

Handout

Franz Goldberger / American Friends Service Committee Packet

DOCUMENT 1 (Overview)

In 1938, Dr. Franz Goldberger, who taught bookkeeping, calligraphy, and other subjects at a commerce academy in Nazi-occupied Vienna, began writing letters to Americans he did not know. He was looking for someone who could provide him with an affidavit of financial sponsorship, a necessary document for obtaining a US immigration visa. Jews who did not have relatives in the United States often wrote to people in similar professions or used American phone books to contact people who had the same last name.

One of Franz Goldberger's letters reached Hazel Hostetter, a teacher in Des Moines, Iowa. Hostetter could not supply an affidavit for Goldberger, but she looked for someone who would. Hazel Hostetter wrote to the Scattergood Hostel in West Branch, Iowa, which assisted newly arrived European refugees. The hostel was run by the Quakers, a Christian denomination. In a second letter to Scattergood, she wrote with good news. She had found someone to sponsor Franz Goldberger: "Miss Helen Roseland, Assistant Postmaster of Eagle Grove, Iowa will sign the affidavit."

While Franz Goldberger waited in Nazi-occupied Vienna, Helen Roseland and the staff at the Scattergood Hostel in Iowa worked to bring him to the United States. They also received assistance from the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker relief organization that helped people flee Nazi Europe, communicate with loved ones, and adjust to life in the United States.

The AFSC formed the center of a network of refugee aid agencies in Europe and fielded hundreds of requests every month from individuals seeking to escape Nazism. With the help of the Scattergood Hostel and the AFSC, Helen Roseland's completed affidavit and other paperwork reached the US State Department and Franz Goldberger's home in Vienna.

Franz Goldberger eagerly awaited his affidavit, hoping that he could use it to obtain a US immigration visa. However, he needed a new official copy, and while waiting for it, he was sent to a work camp near Vienna. Helen Roseland sent a new affidavit to Franz Goldberger in the spring of 1941. On May 22, 1941, the AFSC sent a letter to the National Refugee Service, a refugee coordinating organization, informing them that Goldberger received his affidavit and Helen Roseland had purchased a ticket to the United States for him. He was scheduled to come on a ship from Spain on June 29, 1941.

Helen Roseland never heard from Franz Goldberger again. He never appeared at the ship and was likely trapped in Vienna after the US consulate there closed in July 1941. In May 1942, Goldberger was arrested and sent to the Majdanek concentration camp in Nazi-occupied Poland, where he died. The exact circumstances of his death are unknown, but his body was cremated on August 20, 1942.

DOCUMENT 2

New York City high school teacher Benjamin Davis received this letter from Franz Goldberger, who said that he'd found Davis's name in a directory. Goldberger hoped that Davis could provide him with a financial affidavit so that he could immigrate to the United States.

Letter to Benjamin Davis, January 13, 1940:

PROFESSOR FRANZ GOLDBERGER

WIEN, 13th of January 1940.
XIII., SECHSHAUSERSTRASSE 91

Mr. Benjamin F. Davis,
Walton High School,
Bronx, New - York.

Dear Sir,

I am indebted for your esteemed address to the member list of the International Society for Commercial Education, of which institution I was member for some years. In my desperate situation I take the liberty to apply to you, dear Sir, although you do not know me to ask for your kind help or let me have your valuable advice.

It would be my most ardent wish to come to your beautiful country, it is, however, very unfortunate, that I have no connection whatever to influential personalities abroad. Perhaps, dear Sir, it is possible for you to find a person, who would send me an Affidavit.

Although I would prefer by far an activity in my former calling as a teacher for German, eventually for Calligraphy or accountant, bookkeeper, clerk, a predilection, which you as a colleague of the same line will certainly understand, I am, considering the altered circumstances equally prepared to practise one of the newly learnt professions mentioned in the curriculum vitae.

I am applying to your very person, expecting, that a colleague will certainly extend the interest and also the understanding for my precarious and undeserved situation. Please, do help me to get into possession of an Affidavit. Don't put aside this letter for want of time or on account of its circumstantial exposition.

Such a noble deed will give you everlasting thankfulness and must be a satisfaction to your goodself to have assisted.

I can assure you, dear Sir, that I have only the sole endeavour to find a modest existence by means of industry and work and that it is far from me to be a burden to anyone. In case, however, you should not be in a position to help me directly, I beg you to bring me in connection with some influential people of your country, who are willing to help and who would be kind enough to let me have one or the other address of such personalities, to whom I could apply at random and I would be greatly obliged to you.

I described my situation as well as I could and hope, you will understand, dear Sir, when I take the liberty to beg you imploringly to find some noble person, who is willing to procure me an Affidavit. I think, there should be found in your large and rich country many well - to - do and philanthropic manufacturers, merchants, farmers etc. who are inclined to give their assistance to an unmarried man, both able and willing to work, whose misery is undeserved.

Wouldn't it be possible to draw the attention of one or the other of your colleagues at your school or perhaps the parents of your pupils to my sad fate? There are certainly many possibilities to help also indirectly.

