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

Dr. Walter V. and Lily Dumont Mindus
Family Papers
1908-2006

MC 78/CJC

Extent: 9.7 linear feet (9 manuscript boxes, 1 oversized box, 4 photograph binders)

Biographical Note: Dr. Walter V. Mindus (1908-1985) and Lily Dumont Mindus (1911-2006) were prominent members of the New Bedford, Massachusetts community.

Lily Dumont Mindus was born in Berlin, Germany on July 12, 1911 to Jakob and Rosa Dymont (Dymont is the German spelling of the last name). Lily Dumont was a child prodigy in music whose talent was fostered by her father, a conductor and composer of liturgical music for a synagogue in Germany. Lily Dumont began playing the piano at a very early age and made her debut with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1926 when she was only 15 years old. She studied under her father, and Theodore Bertram. She fled to the United States when Nazi pressures made it difficult for her to play in German concert halls, essentially forcing her to leave Germany in 1937. Her fiancé, Dr. Walter Mindus, joined her in the United States and they were married in 1938. The couple had two children, Lester and Paul.

Lily Dumont continued to perform and tour in the United States, Europe and Latin America, eventually returning for a performance in Germany in 1957. She recorded for His Master's Voice, Polydor and Concert Society labels. For more than 40 years Lily Dumont was a piano instructor at the Longy School in Cambridge, MA. She also taught students out of her home in New Bedford and summer sessions for the SMU Music Department (now University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth). She performed recitals on New Bedford’s WNBJ and Boston’s WCRB radio. She was the founder and long-time president of the New Bedford Concert Series. Lily Dumont Mindus died on March 6, 2006.

Walter Valk Mindus was born January 7, 1908 in Berlin, Germany to Paul Israel and Johanna Mindus. He was educated at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main and at age 27 was chief surgical resident at the Jewish Hospital in Berlin before immigrating to the United States. Dr. Mindus’ parents, Johanna and Paul Mindus, remained in Germany and died at Auschwitz. In 1944 Mindus joined the U.S. Army and served as both a physician and translator in the European theater of operations during World War II. During his tenure in the U.S. Army, Dr. Mindus attended the Medical Field Service School at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania and was a part of the 240th General Hospital in France and later the 20th Corps Medical group, attached to General Patton’s Third Army. After the defeat of Germany, Mindus assisted with the interrogation of SS officers. In the United States, Dr. Mindus was a surgeon on the staff of Saint Luke’s Hospital and maintained a private practice in New Bedford. Walter Mindus died in August 1985.

Scope and Contents note: The collection includes correspondence, in German, between Walter and Lily throughout their lives together, with a significant amount in years 1944-46 when he was serving in the military. Additionally there is correspondence from their friends and family in the U.S., Germany, Israel and Brazil. Of significance is the correspondence from Walter’s parents, P. Israel and Johanna Mindus from 1937-1942. Among Walter’s papers are his Dissertation (1936), as well as his notes and Zionist writings for the Junggruppen Blatter (1936). Military field school manuals as well as his other military records are included. Of special note is a series of documents, dated 1958-1977 in which Walter Mindus attempts to reclaim the estate of his parents in Germany. Dr. Mindus’s significant collection of pamphlets,
journals and monographs on early German Zionism, also donated to the library, are catalogued individually in Special Collections. A list of these publications is available upon request.

In addition to the correspondence, Lily's papers include records of a concert tour in the 1950s, board meeting notes on the Greater New Bedford Concert Series, and pocket diaries from 1953-1957. A large part of the collection consists of hundreds of photographs depicting family and friends from the early 20th century through 2006. Most compelling are an early photograph album and loose photos of Lily's life as a young girl/woman in Berlin, and Walter's scrapbook/photograph album from his service during World War II.

The collection is divided into eight series: Series I is vital documents and biographical material, 1908-1977; Series II is correspondence, 1937-2006; Series III are papers related to Lily Dumont's professional career, 1921-2006; Series IV is Walter Mindus's Zionist and medical writings, 1933-1940; Series V is Walter Mindus's military records, 1944-1946; Series VI is the claim on the Mindus estate, 1958-1977; Series VII is Notebooks and diaries; and Series VIII is photographs, 1900-2006.

**Access:** Unrestricted

**Acquisition:** Gift of the estate of Lily Dumont Mindus through her sons, Lester and Paul Mindus, received, April 2006.

