

**FREDERIC ZELLER PAPERS, 1922-1990**  
**2017.576.1**

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: Frederic Zeller papers

Dates: 1922-1990 (bulk 1939-1948)

Accession number: 2017.576.1

Creator: Frederic Zeller, 1924-1994.

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 Frederic Zeller of Berlin, Germany including his escape from Berlin by train in 1938 and his experiences as a refugee in Rotterdam, the Netherlands and Preston, Lancashire, England. Included are illustrated diaries, biographical material, photographs, and correspondence including letters sent by his father Heinrich Zeller from the Gurs and Saint-Cyprien concentration camps in France.

Languages: German, English

**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), Frederic Zeller papers (2017.576.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Susan Kennedy Zeller.

Related archival materials: An unpublished manuscript of a second book "Friendly Enemy Alien" can be found in the USHMM library. Additionally, the museum has a pocket watch owned by Frederic's father that he had with him while he was imprisoned in the Saint-Cyprien internment camp.

There is related material of Frederic Zeller in the Frederic Zeller collection, 1938-1944 (Center for Jewish History)

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, February 2018

### **Biographical note**

Frederic Zeller (nicknamed Fredi, 1924-1994) was born on 20 May 1924 in Berlin, Germany to Heinrich and Fanny Zeller. He had one sister, Lilian. His father, Heinrich (Henri, b. 1894), was born in Vienna, Austria and had three brothers, Emmanuel (Mulu), Edek, and Monio, and one sister, Dasha. Frederic's mother, Fanny (b. 1891), was born in Borysław (Boryslav, Ukraine) to Hersh and Esther Gottesmann, and had six siblings including Cilly, Leona, Bertha, Max, Charlotte (Lotte).

Frederic's parents owned a store in the Moabit district of Berlin, but moved to Spandau by 1932. After the German annexation of Austria in 1938, the Zellers lost their Austrian citizenship. Several relatives began to emigrate from Germany. After Kristallnacht, Frederic's family tried to get him on a Kindertransport. After several failed attempts, Frederic, along with his cousin Norbert and several other children, decided to try and reach the Netherlands on their own. They arrived in the Netherlands on 14 December 1938 and were allowed to cross the border as Jewish refugees. After spending about 10 days in Nijmegen, they were sent to a refugee camp in Rotterdam. Frederic's sister Lilian joined him in Rotterdam in early 1939.

Frederic and his sister were sent to England on a Kindertransport in 1939. He went to Harwich, and then to Preston, Lancashire. He remained in England for the duration of the war, and immigrated to the United States in 1957.

Frederic's father Heinrich escaped Berlin in 1940 and went to France. He was imprisoned in the Gurs and Saint-Cyprien concentration camps, and then deported to the Drancy transit camp in 1943. On 6 March 1943 he was deported to the Sobibor extermination camp where he perished. Frederic's mother Fanny was a forced-laborer in a factory in Berlin, and then deported to Minsk in 1941 where she perished.

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

The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Frederic Zeller of Berlin, Germany including his escape from Berlin by train in 1938 and his experiences as a refugee in Rotterdam, the Netherlands and Preston, Lancashire, England. Included are illustrated diaries, biographical material, photographs, and correspondence including letters sent by his father Heinrich Zeller from the Gurs and Saint-Cyprien concentration camps in France.

Biographical materials includes a family book (*Familien Stambuch*), birth certificates, diaries, and papers documenting his time in the refugee camp in Rotterdam and in England. The first diary documents Frederic's life prior to leaving Berlin, and also includes loose notes. The second diary is illustrated and primarily chronicles his time as a refugee in Rotterdam. The third diary is post-war and documents his life in England. Additionally, there is a transcription of an interview Frederic conducted with David Borgenicht at the TB Hospice, Quare Mead, Straftord, a camp for boys rescued from Theresienstadt where he worked or volunteered.

Correspondence includes wartime letters from Heinrich and Fanny Zeller to their children, Fanny's sister Cilly Bobath (née Gottesmann) and her daughter Lotte living in Copenhagen, and family friend Freek Adriaans. Some of the letters from Heinrich were sent from Gurs and Saint-Cyprien. Other correspondence includes letters to Frederic from Freek Adriaans, Lilian, and his cousin Susi Zeller. Some of the letters in this series are photocopies.

Photographs include prewar photographs of the Zeller family, relatives, and friends. Wartime photographs include depictions of Frederic and Lilian in the refugee camp in Rotterdam, and Frederic in England. There are also postwar photographs of the TB Hospice camp in Quare Mead. Some photographs are copyprints.

### **System of arrangement**

The collection is arranged as three series.

Series 1. Biographical materials, 1922-1951

Series 2. Correspondence, 1938-1981

Series 3. Photographs, circa 1927-1990

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

### **Indexing terms**

Person:

Zeller, Frederic, 1924-1994.

Zeller, Lilian.

Zeller, Heinrich.

Zeller, Fanny.

Corporate:

Gurs (Concentration camp)

Saint-Cyprien (Concentration camp)

Topical Subject:

Refugee camps--Netherlands--Rotterdam.

Refugees, Jewish--England.

Jews--Germany--Berlin.

World War, 1939-1945--Jews--Rescue--Netherlands.

World War, 1939-1945--Jews--Rescue--England.

Geography:

Berlin (Germany)

Rotterdam (Netherlands)  
Preston (Lancashire, England)

Genre/Form:  
Photographs.  
Correspondence.  
Diaries.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1. Biographical materials, 1922-1951

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Family book ( <i>Familien Stambuch</i> ), 1922
1.2	Interview of David Borgenicht, circa 1947
1.3	Notes on Heinrich and Fanny Zeller
1.4	Zeller family, 1922-1947
	Zeller, Frederic:
1.5	Birth certificates, 1924, 1939
1.6	Diary, 1937 July-1938 December
1.7	Diary, 1938 December-1939 April
1.8	Diary, 1951
1.9	England documents, 1939-1949
1.10	Refugee camp, Rotterdam, 1939

### Series 2. Correspondence, 1938-1981

Box/Folder	Title
1.11	Adriaans, Freek: Zeller, Heinrich and Fanny, 1939-1942
1.12	Bannow-Mørk, Charlotte (Lotte): Zeller, Heinrich and Fanny, 1940-1941
1.13	Bobath, Cilly: Zeller, Heinrich and Fanny, 1940-1941
	Zeller, Frederic:
1.14	Adriaans, Freek, 1939-1948
1.15	Kachel family, 1946-1947
1.16	Zeller, Lillian, circa 1939
1.17	Zeller, Susi and Evan, 1970-1978
1.18	1941-1981
1.19	Zeller, Frederic and Lillian: Zeller, Heinrich and Fanny, 1938-1939
1.20	Zeller, Frederic and Lillian: Zeller, Heinrich and Fanny, 1940-1943
1.21	Zeller, Heinrich and Fanny: Letters sent to family and friends, 1940-1941
1.22	Zeller, Lillian, 1948

### Series 3. Photographs, circa 1927-1990

Box/Folder	Title
1.23	Adriaans, Freek, 1942
1.24	Family and friends, circa 1932-1947
1.25	TB hospice camp, Quare Mead, Stratford, 1947
1.26	Zeller family, circa 1927-1939

1.27	Zeller family, 1980-1990
1.28	Zeller, Frederic: Berlin and England, circa 1939-1946
1.29	Zeller, Frederic and Lilian: Refugee camp, Rotterdam, 1939
1.30	Zeller, Heinrich, 1939 and undated
1.31	Zeller, Lilian, 1939-1946