I would be ever so grateful, if you in intercourse with your colleagues could make up your mind to put in an advertisement in a daily or commercial paper. The small expenditure could be defrayed by the gentlemen, if they would do me a favour, which will never be forgotten. Here enclosed I am sending you a draft, the size and style of which I leave to you. The way, in which you would let me have the replies, you may of course also choose as you like, but preferably by air - mail.

./.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Gerri Seingisser

DOCUMENT 2 (continued)

Goldberger included his résumé in his letter to Benjamin Davis, hoping to prove that he would not become a burden in the United States.

Franz Goldberger,
Professor of the Commercial Academy,
Vienna, XV., Sechshauserstrasse 91.



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, gift of Gerri Steingasser

C u r r i c u l u m v i t a e

Data:

Born on August 6th, 1899 at Saaz, Germany, Jew, single, tall, in good health. From a highly respectable family. My father, who died a few months ago, was a Secondary-School - Head - Master.

Studies and commercial praxis:

Secondary-School, Commercial Academy. From 1918-1924 I was employed as a clerk and bookkeeper in different commercial trades. In 1924 I determined to turn towards the profession of a teacher for commercial subjects and visited for this purpose the lectures at the University and Teaching-Seminary at the Commercial-High-School in Vienna. In 1929 I made the Teachership-Examination for the Commercial-School and in 1932 the Teachership-Examination for the Commercial-Academy. I have a good knowledge of English. I beg to add, that I once wrote a scientific work about bookkeeping in agriculture.

Kind of activity as professor:

At the end of the assistant - time I was employed from 1925 until the day of the political change - over (12th of March 1938) as a professor of the Commercial Academy, Commercial-School and Commercial-Continuation-School of the Body of Registered Merchants in Vienna. I taught the following subjects: Bookkeeping, commercial correspondence, commercial arithmetic, commercial science, calligraphy (including advertising and ornamental writing). I beg it to be taken into consideration, what it means to lose undeservedly, out of confessional reasons only, a respected position all of a sudden, to which I have devoted myself with so much idealism during 13 years in the best time of my working power.

Training - courses:

After the change - over I turned towards the learning of the following handicraft and agricultural professions at the training-courses of the Vienna Jewish - Community, with the view to build up a future existence based on one of these accomplishments in case of emergency: Shoe - Repairing, Window - Dressing, Manicure, Hair-Dressing, Domestic-Service (Butler) Culture of Fruit, Vegetable, Shrub and Flower, Milking etc. I take the liberty to add, that I have a great predilection for agriculture. I don't shrink from work and would, of course, gladly accept manual work too. I am always prepared to send copies of testimonials of my commercial and teachers practice as well as certificates of the professional classes and to name Vienne references.

Remarks about economic situation:

At the end of March 1939 the Schools of the Body of Registered Merchants in Vienna were taken in charge by the Community of Vienna. In consequence of this my small pension, which was paid to me for a short time with the regular remark "provisionally with reservation to claim" was cancelled. By this cancellation I have been robbed of the most primitive needs of living. I dare say without exaggeration, that I am nearly ruined materially, this all the more, as I have no savings and as a Jew have no possibility whatever to earn my living in this country, in which I have lived since my childhood.

x and medical - damage

DOCUMENT 3

Helen Roseland, assistant postmaster of Eagle Grove, Iowa, enthusiastically agreed to provide an affidavit for Goldberger. Roseland was unmarried and had no personal savings, but her family owned 160 acres of land, and she hoped that would be enough to prove her financial stability.



Courtesy of the family of Helen Roseland

United States Post Office
Eagle Grove, Iowa
March 20, 1940

CLASS _____
IN REPLYING
MENTION INITIALS AND DATE

Mildred E. Holmes,
West Branch, Iowa

My dear Madam:

Your letter reached me yesterday. I am beginning to get the letters of recommendation, but am sending the other information at once, including the Federal and State Income tax reports.

My complete name is Helen N. Roseland. I was born Nov. 13, 1888 at Eagle Grove, Iowa and have lived here since. I have no dependants. We have an eight room house. My father and I are the only ones during the school year but in the summer two of my sisters are usually at home but there is ample space for another person.

I have taught a Ypugn Women's Bible class at our church for about 20 years. I have been Iowa Dist President of the Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation which is our Mission organization for TEN years. I am now second vice Pres. of the International organization. Have been pres. of Mission Society and Luther League here. That is about all.

I have no money in the bank, but my father is a retired farmer with 160 acres near Eagle Grove-158 I think to be exact as two corners are taken off. This is all paid for. I have a savings that the Gov. save for us. As for me, I spend mine very fast mostly for the Lord's work, helping people thru school etc.

What pitiful cases do you have requests from now. Any Hebrew Christians?

Yours Very Truly,
Helen Roseland

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

DOCUMENT 4

Mildred Holmes, an aid worker with the American Friends Service Committee (the Quakers), advised Helen Roseland about how to fill out the paperwork to sponsor Franz Goldberger in this letter from April 1, 1940.

