

DINGFELDER AND WOLFF FAMILIES PAPERS, circa 1920-1946 1998.69

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Dingfelder and Wolff families papers

Dates: circa 1920-1946

Accession number: 1998.69

Creator: Felder, Robert, 1924-1986

Extent: 0.1 linear feet (2 folders)

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

Abstract: The Dingfelder and Wolff families papers contains photographs of the Dingfelder family before World War II in Plauen, Germany, the family aboard the MS *St. Louis*, a photograph of Rudi Dingfelder after liberation in 1945, a studio photograph of Aline and Arthur Wolff, circa 1920s, and an undated tourist postcard of the MS *St. Louis*. Correspondence written by the Dingfelder family in German, Hebrew, and English are also contained in the papers. A letter written by Rudi Dingfelder includes descriptions of his wartime experiences as a prisoner in Auschwitz concentration camp and other labor camps.

Languages: German, Hebrew, English, Dutch

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), Dingfelder and Wolff families papers (1998.69), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Gerry Felder donated the Dingfelder and Wolff families papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1998.

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

Related materials: Photographs and correspondence of the Dingfelder family can also be found in the USHMM Photo Archive collection. These include a photograph of the Dingfelder family (31729); a studio portrait of the Dingfelder family (31763); Rudi Dingfelder in Netherlands, 1945 (31709); an exterior outside view of the Dingfelder's kosher butcher shop (46053); the Dingfelder family sitting in the grass (32472); the Dingfelders standing in front of their kosher butcher shop (31765); members of the Dingfelder family standing on a railroad platform (32473); members of the Dingfelder family boarding and aboard the MS *St. Louis* (31702, 31698); brothers Rudi and Martin Dingfelder in school uniforms (31728); Rudi Dingfelder as a toddler (31727); a note scribbled on a napkin by Leopold Dingfelder requesting that his family be given permission to disembark in London because his brother Carl Felder had traveled from Cleveland, Ohio to assist them (38568); and a postcard sent by Rudi Dingfelder from the MS *St. Louis*, 1939 (31702A).

Processing history: Katelynn Vance, February 2019

Biographical note

Rudi Dingfelder (later Robert Felder, 1924-1986) was born on April 21, 1924 in Uehlfeld, Germany to Leopold Dingfelder (1886-1943) and Johanna Dingfelder (née Wormser, 1891-1943). Johanna Wormser was born in Zeitlofs Bavaria, Germany to Moses Wormser and Karolina (née Adler) in 1891. Rudi and his brother Martin grew up in Plauen, Germany. Leopold owned a kosher butcher shop and Johanna was a housewife. In 1938, Martin Dingfelder immigrated to the United States. Rudi and his parents boarded the MS *St. Louis* in 1939. Upon the ship's return to Europe the Dingfelder family disembarked in Holland. In 1942, Rudi and his parents were arrested in Gouda, Holland and were sent to the Westerbork transit camp. His parents were transported to Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland in 1943 where they perished. Rudi was sent to Vught concentration camp and then back to Westerbork. On March 5, 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz. Rudi was one of fifty-five members of his transport of 2,500 people to survive the initial selection of the camp. In January 1945, Rudi was sent on a death march to Germany where he was imprisoned in the Buchenwald concentration camp. A trained toolmaker, Rudi was selected for forced labor at Sachsenhausen concentration camp, Berlin-Siemensstadt, and factory camp near Schwerin, Germany. Rudi escaped from the factory at Schwerin and was liberated by American soldiers. After the war, Rudi returned to Gouda, Holland where he met his future wife, Gerry Wolff. Gerry Wolff was born to Aline and Arthur Wolff. Her mother was not Jewish but her father was Jewish. In March 1947, Rudi immigrated to the United States and joined his brother Martin. In 1948 Gerry joined Rudi in the United States. Rudi and Gerry Felder married, settled in Detroit, Michigan, and had a daughter Joan. At some point Rudi Dingfelder changed his name to Robert Felder. He died in Detroit in 1986.

Scope and content of collection

The Dingfelder and Wolff families papers contains photographs of the Dingfelder family before World War II in Plauen, Germany, the family aboard the MS *St. Louis*, a photograph of Rudi Dingfelder after liberation in 1945, as well as a studio photograph of Aline and Arthur Wolff, circa 1920s, and an undated tourist postcard of the MS *St. Louis*.

Correspondence in the papers includes a typewritten letter written by Rudi Dingfelder in English regarding his wartime experiences imprisoned at Auschwitz concentration camp, Buchenwald concentration camp, and other slave labor camps, August 12, 1945; two Jewish New Years cards from Rudi Dingfelder written in German and Hebrew, 1938-1939; two letters written in German by "Hedwig," May 11, 1939 and June 21, 1939; an official letter issued from Westerbork under the auspices of the Dutch Red Cross stating that Rudi Dingfelder was interned at the Westerbork transit camp, Vught concentration camp, and Auschwitz concentration camp, July 31, 1946.

System of arrangement

Dingfelder and Wolff families papers is arranged into two series.

Series 1: Photographs, circa 1920s-1945

Series 2: Correspondence, 1938-1946

Indexing terms

People:

Dingfelder, Johanna, 1891-1943.

Dingfelder, Leopold, 1886-1943.

Dingfelder, Martin.

Felder, Robert, 1924-1986.

Wolff, Aline.

Wolff, Arthur.

Corporate:

Auschwitz (concentration camp)

Berlin-Siemensstadt (concentration camp)

Buchenwald (concentration camp)

Sachsenhausen (concentration camp)

Vught (concentration camp)

Westerbork (concentration camp)

Geography:

Germany.

Hamburg (Germany)

Netherlands.

Plauen (Germany)

Schwerin (Germany)

Topics:

Children.

Concentration camp inmates.

Families.

Holocaust survivors.

Holocaust victims.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)

Jewish refugees.

Refugees.

St. Louis (Ship)

United States--Emigration and immigration.
World War, 1939-1945.
World War, 1939-1945--Civilian relief--Europe.
World War, 1939-1945--Refugees.

Gene / Form:

Correspondence.
Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Photographs, circa 1920s-1945

Box / Folder	Title
1 of 2	Dingfelder and Wolff families, circa 1920s-1945

Series 2: Correspondence, 1938-1946

Box / Folder	Title
2 of 2	Dingfelder family correspondence, 1938-1946