

SIEGMUND SOBEL PAPERS, 1873-1965
1999.1.1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Siegmund Sobel papers

Dates: 1873-1965 (bulk 1919-1963)

Accession number: 1999.1.1

Creator: Sobel, Siegmund, 1900-1963.

Additional creator: Sobel, Gertrude, 1898-1997.

Extent: 2 boxes, 9 oversize boxes, 9 oversize folders, 137 book enclosures, 22 negative cartons

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

Abstract: The collection documents the pre-war, wartime, and post-war experiences of Siegmund Sobel, originally of Vienna, Austria, and his wife Gertrude Sobel, including their emigrations from Vienna to Shanghai, China in 1939, Shanghai to Israel in 1949, and Israel to the United States in 1951. Included is biographical material, immigration paperwork, photographs, and 141 homemade photograph albums made by Siegmund chronicling his life before, during, and after the Holocaust.

Languages: German, English, Polish, Chinese, Hebrew

Administrative Information

Access: There are no known restrictions on access to this material.

Physical access note: Negatives are currently unavailable for access.

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Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Siegmund Sobel papers (1999.1.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was acquired by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum from Mary Catalina in 1999.

Custodial history: Mary Catalina acquired the collection from the estate of Siegmund and Gertrude Sobel after Gertrude's death in 1997.

Processing history: Adam Fielding, March 2020; container list updated January 2023

Biographical note

Siegmund Sobel (1900-1963) was born on 24 May 1900 in Bielitz, Poland (now Bielsko-Biala, Poland) to Wilhelm and Emma Sobel. He had two sisters, Rosa (later Rosa Guttmann) and Stefanie (later Stefanie Hirsch). Siegmund studied medicine at the University of Vienna and graduated in 1925, specializing in urology. In 1928 Siegmund married Gertrude Theresia Wertheimer in Vienna. Gertrude (1898-1997) was born on 30 December 1898 in Vienna to Viktoria (née Langer, 1870-1942) and Sigmund (b. 1862) Wertheimer.

From 1926-1927 Siegmund lived in Merano, Italy where he was a physician in a private hospital. He returned to Vienna in 1927 to work at the Hospital of the Jewish Community. In 1931 he opened a private practice in Essling near Vienna. Antisemitic laws forced Siegmund to close his private practice in 1938 and he returned to the Hospital of the Jewish Community.

In July 1939 Siegmund and his wife Gertrude emigrated from Austria to Shanghai, China aboard the SS Giulio Cesare. He set up a private practice in Shanghai, primarily treating fellow refugees. He also served as a consulting urologist with the Shanghai Refugee Hospital. Gertrude's mother, Viktoria, also joined them in Shanghai, but died there in 1942. Both of Siegmund's sisters survived the Holocaust in Buenos Aires.

In 1948, Siegmund and Gertrude began planning to emigrate from Shanghai. The Chinese Communist Revolution expedited their need to leave the country, and on 1 January 1949 they sailed to Israel aboard the SS Castelbianco. They settled in Tel Aviv, but began applying for visas for the United States. They left Israel on 18 October 1950 and after a brief stay in Austria, immigrated to the United States in January 1951, settling in New York. Siegmund continued to practice medicine until his death in 1963. Gertrude died in 1997.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the pre-war, wartime, and post-war experiences of Siegmund Sobel, originally of Vienna, Austria, and his wife Gertrude Sobel, including their emigrations from

Vienna to Shanghai, China in 1939, Shanghai to Israel in 1949, and Israel to the United States in 1951. Included is biographical material, immigration paperwork, photographs, and 141 homemade photograph albums made by Siegmund chronicling his life before, during, and after the Holocaust.

Biographical material includes pre-war, wartime, and post-war documents of Siegmund and Gertrude, as well as material relating to Gertrude's mother Viktoria Wertheimer, and other relatives in the Sobel and Wertheimer families. Papers of Siegmund include report cards, documents related to his medical practices in Austria, Shanghai, and the United States, birth certificates, identification papers, restitution, papers regarding his death in 1963, and an essay describing the bookbinding process he used for making his photograph albums. Gertrude's biographical material includes identification papers, birth certificates, report cards, medical papers, notes, and documents regarding her Austrian pension. Other material includes Siegmund and Gertrude's marriage certificate, some identification papers of Viktoria and other relatives, a small amount of correspondence, and various receipts.

Immigration papers include paperwork documenting Siegmund and Gertrude's immigration to Shanghai in 1939, Israel in 1950, and the United States in 1951. Shanghai documents include the itinerary of the SS Giulio Cesare, identification cards, receipts and documents from several Jewish organizations Siegmund belonged to in Shanghai. Israel documents consist of identification cards, inventories, and their ticket from Haifa to Marseille, France as part of the first leg of their journey to the United States. Immigration papers related to the United States documents their attempts to get visas while in Austria in 1938 and during the war in Shanghai. Included are Affidavits of Support, tickets, medical forms, and Declaration of Intention forms.

