

SOMMER AND BLOCH FAMILY PAPERS, 1920-1983 [bulk 1938-1946]
1995.A.0360

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Sommer and Bloch family papers

Dates: 1920-1983 [bulk 1938-1946]

Accession number: 1995.A.0360

Creator: Ralph Sommer and Fred Hanauer

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (1 box)

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

Abstract: The Sommer and Bloch family papers primarily document Ralph Sommer, a Jewish refugee who was imprisoned in the Camp des Milles internment camp and later was a member of the French resistance and the French military. Another major portion of the papers contain correspondence from Fred Hanauer, who was a cousin of Ralph's living in the United States and coordinated efforts with other family members in assisting relatives imprisoned in concentration camps in Europe. Included in the collection is correspondence, identification papers, military papers, and travel visas.

Languages: German, French, 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), Sommer and Bloch family papers (1995.A.0360), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The Sommer and Bloch family papers were donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1995 by Harriet Sommer, wife of Ralph Sommer.

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

Processing history: Michael Folkerts, September 2015

Biographical note

Ralph Sommer (1926-1988) was born Rolf Sommer to Moses Sommer and Flora Bloch Sommer. He was born and raised in Königheim, Germany. Flora was able to obtain a visa to travel to the United States through her sister Betty and husband Leo Hanauer, and lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, Moses and Ralph continued to live in France. During the occupation, both were sent to Camp des Milles in 1941, where Moses died soon after. Ralph was actually able to obtain a visa through his family, and left the camp, but was not allowed to leave the country. Instead, Ralph joined the French Resistance while living in Chauvigny under the name Jean Sommer. After the occupation he also enlisted in the French Army. After the war, Ralph moved to the United States and married Harriet Sommer and had three children, Michele, Caren, and Richard.

Fred Hanauer (1913-2007) was born in Paris, France before moving to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with his parents Leo and Betty (nee Bloch) Hanauer. During the war, Fred maintained correspondence with his Uncle Julio living in Colombia, along with other friends and family members in order to get relatives out of Europe. Along with efforts in try to help his uncle Moses emigrate, Fred attempted to assist Norbert and Sophie Bloch as well, ultimately failing as the two were sent to Auschwitz where they were killed.

Scope and content of collection

The Sommer and Bloch family papers contains primarily records relating to Ralph Sommer while living in France, and correspondence with members of the Bloch family, coordinated with Fred Hanauer. The items concerning Ralph include identity cards, photographs, certificates of good conduct, a travel visa, and a handwritten curriculum vitae. Also included are documents regarding his service in the French Resistance and Military. The correspondence regarding the Bloch family consists entirely of letters and telegrams between Fred, his Uncle Julio, and other relatives and friends, and document the efforts made by the Bloch family in attempting to secure visas to other imprisoned family members. Another series of records consists of various documents related to other relatives, including a death certificate for Moses Sommer, a funeral booklet for Melanie Bloch, and copies of birth certificates for other members of the Sommer family.

System of arrangement

The Sommer and Bloch family papers are arranged as three series:

Series 1: Ralph Sommer, 1939-1946

Series 2: Fred Hanauer, 1938-1946

Series 3: Various family members, 1920-1983

Indexing terms

Sommer, Ralph Jean

Sommer, Harriet

Sommer, Caren

Sommer, Moses

Sommer, Flora
Bloch, Norbert
Bloch, Sophie
Bloch, Julio
Bloch, Melanie
Hanauer, Leo
Hanauer, Betty
Hanauer, Fred

Les Milles (Concentration camp)
Auschwitz (Concentration camp)

World War, 1939-1945--Underground movements--France.
World War, 1939-1945--France.
World War, 1939-1945--Jewish resistance--France.
World War, 1939-1945--Jews--Rescue--France.
Jewish refugees—France
Concentration camps--France.
Holocaust survivors.

United States--Emigration and immigration--History.
Philadelphia (Pa.)
Bogotá (Colombia)
Chauvigny (France)

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Ralph Sommer, 1939-1946

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Certificates of good conduct, 1942-1945
1.2	Certificate of imprisonment, 1942
1.3	Curriculum vitae, approximately 1945
1.4	French identity card, approximately 1942
1.5	French military de-mobilization certificate, 1945
1.6	French military identification card, 1945
1.7	French resistance identification, 1945
1.8	Naturalization request, 1945
1.9	Permission to leave France, 1946
1.10	Photographs, 1939-1944
1.11	Ration cards, 1945-1946
1.12	Receipt of identity card request, 1945
1.13	Small pox vaccination, 1945
1.14	Tax exemption, 1945
1.15	Travel visa, 1945-1946

Series 2: Fred Hanauer, 1938-1946

Folder	Title
1.16	Correspondence, 1938
1.17	Correspondence, 1939-1940
1.18	Correspondence, March 1941
1.19	Correspondence, April-May 1941
1.20	Correspondence, June-July 1941
1.21	Correspondence, August-September 1941
1.22	Correspondence, October-December 1941
1.23	Correspondence, January-February 1942
1.24	Correspondence, March-June 1942
1.25	Correspondence, July-December 1942
1.26	Correspondence, 1943
1.27	Correspondence, 1944-1946
1.28	Financial documents, 1941-1942

Series 3: Various family members, 1920-1983

Folder	Title
1.29	Birth certificates copies, 1961
1.30	Bloch, Melanie, 1920
1.31	Sommer, Caren, 1981-1983
1.32	Sommer, Moses, undated