

**ALISON OWINGS PAPERS, 1984-2013 (bulk, 1984-1997)**  
**2016.67.1**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
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**Descriptive summary**

Title: Alison Owings papers

Dates: 1984-2014 (bulk, 1984-1997)

Accession number: 2016.67.1

Creator: Owings, Alison.

Extent: 13 boxes (5.25 linear feet)

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

Abstract: Correspondence, transcripts, audio recordings, clippings, reviews, and other research and editorial materials created and/or collected by Alison Owings, during the research, writing, and publication of her book "Frauen: Women in the Third Reich" (Rutgers University Press, 1993). Collection includes transcripts of interviews and interview notes; audio recordings; correspondence with interviewees, scholars, and others who were involved with or advised on the research; and correspondence, reviews, and other material related to the publication of the book.

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.

Technical access: Audiovisual materials stored on magnetic media might not be physically accessible due to physical deterioration or lack of required hardware. Materials stored on optical media might not be physically accessible due to physical deterioration or lack of required software or hardware.

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), Alison Owings research collection (2016.67.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum acquired the Alison Owings papers in 2016.

Separated materials: A number of audio recordings of the oral history interviews conducted by Owings have been cataloged separately.

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

Processing history: Brad Bauer, April 2016, revised April 2019.

### **Biographical note**

Alison Owings is a journalist and writer, based in Northern California. She is the author of *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich* (Rutgers University Press, 1993), *Hey, Waitress! The USA from the Other Side of the Tray* (University of California Press, 2004), and most recently *Indian Voices: Listening to Native Americans* (Rutgers University Press, 2011).

Owings grew up in Chatham and East Orange, New Jersey, and in Strafford, Pennsylvania. She graduated from American University in Washington, DC, in 1966 with a bachelor's degree in journalism, and during her studies, she spent a year at the University of Freiburg in Germany. Following college, she worked in television news, primarily with the CBS network, where she worked as a writer for television anchors such as Dan Rather, Walter Cronkite, Ed Bradley, and Charles Kuralt, among others. Prior to working for CBS News, she worked on television news and documentaries for the ABC network, as well as local network affiliates WRC-TV in Washington, DC and WNBC-TV in New York, and has since done free-lance work for stations in the Bay Area in California.

The move from television news writer to the author of books began with *Frauen*, which was inspired during a visit to Spain in the 1980s, where, as she recounts in that book, she became acquainted with a neighbor in the town she was living in, who was an older German woman. During frequent conversations with her, the woman began to gradually talk about her past and about life in Germany during the Third Reich, a topic that intrigued Owings and which she wished to hear more about from the perspectives of other German women—Jewish and non-Jewish—who had experienced that period. Upon returning to her home in Northern California, she began investigating the possibility of writing a book based on oral history interviews with a variety of German women who were eyewitnesses to the Third Reich, and she sought the advice of historian Gordon Craig from Stanford University, who encouraged her to pursue such a project. Between 1984 and 1991, Owings made several trips to Germany, and working from referrals from a network of historians, journalists, and other contacts, she identified approximately 36 women who she interviewed and whose stories are included in the book. Owings took care to find women from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, as well as varying perspectives on the Third Reich, from those who supported it, to those who opposed the Nazis or were persecuted by them. Most of her interviewees lived in West Germany, but she did make multiple trips to East Germany to interview several women there, and also interviewed a few who had relocated to the United States, such as Rita Kuhn and Freya von Moltke, the latter being the widow of resistance leader Helmuth James Graf von Moltke.

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

The Alison Owings collection consists of correspondence, transcripts, audio recordings, clippings, reviews, and other research and editorial materials created and/or collected by Alison Owings, during the research, writing, and publication of her book "Frauen: Women in the Third Reich" (Rutgers University Press, 1993). Collection includes transcripts of interviews and interview notes; audio recordings; correspondence with interviewees, scholars, and others who were involved with or advised on the research; and correspondence, reviews, and other material related to the publication of the book.

### **System of arrangement**

The Alison Owings papers are arranged as six series:

- Series 1: Correspondence, 1984-2013
- Series 2: Editorial and publication, 1984-2005
- Series 3: Interview transcripts, 1984-1991
- Series 4: Photographs
- Series 5: Oversize material
- Series 6: Audiovisual and electronic material

### **Indexing terms**

World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives, German.  
World War, 1939-1945--Women--Germany.  
Women--Germany--Interviews.

