

## **RABBI ELI A. BOHNEN PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, 1943-1948**

### **2015.458.1**

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: Rabbi Eli A. Bohnen photograph collection

Dates: 1943-1948

Accession number: 2015.458.1

Creator: Bohnen, Eli A.

Extent: .5 linear feet (3 folders, 1 oversize box)

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

Abstract: The collection contains photographs and a photograph album documenting the experiences of United States Army Chaplain Rabbi Eli Bohnen in Austria and Germany from 1943-1946. The photograph album was presented to Bohnen, who worked with Jewish Holocaust survivors in the Bad Gastein displaced persons camp, Austria, by the residents upon the closing of the DP camp in 1946. The album depicts the residents, school, organizations, drama society, workshops, protests, and Rabbi Bohnen. The photographs contain wartime and post-war images of Bohnen, along with fellow soldiers and friends primarily in Germany and Austria. Also included is a photograph of a baby with a letter to Bohnen written on the verso. The letter, written by Werner Brink, was likely written by a survivor that Bohnen knew at Bad Gastein.

Languages: English, Hebrew, Yiddish

#### **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), Rabbi Eli A. Bohnen photograph collection, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Michael Bohnen in 2015, with an accretion donated in 2016.

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: Adam Fielding, April 2016

### **Biographical note**

Eli A. Bohnen was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He earned his BA in Semitic studies from the University of Toronto in 1931. He graduated from the Jewish Theological Seminary and was ordained in 1935. From 1939-1948 he was the rabbi at Temple Emanu-El in Buffalo, NY and from 1948 -1973 at Temple Emanuel in Providence, RI. Rabbi Bohnen joined the US Army in 1943 and served as assistant chaplain with the 42nd Infantry Division at the rank of Major. He led a Passover seder in Germany in March 1945 for over 1500 American soldiers of the 42nd Rainbow Infantry Division and printed a haggadah for the seder, known as the Rainbow Haggadah. He was the first Jewish chaplain to enter the Dachau concentration camp immediately following liberation. After liberation, he worked with Jewish displaced persons in Salzburg and Bad Gastein, Austria. For his military service he earned a Bronze star and the Army commendation medal. Rabbi Bohnen returned to the United States in 1946 and in 1948 resumed his pulpit. . Rabbi Bohnen was president of the Rabbinical Assembly (the international organization of Conservative Rabbis) from 1967-1968.

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

The collection contains photographs and a photograph album documenting the experiences of United States Army Chaplain Rabbi Eli Bohnen in Austria and Germany from 1943-1946. The photograph album was presented to Bohnen, who worked with Jewish Holocaust survivors in the Bad Gastein displaced persons camp, Austria, by the residents upon the closing of the DP camp in 1946. The album depicts the residents, school, organizations, drama society, workshops, protests, and Rabbi Bohnen. The photographs contain wartime and post-war images of Bohnen, along with fellow soldiers and friends primarily in Germany and Austria. Also included is a photograph of a baby with a letter to Bohnen written on the verso. The letter, written by Werner Brink, was likely written by a survivor that Bohnen knew at Bad Gastein.

### **System of arrangement**

The collection is arranged alphabetically as one series.

### **Indexing terms**

Person:

Bohnen, Eli, A., 1909-1992

Corporate:

Bad Gastein (Displaced persons camp)

United States. Army. Infantry Division, 42nd.

Topical Subject:

Rabbis--United States.  
Displaced persons camps.  
World War, 1939-1945--Chaplains.  
World War, 1939-1945--Refugees--Austria.

Geography:  
Badgastein (Austria : Refugee camp)  
Austria.  
Germany.

Genre/Form:  
Photographs.  
Photograph albums.

### CONTAINER LIST

Box	Folder	Title
2	1	Bad Gastein displaced persons camp photograph album, 1946
1	1	Bohnen, Eli A., 1945-1946
1	2	Brink, Werner: Baby photograph and letter, 1948
1	3	United States Army, 1943-1946