Miscellaneous material consists of an *Ärzte-Jahrbuch* cardboard box, a Sine Calsum Tablet binder used in Shanghai with Siegmund's last name printed on the cover, and a folded poster entitled *The Synagogue: it's holy objects and their significance*.

Photographs include pre-war, wartime, and post-war depictions of Siegmund and Gertrude including portraits and travel photographs. Also included are depictions of Gertrude's mother Viktoria and unidentified friends and family and a Jewish wedding.

The photograph albums consist of 141 homemade photograph albums (57 small albums and 84 large albums) constructed by Siegmund. The albums contain cloth covers in various patterns, and most are numbered and annotated in English or German. Both the small and large albums have roman number sequences as well as other albums without. The albums have been arranged as two subseries according to the respective numbering sequences for the large and small albums. Albums without roman numerals have been placed at the end of each subseries.

Subseries 5.1 small albums document pre-war life in Austria, Siegmund and Gertrude's emigration from Vienna in 1939 to Shanghai, life in Shanghai from 1939-1948, daily life in Israel, 1949-1950, and daily life in the United States in the 1950s. Subseries 5.1 large albums document various day trips and vacations in Shanghai, Israel, United States, Buenos Aires, and

Europe. Albums VIII and IX contain a lengthy narrative describing the Sobel's last weeks in Shanghai and their attempts to emigrate due to the growing Chinese Communist Revolution. Albums after 1950 primarily document various vacations and daytrips taken in the eastern United States and elsewhere.

Negatives include glass negatives and film negatives with several different formats. Glass negatives are likely all pre-war depictions from Vienna, including Siegmund, his parents' gravestone, a group portrait, and an apartment interior. Other negatives are unprocessed, but likely consist of images used in the photograph albums.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as six series.

- Series 1. Biographical material, 1873-1965
- Series 2. Immigration, 1938-1958
- Series 3. Miscellaneous, 1934-1963
- Series 4. Photographs, circa 1900-1961
- Series 5. Photograph albums, circa 1930s-1962
 - Subseries 5.1. Small albums, circa 1930s-1962
 - Subseries 5.2. Large albums, 1947-1962
- Series 6. Negatives

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Person:

- Sobel, Siegmund, 1900-1963.
- Sobel, Gertrude, 1898-1997.
- Wertheimer, Viktoria, 1870-1942.

Topical Subject:

- Jews--Austria--Vienna.
- Physicians--Austria--Vienna.
- Refugees, Jewish--China--Shanghai.
- Bookbinding.

Geography:

- Shanghai (China)
- Vienna (Austria)
- Tel Aviv (Israel)
- United States--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:

- Photograph albums.

Photographs.
Negatives.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Biographical material, 1873-1965

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Correspondence, 1956-1961
1.2	Langer, Theresia, 1891
1.3	Receipts, inventories, and miscellaneous, 1962-1963
1.4-1.5	Sobel, Gertrude: Austrian pension, 1938, 1950-1961 (2 folders)
1.6	Sobel, Gertrude: biographical and identification papers, 1903-1923
1.7	Sobel, Gertrude: medical papers, 1963
1.8	Sobel, Gertrude: notes, circa 1963
1.9	Sobel, Gertrude and Siegmund: marriage, 1928-1938
1.10, OS 1	Sobel, Siegmund: biographical and identification papers, 1919-1948
1.11	Sobel, Siegmund: bookbinding essay, circa 1940s
1.12, OS 9	Sobel, Siegmund: death, 1963
1.13	Sobel, Siegmund: medical practice, Austria, 1922-1939
1.14	Sobel, Siegmund: medical practice, Shanghai, 1939-1947
1.15	Sobel, Siegmund: medical practice, United States, 1951-1959
1.16	Sobel, Siegmund: report cards, 1906-1939
2.1	Sobel, Siegmund: restitution, 1952-1965
2.2, OS 2	Sobel family, 1873-1924
2.3, OS 8	Wertheimer, Sigmund, 1875-1894
2.4	Wertheimer, Viktoria, 1896-1939

Series 2. Immigration, 1938-1958

Box/Folder	Title
2.5	Israel, 1949-1950
2.6, OS 3	Shanghai, 1939-1948
2.7, OS 7	United States, 1938-1958

Series 3. Miscellaneous, 1934-1963

Box/Folder	Title
3	Ärzte-Jahrbuch box, 1934
BE 137	Sine Calsum Tablet binder, circa 1940s
OS 4	<i>The Synagogue: its holy objects and their significance</i> poster, 1957

