



## Phoebe Eloise Unterman Papers (K1130)

**Collection Number:** K1130

**Collection Title:** Phoebe Eloise Unterman Papers

**Dates:** 2009

**Creator:** Unterman, Phoebe Eloise

**Abstract:** This collection contains the children's picture book *Through Eva's Eyes* written by Phoebe Eloise Unterman, based on the true story of her grandmother Eva's experiences in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II.

**Collection Size:** 0.05 cubic foot  
(1 folder)

**Language:** Collection materials are in English.

**Repository:** The State Historical Society of Missouri

**Restrictions on Access:** Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at [kansascity@shsmo.org](mailto:kansascity@shsmo.org). Collections may be viewed at any research center.

**Restrictions on Use:** The Donor retains copyrights she holds in the Papers, with the understanding that researchers are free to use and quote from any of the Papers.

**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Phoebe Eloise Unterman Papers* (K1130); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Kansas City].

**Donor Information:** The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Phoebe Eloise Unterman on October 27, 2010 (Accession No. KA1851).

**Notes:** This collection is associated with the Jewish Community Archives of Greater Kansas City.

**Processed by:** Processed by Whitney Heinzmann and intern, Natalie Wolf, July 2019

**Historical Note:**

Eva Unterman was born Khristina Teofila Eva Krystyna Wolman on October 29, 1932, to Eli and Esther Wolman in Lodz, Poland. During the winter of 1940, she and her family were forced to move to the Lodz Ghetto along with the other Jewish people in their town. In the early fall or late summer of 1944, she and her parents and maternal grandmother were sent to Auschwitz Concentration Camp. She and her mother and grandmother were then separated from her father, but he was sent to all of the same camps and locations as Eva and her mother over the next year or so. They were then transported to Stutthoff Concentration Camp, where her grandmother was killed. In November of 1944, she and her parents were sent to Dresden, where they worked in a munitions factory and were nearly killed when the Allied Forces bombed Dresden. In March of 1945, she and her parents were forced to go on a Death March to Theresienstadt, a concentration camp located in Terezín, Czech Republic. On May 8, 1945, they were finally liberated by Russian soldiers, and she and her mother soon reunited with her father. After the war, she and her family moved to Germany, where they opened a souvenir shop. Eva met American GI Herb Unterman while working in the shop, and they married in Toronto, Canada, on February 4, 1953, as she could not get approval to enter the U.S. After several months, Eva was able to come to the U.S., and she and Herb moved around for several years before settling in Tulsa, OK, in 1961, where Eva was still living as of 2018. Herb Unterman died in 2008. Eva also later worked as a saleswoman, and she and Herb had one son, Phoebe's father, and one daughter. Eva began speaking about her experiences in the Holocaust in the 1970s and continued to do so, founding the Yom Hashoah Interfaith Holocaust Commemoration.

Phoebe Eloise Unterman was born in Kansas City, Missouri, but has spent most of her life in Kansas and was living in Mission Hills, Kansas, at the time this book was published. She has one older sister, Sophie. As of 2011, she was studying at the Annenberg School of Journalism at the University of Southern California.

Phoebe Unterman first heard her Grandmother Eva speak about her experiences in the Holocaust when she was in third grade. In eighth grade, when she was thirteen years old, she wrote and illustrated the first version of this book, originally called *Eva's Story*. She then entered it in the 2006 National Kids-in-Print Contest through Landmark House, Ltd. Another book won that year, but Teresa M. Melton-Symon, the President of Landmark House, could not put the story aside and asked Phoebe's mother for permission to publish the book under Landmark's Choice Gold Award Line. Phoebe agreed. The original version of the book ended with Eva's family entering the Lodz Ghetto, and Melton-Simon asked Phoebe to include the rest of the story of Eva's family in the Holocaust in the book. Phoebe agreed, and at seventeen, she was able to publish the expanded book, renamed *Through Eva's Eyes*.

**Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged into one folder.

**Scope and Content Note:**

This illustrated children's book follows Eva Wolman's family from the summer of 1939 and the first rumors of war through the German occupation of Poland, their removal to the Lodz Ghetto and eventually the Auschwitz, Stutthoff, and Theresienstadt Concentration Camps, along with Dresden, before they were liberated by Russian soldiers. An epilogue tells how Eva and her

parents later moved to Germany and opened a souvenir shop, where Eva met an American soldier, Herb Unterman, whom she eventually married and followed to the United States, where they raised a family and Eva began to share her story more widely. This copy is also signed on the first page.

**Container List:**

Box 001 f. 1 *Through Eva's Eyes*, 2009

**Index:**

Index Term	Folder
Auschwitz (Concentration camp)	1
Dresden (Germany)	1
Holocaust	1
Jewish Community Archives of Greater Kansas City	1
Litzmannstadt-Getto (Łódź, Poland)	1
Łódź (Poland)	1
Oświęcim (Poland)	1
Stutthoff (Concentration camp)	1
Sztutowo (Poland)	1
Theresienstadt (Concentration camp)	1
Unterman, Teofila Eva Krystyna Wolman	1
Unterman, Phoebe Eloise	1