

Handout

Marianne Winter / Jane Bomberger Packet

DOCUMENT 1 (Overview)

In 1935, 14-year-old Marianne Winter of Vienna, Austria, became pen pals with Jane Bomberger, a non-Jewish girl in Reading, Pennsylvania. The pair were matched by chance through the Camp Fire Girls organization. They forged what Jane's father, Joseph Bomberger, described as "a deep friendship." Over the next three years, they learned about each other's lives and families and occasionally exchanged pictures and small gifts.

Nazi Germany annexed Austria (the *Anschluss*) on March 12, 1938. At that moment, the Winter family became subject to Germany's restrictions on Jews. Not long after the Anschluss, Nazi storm troopers stopped Marianne and her mother in the street and forced them to scrub the floors of a Nazi barracks. The Winters lost their citizenship and became "stateless." They realized they needed to leave Europe as soon as possible. The Winters wanted to immigrate to the United States, but they did not have any American relatives who could grant them a financial affidavit promising that they would not become "public charges" there.

A few months later, Marianne wrote to her pen pal in Pennsylvania to ask Jane whether she knew anyone who could help the Winters by providing an affidavit of financial support—a necessary document for anyone hoping to immigrate to the United States. The Bombergers decided to sponsor the Winter family, promising to take responsibility for them if the Winters were admitted into the United States.

Though the Winters had found an American sponsor, they still had great difficulty obtaining visas to the United States. While waiting for their turn to present their papers at the US consulate, they planned to travel to the relative safety of Czechoslovakia, where Anna had relatives. The Nazi government forced the Winters to surrender most of their belongings before being allowed to leave Vienna. They could only keep ten Reichsmarks each, equivalent to \$45 today.

The US consul in Prague, Czechoslovakia, initially rejected Joseph Bomberger's affidavit because the two families were not blood relatives and the consul was not convinced that the Bombergers would support virtual strangers. Fearing a Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, Max Winter wrote to Joseph Bomberger on September 11, 1938, desperate for additional help.

Bomberger immediately submitted additional income statements to prove his suitability for sponsorship. Though the Bombergers were an average middle-class family, they were determined to help the Winters. The additional income statements persuaded the US consulate in Prague to reconsider the Winters' application and interview them. They finally received their immigration visas in January 1939.

The Winters sailed from Genoa, Italy, on January 26, 1939, on the SS *Conte di Savoia*. Joseph Bomberger brought his daughter Jane to meet the Winters' ship when it arrived in New York City on February 3, 1939. The Winters stayed with the Bombergers for a brief time before moving to a nearby apartment in Reading, Pennsylvania. After they arrived, the Winters immediately sought to help other refugees, but leaving Nazi-occupied territory became more difficult.

DOCUMENT 2

Finest Perfumery Compositions
Max Winter
Vienna, IX., Löblichgasse Nr. 6
Telephone A-12-7-51
Post Savings Account C 133.057

Vienna, the 29 of June 1938

My dear, dearest Jane!

You can not imagine how we felt after having received your letter an hour ago. We could not believe that there are such people, who are really so kind to help us. It is not to think that real strangers, as you are, give us so much love. To my mother came the tears when we received the letter, because no one of our family understood our situation as well as you did.

Of course my parents give you the most thanks and would like to accept. We thank you again and again that you yourselves have claimed for us. We have enough money for to cross, thank you, and my mother has three brothers abroad, who do live in Europe, and so they can-not take us to them, but who promised to give us a certain amount of money for a start. So that you need not fear that we would fall into your pockets.

We can not imagine, how I feel to think to see you in a short time, do you remember in your first letter you wrote me that you have dreamed I was with you. Now it will be true. But it will last two month till we get the papers for to leave.

I thank you again for your frank question about money, because we can not take any money out of there.

I cannot express, how we feel, everything I write is too little, but I hope that once we will be able to show our thanks, we are so happy.

Now I dare say, we will, I hope, see each other very soon, I am

Yours lovingly

Marianne¹

¹ Letter from Marianne Winter to Jane Bomberger, June 29, 1938, gift of Marianne Selinger to United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Stephen Winter.

