

**MARY BERG DIARY PUBLICATION PAPERS, 1944-2009**  
**2017.371.1**

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

Title: Mary Berg diary publication papers

Dates: 1944-2009

Accession number: 2017.371.1

Creator: Berg, Mary, 1924-2013.

Additional creator: Shneiderman, S.L., 1906-1996.

Additional creator: Shneiderman, Ben, 1947-

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

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

Abstract: The collection documents the initial publication of *Warsaw Ghetto: A Diary* by Mary Berg in 1945 and subsequent efforts by S.L. Shneiderman, the original editor and translator of the diary, his son Ben Shneiderman, and historian Susan Pentlin to republish the book. Included is correspondence and documents regarding various efforts to republish the diary, clippings, reviews, interview transcripts, manuscript fragments, photographs, and copies of writings regarding the diary.

Languages: English, Polish

**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), Mary Berg diary publication papers (2017.371.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Ben Shneiderman in 2017.

Related archival materials: Five records of Yiddish music (2017.371.1.2-2017.371.6) were also donated with this collection. Ben Shneiderman also donated a collection of writings and research of his father Samuel Lajb Shneiderman (2014.340.1). Additionally, the USHMM has four scrapbooks that belonged to Mary Berg (2014.405.1).

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: Adam Fielding, September 2018

### **Biographical note**

Mary Berg was born Miriam Wattenberg on October 10, 1924. Her father was Shaya (Srueel, Stanley) Wattenberg, a local gallery owner in prewar Łódź, and her mother, Lena, was an American citizen. Mary and her sister qualified for American citizenship by virtue of their mother's nationality. After the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, the family relocated to Warsaw, where they were later forced into the Warsaw Ghetto. Prior to the liquidation of the ghetto, the sisters and their parents were detained in prison in Pawiak in July 1942, before being transferred to the Vittel internment camp for British and American citizens in January 1943. They were sent to the United States aboard the *Gripsholm* as part of a prisoner exchange in 1944. Mary's diary was serialized in American newspapers in 1944, making it one of the earliest accounts of the Holocaust to be written in English. It was later published as a book in 1945. She later withdrew from public life, and died in April 2013.

S.L. Shneiderman (1906-1996), was born Samuel Loeb Sznajderman in Kazimierz, Poland, the son of Abraham and Chana (nee Mandelbaum) Sznajderman. He studied at Warsaw University, and following that, worked as a journalist, serving as Paris correspondent for a number of Jewish daily newspapers in Poland, and covering the Spanish Civil War. In 1933 he married Eileen (Hala) Szymin (1908-?), and in 1940 he and Eileen immigrated to the United States with their young daughter, Helen. Among his books published was "Warsaw Ghetto: A Diary" by Mary Berg, which he edited and translated, and when published in 1945, was one of the earliest published eyewitness accounts of life in the ghetto. He also edited "My Story," by Gemma LaGuardia Gluck, the sister of New York mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, which describes Ms. Gluck's experiences in German-occupied Budapest during World War II, where she had been trapped with her Hungarian Jewish husband. Shneiderman became a United States citizen in 1949, and worked as a journalist in New York, writing for, among other publications, the Jewish Daily Forward, as well as Yiddish newspapers around the world. He moved to Ramat Aviv, Israel in 1994, where he died on 8 October 1996.

Ben Shneiderman (born 1947) is an American computer scientist, and was born in New York, the son of journalist S.L. Shneiderman and Eileen (nee Szymin) Shneiderman. He received a bachelor's degree in mathematics and physics from City College of New York (1968) and a master's degree and Ph.D. in computer science from the State University of New York at Stony Brook (1973). In addition to being an instructor at Stony Brook, he has also held faculty positions at Indiana University (1973-1976) and the University of Maryland (1976 to present), and is currently a Distinguished University Professor in the

Department of Computer Science at the latter university, and also served as founding director of that university's Human-Computer Interaction Lab (1983-2000).

Biographies by Brad Bauer and Ronald Coleman

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

The collection documents the initial publication of *Warsaw Ghetto: A Diary* by Mary Berg in 1945 and subsequent efforts by S.L. Shneiderman, the original editor and translator of the diary, his son Ben Shneiderman, and historian Susan Pentlin to republish the book. Included is correspondence and documents regarding various efforts to republish the diary, clippings, reviews, interview transcripts, manuscript fragments, photographs, and copies of writings regarding the diary.

Diary publication materials include copies of contracts and documents related to subsequent efforts to republish the diary, clippings, reviews, transcripts of interviews conducted with Mary Berg, and copies of writings by Susan Pentlin regarding the diary.

Correspondence includes letters exchanged by S.L. Shneiderman, Ben Shneiderman, Mary Berg, Susan Pentlin, and various attorneys and publishers. The correspondence between Mary Berg, S.L. Shneiderman, and Susan Pentlin includes early letters from Mary to S.L. in 1945 in Polish, and later letters regarding Mary's desire to not see the diary republished. Other correspondence includes letters with attorneys and publishers regarding publishing rights.

The photographs include depictions of Mary circa 1945 and S.L. and Eileen circa 1992.

### **System of arrangement**

The collection is arranged as three series.

Series 1. Diary publication materials, 1944-2009

Series 2. Correspondence, 1944-2006

Series 3. Photographs, circa 1945-circa 1992

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

6 4x5" black and white negatives (Kodak Safety film) with 11 images have been removed from collection to cold storage. Images are of Mary Berg and others in Warsaw Ghetto.

### **Indexing terms**

Person:

Berg, Mary, 1924-2013.

Shneiderman, S.L., 1906-1996.

Shneiderman, Ben, 1947-

Topical Subject:

World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives, Jewish.

Jews--Poland--Warsaw--Diaries.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945), in literature.

Geography:

Warsaw (Poland)  
United States.  
Israel.

Genre/Form:  
Correspondence.  
Diaries.  
Photographs.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1. Diary publication materials, 1944-2009

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Berg, Mary: Interview transcripts, 1945 and undated
1.2 OS 1	Clippings, 1945-2006 (2 folders)
1.3	Manuscript fragments, circa 1944 and undated
1.4	Miscellaneous, 1989-1997
1.5	Pentlin, Susan: Writings, 1989-2002
1.6	Publishing documents, 1944-2009

### Series 2. Correspondence, 1944-2006

Box/Folder	Title
1.7	Berg, Mary, 1945-1995
1.8	Publishing correspondence, 1957-2006
1.9	Shneiderman, Ben: Pentlin, Susan, 1995-2003
1.10	Shneiderman, S.L. and Eileen: Pentlin, Susan, 1994-1997

### Series 3. Photographs, circa 1945-circa 1992

Box/Folder	Title
1.11	Photographs, circa 1945-circa 1992