

**AARON FINGER PAPERS, circa 1911-1991
2019.317.3**

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

Title: Aaron Finger papers

Dates: circa 1911-1991 (bulk 1943-1947)

Accession number: 2019.317.3

Creator: Finger, Aaron, 1918-2013.

Extent: .25 linear feet (5 folders, 1 oversize box, 2 oversize folders)

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

Abstract: The collection primarily documents the wartime experiences of Aaron Finger, originally of Toronto, Canada, who trained at Camp Ritchie and was in Germany from 1945-1946. Included is an identification card, letter of commendation, a small amount of correspondence, photographs, and a photograph album. Also included are a small amount of documents and photographs related to the family of his wife, Henrietta Finger (née Treister).

Languages: English, Yiddish, 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.

Physical access note: Slides in OS 1 are in cold storage and may not be available for researchers.

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), Aaron Finger papers (2019.317.3), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Susan Bliss in 2019. An accretion was also donated in 2019. Susan is the daughter of Aaron and Henrietta Finger. The collections previously numbered 2019.317.1 and 2019.318.1 have been incorporated into this collection.

Separated material: Oral history interview with Aaron Finger and Henrietta Finger (RG-90.099.0001 2019.317.2). A copy of a 106th Infantry Division booklet (D769.3 106th .A55 1944) has been transferred to the USHMM library

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; updated November 2020

Biographical note

Aaron Finger (1918-2013) was born on either 7 or 8 August 1918 in Toronto, Canada to Simon and Celia Finger. Simon (b. 1884) and Celia (née Feigenbaum, d. 1966) immigrated to the United States from Galicia, and married in New York City on 12 December 1908. Unable to find work in New York, the family moved to Toronto. Simon worked as a tailor and Celia made wigs for Orthodox Jewish women. Yiddish was often spoke at home. The family later moved back to New York in 1920. Aaron had two older siblings: Zelda and Harry, and one younger brother, Seymour (b. 1923).

Aaron enlisted with the United States Army in May 1943. He trained at Camp Ritchie in Maryland, becoming one of the Ritchie Boys trained in intelligence, language, and interrogation. He went overseas in post-war in fall 1945, and spent time in Germany, including the Flossenbürg concentration camp and Hof, where he worked with his Russian counterpart on prisoner exchanges among other tasks. He was discharged in July 1946 as a Second Lieutenant in the 405th Infantry, 102nd Division. His brother Harry also served in the army.

After Aaron returned to the United States, he married Henrietta Treister on 8 February 1948. The family settled in Queens, New York where he became a junior high school teacher.

Henrietta Treister (later Henrietta Finger, 1925-2007) was born in 1925 to Adolf and Rae Treister. Her father Adolf (born Chaim Treister, b. 1892) was born in Bolechów, Galicia (Bolekhiv, Ukraine) to Zvi Hirsch Treister and Chanas Horschowski. His father was a horse trader, and Adolf apprenticed as a barber before immigrating to the United States with his sister Sadie in 1908. He moved to Utica to work as a barber and married Rae Pizer there in 1920. Rae (Rachel, b. 1892) was born in Utica to Rueben Pizer and Mollie Fath Pizer. Both of her parents were born in Russia.

While in Utica, he changed his name from Chaim to Adolf after an accident left his foot seriously injured. Fearing amputation, he changed his name to avoid detection by the doctors. Henrietta had one sister, Ruth (b. 1921). She married Aaron Finger in 1948. At least 11 members of the Treister family in Europe perished during the Holocaust.

Scope and content of collection

The collection primarily documents the wartime experiences of Aaron Finger, originally of Toronto, Canada, who trained at Camp Ritchie and was in Germany from 1945-1946. Included is an identification card, letter of commendation, a small amount of correspondence, photographs, and a photograph

album. Also included are a small amount of documents and photographs related to the family of his wife, Henrietta Finger (née Treister).

The Aaron Finger documents include an identification card, a 1946 letter of commendation, a postcard inscribed in Yiddish to the Finger family in Toronto, and a 1991 letter and map from a former Ritchie Boy regarding his recent visit to Fort Ritchie. Photographs include depictions of Aaron in uniform; basic training in 1943, Camp Ritchie, and others through 1945; Flossenbürg concentration camp; Hof, Bavaria beginning February, 1946; Seder with survivors in Hof, April, 1946 sponsored by the Jewish Aid Committee, including Captain Goldberg, Chaplain Shapiro, and a cantor who was "member of Tito's partisans"; Munich; Garmisch April, 1946, where Aaron lived in former summer home of Hitler; his return to the United States aboard the SS *New Bern Victory* in June 1946; and family photographs.

Treister family papers include Adolf Treister's naturalization certificate from 1925, a copy from 1956 of Adolf Treister and Rae Pizer's 1920 marriage record, Adolf and Rae's ketubah, and six photographs depicting Adolf Treister's parents Chana and Zvi Hirsch Treister and unidentified friends and family.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as two series.

Series 1. Aaron Finger papers, circa 1911-1991

Series 2. Treister family papers, 1920-1956

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Person:

Finger, Aaron.

Treister, Adolf.

Corporate:

Camp Albert C. Ritchie (Md.)

United States. Army.

Flossenbürg (Concentration camp)

Topical Subject:

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, Jewish.

World War, 1939-1945--Veterans--United States.

Geography:

Hof (Germany : Landkreis)

United States--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:

Photographs.

Photograph albums.

Ketubah.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Aaron Finger papers, circa 1911-1991

Box/Folder	Title
1 of 5	Army papers, 1945-1946
2 of 5	Correspondence, circa 1911-1991
3 of 5	Photographs, circa 1943-1946
Box 1	Photograph album, 1943-1947
OS 1	Slides, circa 1943-circa 1946

Series 2. Treister family papers, 1920-1956

Box/Folder	Title
4 of 5, OS 2	Family papers, 1920-1956
5 of 5	Photographs, circa 1920s