

FRED VENDIG PAPERS, 1859-2002
1999.A.0089.1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
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Descriptive summary

Title: Fred Vendig papers

Dates: 1859-2002

Accession number: 1999.A.0089.1

Creator: Vendig, Fred, 1932-2001

Extent: 2.1 linear foot (2 boxes, 2 flat boxes, 1 oversize folder)

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

Abstract: The Fred Vendig papers includes biographical materials, a pocket calendar, correspondence, immigration papers, personal narratives, photographs, and printed materials documenting the Vendig family's expropriation by the Nazi government, 1939 voyage aboard the *M.S. St. Louis*, refuge in Belgium, internment in French concentration camps, refuge in Switzerland, and immigration to the United States.

Languages: German, English, French, Spanish

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), Fred Vendig papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Fred Vendig donated the Fred Vendig papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by in 1998 and 1999, and his widow, Stephanie Vendig, donated additional

material in 2013. The accessions previously cataloged as 1999.317.1 and 2013.486 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related archival materials: Fred Vendig also donated two leather photograph albums to the Museum (2013.486.17 and 2013.486.18). The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum also holds an autographed copy of Captain Gustav Schröder's book *Heimat-log auf hoher see*, and the Library holds a copy of Hans Herlin's book *Die Reise der Verdammten: die Tragödie der St. Louis*, both of which Fred Vendig also donated to the museum in 1999. Digital images of most of the St. Louis photographs in this collection are available on the Museum's website.

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, August 2012, revised May 2015 and December 2015

Biographical note

Fred Vendig (1932-2001) was born Fritz-Dieter Vendig in Kaiserslautern to clothing store owner Ernst Vendig (1899-1955) and Charlotte Bernstein Vendig (Lotti, 1907-1988) and had a younger brother, Henry (Heiner, 1937-2003). The family was forced to sell the store in 1936 and moved to Berlin, where they established a new business. Ernst Vendig was arrested following Kristallnacht and spent several weeks at Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg. Fred sailed to Cuba on the *M.S. St. Louis* in May 1939 with his family and grandmother, Pauline Marx Vendig (Lina, 1872-?), but the passengers were returned to Europe, and the family found refuge in Brussels. Ernst Vendig was arrested following the 1940 German invasion and interned in camps in France including St. Cyprien and Gurs. In 1941, Fred, Charlotte, Henry, and Pauline were smuggled into France with false papers. In August 1942 the entire family was interned at Les Milles and the following month sent to Rivesaltes, before being smuggled into Switzerland, where they lived as refugees for the duration of the war. Vendig immigrated to the United States with his parents and brother in 1946, and his grandmother followed shortly after.

Scope and content of collection

The Fred Vendig papers includes biographical materials, a pocket calendar, correspondence, immigration papers, personal narratives, photographs, and printed materials documenting the Vendig family's expropriation by the Nazi government, 1939 voyage aboard the *M.S. St. Louis*, refuge in Belgium, internment in French concentration camps, refuge in Switzerland, and immigration to the United States.

Biographical materials include birth, marriage, and death certificates; identification papers; and student, citizenship, refugee, and camp papers. The records trace the Vendig family's precarious citizenship, refugee, internee, and immigrant status through Germany, Belgium, France, and Switzerland, their release from Rivesaltes, and their immigration to the United States. The collection further includes materials documenting Fred Vendig's uncle, Fritz Vendig, who was killed at Verdun during World War I, and his grandfather, David Vendig, who died in 1930.

The 1939 pocket calendar was used by Charlotte Vendig as an address book, birthday calendar, account record, notebook, and diary, with a few entries through 1959.

Correspondence files include photocopies of letters Charlotte Vendig wrote aboard the *M.S. St. Louis* to her family and original letters she wrote to her family from Aix-en-Provence and Bex; letters Ernst Vendig wrote to his family from internment camps St. Cyprien and Gurs; illustrated notes from Fred Vendig to his family; postcards documenting Ernst and Pauline Vendig's registration for reparations; and correspondence between Ernst Vendig and Captain Gustav Schröder after the war.

Immigration papers include correspondence and affidavits documenting the Vendig family's efforts to immigrate to the United States.

Personal narratives include English and German versions of Charlotte Vendig's Holocaust experiences. She describes antisemitism under the Nazis, losing the family business, unsuccessful emigration to Cuba aboard the *M.S. St. Louis*, refugee life in Belgium and France, internment in Les Milles and Rivesaltes, release, and refuge in Switzerland.

Photographic materials include four photo albums and eighty eight loose photographs depicting the Vendig family and their journey aboard the *M.S. St. Louis*. The albums include photographs of Ernst and Charlotte Vendig's families, prewar life in Germany and on vacation, childhood photographs of Fred and Henry Vendig, and the family's journey aboard *M.S. St. Louis*. Loose photographs depict Ernst and Charlotte Vendig's families, the Vendigs aboard the *M.S. St. Louis*, fellow passengers after they disembarked in Belgium, Henry Vendig in Brussels, and the Foreign Labor Battalion (GTE) camp in Aubagne.

