

THE GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

Inside the Vault: D-Day

June 2, 2022

The session will start shortly. Please note:

- Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
- You can participate through the Q&A function.
- If you have technical difficulties, please email collectionprograms@gilderlehrman.org so we can assist you.

Our Team

- Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
- Professor Michael Neiberg, US Army War College
- Shelby Miller - Curatorial Intern
- Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator

During the Session



- If you would like to ask a question, you can **use the Q&A feature.**
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.

For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.

Today's Documents

- Operation Overlord Map
- Correspondence between Moe and Sylvia Weiner dated June 6, 1944
- Letter from Sidney Diamond to his fiancée, Estelle Spero, June 7, 1944



Howard Hollem, Edward Meyer or MacLaugharie, A crowd on D-Day in Madison Square, New York, June 6, 1944. Library of Congress, LC-DIG-fsa-8d36265

Operation Overlord

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY



War Office, Map of French coast from Cherbourg to Rouen, 1941. Gilder Lehrman Collection

How did people learn about D-Day?

Tuesday June 6, 1944 1108
Dearest Sgt.
It's a little hard to sit down
and calmly write a letter, just
as though nothing were happen-
ing. Of course nothing has
happened except the most
wild, shaking event.
Although I'm hurrying to
talk about it I can't. Not
that I know anything; even
opinions are taboo at this
particular stage.
However I can say I am
glad that the long wait -
some wait is over.
Now, when and where did you
first hear about it? Did you
upon getting up in the morning
turn on the radio, as we used
to do? Or did you know
earlier.
I see by the papers that Rome
has been taken. Well, that
too is ok. In fact everything
taken into consideration, things
may well.

Moe Weiner to Sylvia Weiner, June 6,
1944. Gilder Lehrman Collection

June - June 6, 1944 284
Hello - my dearest -
Well - D-Day! It has come -
God! So long awaited - so feared -
so expected - such release - such
new tenderness - such statement - such
quiet - Well - darling - all of these
feelings + emotions were expressed +
felt by American people today - as
you can well understand. People +
that includes me were torn between
feelings of gladness that "the beginning of
the end" has come - and with the
fear of great sacrifice -
So much for the general feeling - dearest -
except - that I want to tell you that
the whole thing is being handled in
the usual exciting American manner -
with blow by blow description - comments -
by radio - long discussions on radio -
information in the newspapers - a day
of prayer by Mayor, governors - +
President -
Now for the exciting event as it
was reflected in my own day -

Sylvia Weiner to Moe Weiner, June 6,
1944. Gilder Lehrman Collection

June 7, 1944 423
Darling,
The news of the continental
invasion is the primary source of
conversation. You probably have had
yourself stuffed with the news etc.
consequently we need not go into it -
I heard the report during a movie
in the hospital - Picture was stopped -
~~for~~ news announced - Still - there
were no cheers - no shouts - we
all sat still - We'd fought - we'd
made head heads - Our was
a deep sympathy - a silent prayer -
"Good Luck brother - good luck!!" -
Three weeks in this hospital
have passed. Three more to go - Ugh!!

Sidney Diamond to Estelle Spero, June
7, 1944. Gilder Lehrman Collection

Morris “Moe” Weiner

- Born on December 10, 1909
- Attended Brooklyn College
- Drafted in 1943 and assigned to the Quartermaster Corps
- Attained the rank of Technical Sergeant
- Died on March 14, 1988 in Oceanside, New York



Moe and Sylvia Weiner, 1943. Gilder Lehrman Collection

Moe's letter to Sylvia, June 6, 1944

Tuesday June 6, 1944

Dearest Syl:

It's a little hard to sit down and calmly write a letter, just as though nothing were happening. Of course nothing has happened except the most world shaking event.

Although I'm bursting to talk about it, I can't. Not that I know anything; even opinions are taboo at this particular stage.

However I can say I am glad that the long wearisome wait is over.

How, when and wear [sic] did you first hear about it? Did you upon getting up in the morning turn on the radio, as we used to do? Or did you know earlier.

I see by the papers that Rome has been taken. Well, that too is ok. In fact everything taken into consideration things march well.

Sylvia Weiner

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

- Born on September 14, 1912
- Attended Brooklyn College, NYU School of Social Work, and Columbia College
- Worked as a social worker
- Worked on a draft board evaluating people to see if they were fit for service
- Died on February 1, 2008 in Oceanside, New York



Moe and Sylvia Weiner, April 1940.
Gilder Lehrman Collection

Sylvia's letter to Moe, June 6, 1944

Sylvia described D-Day as

- Both “long awaited” and “feared”
- New York City tense and quiet
- Everyone glued to the news in print and radio
- Reactions around the city differed
- Some cried, some relieved, and no one focused on work
- Attended a multi-denominational prayer meeting
- Heard Roosevelt's Presidential prayer on the radio and compared it to the Gettysburg address

Sylvia's letter to Moe, June 6, 1944

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

Well – D-Day! It has come – God! So long awaited – so feared – so rejoiced – such release – such new tenseness – such excitement – such quiet – Well – darling – all of these feelings & emotions were expressed & felt by American people today – as you can well understand. People – & that includes me were torn between feelings of gladness that “the

beginning of the end” has come – and with the fear of great sacrifices. . . I want to tell you that the whole thing is being handled in the usual exciting American manner – ... blow by blow description – comments – by radio – long discussions on meager information in the newspapers – a day of prayer by mayor, workers – & President –



