

**ELISABETH ORSTEN PAPERS, approximately 1936-1953**  
**2000.417.1**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
Tel. (202) 479-9717  
e-mail: [reference@ushmm.org](mailto:reference@ushmm.org)

**Descriptive summary**

Title: Elisabeth Orsten papers

Dates: approximately 1936-1953

Accession number: 2000.417.1

Creator: Orsten, Elisabeth, 1927-

Extent: 1.0 linear foot (2 boxes)

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

Abstract: The Elisabeth Orsten papers include an autograph book, biographical materials, correspondence, a diary, photographs, printed materials, and school records documenting her childhood in Vienna, her departure for England on a *Kindertransport* with her brother, Georg, their care and education in England, the Ornstien family's immigration to the United States, and her grandparents' continued suffering in Vienna.

Languages: English, German

**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), Elisabeth Orsten papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Elisabeth Orsten donated the Elisabeth Orsten papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2000 and 2001. The accessions formerly cataloged as 2001.280 and 2002.119 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related materials: Elisabeth Orsten also donated a five piece silver cutlery set (2007.467), a miniature mother of pearl compass (2008.333.3), a miniature ivory penknife (2008.333.1), and a silver locket (2008.333.2) to the Museum. The Museum's library holds a copy of Orsten's book *From Anschluss to Albion: Memoirs of a Refugee Girl, 1938-1940*.

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

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, March 2015, revised February 2016

### **Biographical note / Administrative history**

Elisabeth (Liesl) Orsten (1927- ) was born Elisabeth Ornstein in Vienna to Dr. Paul Ornstein (1898-1957) and Hildegard Fulda (1900-1998). Hildegard's parents were Jewish, but she received Lutheran instruction and converted to Catholicism, and Elisabeth and her younger brother Georg (1930-1997) attended Catholic schools. After *Kristallnacht*, the Ornsteins found families to take care of Elisabeth and Georg in England (London, High Wycombe, Kirksby Stephen, and Petersfield), and the children left on a *Kindertransport* in January 1939. Paul and Hildegard obtained visas for the United States from distant relatives, immigrated in January 1940, and settled in Buffalo. Elisabeth and Georg joined them in September, and the family changed their name to Orsten. Hildegard's parents, Eugen (1864-1941) and Paula Fulda (1869-1941), committed suicide in November 1941 to avoid deportation. Elisabeth served in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) translating captured German military documents, and Georg served in the US Air Force.

### **Scope and content of collection**

The Elisabeth Orsten papers include an autograph book, biographical materials, correspondence, a diary, photographs, printed materials, and school records documenting her childhood in Vienna, her departure for England on a *Kindertransport* with her brother, Georg, their care and education in England, the Ornstein family's immigration to the United States, and her grandparents' continued suffering in Vienna.

The autograph book contains illustrations and signed poems by Elisabeth Orsten's parents and friends in Vienna.

Correspondence primarily documents arrangements for Elisabeth's care in England. This series includes letters from Elisabeth's parents to her caregiver in England, correspondence with Georg's caregivers in England, correspondence with aid organizations in England arranging care for Elisabeth and Georg, and correspondence with guarantors who helped fund Elisabeth's care in England. This series also include letters from Elisabeth Orsten's grandparents, Paula and Eugen Fulda, describing their difficult lives as they remained trapped in Vienna.

The diary was a farewell gift to Elisabeth from her nanny upon her departure for England on a *Kindertransport* in January 1939. The entries are in German and English and describe Elisabeth's life in England in 1939 and 1940 with two additional entries about her life in America in 1941 and 1944.

Emigration and immigration records include a copy of Paul Ornstein's *Heimatschein* citizenship document, letters and affidavits in support of the Ornstein family's immigration, and correspondence with the American Consulate General in London about Elisabeth's immigration.

Photographs depict Elisabeth Orsten as a baby, around the time of her journey to England in 1939, and as a member of the WACS around 1948.

Printed materials consist of clippings about Elisabeth's college scholarship, Georg's military service, and a couple of miscellaneous items.

School records document Elisabeth's education in England at the Garden School in High Wycombe and include three report cards, two news bulletins, and a notebook in which she recorded and illustrated her history lessons.

### **System of arrangement**

The Elisabeth Orsten papers are arranged as seven series:

- Series 1: Autograph book, 1936-1938
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1939-1941
- Series 3: Diary, 1939-1944
- Series 4: Emigration and immigration records, 1939-1942
- Series 5: Photographs, approximately 1929-1948
- Series 6: Printed materials, approximately 1945-1953
- Series 7: School records, 1939-1941

### **Indexing terms**

Jews--Austria--Vienna.

Jewish refugees--England.

Jewish children in the Holocaust--England.

Kindertransports (Rescue operations).

Jewish refugees--New York (State)--Buffalo.

Vienna (Austria)

London (England)

High Wycombe (England)

Kirkby Stephen (England)

Petersfield (England)

Buffalo (N.Y.)

Photographs

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1: Autograph book, 1936-1938

Box	Folder	
2	1	Autograph book, 1936-1938

### Series 2: Correspondence, 1939-1941

Box	Folder	
1	1	Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany, 1939
1	2	Cooke, Esmé, to Ornstein, Hildegard, 1939
1	3	Fulda, Eugen, to Cooke, Esmé, 1939
1	4	Fulda, Lily, 1939-1940
1	5-8	Fulda, Paula and Eugen, to Ornstein, Hildegard and Paul, 1940-1941 (4 folders)
1	9	Horking, Phyllis, to Cooke, Esmé, 1939-1940
1	10	Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, Ltd., 1939-1940
1	11	Ornstein, Georg, approximately 1939
1	12-14	Ornstein, Hildegard and Paul, to Cooke, Esmé, 1938-1940 (3 folders)
1	15	Oxford Refugee Committee, 1939
1	16	Parrot, F.W., to Cooke, Esmé, 1939
1	17	Refugee Children's Movement, Ltd., 1940
1	18	Schott, Adolf, to Cooke, Esmé, 1938-1940
1	19	Silberberg, Hedwig, to Cooke, Esmé, 1940
1	20	Miscellaneous, to Cooke, Esmé, 1938-1940
1	21	Miscellaneous, approximately 1939-1941

### Series 3: Diary, 1939-1944

Box	Folder	
2	2	Diary and key, 1939-1941, 1944

### Series 4: Emigration and immigration records, 1939-1942

Box	Folder	
1	22	Emigration and immigration records, 1939-1942

### Series 5: Photographs, approximately 1929-1948

Box	Folder	
1	23	Elisabeth Orsten, approximately 1929-1948

**Series 6: Printed materials, approximately 1945-1953**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	
1	24	Clippings, approximately 1945-1953

**Series 7: School records, 1939-1941**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	
1	25	History notebook, 1939-1940
1	26	News bulletins published by the Garden School in High Wycombe, 1940-1941
1	27	Report cards from the Garden School in High Wycombe, 1940