Kassel. In the third week of May, the last 17 Jews in Neustadt were taken to a regional collection camp in the nearby village of Roth.

The Rosenthals were among those sent to Roth. The Lilienfelds, who had been waiting to go to Alaska with them, had already been removed.

By September, an official Nazi census listed Neustadt as "judenfrei" — free of Jews.

The movements of the Jews were tracked carefully in Nazi records — right up to the final deportation order, when railway passenger manifests often turned deliberately vague. Nazi officials tried to keep the existence of the extermination camps secret.

Max Lilienfeld was taken away from his family. At 44, he was still a strong worker, and he was sent to the forced labor camp at Gross-Rosen, in Poland. Prisoners in long, striped coats worked through the winter quarrying marble and granite.

Max Lilienfeld died of unknown causes at Gross-Rosen on Dec. 16, 1941, according to a recent history of Jews from the Marburg region.

Lilienfeld's ashes were returned to his wife, says his cousin, Alice Pfeffer, who immigrated to the United States before the war. She learned this odd twist from a survivor who had encountered Rosel Lilienfeld

later at the Czechoslovakian concentration camp of Theresienstadt.

Rosel Lilienfeld may have thought she was fortunate when her deportation order came on Sept. 6, 1942. She was sent to Czechoslovakia with her sons, Hans was now 12, Walter 7. They were told to bring a suitcase including a complete suit of clothes with good shoes, eating utensils, bed sheets and lunch for three days.

Theresienstadt, a fortress city in Bohemia, had been turned into the Nazis' "showpiece" concentration camp. While news of the death camps had begun to spread, many people believed the reports that Theresienstadt was different, according to Holocaust historians. Prominent Jews with international ties, whose disappearance might embarrass the Nazis, spent much of the war there.

In June 1944, a Danish Red Cross delegation made a now-famous visit to Theresienstadt, where they were impressed by the flowers, the freshly whitewashed buildings, the signs of industry. They did not know that the prosperous-looking ghetto was a sham, an elaborate stage set up for their visit. Everything had been prepared by forced labor for their arrival, right down to the relatively uncrowded barracks, made possible by shipping 12,500 prisoners to the gas chambers at Auschwitz several weeks before the Red Cross arrived.

By October, with Allied troops advancing across Europe, the Nazis began to empty Theresienstadt. In a month, 16,902 Jews were deported to Auschwitz, where most were marched straight from the train platforms to the gas chambers.

According to records of the Marburg district around Neustadt, Rosel Lilienfeld was sent to Auschwitz on Oct. 9, 1944. Hans and Walter went with her. Walter, the younger son, had spent his entire life as a Jew in Hitler's Germany.

Bruno Rosenthal and his wife, Bianca, were ordered onto a train at Roth in November 1941. One report has them headed for the Jewish ghetto in the Baltic seaport of Riga. Some 16,000 German Jews were moved to the Latvian capital around that time. Most were soon taken into the forest outside the city and shot dead.

But the passenger manifest does not confirm that the Rosenthals went to Riga. Only one thing is certain — the train they boarded that November day was not the one of which they'd dreamed for so long, a train that would take them west to a ship and a frontier destination halfway around the world. It was a train to the east.

The Nazi recordkeepers filled in the customary words next to the names of the Rosenthals: Destination Unknown.

Reporter Tom Kizzia can be reached at kizzia@adn.com.



Meta Bloom Buttnick grew up in the only Jewish family in Fairbanks. She said the friends and neighbors who opposed bringing refugees to Alaska were "kind people, good people."