DOCUMENT 3

Joseph Bomberger wrote and signed this affidavit for the Winter family, promising to be financially responsible for the family in the United States.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Marianne Selinger to United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Stephen Winter

AFFIDAVIT OF SUPPORT.

State of Pennsylvania }
 County of Berks } SS:
 United States of America }

I Joseph A. Bomberger being duly sworn, depose and say:

- That I am 41 years of age and was born at Myerstown, Pennsylvania on March 19th 1897
- That my present address is 920 Lancaster Avenue, Reading, Pennsylvania
- That I have resided in the United States for the past 41 years.
- That I am a citizen of the United States by birth
- That I have declared my intention to become a citizen of the United States and hold Declaration of Intention Certificate No. _____ issued at _____ on _____
- That my ~~business~~ occupation is Builder and Developer; ~~xxxx~~ and that my ~~business~~ average weekly earnings are \$ 60.00.
- That I possess property aggregating: Real Estate \$ 50,000.00 Personal property \$ 2600.00 cash, mortgage totaling \$6000.00, Life insurance to the amount of \$10,000.00
- That my dependents consist of wife, Linda, 2 daughters, Ruth 16 yrs, and Sarah, 10 years
- That it is my intention and desire to have the following relatives friend(s) at present residing at Wien IX, L blichg. 6, Germany come and remain with me in the United States until they, he, she, become self supporting.

| Names of Alien(s) | Age | Sex | Relationship | Occupation |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. MAX WINTER | 15 yrs | male | friend | Chemist |
| 2. ANNA WINTER | 15 yrs | female | friend | Music Teacher |
| 3. Stefan WINTER | 12 yrs | male | friend | student |
| 4. MARIANNE WINTER | 17 | female | friend | dressmaker |

Alien No. 2 was born in Czecho Slovakia; Aliens 1-3-4 were born in Germany

- That I am and always have been a law abiding resident and never have been arrested or charged with any crime, nor have been the above mentioned immigrants to the best of my knowledge and belief ever been convicted of any crime.
- That I do hereby promise, agree and guarantee that I will properly receive and take care of the above mentioned immigrants and that I will at no time allow any of them to become public charges on the United States, or any community or municipality of the United States, and I do further promise and agree that any who are under sixteen years of age will be sent to day school and that they will not be put to work unsuited to their years.
- That I make this affidavit in good faith to induce the Honorable American Consul to issue Immigration Visas to the above named aliens and to induce the United States Immigration Authorities to permit them to enter the United States of America.

Witnesses:
Adolph Frierer
Beatrice Friday

Joseph A. Bomberger (SEAL)
 (Signature of deponent)

Sworn and subscribed to before me a Notary Public in and for said County and State on this 18th day of July A.D. 1948

Jennie [unclear]
 Notary Public
 Commission expires: Feb. 15, 1949

DOCUMENT 4

Tax form from a German administration office, September 9, 1938 (in German):

Staatliche Administration
für den 9., 17., 18. u. 19. Bezirk
Wien, 9. Bezirkskanzlei 112

Wien 9. 9. 1938

(Dienststelle) (Ort und Datum)

(Kennzeichen) (Straße)

Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung

(Gültigkeitsdauer: ein Monat ab Ausstellung)

Gegen die Ausreise des(r) Winter han Pro. (Beruf oder Stand, Vor- und Name)
9. Loblitzgasse 6 (Wohnung), geboren am 18. 9. 1893 in Überreichsdorf,
und seiner Ehefrau Anne, geborene Jedermann, geboren am 21. 5. 1893
in Deutsch Pro., und seiner Kinder _____, geboren am _____,
_____, geboren am _____, geboren am _____

habe ich keine Bedenken.