Series 4. Photographs, circa 1900-1961

Box/Folder	Title
2.8	Family and friends, circa 1900-1949
4	Family and friends: framed photograph, circa 1930s
2.9	Sobel, Gertrude, circa 1940s-circa 1960s
2.10	Sobel, Gertrude and Siegmund, circa 1940s-1961
2.11, OS 5	Sobel, Siegmund, 1926-circa 1940s
2.12	Wertheimer, Viktoria, circa 1939
2.13-2.15	Paper wrappers for negatives, undated (3 folders)

Series 5. Photograph albums, circa 1930s-1962**Subseries 5.1. Small albums, circa 1930s-1962**

Box/Folder	Title
BE 1	I. Leaving Europe, 1939
BE 2	II. Port Said, 1939

BE 3	III. Suez Canal, Aden, Bombay (Mumbai), 1939
BE 4	IV. Colombo, 1939
BE 5	V. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 6	VI. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 7	VII. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948 [negative enclosure stored separately]
BE 8	VIII. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 9	IX. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 10	X. Shanghai, 1940
BE 11	XI. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 12	XII. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 13	XIII, Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 14	XIV. Shanghai: synagogue dedication, 1941
BE 15	XV. Shanghai, 1940
BE 16	XVI. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 17	XVII. Shanghai, circa 1940-circa 1945
BE 18	XVIII. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 19	XIX. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 20	XX. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 21	XXI. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 22	XXII. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 23	XXIII. Shanghai, 1948
2.16	XXIII. Shanghai, 1948 enclosure
BE 24	XXIV. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 25	XXV. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 26	XXVI. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 27	XXVII. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 28	XXVIII. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948

BE 29	XXIX. Shanghai, circa 1939-circa 1948
BE 30	XXX. Israel, circa 1949-circa 1950
BE 31	XXXI. Israel, circa 1949-circa 1950
BE 32	XXXII. Israel, circa 1949-circa 1950
BE 33	XXXIII. Israel, circa 1949-circa 1950
BE 34	XXXIV. Israel, circa 1949-circa 1950
BE 35	XXXV. Israel or China, circa 1945-circa 1950
BE 36	XXXVI. Likely United States, circa 1951
BE 37	XXXVII. United States, 1951
BE 38	XXXVIII. United States, circa 1950s
BE 39	XXXIX. United States, circa 1950s
BE 40	XL. United States, circa 1950s
BE 41	XLI. United States, circa 1950s
BE 42	XLII. New York, Fort Tyron Park, circa 1950s
BE 43	XLIII. New York, circa 1950s
BE 44	XLIV. New York, circa 1950s
30	XLV. New York, circa 1950s
BE 45	XLVI. New York, circa 1950s
BE 46	Buenos Aires, Argentina and New York?, circa 1950-1962
2.17	Buenos Aires, Argentina and New York?, circa 1950-1962 enclosure
BE 47	Austria?, circa 1930s
BE 48	Buenos Aires, Argentina?, circa 1950s
BE 49	Austria?, circa 1930s-circa 1940s
BE 50	Family and friends, 1940
BE 51	New York, circa 1950s
BE 52	New York, circa 1950s
BE 53	New York, circa 1950s

BE 54	New York, circa 1950s
BE 55	New York, circa 1950s
BE 56	New York, circa 1950s

Subseries 5.2. Large albums, 1947-1962

Box/Folder	Title
BE 57	I. Shanghai, 1947-1948
BE 58	II. Shanghai, 1948
BE 59	III. Shanghai, 1948
BE 60	IV. Shanghai, 1948
BE 61	V. Shanghai, 1948
BE 62	VI. Shanghai, 1948
BE 63	VII. Shanghai, 1948
BE 64	VIII. Emigrating from Shanghai to Israel part I, 1949
BE 65	IX. Emigrating from Shanghai to Israel part II, 1949
BE 66	X. Israel, 1949
BE 67	XI. Israel, 1950
2.18	XI. Israel, 1950 enclosures
BE 68	XII. Israel, 1950
BE 69	XIII. Israel, 1950
BE 70	XIV. Israel, 1950
31	XV. <i>Von Israel Nach U.S.A., 1950-1951</i>
BE 71	XVI. <i>Von Israel Nach U.S.A., 1950-1951</i>
5	XVII. <i>Von Israel Nach U.S.A., 1950-1951</i> , Vienna, Austria
2.21	XVII. <i>Von Israel Nach U.S.A., 1950-1951</i> , Vienna, Austria, enclosure
BE 72	XVIII. <i>Von Israel Nach U.S.A., 1950-1951</i> , Vienna, Austria
BE 73	XIX. <i>Von Israel Nach U.S.A., 1950-1951</i> , Switzerland and Belgium

