

SIGMUND A. COHN PAPERS, 1936-1986
1996.A.0074

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: Sigmund A. Cohn Papers

Dates: 1936-1986

Accession number: 1996.A.0074

Creator: Cohn, Sigmund A.

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (1 document box)

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

Abstract: The Sigmund A. Cohn papers contain correspondence and biographical materials documenting the immigration of Cohn and his wife and children, originally from Breslau, Germany, to Athens, Georgia, in 1939 and their unsuccessful efforts to obtain visas for his parents to join them.

Languages: German, English, Italian

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), Sigmund A. Cohn Papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The Sigmund A. Cohn papers were donated in 1996 by Marianne Freeman, daughter of Sigmund A. Cohn.

Related archival materials: Copies of the correspondence in this collection can also be found at the Leo Baeck Institute Center for Jewish History along with additional Sigmund A. Cohn and Suzanne Lewy Cohn family papers.

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

Sigmund A. Cohn (1898-1997) was born in Breslau, Germany, where he earned a law degree before working for the Department of Justice in Berlin and then being appointed a judge. He lost his position when Hitler came to power in 1933 and emigrated to Genoa, Italy, with his wife Suzanne Lewy Cohn and their daughters Eva and Marianne. In 1939 they immigrated to the United States and settled in Athens, Georgia, where Cohn had secured a position at the University of Georgia, first teaching German, Italian, and Spanish, and then as a full-time member of the law faculty. The Cohn family was joined by Suzanne Cohn's mother, Regina Sternberg Lewy. Cohn retired in 1964.

Scope and content of collection

The Sigmund A. Cohn papers measure 0.5 linear feet and date from 1936 to 1986. They are primarily comprised of correspondence between Cohn and his wife and children and Cohn's parents, Georg and Sophie Cohn in Breslau and date from the Sigmund Cohn family's arrival in America in 1939 until the United States declared war on Germany at the end of 1941. The correspondence describes family life in Athens and in Breslau and focuses on unsuccessful attempt to secure visas for Georg and Sophie Cohn to immigrate to the United States. Occasional correspondence with the American Friends Service Committee, the US Department of State, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the National Refugee Service further documents those efforts. The collection includes a few letters among additional Cohn family members in Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden, culminating in the revelations that Georg and Sophie Cohn were deported to Theresienstadt in 1942, that they are believed to have been killed immediately, that additional family members also perished there, and that other family members committed suicide in order to avoid deportation.

The collection also contains biographical materials including printed items from the Italian steamship, the "Rex," which carried the Cohn family from Italy to America, a typed script for Regina Lewy's 60th birthday, a photocopy of Sigmund Cohn's family tree, and blank American Red Cross civilian message forms and Registered Reichsmarks remittance forms.

System of arrangement

The Sigmund A. Cohn papers are arranged as 2 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1937-1942, 1986
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1936-1942, 1946, 1968

Both series are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Jewish families – Poland – Wrocław.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945) – Refugees.
Jewish refugees – Germany.
Jewish refugees – United States.
Jews – Germany – History – 1933-1945.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945).

Germany – Emigration and immigration – Government policy – 20th century.
Wrocław (Poland)

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1937-1942, 1986

Box	Folder	
1	1	Emigration, Family Tree, Birthday Play, and Forms, 1937-1942, 1986

Series 2: Correspondence, 1936-1942, 1946, 1968

Box	Folder	
1	2	1936-1938
1	3	January-February 1939
1	4	March-April 1939
1	5	May-June 1939
1	6	July-August 1939
1	7	September- December 1939
1	8	January-February 1940
1	9	March-April 1940
1	10	May-June 1940
1	11	July-August 1940
1	12	September-October 1940
1	13	November-December 1940
1	14	January-February 1941
1	15	March-April 1941
1	16	May-June 1941
1	17	July-August 1941
1	18	September-October 1941
1	19	November-December 1941
1	20	1942, 1946, 1968