

THERESA CAHN-TOBER PAPERS, 1935-1946
2002.45.1

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

Descriptive summary

Title: Theresa Cahn-Tober papers

Dates: 1935-1946

Accession number: 2002.45.1

Creator: Cahn-Tober, Theresa.

Extent: .5 linear feet (1 folder)

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

Abstract: The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Theresa Cahn-Tober (born Theresa Licht) and her parents Stephen Lighton (previously Szymon Licht) and Elizabeth Lighton (previously Esther Licht), all of whom survived the war in Warsaw under false-identities and lived in the München Neu Freimann displaced persons camp after liberation. Included are false-identity documents, identification papers, and a report card. Post-war documents stating the Licht family were former prisoners of Mauthausen are also false certificates used to get into the displaced persons camp.

Languages: Polish, German, English, Latin

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use.

Physical access note: The collection is unprocessed.

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), Theresa Cahn-Tober papers (2002.45.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Theresa Cahn-Tober in 2002.

Related archival materials: Theresa Cahn-Tober authored a book about her Holocaust experiences. *Hide and Seek: a wartime childhood* by Theresa Cahn-Tober. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003.

An oral history interview was conducted with Elizabeth Lighton (2007.187.9)

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

Processing history: updated by Adam Fielding, August 2020

Biographical note

Theresa Cahn-Tober (1936-2004) was born Theresa Licht on 26 February 1936 to Szymon and Estera Licht. Her father Szymon Licht (later Stephen Lighton, 1903-1992) was born on 25 January 1903 in Jarosław, Poland to Julius and Gisela (née Goldstein) Licht. Before the war he worked as a doctor. Her mother Esther Licht (later Elizabeth Lighton, 1909-2007) was born Esther Chajes on 26 February 1909 in Kałusz, Poland (Kalush, Ukraine) to Perez and Rose (née Muhlstein) Chajes. Her parents married on 11 September 1932 in Lvov, Poland (Lviv, Ukraine).

After the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, Poland was partitioned and Lvov was annexed by the Soviet Union. After the Nazis occupied Lvov in 1941, the family acquired false identification documents and survived the Holocaust in Warsaw. Szymon lived under the name Mieczysław Ładysław Teodorowicz and his wife was Pelagia Kaliszewska-Teodorowicz.

After liberation the family lived in the München Neu Freimann displaced persons camp from December 1945-May 1946. In May 1946 the family immigrated to the United States aboard the SS *Marine Perch*.

Theresa married Herbert Cahn and worked as a clinical psychologist in Arizona. They had two children, Debora and Jeffrey. She later married Gerald Tober.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Theresa Cahn-Tober (born Theresa Licht) and her parents Stephen Lighton (previously Szymon Licht) and Elizabeth Lighton (previously Esther Licht), all of whom survived the war in Warsaw under false-identities and lived in the München Neu Freimann displaced persons camp after liberation. Included are false-identity documents, identification papers, and a report card. Post-war documents stating the Licht family were former prisoners of Mauthausen are also false certificates used to get into the displaced persons camp.

System of arrangement

The collection is unprocessed.

Indexing terms

Person:

Licht, Szymon.

Licht, Esther.

Licht, Theresa.

Corporate:
Neu Freimann (Displaced persons camp)

Topical Subject:
Jews--Ukraine--L'viv.
Jewish ghettos--Ukraine--L'viv.
Identification cards--Forgeries--Poland.
Displaced persons camps.

Geography:
L'viv (Ukraine)
Warsaw (Poland)
Munich (Germany)
Katowice (Poland)

Genre/Form:
Identification documents.
Report cards.

PRELIMINARY INVENTORY

Baptismal Certificate: Reissued for the baptism of Mieczyslaw Ladislaus Teodorowicz (father's false identity), states that baptism took place in February 1902; preprinted form in black ink with handwritten black ink entries, two circular blue ink stamps, and stamp adhered in upper right; issued December 14, 1941; Leopoli, Poland; in Latin; donor notes that this certificate was authentic and purchased by parents to establish her father's false identity.

