

ERNEST STEEN PAPERS, 1897-1967
2020.300.1

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

Title: Ernest Steen papers

Dates: 1897-1967 [bulk 1930-1948]

Accession number: 2020.300.1

Creator: Steen, Ernest, 1911-1987.

Extent: 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 Ernest Steen (born Ernst Levistein), originally of Frankfurt am Main, Germany, including his employment in Frankfurt, immigration to the United States in 1940, and service during World War II in the United States Army.

Languages: German, English

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use.

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), Ernest Steen papers (2020.300.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Jacqui Barrientos in 2020. Jacqui is the daughter of Ernest Steen.

Separated material: 2020.300.1 Army patch

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, July 2022

Biographical note

Ernest Steen (1911-1987) was born Ernst Levistein on 15 July 1911 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany to Henrietta (1881-1942, née Langenbach) and Adolf Levistein (1881-1935). He had one sister Erna (b. 1907, later Erna Oppenheim). Prior to the war, Ernest worked for R. & W. Nathan, a women's and children's shoe manufacturer in Frankfurt.

Ernest's employment was terminated in 1938, and he left Germany for London. He immigrated to the United States aboard the S.S. Scythia in May 1940. He moved to Chicago where he knew the family of Carl Nathan. He was drafted into the United States Army in December 1942. Ernest received military intelligence training at Camp Ritchie (Camp Albert C. Ritchie) in Maryland in 1943. He was attached to the 80th Infantry Division (APO 80), 317th Infantry Regiment. In Europe he interrogated German prisoners-of-war and interpreted captured documents. Ernest was awarded a Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

He was discharged from the army in December 1945, and returned to Chicago. Ernest worked as a shoe salesman, and married Ruth Liss on 24 December 1950. They had two daughters, Helene (b. 1952), and Jacqui (b. 1954, later Jacqui Barrientos).

Ernest's sister immigrated to the United States prior to World War II, and lived with her family in Providence, Rhode Island. His mother Henrietta was unable to secure a visa to emigrate from Germany. She was deported from Frankfurt on 19 October 1941 to Łódź ghetto, where she perished on 8 February 1942 in the ghetto hospital.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Ernest Steen (born Ernst Levistein), originally of Frankfurt am Main, Germany, including his employment in Frankfurt, immigration to the United States in 1940, and service during World War II in the United States Army. Included are a small number of personal and biographical papers, clippings, newsletters, songs and poems, and military papers. Correspondence includes letters Ernest received from his mother Henrietta Steen (née Langenbach) in Frankfurt July 1940-August 1941, prior to her deportation to Łódź ghetto in October 1941. Photographs include depictions of Ernest's childhood and life in Frankfurt as well as photographs taken of Europe while he was in the army.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as three series.

Series 1. Personal papers, 1897-1967

Series 2. Correspondence, circa 1925-1960

Series 3. Photographs, circa 1913-circa 1945

Indexing terms

Person:

Steen, Ernest, 1911-1987.

Levistein, Henrietta, 1881-1942.

Levistein, Adolf, 1881-1935.

Oppenheim, Erna.

Corporate:

Camp Albert C. Ritchie (Md.)

United States. Army. Infantry Division, 80th (1942-1946)

Topical Subject:

Jews--Germany--Frankfurt am Main.

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

Geography:

Frankfurt am Main (Germany)

United States--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:

Photographs.

Letters.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Personal papers, 1897-1967

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Biographical and family papers, 1897-1945
1.2	Clippings, circa 1944-circa 1946
1.3	Newsletters, 1939-circa 1943
1.4	Postcards and ephemera, 1941, undated
1.5	Report: Report of an Investigation of the ADA-ADA-SCHUH Aktiengesellschaft

	by Carl H. Nathan, 1946
1.6	Restitution, 1961-1967
1.7	Songs and poems, 1940-circa 1945
1.8	United States Army, 1942-1946

Series 2. Correspondence, circa 1925-1960

Box/Folder	Title
1.9	Levistein, Henrietta, 1940
1.10	Levistein, Henrietta, 1941
1.11	General correspondence, circa 1925-1960

Series 3. Photographs, circa 1913-circa 1945

Box/Folder	Title
1.12	Europe and the United States, circa 1913-circa 1943
1.13	With the U.S. Army in Europe, circa 1945