

I first met Ada Holtzman in the mid-1990's. At that time, I did not actually meet her. I just started receiving email from her. Let me step back a moment and explain. Like many other people sitting here today, I am the child of a holocaust survivor who was born in Gombin Poland. Like some of you sitting here today, I was contacted by a family friend, Raymond Boll about starting a Gombin Society for the second generation. To be honest, I did nothing about it. However, others did..... and a few months after the society started, my brother , Elliot Ballen called me to tell me that this Gombin thing had started and I had to become involved. And soon I was. Before long, I had my Dad's history up on our fledging website asking anybody out there if they knew anything about the history of my grandmother or my grandfather. For a while...nothing.... That was not new news to me. Generally my feeble searching has led to well...nothing! Then, suddenly it was as if a light switch had been turned on. Our very young but enthusiastic Noam Lupu had his Dad drive him up to NJ from Washington DC and he brought his visiting Israeli grandmother to meet me... she grew up next door to my father! This meeting was followed by contact from Ada

Holtzman..... giving me details of my grandparents that was beyond anything I could have hoped for. Ada Holtzman brought my family to life for me. Her research turned my hazy history into real people. I cannot begin to tell you what that meant to me. When I contacted her to ask her why she did so much research on people that were not her family she seemed surprised...."well they are your family, aren't they?". I knew that the Gombin Society had it's own very special treasure in Ada Holtzman.

If we fast forward to today, it would be hard to believe that most of you do not know of Ada Holtzman. I would ever go as far as to say that many of you have had contact with Ada as she probably aided you or your members in finding some of your lost history. And you are not alone! Ada has been instrumental in aiding hundreds, if not thousands of families in finding out more about their families. And this is not just in Gombin, where her father was born but also in her mother's shetal and beyond.

If you speak to Ada, you will find her to be very humble. She was shocked to think that we would want to honor her for her work in helping Gombiner to find their lost families. However, Gombin aside, I can assure you that Ada Holtzman is considered by many to be one of the top holocaust researchers and keepers of the memories throughout the world. We are so incredibly lucky that Ada is also a member of our Gombiner family.

I have had the honor of traveling with Ada in Poland. We spent a day together traveling to Treblinka. Ada knows how to negotiate the Polish travel systems unlike anyone I know.... Including the Poles I know! I think I know more about life in Poland during WWII from one day with Poland than I have ever learned prior to that day or even after. Ada is just an incredible woman... her knowledge, her tenacity and her passion are beyond words.

I wish that Ada could be with us today but, sadly, we were not able to make that happen... not this year anyway. I am hopeful that she will be able to attend a future Gombin meeting and I am hopeful that you will all be there on that day also. In the meantime, it is with great pleasure that we, the Jewish Gombin Historical and

Genealogical Society, loving known as The Gombin Society, award to Ms. Ada Holtzman the following award for all her hard work, dedication and commitment to the goals of The Gombin Society.... To help keep the memory of the Jews of Gombin alive. If there is anyone on this planet who had helped to keep our families memories alive and intact it is our own, Ada Holtzman.

Ada, from the bottom of my heart and the hearts of so many people sitting here today...we thank you.

Pleaseplease.... keep up the good work!!