



Tribute Resolution Honoring Ona Šimaitė

Whereas Ona Šimaitė (also known as Anna Shimaite) used her position as head of cataloging at Vilnius University to render aid to those confined in the Vilna Ghetto.

Whereas Ona Šimaitė as a librarian contributed to the preservation archiving of Jewish culture, creative works, and personal histories of the Vilna Ghetto.

Whereas June 22, 2021, is the 80th anniversary of the invasion of Lithuania by Nazi Germany:

Whereas Ona Šimaitė was born January 6, 1894, in Akmenė, Lithuania;

Whereas Ona Šimaitė was educated in Moscow and became a librarian at Vilnius University in 1940.

Whereas Ona Šimaitė began regularly entering the Vilna Ghetto under the ruse of collecting university library materials from Jewish students and then antiquarian books.

Whereas in this environment that attempted to annihilate the Lithuanian Jewish culture, Ona Šimaitė smuggled out Jewish cultural items, including books, literary, and historical documents, supporting the Paper Brigade. Ona's actions contributed to "the largest collection of material about Jewish life in Eastern Europe that exists in the world".¹

Whereas from 1941 to 1944, Ona Šimaitė provided forged documents to residents of the Vilna Ghetto.

Whereas from 1941 to 1944, Ona Šimaitė smuggled food into and children out of the Vilna Ghetto.

Whereas in 1944 Ona Šimaitė took a ten-year-old Jewish girl out of the ghetto and, through an attorney, obtained papers certifying that she was her niece.

Whereas on April 28, 1944, Ona Šimaitė was arrested and tortured for her actions.

Whereas Ona Šimaitė was originally sentenced to death. Due to the intervention of the Vilnius University and friends who paid a ransom, her sentence was commuted, and Ona Šimaitė was sent to Dachau.

Whereas Ona Šimaitė was eventually transferred to a camp in the south of France.

Whereas Ona Šimaitė continued to serve as a librarian, in Paris, after World War II. She referred to librarianship as "the beloved profession."²

Whereas Ona Šimaitė was recognized in 1966 as a Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum on behalf of the State of Israel.

¹ Dolsten, Josefin (15 November 2017). "5 amazing discoveries from a trove of documents hidden during the Holocaust". *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

² Šimaitė, Ona (18 May 1957). Letter to Marijona Civilinate.



Whereas Ona Šimaitė lived out her own words, “Know firmly and feel deeply that every day of your life you have to devote yourself to the good of others by doing everything you can. Doing, but not chatting,”³ therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. honors and is grateful to Ona Šimaitė for her dedication, courage, and achievements to the “beloved profession” of librarianship, the preservation of archives, protection of history, and serving as a beacon of humanity in the midst of barbarism.
2. expresses its gratitude for the example she set to librarians and archivists across the world.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Tuesday, January 26, 2021, ALA Virtual Midwinter Council Meeting

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracie Hall", written in a cursive style.

Tracie D. Hall, Executive Director and
Secretary of the ALA Council

³ Šukys, Julija. *Epistolophilia: Writing the Life of Ona Simaite*. University of Nebraska Press, 2012.