BE 74	XX. <i>Von Israel Nach U.S.A., 1950-1951</i> , London
BE 75	XXI. United States, 1951
BE 76	XXII. United States, 1951
BE 77	XXIII. United States, 1952
BE 78	XXIV. United States, 1952
BE 79	XXV. United States, 1952
BE 80	XXVI. United States, 1952-1953
BE 81	XXVII. United States, 1953
BE 82	XXVIII. United States, 1954
BE 83	XXIX. United States, 1954
BE 84	XXX. United States, 1954
BE 85	XXXI. United States, 1954
BE 86	XXXII. United States, 1954
BE 87	XXXIII. United States, 1955
BE 88	XXXIV. United States, 1955
BE 89	XXXV. United States, 1955
BE 90	XXXVI. United States, 1955
BE 91	XXXVII. United States, 1955
BE 92	XXXVIII. United States, 1955
BE 93	XXXIX. United States, 1955
BE 94	XL. <i>Lilly's Vacation in New York</i> , part I., 1955
BE 95	XLI. <i>Lilly's Vacation in New York</i> , part II., 1955
BE 96	XLII. <i>Lilly's Vacation in New York</i> , part III., 1955
BE 97	XLIII. <i>Lilly's Vacation in New York</i> , part IV., 1955
BE 98	XLIV. United States, 1955
BE 99	XLV. United States, 1955-1956
BE 100	XLVI. United States, 1956

BE 101	XLVII. United States, 1956
BE 102	XLVIII. United States, 1956
BE 103	XLIX. United States, 1956
BE 104	L. United States, 1956
6	LI. United States, 1956
BE 105	LII. United States, 1956-1957
BE 106	LIII. United States, 1957
2.19	LIII. United States, 1957 enclosures
BE 107	LIV. United States, 1957
BE 108	LV. United States, 1958
BE 109	LVI. Buenos Aires, part I., 1958
BE 110	LVII. Buenos Aires, part II., 1958
2.20	LVII. Buenos Aires, part II., 1958 enclosures
BE 111	LVIII. <i>To the Great Smoky Mountains</i> , part I., 1958
BE 112	LVIX. <i>To the Great Smoky Mountains</i> , part II., 1958
BE 113	LX. <i>To the Great Smoky Mountains</i> , part III., 1958
BE 114	LXI. <i>To the Great Smoky Mountains</i> , part IV., 1958
BE 115	United States, 1958-1959
BE 116	United States, May 1959
BE 117	United States, June 1959
BE 118	<i>Vacation, Desert Island, Maine</i> , part I., 1959
BE 119	<i>Vacation, Desert Island, Maine</i> , part II., 1959
BE 120	<i>Vacation, Desert Island, Maine</i> , part III., 1959
BE 121	<i>Vacation, Quebec</i> , part IV., 1959
BE 122	<i>Vacation, White Mountains, Vermont</i> , part V., 1959
BE 123	<i>Vacation, Ogunquit</i> , part VI., 1959
BE 124	<i>Armando and Steffi in U.S.A.</i> , part I., 1960

BE 125	<i>Armando and Steffi in U.S.A., part II., 1960</i>
BE 126	<i>Armando and Steffi in U.S.A., part III., 1960</i>
BE 127	<i>Armando and Steffi in U.S.A., part IV., 1960</i>
BE 128	United States, 1960-1961
7	United States, 1961
BE 129	United States, 1961
BE 130	United States, 1961
BE 131	Europe, part I., 1962
BE 132	Europe, part II., 1962
BE 133	Europe, part III., 1962
BE 134	Europe, part IV., 1962
BE 135	Glen Island, circa 1950s
BE 136	Tibbetts Brooks Park, circa 1950s

Series 6. Negatives

Box/Folder	Title
8	Glass negatives (7 negatives)
9	Photographic negative carton 9 (12 folders)
10	Photographic negative carton 10 (13 folders)
11	Photographic negative carton 28 (12 rolls)
12	Photographic negative carton 29 (12 rolls)
13	Photographic negative carton 30 (12 rolls)
14	Photographic negative carton 31 (12 rolls)
15	Photographic negative carton 32 (12 rolls)
16	Photographic negative carton 33 (23 rolls)
17	Photographic negative carton 34 (12 rolls)
18	Photographic negative carton 35 (12 rolls)

19	Photographic negative carton 36 (6 rolls)
20	Photographic negative carton 37 (37 rolls)
21	Photographic negative carton 38 (40 rolls)
22	Photographic negative carton 39 (40 rolls)
23	Photographic negative carton 40 (40 rolls)
24	Photographic negative carton 41 (40 rolls)
25	Photographic negative carton 42 (40 rolls)
26	Photographic negative carton 43 (40 rolls)
27	Photographic negative carton 44 (40 rolls)
28	Photographic negative carton 45 (40 rolls)
29	Photographic negative carton 46 (21 rolls)