

FRUMA GULKOWITZ-BERGER PAPERS, 1930-1990
2017.262.5

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: Fruma Gulkowitz-Berger papers

Dates: 1930-1990 and undated

Accession number: 2017.262.5

Creator: Gulkowitz-Berger, Fruma, 1918-1995.
Berger, Murray, 1912-1999.

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-era experiences of Fruma Gulkowitz-Berger (pen name of Frances Berger) and Murray Berger, both of whom joined the Bielski partisans in Western Belorussia (Belarus). The collection includes identification papers and immigration documents of Fruma, Murray, and Murray's brother Elliot; manuscripts of essays and poems by Fruma Gulkowitz-Berger along with clippings of her articles; and pre-war and post-war photographs.

Languages: English, Yiddish, French

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), Fruma Gulkowitz-Berger papers (2017.262.5), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Ralph S. Berger in 1997. He and his brother Albert S. donated an accretion in 2017. Both collections, 1997.A.0253 and 2017.262.1 have been unified under the new accession number of 2017.262.5.

Related materials: The Fruma Gulkowitz-Berger papers is part of the Fruma Gulkowitz Berger collection. A collection of Fruma and Murray's writings appear in the book *With Courage Shall We Fight: The Memoirs and Poetry of Holocaust Resistance Fighters Frances "Fruma" Gulkowich Berger and Murray "Motke" Berger*, edited by Ralph S. Berger and Albert S. Berger. Margate, New Jersey : Comteq Pub., 2010.

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, September 2017

Biographical note

Fruma Gulkowitz-Berger (born Fruma Gulkowitz, also known as Frances Berger, 1918-1995) was born on 18 May 1918 in Lublin, Poland to Rochel (née Krynicki or Kriniki, 1885-1941) and Shlomo (1882-1942) Gulkowitz. She had three sisters, Feigel (1915-1942), Grunia (1909-1942), and Brina (1922-1942), and one brother, Ben-Zion. When Fruma was a child her family moved to Korelitz (Korelichi, Belarus), Poland. Her brother Ben-Zion married a woman named Judes and they had a daughter, Chaya (1939-1942). Her sister Grunia had a daughter, Miriam Weintraub (1936-1942).

After the outbreak of World War II, the Russians occupied Korelitz. By July 1941 the town was occupied by the German army. Fruma's family, along with the rest of the Jews in town, were sent to the Korelitz ghetto. Fruma's mother, Rochel, was killed in the ghetto on 27 December 1941 after being severely beaten by the police. In May 1942 the ghetto was closed and they were deported to the nearby Nowogródek ghetto (Navahrudak, Belarus). In August 1942, Fruma and her sister-in-law Judes hid in the ghetto outhouse with two other women. Around the same time, her brother Ben-Zion escaped with seven others including Murray Berger and joined the Bielski partisans, led by Tuvia Bielski. Several weeks after joining, Ben-Zion returned to the ghetto and rescued Fruma and Judes. They both then joined the partisans as well, participating in acts of sabotage and other forms of resistance.

After liberation by the Red Army, Fruma and Murray, whom she met while with the partisans, went to the Kibbutz Turda displaced persons camp in Romania in early 1945. They left in May 1945 and went first to Austria and then the Kibbutz Anzio DP camp in Italy. Fruma and Murray married while in Italy, and immigrated to the United States in 1947. They settled in New York and had two sons, Albert and Ralph.

Fruma's father, sisters, and niece all perished on 7 August 1942 in the Nowogródek ghetto.

Murray Berger (born Mordechai Shmulewicz, 1912-1999) was born on 12 February 1912 in Wsielub, Belorussia (Vselyub, Belarus) to Abraham (born Abraham Berger, 1875-1941) and Sara (d. 1941) Shmulewicz. He had four brothers, Elliot (born Elia Shmulewicz, 1910-1998), Harry, Zemach (1902-1941), and Issak (1906-1942); and two sisters, Bluma (Bluma Bussel, 1908-1942) and Rachel (Rachel Fuks, 1904-1941). Murray's father Abraham worked as a butcher, and changed the family name from Berger to Shmulewicz to avoid military service. Murray changed his last name back to Berger after immigrating to

the United States. Before the war, Murray was studying to become a rabbi and lived in Vilna (Vilnius, Lithuania) for several years before moving back to Wsielub to care for his sick mother.