**Processed:** November, 2006. Carolyn Ravenscroft as part of internship through Simmons College.

**Language:** Materials in English and German.

**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, (508) 999-8686
**Series I** Mindus Vital Documents and Biographical Material, 1908-1977

**BOX 1**

Folder #

1. Lily Dumont Mindus Documents, 1942-1977
   - Alien Registration, 1942
   - Copy of Naturalization, 1945
   - Passport, 1972
   - Passport, 1977
2. Walter V. Mindus Documents, 1908-1943
   - Copy of Birth Certificate
   - Diploma, 1925
   - Copy of Naturalization, 1943
3. My Grandfather Jacob Caspari
5. Walter Mindus and Lily Dumont Mindus Blank Stationery

**Series II** Correspondence, 1937-2006

**BOX 2**

Folder #

1-7. Walter to Lily, 1937-1972
11. Dymont, Jakob and Rosa (1937-1942)

**BOX 3**

17. Haase, Alice, 1959
23. Lester Mindus Wedding Invitation, 2000
24. Mindus, Lily Dumont, [1940]-2000
25. Mindus, Paul Israel and Johanna, 1937-1942
27. Ocougne, Marcus, 1977-1979
29. Correspondence from Israel, 1959-1972
30-33. Correspondence, Various, 1937-1989
BOX 4

34-36    Correspondence, Various, 1990-2006
37        Correspondence, Various, Undated
34        New Bedford Holocaust Memorial Correspondence, 1997
38        Condolences for the Death of Sima Burgheim, 1985
39-41     Condolences for the Death of Jakob Dymont, 1956

Series III Lily Dumont Professional Career, 1921-2006

BOX 5

1        Contracts, 1949-1951
2        Concert Expenses, 1953
3        Notes of Income and Expenses (School, Concerts, Lesson), 1954
4        Concert Tour Expenses, 1955
5        Income, 1956
6        Expenses, 1956
7        Concert Tour Expenses, 1956
7a       Concert tour reviews, 1956
8        Income and Expenses, 1957
9        Expenses, 1957
10       Longy School (dates?)
11       Concert Appearances, 1927-2000
12       CD Cover, “Rare Echoes of Prewar Berlin”
16       Handwritten Notes (mostly NB Concert series board matters), undated
17       Zeiterion Theater Playbills and Promotional Material, 1990s
18-19    Newspaper clippings of area concerts, 1960-1998 (folder 19 is in the oversized box, # 9)
20       Seminar, 1998

Series IV Walter Mindus Zionist Writing and Medical Writing, 1933-[1940]

BOX 6

1        Zionist Writings, Notes, 1933-1936
2        Junggruppen Blatter, 1936 (self-published newsletter)
2a       Map of Palestine (located in oversized box # 9)
3        Dissertation, 1936 (2 carbon typescript copies) see oversized box # 9 for original binders
4        Dissertation Notes, 1936
5        Professional Correspondence, 1937
6        Notes for Speech to Woman’s Club, undated
7        German Medical Device Brochures (2), 1934-1936
8        Judische Rundschau, 1935-1936 (kept in oversized box # 9)

Series V Walter Mindus Military Records, 1944-1946

BOX 6

1        Report of Physical Exam and Draft Paper, 1944
2        Records, 1945
3        Discharge, 1946
4        Jewish Calendar for Sailors and Soldiers, 1944-1945
5        Speech Improvement Notebook, 1944
3-7 Medical Field Service School, 1944

BOX 7

8-11 Medical Field Service School (mimeographed handouts), 1944
(see oversized box # 9 for original folders that Dr. Mindus kept them in)

Series VI Claim on Mindus Estate, 1958-1977

1-2 Claim on Paul and Johanna Mindus Estate, 1958-1960
3 Claim on Paul and Johanna Mindus Estate, 1961-1977

Series VII Notebooks and Diaries.

BOX 8

1 Walter Mindus, Physician’s Daily Record, 1950
2 Lily Dumont Pocket Diaries (2), 1953-1954
3 Lily Dumont Diary and Memoranda, 1955
4 Lily Dumont Calendar and Pocket Diary, 1956
5 Lily Dumont Diary, 1957
6 Lily Dumont Appointment Book and Diary, 1957
7 Items inserted into Appointment Book, 1957
8 Lily Dumont Notebooks (2), Undated
9 School Notebook, Undated
10 Notebook, Undated

Series VIII Photographs [1900]-2006

BOX 9 Oversized photographs, mostly family portraits

BOX 10

1 Walter Mindus military service photo album of Germany and France, 1945
2 Lily Dymont scrapbook/photo album of life in Berlin, 1920s and 1930s
   (many photos had been previously removed; grey pages with photographs still attached are all
   loose and kept in a folder in overzised box # 9. Scrapbook portion of the album, with greeting
   card ephemera collection, is still attached)
3 Two small family/friends photo albums labeled “Berlin House” 1930s
4 Framed photographs of family and friends, see oversized box # 9

Photo Binder Box 11

- Berlin, (1920’s – 1930’s)
- Berlin, Sima (1930’s)
- Berlin House, (bulk from 1920’s – 1930’s)
- Brazil House (bulk from 1920’s- 1930’s)

Photo Binder Box 12

- Loose Photos from Lily Dumont’s Album (1923-1929)
- Old Family, Lily Alone and with Children, to 2003
- Lily (1990-2000)
Photo Binder Box 13

- Friends
- Family Hirsch, Israel (bulk, 1960’s)
- Travel
- Mindus
- Different Pictures, Walter (mostly negatives)

Photo Binder Box 14

- Walter, Family & Friends (1930’s – 1950’s)
- Family & Friends
- Blue Mountains (Negatives)
- Various, (1900’s-1960’s)