

ANTONI STEFAN KOPER AND SOPHIE KOPER PAPERS, 1943-1999 2019.268.6

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

Title: Antoni Stefan Koper and Sophie Koper papers

Dates: 1943-1999

Accession number: 2019.268.6

Creator: Koper, Antoni Stefan, 1906-1990.

Additional creator: Koper, Sophie, 1916-2011.

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 wartime and post-war experiences of Antoni Stefan Koper, an active member of the Polish Resistance during the German occupation of Warsaw, and his wife Sophie Koper, whom he rescued from the Warsaw ghetto and served as a nurse during the Warsaw Uprising. Included are Antoni's wartime identification cards, post-war documents from the Polish Armoured Division, letters from Sophie written to him while imprisoned in Oflag II D at Gross Born, personal narratives, and photographs. Papers of Sophie include wartime documents bearing her false identity of Zofia Jabłońska, personal narratives, and materials related to her efforts to get Antoni recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1990.

Languages: Polish, 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.

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), Antoni Stefan Koper and Sophie Koper papers (2019.268.6), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Peter Koper in 2019. The collections previously numbered 2019.268.1, 2019.271.1, and 2019.272.1 have been incorporated into this collection.

Separated material: Also donated are four objects: Antoni Stefan Koper's insignia patches from the Polish Armoured Division (2019.268.3, 2019.268.4, 2019.268.5) and Sophie Koper's cap from the Polish Armoured Division (2019.268.2).

Four publications were also donated and transferred to the USHMM library: Warsaw telephone directory, 1939-1940; Nr. 86, "Dzien Po Dniu": Dzienniczek/Powstania Warszawskiego/1/8 – 2/10-1944; W. Majewski, *Jack the Distributor*. London, 1942; Zbigniew Mystkowski, *Godziny Czekania*. Neubrandenburg, 1943. 1946 printing.

Related archival materials: An oral history interview was conducted with Sophie Koper (20012.153). Archive of Antoni Koper, (archival fonds no. 60), The Józef Piłsudski Institute of America

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, November 2019

Biographical note

Antoni Stefan Koper (1906-1990) was born on 6 September 1906 in Warsaw, Poland. He received a degree from the University of Warsaw and he worked for the Polish Press (Prasa Polska). While attending the University of Warsaw he met Sophie Margulies, whom he would marry after the war.

Antoni fought with the Polish Army after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939. After Warsaw was occupied he joined the Polish Resistance where he helped publish underground newspapers, smuggle goods into the Warsaw ghetto, and forge identity documents. In February 1943 he helped Sophie Margulies escape the Warsaw ghetto. Antoni and his mother Marta hid Sophie and several other Jews in their apartment. He was also a member of the Polish Home Army and participated in the Warsaw Uprising begun in August 1944. He was captured in October 1944 and imprisoned in Oflag II D at Gross Born. He escaped the prison and joined the Polish Armoured Division under the British Army.

Antoni and Sophie married after the war and lived in Quakenbrück, Germany where he remained with the Polish Army until 1947 and then worked for the Polish Press Corps. Their son Peter was also born in 1947. Antoni and Sophie immigrated to London in 1947, and the United States in 1952. They settled in Monterey, California where Antoni taught Polish at the Defense Language Institute. They moved to Washington, D.C. in 1958 and Antoni worked as senior editor of a Polish language magazine published by the United States Information Agency. He died in June 1990 and was recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in July 1990.

Sophie Koper (1916-2011) was born Fanny Margulies in Moscow, Russia to Benjamin and Tatiana Margulies. She had an older sister, Raisa. Her family was Polish and not religious. Sophie's father left for Odessa for a job and never returned to his family. Sophie and her mother and sister moved to Krasnodar

where Tatiana's parents lived. Around 1920 the family moved to Warsaw where her mother worked as a nurse. After graduation from Gymnasium Sophie attended the University of Warsaw to study journalism. She met Antoni while attending the school. In 1938 Sophie worked as a secretary while still attending school.

