

**University of Massachusetts Dartmouth  
Archives and Special Collections  
Archives of the Center for Jewish Culture**

**Abraham Wolf Landau (1922-2000)  
Papers, 1939-1996**

**Manuscript Collection, MC 5  
Guide and collection inventory**

**Extent:** 5 linear feet (2 manuscript boxes, 1 oversize box, 19 videocassettes)

**Biographical note:**

Abraham W. Landau was born April 25, 1922 in Wilczyn, Poland. In 1931, at age 9 he and his family moved to Kalisz, Poland, and then back to Wilczyn in 1933. In March of 1940, the family was evacuated, along with thousands of other Jews, and sent to the infamous Zagorow ghetto.

In August of 1941, Landau was separated from his family and sent to ZAL Inowroclaw, a forced labor camp. He would never see them again. Over a period of approximately five years (to April 1945), Landau would endure the dehumanizing conditions of fourteen forced labor and concentration camps administered by the Nazi party. The following is a chronological list of every camp in which Landau was held: Inowroclaw, Rabinek (Sept. 1941), Gutenbrum (August 1942), Gleiwitz (February 1943), Auschwitz Birkenau (August 1943), Dachau (Feb 1944), Buchenwald (April 1944), Lagisza (May 1944), Bedzin (June 1944), Buna Monowitz (July 1944), Gleiwitz (January 19, 1945), Dora (January 1945), Ellrich (February 1945), Bergen-Belsen (April 1945).

After spending nearly a month on the "death train," Landau and other prisoners of war were liberated by British and American troops at Bergen-Belsen on April 15, 1945. Although Landau was free from the Nazis, he was alone without a family (in total, he had lost 95 members of his family) and had only a few friends from the liberation site. Weighing a mere 79 pounds, he spent months (April to August) in rehabilitation, plagued by illness, nightmares, loneliness, and utter pessimism.

The UNRA (United Nations Relief Association) helped to reintegrate the Jewish people and other prisoners of war back into society; a society which knew little of the atrocities endured by these individuals. At the UNRA's ration line at Bergen-Belsen, Landau met his wife-to-be, Freida, and though he would leave this camp upon completing his rehabilitation, he would return often to visit her. They married in September of 1946.

Landau and his wife, Freida, settled in Hannover, Germany for a couple of years (1946/1947), as he began a feather business specializing in blankets, quilts, and pillows. Though business was very good, they were forced to leave due to apathy towards Holocaust victims and, in some cases, outright expressions of anti-Semitism by the German people. Additionally, Frieda had lost a baby girl during the ninth month of her pregnancy. They decided it would be disastrous to raise a family in a nation where Jewish religion, culture, identity, and experiences were not tolerated.

The couple travelled to Sweden in 1948 where they awaited any opportunity to emigrate to the United States. The Jewish Joint Distribution Agency sponsored a military ship, "General Grant," to travel to the United States. The ship was open to anyone, particularly the Jewish community, who wished to immigrate to the United States; Landau and his wife took the opportunity.

Upon arriving in New York in February of 1950, a home could not be found for the couple. They were advised, therefore, to travel to New Bedford, Massachusetts. Initially, they were rejected by the Jewish community of New Bedford; it was not until the publicity of the Eichmann trials that people were willing to listen.

Once the Landaus were settled, Abe established a tailoring business, following in his father's footsteps. In 1951, he attended the New England Conservatory of Music where he was trained to become a professional cantor. Abraham and Freida raised two children: a son, Jack, and a daughter, Ann.

Landau spread his message of religious toleration through speaking at public schools, universities, synagogues and churches. Additionally, he was actively involved in and received support from nationally-known institutions such as the United States Memorial Council, the United States Holocaust National Museum, the Jewish Federation, the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, and the New Bedford community.

For more information, see: Abraham Landau, *Branded on my arm and in my soul: a Holocaust memoir*, edited by Joseph D. Thomas, Marsha L. McCabe and Jay Avila, New Bedford: Spinner Publications, 2011 (DS 134.72.L36 A3 2001)

**Scope and Contents:**

The papers contain vital documents (identification cards, processing cards, requests for birth certificates), compensation letters concerning Landau's manual labor at Auschwitz, pages from a photographic publication on camps Buchenwald, Dachau, and Buna, and various photographs of Landau with friends and family (c.1945-c.1996). Poetry, newspaper clippings, programs, transcripts to talks given by Landau to the community, press releases, along with the Official Resolutions and congratulations from the City of New Bedford concerning Landau's contributions to Holocaust and Jewish causes can all be found in the collection.

