

**ERNA RETTBERG BAUER PAPERS, 1903-1995 [BULK 1991-1995]  
1995.A.0962**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
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**Descriptive summary**

Title: Erna Rettberg Bauer papers

Dates: 1903-1995 [Bulk 1991-1995]

Accession number: 1995.A.0962

Creators: Erna Rettberg Bauer

Extent: 1 box plus 1 oversized folder

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

Abstract: The Erna Rettberg Bauer papers contain documents concerning Erna Rettberg Bauer, a United States citizen living in Nazi Germany with her parents in the years leading up to World War II, and her quest to regain ownership of property illegally taken from her family by members of the Nazi party. Her collection comprises documents she assembled for the German and United States Consulates in the early 1990s. These documents include correspondence with members of the United States House of Representatives, copies of Julius' will, citizenship papers, and identification papers, paperwork relating to the deed of the property, testimony from friends and family members, and a series of family correspondence and photographs.

Language: English, German

**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 if item), Erna Rettberg Bauer papers (1995.A.0962) United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: The Erna Rettberg Bauer papers were donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1995 by Erna Rettberg Bauer.

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

Processing history: Colleen Benoit, January 2016

### **Biographical note**

Erna Rettberg Bauer (1914-2007) was born in Wyomissing, Pennsylvania to German-born parents, Julius (1864-1945) and Anna Rettberg (1876-1935). In 1927 the family returned to Germany for what was meant to be a three-month visit to check in on an investment property belonging to Julius and Anna. The property, a 21-unit apartment building in Wuppertal-Barmen, Germany had been under the management of a family friend but through an investigation, the Rettbergs learned their friend was embezzling money from the property for his own gains. Because of the legal situation that ensued, the Rettberg family stayed in Germany, eventually becoming trapped by the Nazi regime.

Three years after their arrival in Germany in 1930, Anna suffered stroke and was bedridden for the remainder of her life. In 1934, Julius was hit by a car. Left in compromised health, the family was coerced by members of the Nazi party to turn over ownership of the property. Both Anna and Julius died in Germany. Erna eventually returned to the United States. Despite multiple legal pursuits, she was never able to regain ownership of her family's property.

### **Scope and content of collection**

The Erna Rettberg Bauer papers comprise documents assembled by Erna in pursuit of legal action to regain her family's property. Many of the documents focus on Julius Rettberg and his relationship with Friedel Bredderman, the wife of Sturmabteilung Trooper, Paul Bredderman who was allegedly responsible for taking advantage of Julius and the Rettberg family. These documents include correspondence with United States Representatives, copies of Julius' will, citizenship papers, and identification papers, paperwork relating to the deed of the property, testimony from friends and family members, and correspondence from Friedel to Julius. Also included in this collection is a series of family papers consisting of photographs of the Rettberg family in the United States and Germany, including images of the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, correspondence between Anna and Julius and their son in the United States, and newspaper clippings.

### **System of arrangement**

The Erna Rettberg Bauer papers are arranged as two series:

- Series 1: Legal Action, 1991-1995
- Series 2: Family papers, 1903-1995

### **Indexing terms**

Rettberg, Julius (1864-1945).

Rettberg, Anna (1876-1935).

Bauer, Erna Rettberg (1914-).

Olympic Games (11th : 1936 : Berlin, Germany)

Holocaust victims--United States.  
Property--Germany.

United States--Emigration and immigration--History.  
Wuppertal (Germany).  
Wyomissing (Pa.)

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1: Legal action, 1991-1995

Box	Folder	Title
1	1	Correspondence, 1991-1995
1	2	Documentation prepared for the German Consulate, 1990
1	3	Documentation prepared for the United States Consulate in Bonn, Germany, approximately 1992

### Series 2: Family papers, 1903-1995

Box	Folder	Title
1	4	Correspondence [copies], 1927-1930
1	5	Family photographs, 1903-1990
1	6	Newspaper clippings, 1975-1995 [see also oversized folder] (2 folders)

### Oversized folders

Folder	Title
1	Newspaper clippings, 1975-1995