Howard Hollem, Edward Meyer or MacLaugharie, New York, New York.
People watching the electrical news sign on the Times building at
Times Square, June 6, 1944. Library of Congress, LC-USW3- 054057-C

Sylvia's letter to Moe, June 6, 1944

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY



Howard Hollem, Edward Meyer
or MacLaugharie, Times Square
and vicinity on D-Day, June 6,
1944. Library of Congress, LC-
USW3-054014-C

As I got into the train – & thank Heaven! got a seat – looked at the rear page covering latest Bulletins – & there was Gen. Eisenhower's speech . . . I became Excited & read the paper through – It was so exciting – People were deep in their papers – like never before – Few spoke – even people traveling together did not speak – I read every word.

Sylvia's letter to Moe, June 6, 1944

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

When I arrived at the office – several girls were crying – others glad it had finally came – Tenseness which had been accumulating during the last few weeks was released – Needless to say – no one could work – As for myself – I didn't cry – darling – I felt as I have been feeling all along that it is good it has started – What will happen will do so – & the sooner this gets started the sooner it will be over – I am fully aware of all the dangers & sacrifices – I am ready for them – I have been thinking of them for so long – So I spent my time trying to reassure others –



Howard Hollem, Edward Meyer or MacLaugharie, New York, New York. Times Square and vicinity on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Library of Congress, LC-USW3- 054025-C



Howard Hollem, Edward Meyer or MacLaugharie, New York, New York. June 6, 1944. Entering the synagogue on West Twenty-third Street for D-day services. Library of Congress, LC-USW3- 054041-C

Sylvia's letter to Moe, June 6, 1944

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

Late in the afternoon we were informed that the “Little Homer” requested presence at a “Prayer meeting—” in Madison PK — where a light burns ever for the soldiers who died in the last war — So at 5 P. M — went there — around the corner from the office — There were crowds & crowds — The mayor came with Mr. Whaler — & loads of camera men — & — A catholic priest, & Rabbi (Wise) & Protestant pastor — said prayers — then — an English opera singer sang “God



Howard Hollem, Edward Meyer or MacLaugharie, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise at the D-day rally in Madison Square, June 6, 1944. Library of Congress, LC-USW3- 054078-C



Save The King” — a French (free) who received a lot of applause sang the “Marseilles” which is very stirring — Papers drifted down from the tall buildings — Then the Italian anthem was played — as Italy was welcomed as a member of the Allied nations —

Howard Hollem, Edward Meyer or MacLaugharie, New York, New York. A crowd on D-day in Madison Square, June 6, 1944. Library of Congress, LC-USW3-054067-C

Sylvia's letter to Moe, June 6,

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

Then Igor Gorin (a White Russian) sang of all things – the “Internationale” – what a faux Pas – Evidently, there had been no time for Igor to learn the new Russian anthem . . . Wow! I was terrified – & funny – because most of us knew about the new Russian Anthem – By the way, attitude toward Russia has changed considerably here – It is realized that she has taken her place as a nation alongside with us – & that she no longer is a bugaboo



Howard Hollem, Edward Meyer or MacLaugharie, Igor Gorin at the D-day rally in Madison Square, June 6, 1944. Library of Congress, LC-DIG-fsa-8d36289

Howard Hollem, Edward Meyer or MacLaugharie, New York, New York. June 6, 1944. Blood donors on D-day, June 6, 1944. Library of Congress, LC-USW3- 054058-C

Sidney Diamond

- Born in 1922
- Attended City College as a chemical engineering major
- Enlisted on April 24, 1942
- Killed in action on January 29, 1945 in Fort Stotsenburg
- Earned a posthumous Silver Star for his bravery



*First Lieutenant Sidney Diamond, U.S.
Army Chemical Corps Hall of Fame,
2011. U.S. Army*

Sidney's letter to Estelle, June 7, 1944

June 7, 1944

Darling,

The news of the continental invasion is the primary source of conversation. You probably have had yourself stuffed with the news etc. consequently we need to not go into it - I heard the report during a movie in the hospital - picture was stopped – [stuck] news announced – ‘Stelle - there were no cheers - no shouts - we all sat still – we’d fought – we’d made beachheads - - ours was a deep sympathy - a silent prayer – “good luck brother - good luck!!” –

Our landings in the
Cherbourg - Havre area
have failed to gain a
satisfactory foothold and
~~I have withdrawn~~
~~the troops.~~ ~~withdrawn.~~ ~~my decision to~~
~~attack at this time and place~~
~~was based upon the best~~
~~information available, and~~
~~the troops, the air and the~~
~~Navy did all that could be~~
Bravery and devotion to duty
could do. If any blame
or fault attaches to the attempt
it is mine alone.

July 5

Our landings in the Cherbourg- Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that Bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.

Upcoming Programs

- **Inside the Vault:** Thursday, July 7 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)
 - We will be joined by Eric Slauter to discuss Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.
- **Self-Paced Courses:** Gilder Lehrman's self-paced courses, drawn from our MA in American History Program, allow you to study a wide array of topics and eras in American history with eminent historians from the comfort of your own home!
- **Gilder Lehrman Summer Seminars registration is now open!** Explore in-person and virtual programs, including our first-ever Teacher Symposium at Gettysburg College.