Certificate: "Zaswiadczenie" issued to "Dr. med. Mieczyslaw Teodorowicz" (donor's father's false name) by the Polski Komitet Opiekuncz [Committee of Social Welfare] stating that he is employed by them; typed in black ink with two blue ink stamps of organization's address, black and white photo of bearer affixed in bottom left; issued February 14, 1945; Podkowa Lesna, Poland; in Polish; donor notes that her father got a job with them while they were in hiding

Identity card: "Kennkarte" issued to "Pelagia Kaliszewska-Teodorowicz" (mother's false name); preprinted card in black ink with typed black ink entries, red ink stamps, and blue ink stamps; two black ink fingerprints next to black and white photograph of bearer adhered in center; issued November 27, 1942; Warsaw, Poland; in German and Polish

Report card: Issued to Theresa Licht (donor) from "Beit Sefer Tarbut"; preprinted form in black ink with handwritten entries all in Hebrew characters, stamp adhered in lower left corner; issued May 11, 1946; Neu Freuman DP Camp, Germany; in Hebrew; donor notes that although her birth name was Irena, her name was changed to Theresa during the war, and retained that after liberation.

Marriage certificate: Reissue of certificate for Catholic marriage of Feliks Kaliszewski and Pelagia Supiw; preprinted form in black ink with handwritten black ink entries, circular blue ink stamp in lower left corner; states that they are both Roman Catholic and were married August 31, 1939; issued September 23, 1942; Bialowieza, Poland; in Polish; donor notes that this document was purchased by her parents to establish her mother's false identity.

Identity card: "Provisional identyfikation [sic] card for civilian internee of Mauthausen" issued to "Dr. Simon Licht" (donor's father); preprinted card in black ink with black ink handwritten entries, states that he was born January 25, 1903 in Jaroslaw, his nationality is listed as "Polish Jew" and that he was interned in Mauthausen from January 17, 1943 – June 7, 1945; green ink fingerprint at lower right above signature; dated September 17, 1945; in German and English; donor notes that this is a false certificate, as her parents were never in concentration camp. The purpose of this document was to facilitate family's settlement in DP camp, since Jews who were in concentration camps got priority.

Identity card: "Dowód Osobisty" Series B No. 287470 issued to "Esther Licht" (donor's mother); preprinted card in black ink with entries handwritten in black ink, multiple red ink stamps, black and white photograph of bearer on inside upper right; issued May 31, 1935; Katowice, Poland; in Polish

Identity card: "Dowód Osobisty" Series D No. 96350 issued to Dr. Szymon Licht (donor's father); preprinted card in black ink with entries handwritten in black ink, multiple red ink stamps, black and white photograph of bearer on inside upper right; issued June 17, 1938; Katowice, Poland; in Polish

Registration certificate: issued by the "International Committee for transient Jews from concentration camps and refugees" for "Dr. Simon Licht" (donor's father); preprinted card in black ink with black handwritten entries; black and white photograph of bearer stapled in upper left inside corner; states that Dr. Simon Licht was born January 25, 1903 in Jaroslaw, and was liberated from the Mauthausen concentration camp; two red ink stamps from issuing organization; issued August 15 1945; Vienna, Austria; in German, English, and Russian; donor notes that this is a false certificate, as her parents were never in concentration camp. The purpose of this document was to facilitate family's settlement in DP camp, since Jews who were in concentration camps got priority.

Registration certificate: issued by the "International Committee for transient Jews from concentration camps and refugees" for "Elisabeth Licht" (donor's mother); preprinted card in black ink with black handwritten entries; black and white photograph of bearer stapled in upper left inside corner; states that Elisabeth Licht was born February 26, 1909 in Krosno, and was liberated from the Mauthausen concentration camp; two red ink stamps from issuing organization; issued August 15 1945; Vienna, Austria; in German, English, and Russian; donor notes that this is a false certificate, as her parents were never in concentration camp. The purpose of this document was to facilitate family's settlement in DP camp, since Jews who were in concentration camps got priority.

Identity card: issued by director of Polish railway authorities to "Pelagia Teodorowicz" (donor's mother's false identity); pink paper with preprinted black ink and entries handwritten in black ink; black and white photograph of bearer affixed in center, red ink stamps; issued July 3, 1945; Bydgoszcz, Poland; in Polish; donor notes: Father was working for the Railway authority as a physician. She adds that even after the war, they kept their false identities because of Russian anti-Semitism.

Document: Page from prescription pad for Dr. med. Mieczyslaw Teodorowicz (donor's father's false identity); printed in black ink; dated 1945; Bydgoszcz, Poland; in Polish; donor notes that this was used

by her father after the war. The family continued to use their false identities to protect themselves from antisemitism.

Document: preprinted card in black ink with handwritten black ink entries; "UNRRA TEAM 560/Neu Freimann-Siedlung/Munich" printed at top center; issued "Theresa Licht" of 21 Spitzer Str, age 9, Female, single, number 4 in her family; stamp of signature of UNRRA Team Director; issued 1946; Neu Freimann DP camp; in English