

DR HANS KIMMEL MEMORIAL PRIZE

FOR JEWISH HISTORY

YEAR 10

The aim of this project is to encourage you to do some primary research into your family's background. It is hoped that you will acquire more understanding about yourselves, your families and the Jewish Community by personally relating to historical events. Your information should be gleaned mainly from **personal interviews**. However, it will also be necessary to do some background reading from **secondary sources** (books and encyclopedia) so as to substantiate the personal story with historical fact. Note that you must inter-relate the material you have gathered from your interviews, with your general historical reading. You must present your information in the form of an essay - not just scattered notes or point form.

Please note the following carefully:

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

1. World War II was a period of disruption for people throughout the world, but this was especially true for World Jewry. How was YOUR family, OR one member of your family, OR a close acquaintance of your family, affected by it? Relate your answer to the background events of the period.
2. Jews have traditionally been known as migrants - "The Wandering Jew". Write a researched essay on "The Early Years of my Family's settlement in Australia", considering in particular:
 - The reasons for their leaving their old country;
 - Why they chose Australia as their new home;
 - Problems faced on the journey, and in settling in a new land;
 - The way their period of migration affected the development of New South Wales Jewry.
3. The Twentieth Century has been one of the most eventful periods of Jewish History. Many of your parents or other members of your family have lived through and experienced these events. Write a researched essay on the life of ONE member of your family showing how that person's experiences relate to the overall history of the period. (Note that this question does not only deal with World War II; you must deal with the life-span of your subject.)
4. New South Wales Jewry can be considered as consisting of a number of organisations which deal with the various facets of communal life. Choose a person who has played a significant part in one such organisation and find out and relate his/her experiences. Write briefly what has been the continuing history of the organisation, and its present role in the community.
5. A family tree of the student's unitary and extended family, spanning at least three generations, with dates of birth, marriage and death. You must include a brief historical essay, covering the main events experienced by your family during the period covered by the family tree.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

1. The essay should be the original work of the student submitting it under his/her name, except for possible identified quoted passages from reference books, documents, letters or poems.
2. The essay should be submitted on paper, now so-called hard-copy, either legibly handwritten, typed, or word-processed and printed.
3. A title-page with the student's first name, family surname, and the chosen title of the essay should be the first page, preceding the body of the essay.
4. No paper or cardboard with burnt edges simulating an old document is acceptable.
5. Quotes from reference books, books with other authors, letters, etc, should be clearly identified in the text of the essay with quotation marks and name (s) of authors, and in the bibliography.
6. It is to the advantage of the student to include in the essay relevant family documents, photographs and maps pertaining to the topic of the essay in some way.
7. Family documents may be original or quality photocopies so as to be clearly legible. A legend explaining the nature of the document is desirable. A translation may be included, but should be accurate.
8. Photographs may be originals or good quality photographic copies. No photographs of atrocities should be included. Photographs of Nazi personalities, marches or rallies are not desirable inclusions.
9. Maps may be hand-drawn or photocopies, or computer-made, but should contain information relevant to the text of the essay. Computer drawn maps of countries with only major cities shown may have no relevance whatsoever to the essay written and will be negatively assessed. Maps should also be labelled with a legend identifying what they represent.
10. Place names in the essay should be spelled correctly.
11. A bibliography should be provided at the end of the essay identifying
 - a) people interviewed
 - b) letters quoted
 - c) providers of documents, photos, etc
 - d) authors or editors of books quoted
 - e) reference books read
 - f) websites

The reference books included in the bibliography should have been at least partially read by the student. All too often an impressive-looking bibliography is provided, but the text of the essay seems to indicate a total lack of acquaintance with the contents of some of the books listed. This is negatively assessed.

12. The events and dates described in the essay should be as accurate as possible.

DR HANS KIMMEL: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dr Hans Kimmel was born at Monasterzyska on 26 February 1889. He qualified as a doctor of law, settled in Vienna where he married and his wife Emmy. In 1938 he was severely affected by the Nazi Anschluss and in early 1939 suffered a nervous breakdown. He had managed to acquire landing permits for himself and his family to migrate to Australia through the Jewish Welfare Society, but initially thought he would need to send his family on ahead because of his illness. He wrote to the Department of Interior requesting permission for his wife and two children to travel ahead of him, since his wife would be 'the business head of the family as she is a machinist and will bring her own machinery to Australia'.¹ Emmy Kimmel was given permission to proceed to Australia without her husband, but in the end the family travelled together on the SS Strathhallen, arriving in Sydney on 19 July 1939.

In his first few years in Sydney, Kimmel continued to suffer from illness and spent time in hospital. Emmy supported the family by making string bags for a business in Pitt Street as well as giving private piano and singing lessons. They lived initially at Maroubra and then moved to Pennant Hills where they lived for the rest of their time in Sydney. The family experienced further tragedy when their son, Friedrich George, who had enlisted in the Australian army after he turned eighteen and became a corporal, was killed in a car accident shortly after he had been discharged from the army in 1945.

Kimmel had planned to become a dress manufacturer in Sydney and the family brought with them knitting machines from Europe, but he was not able to establish himself. He was not able to practise as a lawyer as this would have required requalifying at university. He started to write for the Jewish papers under the pen name of Dr Joseph Staedter, and his column, 'The Sydney Jewish Diary' was published in the *Sydney Jewish News* and later the *Hebrew Standard*. In 1953/4 he published a selection of his writings in two volumes entitled *Sydney's Jewish Community: Materials for a Post-War (II) History*. The Kimmels left Sydney in 1957 to join their daughter, Elisabeth, who had settled in London.

From the beginning of the struggle for the creation of a Jewish Board of Deputies, Kimmel was a leading advocate for the need for universal franchise, initially publishing his views in the *Australian Jewish Forum*. When the Board was created in 1945, based on indirect franchise through organisational representation, Kimmel continued his battle for constitutional reform. Known as Sydney's stormy petrel, he consistently demanded 'direct and universal franchise' and claimed that the community was run by an 'oligarchy (who) governed the community without democratic mandate'. Largely as a result of his efforts, universal franchise for 25% of deputies for the Board was introduced in 1949 and this was increased to 50% in 1954. Although he often disrupted meetings, and at one stage was suspended for three months, Kimmel played a significant part in the democratisation of Sydney Jewry's leadership and in the recognition of the contribution of the refugees from Nazism to the development of the community.

DR S. RUTLAND