

PAULA BALKIN CORRESPONDENCE, 1939-1948
1995.A.0812

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington, DC 20024-2126
Tel. (202) 479-9717
e-mail: reference@ushmm.org

Descriptive summary

Title: Paula Balkin correspondence

Dates: 1939-1948

Accession number: 1995.A.0812

Creator: Balkin, Paula Regina, 1924-

Extent: 0.5 linear feet (1 document box)

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Abstract: The Paula Balkin correspondence dates from 1939-1948 and measure 0.5 linear feet. It documents the lives of a Jewish family in Leipzig during and after World War II. The correspondence consists of letters and postcards between Balkin (nee Grünbaum) and her relatives (the Schmulewitz, Grünbaum, Koppold, and Ribetski families) and family friends (the Mitdank and Wagner families). The correspondence traces Balkin's time with her sister and cousins in England, where she had arrived via a *Kindertransport*, and her move to Detroit; her parents' journey from Leipzig to Budapest and then Salonika; her uncle's death at Sachsenhausen; and her grandmother's and aunts' deportation to Riga.

Languages: German, 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), Paula Balkin Correspondence, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The Paula Balkin correspondence was donated in 1995 by Paula Balkin.

Related archival materials: The Library at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum also holds Paula Balkin's 2002 book *Strong Family Ties: A Story in Letters*, which includes English translations of most of the letters in this collection. An oral history interview with Balkin dated November 29, 1996, which forms part of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute Visual History Archive, can be accessed via the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Library. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum also holds the Vera Nussenbaum papers, donated by Balkin's cousin Vera Nussenbaum, containing additional correspondence complementing the Paula Balkin correspondence.

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, April 2012

Biographical note

Paula Balkin was born Paula Grünbaum in 1924 to Abraham (Otto) and Gertrude (Trude) Grünbaum (nee Schmulewitz). On June 15, 1939, she was part of a *Kindertransport* to London, England. Her cousin Vera had already arrived in England, her sister Edith joined her in July, and her cousins Harold, Siegmar, and Zilla Koppold followed shortly thereafter. In 1947 Balkin immigrated to the United States, and in 2002 she published a book about her experiences, *Strong Family Ties: A Story in Letters*.

Scope and content of collection

The Paula Balkin correspondence measures 0.5 linear feet, dates from 1939-1941 and 1946-1948, and is comprised of letters between Balkin and her family and friends. Letters and postcards document the lives of Paula Balkin; her parents Abraham (Otto) and Gertrude (Trude) Grünbaum and her sister Edith; Balkin's grandmother Rose Schmulewitz; Balkin's uncle and aunt Leo and Eva Schmulewitz; Balkin's uncle and aunt Abraham (Adolf) and Clara (Clärchen) Koppold and their children Harold, Siegmar, and Zilla; Balkin's aunt Yette Ribetzki Pietrkowski and her daughter Vera; and family friends Marjane Mitdank and Johanna (Hanni or Hans) Wagner in Leipzig.

Most of the correspondence dating from 1939-1941 is addressed to Balkin and her sister and cousins and comes from her parents, aunts and uncles, and grandmother. The letters relate the family's experiences in Leipzig and efforts to emigrate, and they trace Balkin's parents' movement from Leipzig to Budapest and Salonika. Many of these letters have multiple addressees and multiple signatories as family members would use the opportunity to include several messages in a single piece of correspondence.

The correspondence dating from 1946-1948 documents Balkin's efforts to locate her parents. Family friends Marjane Mitdank and Hanni Wagner describe their own experiences in Leipzig during the war, relate the experiences of the Schmulewitz, Grünbaum, and Koppold families during the war, and contribute to the search for information about their fates. They relate the deportation of Adolf Koppold to Sachsenhausen and the deportation of Rose Schmulewitz, Clärchen Koppold, and Yette Ribetzki Pietrkowski to Riga. The later letters also include correspondence from Arnold Levy about securing an appropriate home for Siegmar Koppold, correspondence from the Becker family who were relatives of the Koppold family, and correspondence from the American Red Cross indicating that Abraham Grünbaum died in Dachau and that Gertrude Grünbaum could not be traced.

System of arrangement

The Paula Balkin correspondence is arranged as a single series:

- Series 1: Correspondence, 1939-1941, 1946-1948

Indexing terms

Balkin, Paul Regina, 1924 – Correspondence.
Nussenbaum, Vera.

Kindertransports (Rescue operations) – England.
Jewish refugees – Great Britain – Correspondence.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945) – Children.
Jewish families – Germany – Leipzig.
Holocaust victims' families.
Holocaust survivors.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945).
Polish people – Germany.
Jews – Germany – History – 1933-1945.

Germany – Emigration and immigration – Government policy – 20th century.
Leipzig (Germany)
London (England)
Cambridge (England)

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Correspondence, 1939-1941, 1946-1948

Box	Folder	
1	1	July 1939
1	2	August 1939
1	3	September - October 1939
1	4	November - December 1939
1	5	January - February 1940
1	6	March - April 1940
1	7	June 1940
1	8	September - October 1940
1	9	September - October 1941
1	10	January - September 1946
1	11	October 1946
1	12	December 1946
1	13	March - April 1947
1	14	May 1947
1	15	May 1947
1	16	July 1947
1	17	October - December 1947
1	18	August - December 1948