April 1, 1940

Helen N. Roseland
Eagle Grove, Iowa

Dear Miss Roseland:

I am enclosing the four copies of the affidavit which are to be signed, notarized and returned when reasonable. I hope you find it satisfactory.

Also I am sending the suggested letter to the Consul. It will be good for you to change it into your own words and strengthen it wherever you wish, being certain only that all the ideas in it are retained in a clear form, about which there can be no doubt. This can be done as soon as you have collected all the additional letters of recommendation and other documents. Be certain to list these in your personal letter to the Consul.

Yes, another thing about the document proper. If you will kindly insert the year since when you have been employed as assistant-postmaster in the 2nd paragraph, it will be very helpful. I found I had that information nowhere, and I don't want to delay sending it on to you any longer.

I am making copies of your income-tax returns, which I will send back to you when they have been notarized.

I trust that your letters of recommendation and credit etc. are coming along steadily. Please just be certain to have four copies of everything, and to have notarized all except personal letters.

I cannot begin to express ^{my own} ~~my~~ personal gratitude to you for the helpful way in which you ^{have} ~~gone~~ about this task. It surely will be an undeniable satisfaction ^{to} ~~of~~ many persons.

Any word from you will be most appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

P.S. I am enclosing the Curriculum vitae Mildred B. Holmes and personal letter copied from Mrs. Hostetter's information, just in case you do not have them at hand

DOCUMENT 5

After surviving seven months in a work camp, Franz Goldberger wrote to Helen Roseland asking her to send updated immigration paperwork.

910

Copy

January 22nd 1941.

Miss Helen N. Roseland,
Assistant - postmaster,
610 East First Street South,
Eagle - Grove, Iowa.

Dear Miss Roseland,

I am afraid you will be shocked not to have got any answer to your very dear and kind letter from May 14th 1940. You must believe, that since many months I was only thinking how to find a way to communicate with you and to thank you for all the joy and hope, which your good words have given to me. You have not only given me the chance of a new life by your noble act of signing an affidavit to me, but you have also filled me with courage by your cordial lines.

I have been staying in a work - service camp out of Vienna as an earth-worker since ~~May~~ 1940. It is the first time since nine months, that I have got a holiday and was allowed to return to my home in Vienna and I employ my first free day by writing this letter to you.

You can think, how much it oppressed me to think of you all the time and to have been absolutely unable to answer you. If God will help me to come to you one day, I trust that I shall be able to make you understand that I have only the one desire to show you, that you haven't granted your help to somebody unworthy of your confidence.

~~As I am told the consulate is very strict now and has the habit of refusing to grant visas for the possessors of those affidavits, which differ in the least bits from their regulations. Therefore I take the liberty of enclosing a paper to you, in which the demands are put down, which are made by the Consulate, so that you may be able to inform yourself, how to draft the necessary papers according to the demands and regulations of the American Consulate in Vienna. Of course, a lot of the points mentioned in this blank, will not regard the present case, but in all points which are connected with the statements of your affidavit, I beg you to follow the directions given in this information - paper, because it causes a great delay in the departure, if something is not in order. Therefore I thank you with this paper, which I translated into English, that you can control, if you haven't omitted to fulfill one of the necessary demands.~~

I beg you most heartily to make also a certified copy of the affidavit and all supplemental papers and to send it to my Viennese address by air-mail registered, as it will be necessary, that I hold a copy of these papers in hand, in case the authorities here should demand some proof, that I have really taken steps for my immigration.

I beg your pardon for troubling you so much, but you can't think, how important it is for me to have that opportunity of getting away. I need these sworn copies of the affidavit as well as of the enclosures, such as proof income, bank account, insurance, real estate, stock and bonds, income tax and so on. Please, send the original papers to the Consulate, and the copies to my Viennese address, both by air - mail registered, because that is the safest and quickest way.

This affidavit is really my only hope for a new future and I am only sustained by this chance of being allowed to the United States one day. I therefore beg you to consider, how much I should have desired to thank you at once and to excuse my not having answered for such a long time because of my predicament, but I couldn't help otherwise. ./.

DOCUMENT 6

Anticipating that Goldberger would soon be able to leave Vienna, Roseland collected \$425 (equivalent to \$7,000 today) for his ship ticket, using money from her own bank account along with donations from people in New York and California. She was able to purchase a ticket for Goldberger on a ship scheduled to sail from Spain on June 29, 1941.

APR 5 - 1941
Eagle Grove, Iowa
Apr. 3, 1941
American Friends Serv. FCom.
Phil. Pa.
3837
2132
Thank you for your help!
My dear Friends:
Recd. your letter of Mar. 31st in regard to Mr. Goldberger.
I have sent another affidavit and about two wks ago heard
from the Hamburg American Line in N.Y. to send \$425. Well
yesterday I went to Bank and borrowed \$190. which I sent. A
girl in Los A. is sending \$225. and a man in Brooklyn \$10.
It will be cabled very soon I think. I have signed 4 other
affidavits-one a little girl 8 yrs.
Mr. Goldberger is now in a Concentration Camp out of Vienna
It is a terrible story! - Helen Roseland.