Printed materials primarily consist of clippings from German and Swiss newspapers from the 1930s and 1940s and include articles written by Ernst Vendig describing the refugee experience. This series also includes brochures and a history describing the town of Hachenburg as well as a prayer book printed in 1859.

System of arrangement

The Fred Vendig papers are arranged as seven series:

- Series 1: Biographical materials, 1907-1964
- Series 2: Calendar, 1939-1955
- Series 3: Correspondence, approximately 1929-2002
- Series 4: Immigration papers, 1939-1952
- Series 5: Personal narratives, approximately 1980
- Series 6: Photographic materials, approximately 1910-1976
- Series 7: Printed materials, 1859-1998

Indexing terms

St. Louis (Ship)

Saint-Cyprien (Concentration camp)

Gurs (Concentration camp)

Les Milles (Concentration camp)

Rivesaltes (Concentration camp)

Jewish families--Germany--Kaiserslautern.
 Jewish merchants--Germany.
 Jewish refugees--Belgium.
 Jewish refugees--France.
 Jewish refugees--Switzerland.
 Concentration camp inmates--France--Correspondence.
 Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Children.
 Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Personal narratives.

Germany--Emigration and immigration--20th century.
 United States--Emigration and immigration-- 20th century.
 Kaiserslautern (Germany)
 Brussels (Belgium)
 Aix-en-Provence (France)
 Bex (Switzerland)

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Biographical materials, 1907-1964

Box	Folder	
1	1	Mendel, Jenny, 1942
1	2-4	Vendig, Charlotte, 1921-1964 (2 folders)
1	5	Vendig, David, 1917-1938
1	6-11	Vendig, Ernst, 1907-1955 (6 folders)
1	12	Vendig, Fred, 1932-1951
1	13	Vendig, Fritz, 1934, 1941
1	14	Vendig, Henry, 1937-1951
1	15-16	Vendig, Pauline, 1938-1952 (2 folders)
1	17	R. Vendig stationery, circa 1936

Series 2: Calendar, 1939-1955

Box	Folder	
1	18	Vendig, Charlotte, calendar used as address book and diary, 1939-1955 (see Box 3, Item 1)

Series 3: Correspondence, approximately 1929-2002

Box	Folder	
1	19	Entschädigungsamt Berlin, 1952-1955
1	20	Vendig, Charlotte, 1939, 1942
1	21-24	Vendig, Ernst, 1940-1941 (4 folders)

1	25	Vendig, Ernst, and Captain Gustav Schröder, 1949-1950
1	26	Vendig, Fred, 1936-1948
1	27	Miscellaneous, approximately 1929-2002

Series 4: Immigration papers, 1939-1952

Box	Folder	
1	28-29	Immigration papers, 1939-1946, 1952 (2 folders)

Series 5: Personal narratives, approximately 1980

Box	Folder	
2	1-2	Vendig, Charlotte, approximately 1980 (2 folders)

Series 6: Photographs, approximately 1910-1976

Box	Folder	
2	3	Foreign Labor Battalion (GTE) camp in Aubagne, 1942
2	4	<i>M.S. St. Louis</i> passengers in Belgium, 1939
2	5	Vendig, Charlotte and Ernst, aboard the <i>M.S. St. Louis</i> , 1939
2	6	Vendig, Charlotte, and her family, approximately 1931-1948
2	7	Vendig, Charlotte, class picture, 1914
2	8	Vendig, Henry, in Brussels, approximately 1940
2	9	Vendig family, 1921-1976
2	10	Vendig, Pauline, circa 1939
2	11	Wedding family portrait, circa 1959
2	12	Photo album, photographs from black leather wallet album, approximately 1910-1935
2	13	Photo album, blue album, 1932-1935 (see Box 3, Item 2)
2	14	Photo album, photographs from brown leather wallet album, approximately 1930s
2	15	Photo album, brown paper album, 1916-1926 (see Box 3, Item 3)
2	16	Photo album, brown paper album, loose photographs, 1916-1926
2	17-22	Photo album, <i>M.S. St. Louis</i> , 1939 (6 folders)
2	23	Photo album, <i>Unser Kind</i> baby book, 1932-1946 (see Box 3, Item 4)
2	24	Photo album, <i>Unser Kind</i> baby book, loose photographs, 1932-1946

Series 7: Printed materials, 1859-1998

Box	Folder	
2	25	Clippings, 1931-1933, 1943-1946 (see also oversize folder)
2	26	Hachenburg brochures and history, approximately 1970s, 1998

2	27	Prayer book, <i>Die täglichen Gebete der Israeliten nebst deutscher Übersetzung</i> , 1859 (see Box 4)
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Oversize materials

Box	Item	
3	1	Vendig, Charlotte, calendar used as address book and diary, 1939-1955
3	2	Photo album, blue album, 1932-1935
3	3	Photo album, brown paper album, 1916-1926
3	4	Photo album, <i>Unser Kind</i> baby book, 1932-1946
4	1	Prayer book, <i>Die täglichen Gebete der Israeliten nebst deutscher Übersetzung</i> , 1859
Oversize folder		Clippings, 1931-1933, 1943-1946