HARRY AND HELEN BERGER PAPERS, 1940-1972
2017.596.1

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

Title: Harry and Helen Berger papers

Dates: 1940-1972

Accession number: 2017.596.1


Extent: 0.1 linear foot (6 folders)

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

Abstract: The Harry and Helen Berger papers consist of wartime identification papers for Helen Berger under her assumed name, Helena Barciszewska, in Lublin, postwar identification papers documenting Harry’s and Helen’s status as displaced persons in Germany, marriage records, immigration papers documenting Helen’s immigration and naturalization, and restitution papers documenting payments Harry received in settlement for claims of “damage to body or health.” The papers also include a 1940 postcard from the Kejer family to S. Meerson, and a 1947 program and Yiddish newspaper clipping documenting performances of Sami Feder’s adaptation of Sholem Aleichem’s, 200,000, oder Dos groyse gevins at the Bergen-Belsen DP camp.

Languages: German, English, Yiddish, Hebrew, 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), Harry and Helen Berger papers (2017.596.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Steven C. Berger donated the Harry and Helen Berger papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2017. Steven C. Berger is the son of Harry and Helen Berger.

Separated material: Steven C. Berger also donated four pieces of scrip (2017.596.2-.5) to the Museum.

Related material: Steven C. Berger further donated a cigarette case (2017.605.1) to the Museum.

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

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, October 2019

Biographical note
Harry Berger (1924-1985) was born Chaim Berger on January 21, 1924 in Ostrówek, Poland, to Mordcha Nohim and Estera Lampart. The Bergers’ family name had previously been Janizewski but was changed. Harry’s mother was killed during the war. He survived in hiding with his father, Motel Berger, and brothers, Jack and Harold Berger, and Jack’s wife, Wande (later Ruth). They foraged for food at night, and Harry once had to kill a German shepherd that was after him. He traded his sister-in-law’s watch to obtain freedom for the entire group. He met Helena Blum at the Bergen-Belsen displaced persons camp and married her in a religious ceremony in April 1946 and in a civil ceremony in 1949. They immigrated to the United States aboard the SS General Stewart and arrived on May 30, 1949. Harry Berger died in 1985 in Fair Lawn, NJ.

Helen Berger (1923-2008) was born Helena (Hindla) Blum on October 16, 1923 in Kalisz, Poland to Abram Zwi and Masza Zalc. Her mother died when she was young. Helen’s childhood friend Helena Barciszewska turned in the Blum family following the German occupation of Kalisz. Helen and her older brother hid, and Helena Barciszewska was later killed. Her father, Avraham Zvi Blum, and her stepmother perished in the Holocaust. Her older brother Shlomo Blum survived the Holocaust and moved to Israel. Helen was deported but jumped from the train. She assumed the identity of her murdered friend, Helena Barciszewska, and worked as a nanny for an SS soldier. She survived the war and met her future husband, Harry Berger, at the Bergen-Belsen displaced persons camp after the war. They were married in a religious ceremony in April 1946 and in a civil ceremony in 1949, and Helen used a pillowcase to make her headdress. The couple immigrated to the United States aboard the SS General Stewart, arriving on May 30, 1949. Helen Berger died in 2008 in Fair Lawn, NJ.

Scope and content of collection
The Harry and Helen Berger papers consist of wartime identification papers for Helen Berger under her assumed name, Helena Barciszewska, in Lublin, postwar identification papers documenting Harry’s and Helen’s status as displaced persons in Germany, marriage records, immigration papers documenting Helen’s immigration and naturalization, and restitution papers documenting payments Harry received in settlement for claims of “damage to body or health.” The papers also include a 1940 postcard from the Kejer family to S. Meerson, and a 1947 program and Yiddish newspaper clipping documenting
performances of Sami Feder’s adaptation of Sholem Aleichem’s, *200,000, oder Dos groyse gevins* at the Bergen-Belsen DP camp.

**System of arrangement**
The Harry and Helen Berger papers are arranged as a single series.

**Indexing terms**
**Personal names**

**Corporate names**
DP-Camp Bergen-Belsen

**Topical terms**
Jews--Poland--Ostrówek.
Jews--Poland--Kalisz.
Holocaust survivors--Germany.

**Geographic terms**
Poland.
Germany.
United States--Emigration and immigration.

**CONTAINER LIST**

**Series 1: Harry and Helen Berger papers, 1940-1972**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 of 6</td>
<td>Harry Berger, Identification papers, 1945-1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 of 6</td>
<td>Harry Berger, Restitution papers, 1962, 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of 6</td>
<td>Helen Berger, Helena Barciszewska papers, 1942-1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of 6</td>
<td>Helen Berger, Identification and immigration papers, 1945-1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 of 6</td>
<td>Harry and Helen Berger, 1946-1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 of 6</td>
<td>Miscellaneous, 1940, 1947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>