Gefahr
Dienststempel **ZOLLAMT WIEN 199**
18. u. 19. Bezirk
Finanzamt
Geisler
(Unterschrift)

1 1/2 SCHILLING 1938

Administration
für den 9., 17., 18. u. 19. Bezirk
Wien, 9. Bezirkskanzlei 112

(Bescheinigung) 6. 88. — 5000. — Österreichische Staatsdruckerei. (St.) 3897 89

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Marianne Selinger to United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Stephen Winter

DOCUMENT 5

Winter family's inventory list (translated):

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Piano | 1 Doll's quilt |
| 1 Dresser with hutch | Miscellaneous fabric remnants |
| 1 " " drawer | 1 Bath towel |
| 1 Bench | 1 Child's bathrobe |
| 5 Chairs | 11 Feather pillows |
| 1 Table | 1 Horsehair " |
| 1 Sofa | 5 Featherbeds |
| 1 Sewing machine | 2 Quilts |
| 8 Sofa cushions | 2 Flannel blankets |
| 3 Blankets | 1 Bedspread |
| 1 Rug, hand knotted | 1 Venetian blind |
| 2 Rugs | 4 Tulle curtains |
| 1 Bookcase | 6 Small curtains |
| 1 Armoire | 5 [Pieces of] Embroidered trim |
| 7 Paintings | 4 " " " " " for the kitchen |
| Miscellaneous photographs with frames | 2 Wool sweaters |
| Miscellaneous books | 1 Sweater |
| " musical scores | 1 [Perfume] atomizer set |
| 9 Mattresses | Miscellaneous needlework |
| 11 Duvets | 6 Plates |
| 10 Duvet covers | 2 Coffeepots |
| 24 Pillows | 2 Tea services |
| 4 " small | 2 Mocha services |
| 4 Table settings | 1 Mocha cup |
| 6 Tablecloths | 12 Drinking glasses |
| 30 Doilies | 23 Wine glasses + tankard |
| 15 Sheets | 2 Coffeepots |
| 12 Handkerchiefs | 2 Candy dishes |
| 6 Kitchen Towels | 2 Jardinières |
| 15 Sheets | 6 Vases |
| 12 Dishtowels | 1 Figurine |
| 6 Fans | 2 Mantle clocks |
| 14 Men's shirts | 1 Dessert service |
| 2 Pajamas | 4 Sandwich platters |
| 2 Nightshirts | 3 Salt shakers |
| 5 Men's winter underpants | 2 Ladles |
| 1 Men's undershirt | 2 Sugar tongs |
| 2 [Pairs of] shorts | 1 Nutcracker |
| 5 Children's dresses | 12 Coffee spoons ¹ |
| Miscellaneous lace remnants | |
| 5 Ladies' trousers | |
| 5 Ladies' shirts | |

¹ Winter Family's Inventory List, gift of Marianne Selinger to United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Stephen Winter, translated by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

DOCUMENT 6

The Winters fled Vienna and went to live with relatives in Prague, Czechoslovakia, less than 200 miles away. The American consulate in Prague denied the Winters' applications for visas because Mr. Bomberger's affidavit listed them as "friends" instead of relatives. Refugees with relatives in the United States had a greater chance of receiving visas. Below is a translation of a letter to Joseph Bomberger from Max Winter.

Dear Sir,

I regret to inform you that the efforts you have made to help us have not yet succeeded, I am sorry to say. The American Consul of this place has refused to give us the visas, because I can't proof [sic] a sufficient evidence of support. if the affidavit would have been sent by relatives it would find a more favorable judgment. I shall try to change the consul's mind by a friend of mine who has relations to the consul, but I have to wait several days my friend being abroad at this moment.

I have been informed, that in case I could get an additional affidavit by a relative it would be sure that we could all get the visas and the affidavit must not be strong and show a big amount. or if I could show a banking-account amounting at least to \$3,000 on my own name.

I again dare to apply to you if you could find any cousin of mine, who would send me this additional affidavit I know that I am claiming in an extraordinary way to your philanthropy, reading the newspapers you will understand the International political circumstances in Europe and especially those concerning Czechoslovakia make it recommendable to leave as soon as possible. I believe I have to try In this moment every possibility to reach this aim, but I assure you that I will understand if also, if I should get refusal to my request.

Please be convinced that I know to appreciate all you have done for us till this moment and let we have your answer as soon as possible.

