

OERTELT AND FROMM FAMILIES PAPERS, 1924-2008
2016.412.1

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

Title: Oertelt and Fromm families papers

Dates: 1924-2008

Accession number: 2016.412.1

Creator: Oertelt, Henry, 1921-2011.

Extent: .5 linear feet (1 box)

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

Abstract: The collection documents the Holocaust experiences of Henry Oertelt of Berlin, Germany. Included are presentation scripts of his story authored by Henry and his daughter Stephanie Oertelt Samuels, pre-war photographs of his wife Inge Fromm's family, an identification card of Inge's mother Erma Fromm, copy prints of liberation camp photographs of the Buchenwald concentration camp, and video recordings of presentations done by Henry.

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), Oertelt and Fromm families papers (2016.412.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Corey L. Samuels in 2016. Corey is the granddaughter of Henry Oertelt.

Related archival materials:

Oertelt, Henry A. with Stephanie Oertelt Samuels. *An Unbroken Chain: My Journey Through the Nazi Holocaust*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2000.

The following two items were also donated to the museum by Corey L. Samuels.

Armband with swastika (IRN# 548067)

Star of David badge (IRN# 548066)

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

Processing history: Adam Fielding, October 2016

Biographical note

Henry Oertelt (born Arthur Karl Heinz Oertelt, 1921-2011) was born on 13 January 1921 in Berlin, Germany to Arthur and Else Oertelt. He had one brother, Kurt (later Kurt Messerschmidt). Henry's father died when he was two years old, and his mother worked as a seamstress. As Jewish persecution increased in Germany, Else lost her job and Henry was no longer able to attend school. In May 1943, Henry, Kurt, and their mother Else were sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. In October 1944, Henry and Kurt were sent to the Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration camp. Several weeks later, they were sent to the Gollerschau sub-camp of Auschwitz where Henry was a forced-laborer in furniture and cement factories. In January 1945, as the Soviet army approached the camp, Henry and the other prisoners were sent on a death march to the Sachsenhausen and Oranienburg concentration camps, and then to the Flossenbürg concentration camp where Henry and Kurt were separated. Henry was liberated on the death march from Flossenbürg in April 1945. He was reunited with his brother in Berlin, and soon met Inge Fromm. Inge was the daughter of Erma Fromm (1892-), who was imprisoned in Theresienstadt and survived the war. Henry and Inge married in 1946. Their daughter, Stephanie, was born in 1948. In 1949, they immigrated to the United States on the *U.S.S. General C. C. Ballou*. The family settled in St. Paul, Minnesota where Henry worked as a furniture designer. He also became active in education about the Holocaust, travelling around the area to speak to groups about his experiences.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the Holocaust experiences of Henry Oertelt of Berlin, Germany. Included are presentation scripts of his story authored by Henry and his daughter Stephanie Oertelt Samuels, pre-war photographs of his wife Inge Fromm's family, an identification card of Inge's mother Erma Fromm, copy prints of liberation camp photographs of the Buchenwald concentration camp, and video recordings of presentations done by Henry.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as one series.

Indexing terms

Person:

Oertelt, Henry, 1921-2011.
Samuels, Stephanie Oertelt.
Fromm, Inge.
Fromm, Erma.
Messerschmidt, Kurt.

Corporate:
Theresienstadt (Concentration camp)
Auschwitz-Birkenau (Concentration camp)
Flossenbürg (Concentration camp)
Golleschau (Concentration camp)
Death march survivors.

Topical Subject:
Jewish families--Germany--Berlin.
Holocaust (1939-1945)--Personal narratives.
Forced labor.

Geography:
Berlin (Germany)

Genre/Form:
Photographs.
Videotapes.

CONTAINER LIST

Folder	Title
1	Identification card: Fromm, Erma, 1939
	Photographs:
2	Buchenwald concentration camp, 1945 [copy prints]
3	Fasanenstrasse synagogue, Berlin, Germany, 1938 [copy print]
4	Fromm family, 1924-1948
5	Oertelt, Henry and Inge, wedding day, 1946
6	Oertelt, Kurt, circa 1940s
7	Presentation scripts, 1995-2003
	Video recordings:
8	Kramer, Seth, "Untitled" VHS cassette, circa 2000
9	Oertelt, Henry, "Holocaust class" presentation VHS cassette, 2004
10	Oertelt, Henry, "What the Swastika Means to Me" DVD, 2008
11	"Oertelt Teaser 5.8.07" DVD-R, 2007