

**ELIZABETH KOENIG PAPERS, approximately 1927-1995 (bulk 1939-1942)
1989.260.3**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington, DC 20024-2126
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Descriptive summary

Title: Elizabeth Koenig papers

Dates: approximately 1927-1995 (bulk 1939-1942)

Accession number: 1989.260.3

Creator: Koenig, Elizabeth, 1924-2003

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (9 folders, 1 oversize folder)

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW,
Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Elizabeth Koenig papers consist of a letter from HIAS-JCA Emigration Association to Fritz Kaufmann; an autograph book including photographs of children in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon; Elizabeth's diary describing her life in France from February to July 1940; a 1939 map of the Hautes-Pyrénées; photographs of Elizabeth, her brother, and the La Guespy children's house in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon; and a school report Elizabeth wrote and illustrated after arriving in America about France under the occupation.

Languages: German, French, English

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Physical access note: A negative strip with two negatives is kept in cold storage for preservation reasons and would require additional time for acclimatization before they can be served to researchers.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Elizabeth Koenig papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Elizabeth Koenig donated the Elizabeth Koenig papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1989, 1990, 1995, and 1998. Accessions previously cataloged as 1990.215, 1995.143.1 through 1995.143.5, and 1998.27.1 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related archival materials: Elizabeth Koenig also donated three sketchbook covers and twenty-one watercolor and pencil drawings depicting France under German occupation (2001.121) to the Museum. The Museum also holds two oral history interviews conducted with Elizabeth Koenig in 1990 and 1997 (1990.342.1 and 1997.A.0435). A 1944 letter from Koenig can be found in the Magda Trocmé collection (1990.238.3 a-b).

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at collections.ushmm.org for further information.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, March 2014

Biographical note

Elizabeth Koenig (1924-2003) was born Elizabeth Kaufmann in Vienna to journalist Fritz Kaufmann and nurse Helen (Berggruen) Kaufmann. Fritz was put on trial in Germany for his anti-Nazi work and fled to Paris via Prague before the *Anschluss*. After several failed attempts to join him, Elizabeth finally arrived in Paris in November with her mother and brother, Peter, and attended art school. Fritz and Peter were interned as enemy aliens following the outbreak of World War II. Helen and Elizabeth fled south with other refugees as the Germans advanced on Paris, but were separated en route. Elizabeth found her brother in Toulouse, was reunited with her mother in Pau, and then joined Fritz near Limoges. Elizabeth found work in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon caring for the children of Pastor André Trocmé and then helping Dr. Juliette Usach care for German Jewish refugee children at the Secours Suisse aux Enfants home, La Guespy. Varian Fry of the Emergency Rescue Committee offered Fritz a non-quota American visa as an endangered, anti-Nazi European refugee intellectual caught in Vichy France, and helped secure visas for his family. The family was reunited in Lyon, traveled to Portugal via Marseilles and Spain, and sailed from Lisbon to the United States in February 1942.

Scope and content of collection

The Elizabeth Koenig papers consist of a letter from HIAS-JCA Emigration Association to Fritz Kaufmann; an autograph book including photographs of children in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon; Elizabeth's diary describing her life in France from February to July 1940; a 1939 map of the Hautes-Pyrénées; photographs of Elizabeth, her brother, and the La Guespy children's house in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon; and a school report Elizabeth wrote and illustrated after arriving in America about France under the occupation.

Correspondence consists of a single letter from HIAS-JCA Emigration Association in Marseilles to Fritz Kaufmann advising him on emigration matters.

The diary documents Elizabeth's life as a refugee studying art in Paris and her flight south from Paris as the Germans advanced.

The 1939 map depicts major roads and railways in the French department of the Hautes-Pyrénées and was presumably used by Elizabeth during her June 1940 flight south from Paris and her efforts to reunite with her mother.

Photographs include portraits of Elizabeth and Peter Kaufmann as children in Vienna, pictures of Elizabeth in Chambon-sur-Lignon and New York in 1941 and 1942, and an autograph book and photograph album presented to Elizabeth before she left the La Guespy child refugee home in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon containing photographs of Le Chambon, La Guespy, and the children and staff of La Guespy as well as messages and autographs.

The student paper consists of Elizabeth's essay about political youth organization in France under Maréchal Petain with her hand-drawn cover.

System of arrangement

The Elizabeth Koenig papers are arranged as five series:

Series 1: Correspondence, 1941

Series 2: Diary, 1940, approximately 1995

Series 3: Map, 1939

Series 4: Photographs, approximately 1927-1942

Series 5: Student paper, approximately 1942

Indexing terms

Kaufmann, Fritz

Kaufmann, Helen

Kaumann, Peter

Trocmé, André, 1907-1971.

Trocmé, Magda, 1901-1996.

Jews--Austria--Vienna.

Jews, German--France.

Jewish children in the Holocaust--Diaries.

Jewish children in the Holocaust--France--Le Chambon-sur-Lignon.

World War, 1939-1945--Refugees--France.

France--History--German occupation, 1940-1945.

Le Chambon-sur-Lignon (France)

Paris (France)

Photographs.

Autograph books.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Correspondence, 1941

| Folder | Title |
|--------|---|
| 1 of 9 | Letter from HIAS-JCA Emigration Association in Marseilles to Fritz Kaufmann, 1941 |

Series 2: Diary, 1940, approximately 1995

| Folder | Title |
|----------|---|
| 2-4 of 9 | Diary, February-July 1940 (3 folders) |
| 5 of 9 | "A Preface that must be read," approximately 1995 |

Series 3: Map, 1939

| Folder | Title |
|--------|---|
| 6 of 9 | Carte Postale, Télégraphique, Téléphonique et des Chemins de Fer du Département des Hautes Pyrénées, 1939 |

Series 4: Photographs, approximately 1927-1942

| Folder | Title |
|-----------------|--|
| 7 of 9 | Autograph book and photo album, 1941 |
| 8 of 9, OS 1 | Kaufmann, Elizabeth and Peter, approximately 1927-1942 (negatives in cold storage) |

Series 5: Student paper, approximately 1942

| Folder | Title |
|--------|---|
| 9 of 9 | "Maréchal, nous voilà," Drawing and essay, approximately 1942 |