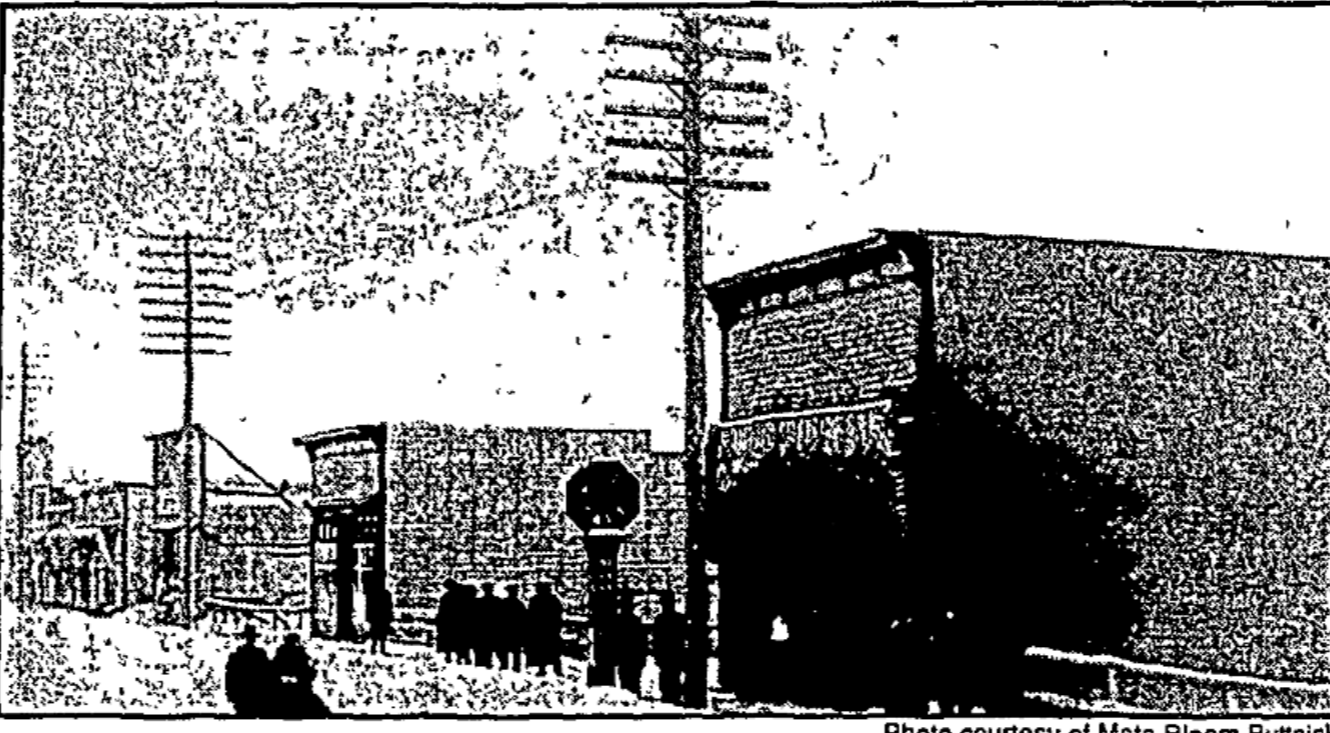


Photo courtesy of Meta Bloom Buttnick

DAN SCHLATTER / Special to the Daily News

Buttnick's father, Robert Bloom, ran a hardware store on First Avenue in Fairbanks, shown here, second from right, in the early 1930s. Bloom came to Alaska during the Gold Rush and remained for the "joy of adventure."

Sources

Today's story is drawn from the following sources:

The letters of Bruno Rosenthal and other European Jews regarding Alaska, along with Interior Department memos on the Slattery Report are available in the National Archives. The file is available on microfilm at University of Alaska Fairbanks archives, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library.

The Slattery Report is available from library sources in Alaska: "The Problem of Alaskan Development," United States Department of the Interior, Harold L. Idles, Secretary, Washington, D.C., 1939/1940.

A complete transcript of the testimony before Congress on the King-Hawenhorst bill is available in "Settlement and Development of Alaska," hearings before a subcommittee

of the Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, U.S. Senate, on S. 3577, May 13, 15, and 18, 1940.

University of Alaska Fairbanks sociologist Gerald S. Berman has written two articles about the Alaska immigration effort of Neustadt's Jews: "From Neustadt to Alaska, 1939: A Failed Attempt of Community Resettlement," *Immigrants and Minorities*, vol. 8, no. 1, (March 1987); and "Reaction to the Resettlement of World War II Refugees in Alaska," *Jewish Social Studies*, volume 44, 1982. Much of the information about his 1984 visit to Neustadt was drawn from interviews with Berman.

A 787-page book about Neustadt's Jews by Dankward Sieburg includes personal accounts of the prewar years, copies of German SS orders affecting the area, and family trees for the great Jewish families, including the Rosenthals, Bachrachs and Lilienfelds.

Dankward Sieburg, "Die Synagogengemeinde zu Neustadt," ("The Synagogue Community of Neustadt"), Neustadt, Germany, 1990. Translation from German provided by Chlaus Lotscher of Homer.

Details about the Nazi concentration camps at Theresienstadt, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald and Auschwitz are available in Konny Feig, "Hitler's Death Camps: the Santity of Madness," Holmes and Meier, N.Y., 1979.

Information on the fate of the Rosenthals and Lilienfelds is drawn from Sieburg's book, from Berman's research in German and Israeli archives, and from a more recent book by Barbara Handlar-Lachmann and Ulrich Schutt, "Unbekannt Verzogen oder Weggemacht: Schicksale der Juden im alten Landkreis Marburg 1933-1945," ("Fate of the Jews in old Marburg County 1933-1945") Marburg, Germany, 1992.

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