Deadly Deception at Sobibor: Learning from the Artifacts

A metal identification tag of a six year old that died at Sobibor

The camp was carefully excavated and the documentary shows how technology and conventional field archaeology can uncover this part of the Holocaust. The archaeology is combined with the testimonies of the survivors to create a complete history of the Holocaust at Sobibor that was nearly hidden. The film includes interviews with some of the survivors, some of the bystanders, and some of the scholars working to document the history of this extermination camp located on the eastern border of Poland with the Ukraine.

Out of the almost 500 who got away on that day, 50 survived the war. This documentary features the stories of some of the rebels who escaped and the researchers who are still searching to reclaim an almost lost history of rebellion, deception, and triumph during the Holocaust. "When I spoke at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in February, 2013, I was asked what is the most unusual and telling artifact found thus far. There are really two artifacts that stand out. A Sephardic name appears on the artifact, straight out of the types of famous names of the Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 and who arrived in Amsterdam in search of the freedom of life and religion that Jews in the 16th century enjoyed right up until the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. She was a Jewish child, Lea Judith de la Penha, who was born in 1937 in Amsterdam, and would have been six years old when she arrived at the Sobibor camp, and had a metal tag affixed to her, which was probably used as another Nazi tracking device of the Jews, much like
the numbering system that was used at Auschwitz. In addition, there was another unique version of the yellow star which Jews all over Europe had sewn to their clothes. The one below, made out of metal instead of cloth, according to researchers probably originated in Slovakia.

The types of artifacts that are found at a place like Sobibor, gives us a sense of the real, human aspects of the Final Solution. Thousands of personal items have emerged from the excavations, including perfume bottles, dentures, rings, watches, earrings, and eye glasses. A sampling is presented below.