## **CONTAINER LIST**

### **Series 1: Correspondence, 1984-2013**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	
1.1	Altmann, Petra, 1985
1.2	Anderson, Edith, 1985-1999
1.3	Baum, Rainer, 1989
1.4	Beck, Ilse, 1989
1.5	Bendix, Reinhard, 1984-1991
1.6	Blersch, Margret, 1982-1997
1.7	Bridenthal, Renate, 1984-1992
1.8	Brixius, Martha, 1984-1993
1.9	Brixius, Martha, 1994-2013
1.10	Burchert, Irene, 1986-1992
1.11	Conrad, Friedrich (West German consulate, San Francisco), 1985-1987
1.12	Craig, Gordon, 1984-2001

1.13	Daniel, Ute, 1984
1.14	Dönhoff, Marion Gräfin, 1984-1994
1.15	Dubnack, Erna, 1987-2006
1.16	Elschner, Lotte, 1984-1989
1.17	Erdmann, Sylvia and K.D., 1984
1.18	Fischer, Margrit, 1984-2000
1.19	Frankenfeld, Regina, 1987-1994
1.20	Frey, Ellen, 1984-1997
1.21	Fröhlich, Elke, 1985-1988
1.22	Goldschmidt, Ursula, 1985-1986
2.1	Graeber, Traut (Verena Groth), 1987-1998
2.2	Graeber, Traut (Verena Groth), 1999-2009
2.3	Hansen-Blancke, Dora, 1984
2.4	Henssel, Asta von Moltke, 1987-1993
2.5	Hepp, Anne, 1992
2.6	Herzfeld, Maria, 1985-1987
2.7	Karlsruhen, Marianne, 1987-1992
2.8	Katzenstein, Dorothea, 1985-1986, and undated
2.9	Kinzel-Amuser, Ingrid, 1985-1993
2.10	Kuhn, Rita, 1989-1997
2.11	Lachmann, Anna (alias, Anna Fest), 1988-2006
2.12	Lawrence, Hilde, 1986-1992
2.13	Lingen, Maria von
2.14	Meyer-Semlies, Ursula, 1985-2002
2.15	Moltke, Freya von, 1984-2004
2.16	Otting, Liselotte, 1984-2003
2.17	Peterson, Agnes (Hoover Institution), 1986-2009
3.1	Popist, Marianne, 1988-1998
3.2	Rascher, Hans, 1985
3.3	Rauhut, Karma, 1985-1998
3.4	Readers, 1993
3.5	Readers, 1994
3.6	Readers, 1995
3.7	Readers, 1996-1997
3.8	Readers, 1998-2000
3.9	Readers, 2001-2007
3.10	Riefenstahl, Leni: production company
3.11	Sasowski, Hedwig, 1985-1988
3.12	Schöning, Herta (Landsmannschaft Ostpreussen), 1984
3.13	Shirer, William, 1985
3.14	Stephenson, Jill, 1984
3.15	Stern, Fritz, 1986-1988
3.16	Thadden, Rudolf von, 1984
3.17	Thormayer, Wolfgang, 1985-1987
3.18	Tietz, Erna, 1984-1986
3.19	Todtenhaupt, Frida, 1984

3.20	Various, "Bäuerinnen," 1984
3.21	Various, East Germany, travel, 1984-1985
3.22	Various, West Germany, travel, 1985
3.23	Wehler, H.U. (University of Bielefeld), 1984

## Series 2: Editorial/publication, 1984-2005

Box/Folder	
4.1	Advertisements, 1993-1995
4.2	Blurbs (Dan Rather, Charles Kuralt, Gordon Craig), 1993
4.3	Errata, 1994
4.4	Events, interviews, and readings: general, 1993-1994
4.5	Events, interviews, and readings: Bay Area: East Bay, 1993-1995
4.6	Events, interviews, and readings: Bay Area: Marin County and North Bay, 1993-1995
4.7	Events, interviews, and readings: Bay Area: other, 1993-2005
4.8	Events, interviews, and readings: Bay Area: San Francisco, 1993-1994
4.9	Events, interviews, and readings: Bay Area: South Bay and Peninsula, 1993-1995
4.10	Events, interviews, and readings: Boston and New England, 1993-1995
4.11	Events, interviews, and readings: California, Southern, 1994
4.12	Events, interviews, and readings: Chicago, 1993-1995
4.13	Events, interviews, and readings: Midwest, 1993-1995
4.14	Events, interviews, and readings: New York and New Jersey, 1993-1997
4.15	Events, interviews, and readings: North Carolina, 1996-1997
4.16	Events, interviews, and readings: Pacific Northwest, 1995-1997
4.17	Events, interviews, and readings: Pennsylvania, 1994-2005
4.18	Events, interviews, and readings: South, 1995-1996
4.19	Film projects (proposed), 1993-1994
4.20	Goldhagen, Daniel (regarding controversy about his book), 1996-1997
4.21	Goldin, Frances (agent), 1985-1996
4.22	Press coverage (of readings, and interviews with Owings), 1993-1995
5.1	Publishers: Italy, 1995
5.2	Publishers: Penguin Books, UK, 1992-1997
5.3	Publishers: Rutgers University Press, correspondence, 1992-2003
5.4	Publishers: Rutgers University Press, publishers catalogs and brochures, 1993-1995
5.5	Publishers: Ullstein Verlag, 1997-1999
5.6	Responses of interviewees, 1993
5.7	Rejections, 1985-1991
5.8	Research notes, undated, circa 1980s
5.9	Reviews, 1993-2000
6.1	Writings: Diaries, 1984
6.2	Writings: Diaries, 1985, 1987
6.3	Writings: Diaries, Ephemera from Berlin trip, 1987
6.4	Writings: Diaries, 1993
6.5	Writings: Diaries, 1994, January
6.6	Writings: Diaries, 1994, April

