

RUTH OPPENHEIMER LETTERS, 1937-1940
1995.A.0301

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Ruth Oppenheimer letters

Dates: 1937-1940

Accession number: 1995.A.0301

Creator: Ruth Oppenheimer

Extent: 2 folders

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

Abstract: The Ruth Oppenheimer letters contain correspondence collected by Oppenheimer during her time living in Nazi-era Germany. The bulk of the correspondence comes from her boyfriend George Rau to Oppenheimer, during his imprisonment in 1939. George was arrested for having a relationship with an Aryan woman, and was later tried and found guilty of the same crime before dying in prison. The letters were written weekly and sent to Ruth. In addition are a letter and postcard from Rau prior to 1939, and correspondence from Rau's family after his death.

Languages: German, French

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: Ruth Oppenheimer letters, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The Ruth Oppenheimer letters were donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1992 by Ruth Oppenheimer.

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

Processing history: Michael Folkerts, June 2015

Biographical note

Ruth Höflich Oppenheimer was born in 1920 in Fürth, Germany to Julius and Klara Höflich. Julius owned an automobile dealership, which was eventually shut down when the Nazi regime confiscated his inventory and business. After attending school, Ruth worked as a dental assistant. While working in the office in 1937, she met a patient named George Rau. George Ernst Rau (1905-1939) was born in Nuremberg, Germany to Franz and Mathilde (née Lorch) Rau. The two began dating, despite him being 33 years old while she was 17. They continued their courtship for two years, until George was arrested one day in 1939, on the grounds that he was having relations with an Aryan woman. The authorities had seen George with Ruth, and assumed that Ruth was not Jewish based on her appearance. Ruth proved that she was Jewish, having attended Hebrew schools, but a court date was still set. During the hearing, a non-Jewish woman testified that she had been having an affair with George, and the court sentenced George to seven years of hard labor. The next day, the authorities alerted his family that George was dead. His death was ruled as a suicide, though Ruth did not believe it to be true. Months later, Ruth fled to the Netherlands after acquiring a visa, and later traveled to the United States with her family in 1940. George's family had their possessions confiscated, and were sent to Theresienstadt in 1942 where they were killed.

Scope and content of collection

The Ruth Oppenheimer letters contain correspondence collected by Oppenheimer during her time living in Nazi-era Germany. The bulk of the correspondence comes from her boyfriend George Rau to Oppenheimer, during his imprisonment in 1939. George was arrested for having a relationship with an Aryan woman, and was later tried and found guilty of the same crime before dying in prison. The letters were written weekly and sent to Ruth. In addition are a letter and postcard from Rau prior to 1939, and correspondence from Rau's family after his death.

System of arrangement

The Ruth Oppenheimer letters are arranged as a single series.

Indexing terms

Oppenheimer, Ruth Höflich.
Höflich, Julius.
Höflich, Klara.
Rau, George.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Germany.
Jewish refugees--Germany.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)
Jews--Persecutions--Germany.
Jews--Legal status, laws, etc.--Germany.

Fürth (Bavaria, Germany)

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Ruth Oppenheimer letters, 1937-1940

Folder	Title
1	Rau, George, 1937-1939
2	Rau family, 1940