

BERNARD RECHNITZ MEMOIR, 1946-1947 and undated 1993.A.0008

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Bernard Rechnitz memoir

Dates: 1946-1947 and undated

Accession number: 1993.A.0008

Creator: Rechnitz, Bernard, 1894-1970

Extent: 0.3 linear feet (1 book enclosure and 2 folder)

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

Abstract: This collection includes a memoir written by Bernard Rechnitz from 1946-1947. In the memoir Bernard records his thoughts on what happened during the Holocaust and recounts his family's experiences from 1939-1943. Bernard writes about life before the war, moving his family from Katowice to Kraków, the German invasion, confiscation of Jewish property, and their imprisonment in the Płaszów labor camp. The collection also includes a translation of the diary.

Languages: Polish, 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.

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), Bernard Rechnitz memoir (1993.A.0008), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Moses Rechnitz donated the Bernard Rechnitz memoir to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1992.

Related material: An oral history interview conducted with Moses Rechnitz is available through USHMM (1992.A.0125.106).

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

Processing history: Morgan Voth, October 2018

Biographical note

Bernard Rechnitz (1894-1970) was raised by Jewish parents in the small southwestern Polish town of Bedzin. In 1930 Bernard moved with his wife, Ruchla (later Rachel, née Lejzerowitz), to the nearby city of Katowice, where he owned a wholesale leather business. They had two children, Genia (b.1918) and Moses (b. 1923). In 1939 Bernard became increasingly concerned for his family's safety and decided they should immigrate to Palestine. Genia had left for Palestine three years earlier to study piano at a conservatory. Bernard sold his business and the Rechnitz family packed up their household and moved to Kraków. The war broke out before they could leave for Palestine, so they remained in Kraków. By 1942 Bernard, Ruchla, and Moses were deported to a labor camp on the site of a munitions factory in Skarżysko-Kamienn. Bernard was put to work in subcamp C where workers filled artillery shells with picric acid, a yellow, poisonous powder absorbed through the skin. One day, someone dropped a loaded artillery shell that exploded injuring several people, including Ruchla, who did not survive. Over the next three years Bernard was sent to several different camps, including Buchenwald. Moses was also sent to various camps, including Dachau. After liberation in 1945, Bernard and Moses immigrated to Palestine. Moses later immigrated to the United States in 1954.

Scope and content of collection

This collection includes a memoir written by Bernard Rechnitz from 1946-1947. In the memoir Bernard records his thoughts on what happened during the Holocaust and recounts his family's experiences from 1939-1943. Bernard writes about life before the war, moving his family from Katowice to Kraków, the German invasion, confiscation of Jewish property, and their imprisonment in the Płaszów labor camp. The collection also includes a translation of the diary.

System of arrangement

The Bernard Rechnitz memoir is arranged as a single series.

Indexing terms

Rechnitz, Bernard.

Płaszów (Concentration camp)

World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives.

Kraków (Poland)

Palestine--Emigration and immigration.

Diaries.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Bernard Rechnitz memoir, 1946-1947 and undated

Folder	Title
BE 1	Memoir, 1946-1947
1 of 2	Loose pages from memoir, 1946
2 of 2	Transcription, undated