Additionally, the collection contains correspondence, from dates 1949-1996, consisting of letters of appreciation from Jewish and civic organizations, letters from friends, family, and the community, and lastly, memorandums for and invitations to area events, especially those at which Landau was to speak. A large portion of the correspondence consists of thank-you letters written by elementary, middle, and high-school students, including faculty, from the greater southeastern Massachusetts region.

A significant part of the collection are the memoirs of Abraham Landau, entitled "Branded on My Arm and In My Soul," originally collected as part of the Archives of the Center for Jewish Culture at University of Massachusetts (compiled by professors Yale Magrass and Robert Michael). The memoirs graphically describe Abe Landau's childhood and experiences in the Zagorow ghetto, his five years spent in concentration, labor, and death camps, his experiences during the period immediately following liberation at Bergen-Belsen, and subsequent emigration to the United States with his wife Frieda.

**Acquisition:** Gift of Abraham Landau, January, 1997, accession number 97-20.

**Access:** unrestricted

**Copyright:** Except for the *Survivors of the Shoah* videotape testimony and articles clipped from newspapers, all items in this collection are copyright of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

**Citation:** *Abraham W. Landau Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Claire T. Carney Library, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, MA*

**Repository:** University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Claire T. Carney Library Archives and Special Collections, Archives of the Center for Jewish Culture, 285 Old Westport Road, N. Dartmouth, MA 02747. Telephone: 508-999-8686.

**Processing note:** Processed June 1997 by Julie Fernandes '99.

**Box and folder list**

Series I: Papers, 1939-1996

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	1	Vital documents, 1945-1949, 1974
	2	Compensation letters, 1963-1964
	3	Photographic publication (Buchenwald, Dachau, Buna), 1945
	4	Photographs, 1945-1950, 1975, 1982, 1991, 1995
	5	Correspondence, 1949-1986
	6	Correspondence, 1987-1996, n.d.
	7	Correspondence from Acushnet Middle School, 1995
	8	Correspondence from A.J. Gomes School, New Bedford, 1994
	9	Correspondence from Bishop Connolly High School, New Bedford, 1986
	10	Correspondence from B.M.C. Durfee High School, Fall River, 1996
	11	Correspondence from Carrey Academy, 1992
	12	Correspondence from Dartmouth High School, 1994
	13	Correspondence from Edmond P. Talbot Middle School, Fall Rive, 1992r
	14	Correspondence from Elizabeth I. Hastings Jr. High School, Fairhaven , 1985
	15	Correspondence from George R. Austin Middle School, Lakeville, 1992
	16	Correspondence from a Marion jr. high school (name unknown), 1984
	17	Correspondence from New Bedford High School, 1983-84, 1994
	18	Correspondence from New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School, 1994
	19	Correspondence from a New Bedford middle school (name unknown), 1994
	20	Correspondence from Plymouth-Carver Intermediate School, 1985
	21	Correspondence from St. Francis Xavier School, Acushnet, n.d.
	22	Correspondence from St. James-St. Johns School, New Bedford, 1994
	23	Correspondence from St. Laurent Jr. High School, 1996
	24	Correspondence from St. Mary's Parish Family Religious Education, 1994
	25	Correspondence from Tabor Academy, Marion, 1983
	26	Correspondence from unidentified schools, n.d., 1984, 1987
	27	Poetry, 1945-46
	28	Programs, 1971-1994
	29	Press releases, posters, 1985-1994
	30	Cantor Landau, c. 1955, 1975
	31	Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, 1996
	32	Transcript of talks, c. 1996
	33	A draft of "An Obligation to Speak" from the memoirs, "Branded On My Arm and In My Soul," 1986
2	34	"Branded on My Arm and In My Soul," (memoirs) 1986 Parts I - III (Introductions by Yale Magrass and Robert Michael)
	35	Parts IV- VIII
	36	Parts IX - XII
	37	Parts XIII - XIV
3	38	The City of New Bedford's Official Resolutions to Abraham Landau, 1995
	39-40	Newspaper articles, 1978-1996

Series II: Videocassette recordings of talks, 1996-1997

(for each talk there is an original, or master tape, which should not be played or duplicated, a duplicating copy (a) to be used to make additional copies from, and a reference copy (b) which may be viewed)

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Cassette#</u>	<u>Title</u>
4	1, 1a, 1b	Ford Middle School, Acushnet, MA, March 1996
	2, 2a, 2b	G.R. Austin Middle School, Lakeville, MA, May 1996
	3, 3a, 3b	Mt. Carmel School, 1996
	4, 4a, 4b	Rochester High School, 1996?
	5, 5a, 5b	Channel 13 interview, 1997
	6, 6a, 6b	Survivors of the Shoah, oral history interview, 1996, tape 1
	7, 7a, 7b	“ “; tape 2

(THESE TAPES MAY ONLY BE VIEWED PRIVATELY; NO DUPLICATION ALLOWED),