

STEFFI STEINBERG WINTERS PAPERS, 1944-1946
1989.272

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington, DC 20024-2126
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Steffi Steinberg Winters papers

Dates: 1944-1946

Accession number: 1989.272 / RG-10.378

Creator: Winters, Steffi, 1924-2016.

Extent: 1 folder, 1 oversized folder

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Steffi Steinberg Winters papers consist of newspaper clippings related to Jewish refugees at Fort Ontario in Oswego, New York; compositions written by Steffi Steinberg (later Winters) during her time at Oswego High School; and two photographs of Jewish refugees at Oswego High School. The poem included in the collection was composed by Steffi Steinberg on the occasion of the resignation of Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter Director, Joseph Smart.

Languages: English

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Steffi Steinberg Winters papers (1989.272), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Steffi Winters donated the Steffi Steinberg Winters papers to the United State Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1989.

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at collections.ushmm.org for further information.

Processing history: Katelynn Vance, August 2019

Biographical note

Steffi Steinberg (later Winters) was born on April 6, 1924 in Berlin, Germany. In 1936, due to rising antisemitism, her father left Berlin and settled in Turin, Italy. Steffi and her mother joined her father in 1938. In June 1940, war broke out in Italy. Eight days later, her father was arrested and imprisoned. He was eventually sent to an internment camp near Parma, Italy. In October 1940, he was sent to an unnamed internment camp high in the Italian mountains. He died three days after his arrival in the new camp at the age of fifty-one. Steffi and her mother were sent to central Italy where they lived under “free internment” in June 1940. They lived in relative freedom in an unnamed village in central Italy for three and a half years.

Eventually German soldiers arrived in the village. Steffi’s mother was asked to act as an interpreter between the Italian villagers and the Nazi soldiers. When the soldier’s inquired about her fluency in German, Steffi’s mother lied and claimed to have studied in Berlin. During the occupation of the village, the Steinbergs hid with an Italian family. The Germans confronted the mayor of the town asking if there were any remaining internees left in the town. The mayor lied claiming there were none, and the Steinbergs remained undiscovered. The mayor told Steffi and her mother that the village was no longer safe, and that they needed to leave. Steffi and her mother packed their two suitcases of belongings, rented a mule from a local farmer, and walked seven hours through an unofficial no-man’s land to the Allied lines. Upon arrival, they were taken in, registered and sent further south in a convoy of trucks. They ended up in a refugee camp in Bari, Italy. There Steffi and her mother worked as interpreters for the British army.

In 1944, Steffi and her mother were among a group of refugees selected to find temporary asylum in the United States. The refugees were required to sign an agreement stating that they would return to Europe after the war. In 1944, they boarded the transport ship the *Henry Gibbons* in Naples, Italy. After sitting in the harbor for five days, the ship set sail for New York. During the voyage the ship was followed by submarines. Ruth Gruber, a representative from the United States who had traveled with the group, held English lessons on the deck of the ship. The ship arrived in New York harbor on August 3, 1944. The passengers were immediately sent to Hoboken, New Jersey for delousing, and then they traveled on an overnight train to New York. When they arrived in Fort Ontario in Oswego, New York the refugees were placed under quarantine for four weeks. Once the quarantine was lifted, the refugees were able to leave the camp for six hours at a time, provided they had a pass. Steffi was able to attend the local high school. She later described her experience within the camp as fairly comfortable because she could focus on her studies. However, she recognized that they were “free and yet not free.” Despite their previous agreement to return to Europe after the war, in December 1945, the refugees were taken to Canada and granted visas to enter the United States. Steffi and her mother settled in the United States. Steffi Steinberg married Samuel Winters in New York in 1954. Steffi Winters died on June 13, 2016.

Scope and content of collection

The Steffi Steinberg Winters papers consist of newspaper clippings related to Jewish refugees at Fort Ontario in Oswego, New York; compositions written by Steffi Steinberg (later Winters) during her time at Oswego High School; and two photographs of Jewish refugees at Oswego High School. The poem

included in the collection was composed by Steffi Steinberg on the occasion of the resignation of Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter Director, Joseph Smart.

System of arrangement

The Steffi Winters papers are arranged in a single series.

Indexing terms

People:

Fuller, Hadwen C.

Hanf, Lea.

Weiss, Edith.

Winters, Steffi, 1924-2016.

Corporate:

Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter.

Topics:

Displaced persons--Europe.

Families.

High School.

Holocaust survivors.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)

Jewish refugees.

Jews rescue (1939-1945)

Refugees.

United States--Emigration and immigration.

World War, 1939-1945.

World War, 1939-1945--Refugees.

Geography:

Fort Ontario (N.Y.)

Genre / Form:

Manuscripts.

Newspaper clippings.

Photographs.

Poetry.

CONTAINER LIST

Folders:	Title:
1 of 1	Steffi Steinberg Winters papers, 1944-1946
OS 1	Steffi Steinberg Winters papers, 1944-1946