



Across the Atlantic: Lifesaving Friendships During the Holocaust

Dr. Edna Friedberg

Dr. Edna Friedberg is a JTS Fellow, senior curator at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and host of the museum's popular Facebook Live series *Stay Connected*. Dr. Friedberg joined the staff of the museum in 1999, and served as the historian for the multilingual online *Holocaust Encyclopedia* and as director of its Wexner Learning Center. She also curated a special exhibit on the legacy of the Nuremberg trials and postwar justice. She received her PhD in Modern Jewish Studies from JTS, where she wrote a dissertation on the origins of American Jewish services for the elderly. Dr. Friedberg regularly speaks to audiences across the country, and her essays connecting Holocaust history with social, cultural, and political trends today have appeared in publications including the *Atlantic*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Forward*. An alumna of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, she served as president of the Board of Trustees of the Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School of the Nation's Capital. She is a member of Adas Israel Congregation.

Robert Harlan diary entries:

October 28, 1938

“When the Steins got home last Monday night they discovered they had to sell their house. On Tuesday they sold it, the price, [and the] buyer being settled, not by them, but by the authorities. Just like that! Dr. Stein has to stop working, either the 1st of Dec. or Jan. I’m not sure which.

I guess I’ve mentioned already the ‘tax’ Jews have to pay on purchases they make. Just double whatever the regular price is.”

November 11-13, 1938

“A stranger meets me—Frau Dr., utterly dejected, tear-stained, almost at wits end, but still struggling desperately to plan ahead—obviously relieved to see me....Fraulein’s dumb terror, and ensuing exhausted relief at seeing me—momentary breakdown by both women—

Ap’t’s appearance: little left in 1 piece—doors smashed—furniture splintered to nothingness—pictures methodically mutilated—books scattered all over—clock turned over—dishes tossed & crushed every which way—mirrors shattered systematically—“Mord [murder] instruments”—3 found, all iron rods, one apparently made for express purpose of destruction, a most effective affair with heavy knob on end—

LATER:--Indomitable spirit rises. ‘Bob, come here, quick!’ And I hurry to find her wrestling with a table she’d bumped against & remarking with dry humor (but damp eyes—I didn’t see a dry one all weekend), ‘I’m not yet accustomed to tables with only three legs.’”

Vienna, June 6, 1938

Excerpt from letter from Marianne Winter to Jane Bomberger

“My dear Jane!

You cannot imagine how happy I was when I got your letter in all that time. Facts are that we need to emigrate under every circumstance and of course, I know that you and your family have not the money to claim for us. But I have heard there are many people who send such papers to Austrian Jews [who] they do not know. It is sad to say that we have no one in the USA so that I have to ask you.”

Vienna, October 26, 1938

Excerpt from letter from Max Winter to Joseph Bomberger

“Dear Sir,

...I am at a loss to find the wright [sic] words for the help which you are extending to me....my application for a visa has been already twice rejected, which threw me in an utter despair.

You will probably be informed by your newspapers about the conditions prevailing here about the thousands [of] refugees who have fled to this country....

I assure you that I shall do my best in order to prove worthy of the generosity which you are so liberally bestowing on me and my family and for which words cannot give an adequate expression.”

“Hands Across the Sea Are Joined.” *The Reading Eagle*. February 5, 1939

“Correspondence which Jane Bomberger, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bomberger of 920 Lancaster avenue, started with an Austrian Jewish girl while she was a member of the Camp Fire Girls, yesterday had brought deliverance from Nazi persecution to the Vienna girl’s family. The 18-year-old girl abroad, seeking desperately to relieve the plight of her family, asked Miss Bomberger if it would be possible for them to come to the United States, and the Bombergers arranged it. Miss Bomberger is pictured at the left. Fearing retaliation on relatives in Germany, the family of four declined to permit their names to be used.”

Marianne Winter, decades later:

“We could have been bank robbers or murderers. They had no idea [who we were]. But they thought that if we were in need, they would help. And they were terrific.”

Chicago, December 16, 1938

Letter from Harry Rosenfeld to Josef Rosenfeld

“Dear friend

Go to the American consul he has all the papers for you to come to the United States. Let me know when you are leaving.

Yours Truly

Harry Rosenfeld

2944 Mango Ave.

Chicago, Illinois

U.S.A.”