6.7	Writings: Diaries, October
6.8	Writings: Free-lance articles by Owings, related to book' theme
7.1-7.2	Writings: German translation, proofs and edits, 1996-1997 (2 folders)

### Series 3: Interview transcripts, 1984-1991

Box/Folder	
7.3	"Bäuerinnen," (Kemmer, near Bamberg), 13 May 1985: General
7.4	"Bäuerinnen," (Kemmer, near Bamberg), 13 May 1985: Amschel, Barbara
7.5	"Bäuerinnen," (Kemmer, near Bamberg), 13 May 1985: Lieb, Anna
7.6	Bigl, Anna (Munich), 1985, 2 October
7.7	Blersch, Margarete (Riedlingen), 2 January 1991.
7.8	Brixius, Martha (Marburg), 1987.
7.9	Burchert, [Frau] (Preetz), 1984, 3 September
8.1	Dubnack, Erna (Berlin), 1987, 1 August.
8.2	Elschner (one sheet of notes, no transcript)
8.3	Erdmann, Sylvia (Kiel), 1984, 3 September
8.4	Fest Anna, alias, Lachmann (Marburg): 1984 transcripts
8.5	Fest Anna, alias, Lachmann (Marburg): 1987 transcripts
8.6	Fest Anna, alias, Lachmann (Marburg): Background, clippings, and notes
8.7	Fischer, Margarete, 1984
8.8	Frankenfeld, Renate, 1991
9.1	Frey, Ellen (n.d.)
9.2	Goldschmidt, Ursula (Berlin), 1985, 23 May: notes
9.3	Graeber, Traut, alias Verena Groth (Chiemsee)
9.4	Haferkamp, Wilhelmine (Wuersele), n.d.
9.5	Heinrich, Emmy (Berlin), 1985
9.6	Hepp, Anna (Rothenburg o.d. Tauber), 1987
9.7	Hunger, Ilse (Berlin): notes/summary
9.8	Janz, Gerda (Frankfurt/Oder), 21 May 1985: notes/summary
9.9	Karlsruhe, Marianne (Wuppertal), 1987
9.10	Kretschmer, Ursula (Dresden), 1985
9.11	Krogull [Frau] (Leipzig), 1985, 20 May: Notes/summary only
9.12	Kuhn, Rita (Berkeley, CA), 1988, 16 July
9.13	Lingen, Maria von (Überlingen), 1985, 25 October
10.1	Meyer-Semlies, Ursula (Tilsit/Ostpreussen, later Hamburg), 1984, 2 September
10.2	Moltke, Freya von (Norwich, VT): Background information
10.3	Moltke, Freya von (Norwich, VT): Chapter draft by Owings
10.4	Moltke, Freya von (Norwich, VT): Transcripts
10.5	Müller, Charlotte (Berlin)
10.6	Naniga [Frau]. Alias Mundt
10.7	Otting, Liselotte (Berlin), 1985: with notes, correspondence
10.8	Plötz group [notes, tapes not transcribed]
10.9	Rauhut, Karma (Berlin), 1985, May
11.1	Sasowski, Gretl (Hohn/Eifel), 1985, 31 October

11.2	Stoekenius [Frau], 1987: Notes only
11.3	Tietz, Erna (Marburg), 1984
11.4	Weih, Tini (Stuttgart), 1987

#### Series 4: Photographs

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11.5	Interviewee: Brixius, 1951 and circa 1980s
11.6	Interviewee: Dubnack, Erna, 1994-1995, and undated
11.7	Interviewee: Fischer, undated copyprints, circa 1930s
11.8	Interviewee: Graeber, 1991 and undated
11.9	Interviewee: Haferkamp, undated copyright, circa 1930s-1940s
11.10	Interviewee: Lingen, Maria von, 1986, and undated copyprint, circa 1940s
11.11	Others: Blerch, 1991; Kuhn (photocopy), 1939; Meyer-Semlies, 1944; and printed copies from other folders
11.12	Otting, Lieselotte, 1935
11.13	Publicity and book readings: American Council on Germany, with John Weitz, undated
11.14	Publicity and book readings: Rollins College, Florida
11.15	Publicity and book readings: Newark, New Jersey
11.16	Publicity and book readings: Publishers photos of Owings
11.17	Publicity and book readings: Unidentified book signing

#### Series 5: Oversize material

Box/Folder	
Box 13	Oversize: Photographs (enlarged) of interviewees, used in public presentations
Box 13	Oversize: Book jacket
Box 13	Oversize: Posters from events
Box 13	Oversize: Newspaper clippings

#### Series 6: Audiovisual and electronic material

Box/Folder	
Box 12	Computer disks: Not yet processed
Media stored separately	28 audiocassettes