Once the war began, the Russians occupied Wsielub and anti-Semitic activities increased. On 25 December 1940 the police approached Murray's house to arrest him but he managed to escape and flee Wsielub. He went to Nowogródek where he remained with his cousin Alter Nochimowski. On 5 December 1941 the Germans began preparing for mass executions by having large pits dug by slave Jewish labor. Murray escaped into the forest where he remained for the duration of the winter, surviving in part due to acts of kindness from local farmers. He eventually went back to the Nowogródek ghetto not knowing where else to go. He managed to sneak into the ghetto and remained there until August 1942 when he escaped the ghetto with seven other men in order to join the Bielski partisans.

Murray lost 126 members of his family in the Holocaust. His brother Harry immigrated to the United States prior to Murray's birth. His brother Elliot was drafted into the Russian army where he was wounded. His wife was in the Nowogródek ghetto when she gave birth. The next day the Nazis killed her and their baby. Murray was able to get back in contact with Elliot after he and Fruma returned to Nowogródek after liberation. Elliot received leave to visit them and decided not to return to the army. He travelled with them to the DP camps and to the United States.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Fruma Gulkowitz-Berger (pen name of Frances Berger) and Murray Berger, both of whom joined the Bielski partisans in Western Belorussia (Belarus). The collection includes identification papers and immigration documents of Fruma, Murray, and Murray's brother Elliot; manuscripts of essays and poems by Fruma Gulkowitz-Berger along with clippings of her articles; and pre-war and post-war photographs.

Biographical materials include identification cards issued by the Red Cross, DP identification cards, and Italian identification documents. The immigration documents include a small amount of immigration paperwork and naturalization certificates. Also included are lists of family members who perished in the Holocaust.

Writings include handwritten and photocopies of typed manuscripts of Fruma Gulkowitz-Berger. Her writings include essays and poems about the Holocaust, both in English and Yiddish. Also included are clippings of her writings from newspapers and other sources. Folder 2.9 contains writings of Murray Berger, and folder 2.15 contains writings of Y. Shmulevitch.

Photographs include pre-war depictions of the Gulkowitz and Shmulewicz families, the Kibbutz Turda displaced persons camp in Romania, displaced persons camps in Italy, and memorials to the Jews of Korelitz (Korelich, Belarus) and Nowogródek (Navahrudak, Belarus), Poland.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as three series:

Series 1. Biographical, 1945-1982

Series 2. Writings, 1968-1990 and undated

Series 3. Photographs, 1930-1948 and undated

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Person:

Gulkowitz-Berger, Fruma, 1918-1995.
Berger, Murray, 1912-1999.
Gulkowitz, Ben-Zion.
Berger, Elliot, 1910-1998.
Bielski, Tuvia.

Corporate:

Bielski partisans (Resistance Group)

Topical Subject:

Jewish families--Belarus--Navahrudak.
Jewish ghettos--Belarus--Navahrudak.
Guerillas--Belarus
Jewish women authors.
World War, 1939-1945--Jewish resistance--Personal narratives.

Geography:

Korelichy (Belarus)
Navahrudak (Belarus)
Rome (Italy)
Romania.

Genre/Form:

Photographs.
Poems.
Memoirs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Biographical, 1945-1982

Folder	Title
	Berger, Elliot:
1	Identification papers, 1946
2	Immigration papers, 1947-1953
	Berger, Murray:
3	Correspondence, 1973, 1982
4	Identification papers, 1945-1946
5	Immigration papers, 1946-1952
	Gulkowitz-Berger, Fruma:
6	Identification papers, 1945-1946, 1995
7	Immigration papers, 1947-1952
8	Lists of family members who perished in the Holocaust, 1982

Series 2. Writings, 1968-1990 and undated

Folder	Title
9	Berger, Murray, undated
10	Clippings, 1968-1990 and undated
11	Composition book in Yiddish, undated
12	Manuscripts, handwritten in English, undated
13	Manuscripts, handwritten in Yiddish, undated
14	Manuscripts, typed in English, and Yiddish, undated
15	Shmulevitsh, Y., 1968

Series 3. Photographs, 1930-1948 and undated

Folder	Title
16	Berger, Elliot, undated
17	Berger, Murray, undated
18	Bielski partisans, undated
19	Family and friends, 1945-circa 1947
20	Gulkowitz, Ben Zion and Judes, undated
21	Gulkowitz family, 1930-1934 and undated
22	Gulkowitz-Berger, Fruma, 1938-1946 and undated
23	Italy, 1946-1947
24	Kibbutz Turda displaced persons camp, Romania, 1945-1946
25	Memorials, undated
26	Shmulewicz family, 1947-1948 and undated