In 1940 Sophie, her mother, sister, and brother-in-law were forced to move into the Warsaw ghetto. She avoided deportation, but her family were all deported and murdered. She was in contact with Antoni, active in the Polish Resistance, and he helped her escape the Warsaw ghetto in February 1943. He and his mother hid Sophie among others in their apartment. Antoni helped Sophie obtain forged papers, and she assumed the identity of Zofia Jabłońska. She was a nurse for the Polish Home Army during the Warsaw Uprising, and worked as a nurse in a hospital for the duration of the war.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the wartime and post-war experiences of Antoni Stefan Koper, an active member of the Polish Resistance during the German occupation of Warsaw, and his wife Sophie Koper, whom he rescued from the Warsaw ghetto and served as a nurse during the Warsaw Uprising. Included are Antoni's wartime identification cards, post-war documents from the Polish Armoured Division, letters from Sophie written to him while imprisoned in Oflag II D at Gross Born, personal narratives, and photographs. Papers of Sophie include wartime documents bearing her false identity of Zofia Jabłońska, personal narratives, and materials related to her efforts to get Antoni recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1990.

Biographical material of Antoni Koper includes his wartime Polish identification cards, post-war Polish Armoured Division documents and forms, a Ministry of Labour and National Service application, notes from his studies to learn English in 1947, and photocopies of his obituary. Biographical materials of Sophie Koper primarily consist of wartime identification documents and forms bearing the name of her false identity, Zofia Jabłońska, including an affidavit stating that her identification card had been stolen, possibly used to obtain a duplicate document, and a document stating that she was working for the Red Cross. Other materials include a Certificate of Honor awarded by Yad Vashem posthumously to Antoni as a Righteous Among the Nations, and materials from the Jewish Community Federation recognizing him for his actions during the Holocaust.

Correspondence includes wartime postcards and a letter sent to Antoni from Sophie while he was a prisoner of war in Oflag II D at Gross Born in 1944-1945, and letters from Sophie to Yad Vashem regarding the museum recognizing him as Righteous Among the Nations as well as letters of support from Paulina Krystny Zulawska, Alice Lovell, and someone identified as Bronka.

Writings include a clipping, a biography of Sophie's Holocaust experiences authored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, a biography of Antoni authored by Sophie, and personal narratives of Antoni and Sophie. Antoni's personal narrative describes the Warsaw Uprising, and Sophie's describes the ghetto experiences of a friend, Janek Goldman, and his wife Janka and son Yulka. There is also an essay by Antoni describing in detail the process and techniques used in the creation of forged documents by the Polish Underground during World War II. This document is undated but post-war and likely aimed at Polish citizens living under Communism in the late 1950s or 1960s.

Photographs consist of post-war depictions of Antoni and Sophie with the Polish Press Corp in Quakenbrück, Germany.

System of arrangement

The collection has been arranged as four series.

Series 1. Biographical material, 1943-1991

Series 2. Correspondence, 1944-1990

Series 3. Writings, 1945-1999

Series 4. Photographs, 1946-circa 1947

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Person:

Koper, Antoni Stefan, 1906-1990.

Koper, Sophie, 1916-

Corporate:

Righteous Gentiles in the Holocaust.

Oflag IID (Concentration camp)

Topical Subject:

Resistance movements--1940-1950.

Forgers--Poland.

Identification cards--Forgeries--Poland.

Holocaust Jewish (1939-1945)--Poland--Warsaw.

Holocaust survivors.

Geography:

Warsaw (Poland).

Quakenbrück (Germany)

Genre/Form:

Personal narratives.

Correspondence.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Biographical material, 1943-1991

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Jewish Community Federation Recognition of Rescuers and Camp Liberators of the Holocaust, 1991
1.2	Koper, Antoni: English language study notes, 1947
1.3	Koper, Antoni: identification and personal papers, 1943-1990
1.4	Koper, Antoni: Polish Armoured Division, 1945-1947
OS 1	Koper, Antoni: Yad Vashem Certificate of Honor, 1991
1.5	Koper, Sophie: false identity documents, 1943-1944
1.6	Koper, Sophie: identification card, circa 1946

Series 2. Correspondence, 1944-1990

Box/Folder	Title
1.7	Koper, Antoni: Koper, Sophie, 1944-1945
1.8	Koper, Sophie: correspondence regarding Yad Vashem, 1963, 1990

Series 3. Writings, 1945-1999

Box/Folder	Title
1.9	Biography of Sophie Koper, 1999
1.10	Clipping, undated
1.11	Koper, Antoni: "Allied Restaurant for the Gestapo," undated
1.12	Koper, Antoni: document forgery essay, circa 1960
1.13	Koper, Antoni: personal narrative, circa 1946
1.14	Koper, Sophie: Antoni Koper biography, circa 1990
1.15	Koper, Sophie: personal narrative, 1945

Series 4. Photographs, 1946-circa 1947

Box/Folder	Title
1.16	Koper, Antoni and the Polish Press Corps, 1946-circa 1947