Your obedient servant,
Max Winter¹

¹ *Letter to Joseph Bomberger from Max Winter*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Marianne Selinger to United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Stephen Winter, translated by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

DOCUMENT 7

The Winters' ticket from Genoa, Italy, to the United States, January 26, 1939. The ship tickets cost the family 1,976.28 Reichsmarks, the equivalent of about \$14,000 today.

Per il Passeggero

A) Per il **Passeggero**

ITALIA N° 99125

SOCIETÀ ANONIMA DI NAVIGAZIONE - SEDE IN GENOVA
CAPITALE SOCIALE L. 500.000.000 INTERAMENTE VERSATO 65/68

Contratto per Biglietto di Classe TURISTICA

RILASCIATO ALLE CONDIZIONI INDICATE A TERGO
Issued on the conditions printed on the reverse side

PRAGA (GENOVA) da a **NEWYORK** colla Nave **CONTE DI SAVOIA**
 ANDATA from to with Vessel
 OUTWARD in partenza il **26/I/1939** alle ore **11 AM** imbarco alle ore **9 AM** cabina **85 BAGNO**
 sailing at embarkation at cabin **79 SENZA BAGNO**

RITORNO da a colla Nave
 HOMEWARD from to with Vessel
 Valido fino al in partenza il alle ore imbarco alle ore cabina letto
 Valid until sailing at embarkation at cabin berth

| NOMI DEI PASSEGGERI PASSENGERS NAMES | Eta Age | Valuta Tariffa Currency | ANDATA OUTWARD | | RITORNO HOMEWARD | |
|--|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| | | | Posti Fares | Nolo Amount | Posti Fares | Nolo Amount |
| SIG. Max WINTER | AD | § | I | 174.= | | |
| SIG. RA Anne WINTER | " | " | I | 174.= | | |
| FIGLIA Marianne WINTER | " | " | I | 174.= | | |
| FIGLIO Stephan WINTER | " | " | I | 174.= | | |
| Supplemento cabina | " | " | | 40.= | | |
| " bagno | " | " | | 20.= | | |
| Incasato collected (valute d'incasso) (actual currency) | | | | 756.= | | |
| | | | | 2.50 RM. | | 1890.= |
| Importo totale passaggi Total amount | | | | 8 | | 20.= |
| Tasse Europee imbarco European Taxes, Embarkation | | | | | | |
| Tasse Europee sbarco European Taxes, Landing | | | | | | |
| Tasse Americane imbarco American Taxes, Embarkation | | | | | | |
| Tasse Americane sbarco American Taxes, Landing | | | | 24 | | 60.= |
| Proseguimenti ferroviarie Railway tickets | | | | | | |
| TOTALE TOTAL | | | | | | RM. 1970.= |
| Accanto come da B. to r. Deposit as per Ticket | | | | 21463 | Vienna | 1976,28 |
| A favore dei passeggeri In Vienna | | | | | | RM. 6,28 |
| Emesso in sostituzione del B. to Chiam./Saz. Rit. N° Issued in exchange for Prepaid/Return Ticket | | | | | | |
| Valore Amount | | | | | | |
| rilasciato a issued at | | | | | | |
| rilasciato a GENOVA il 26/I/1939 XVII Issued at on the | | | | | | |

Società Anonima di Navigazione
Cap. Sociale L. 500.000.000 interamente versato
UFFICIO PASSEGGERI CLASSE TURISTICA

S. A. IMPRESE TIPOGRAFICHE - GENOVA

Per il Passeggero

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United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Marianne Selinger to United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Stephen Winter

DOCUMENT 8

Left: Max, Anna, Marianne, and Stefan Winter at Stefan's high school graduation from Reading High School in Reading, Pennsylvania, 1943.

Right: Local Reading Eagle newspaper article about the correspondence between Marianne Winter and Jane Bomberger, February 5, 1939. The Winters didn't want their names mentioned in the article; the caption reads: "Fearing retaliation on relatives in Germany, the family of four declined to permit their names to be used."



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Stephen Winter
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Marianne Selinger to United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection,



Reading Eagle, February 5, 1939