

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 ~~(occupation)~~ occupation is Builder and Developer; ~~that my~~ 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 1X, Lblichg. 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 Guerer
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. 1938

Jennie (Weber)
 Notary Public
 My commission expires: Feb. 15, 1939

DOCUMENT 4

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

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

Wien 9. 9. 1938
(Ort und Datum)

(Dienststelle)

(Merkzeichen)

(Straße)

Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung

(Gültigkeitsdauer: ein Monat ab Ausstellung)

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

habe ich keine Bedenken.

1 1/2 SCHILLING 1934
ÖSTERREICHISCHE
STAMPELMARKE

Administration
für den 9., 18. u. 19. Bezirk
Dienststelle 112

Dienststempel
ZOLLAMT
WIEN
199

u. 19. Bezirk
Finanzamt

Geisler
(Unterschrift)

(Bescheinigung) 6. SS. — 5000. — Österreichische Staatsdruckerei. (St.) 3897 30

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



Reading Eagle, February 5, 1939