

BETTY SKLOW PAPERS, 1897-1949
1999.A.0269

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: Betty Sklow papers

Dates: 1897-1949 [bulk dates: 1939-1940]

Accession number: 1999.A.0269

Creator: Sklow, Betty, 1880-1961

Extent: 0.3 linear foot (7 folders, 1 oversized folder)

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

Abstract: The Betty Sklow papers contain correspondence written by Betty Sklow and her daughters Charlotte Rosenthal and Helene Sklow. The letters contain detailed description of Betty Sklow's experiences aboard the MS *St. Louis* in 1939, her disembarkation in the Netherlands, her experiences negotiating travel to the United States, and her journey to the United States aboard the SS *Pennland* in 1940. The papers also include photographs of Betty Sklow and her husband Hermann Sklow, as well as a printed cabin plan for the MS *St. Louis*, February 1939.

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), Betty Sklow papers (1999.A.0269) United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Carla Gelbaum, Ursula Frangiamore, and Peter Roark donated the Betty Sklow papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1999.

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

Processing history: Katelynn Vance, March 2019

Biographical note

Betty Sklow (née Behrendt, 1880-1961) was born on October 30, 1880 in Magdeburg, Germany to Adolph and Rosa Jeanette Behrendt. Hermann Sklow (1870-1938) was born on March 14, 1870 to Wolf and Pauline Sklow. Betty Behrendt married Hermann Sklow on July 6, 1927 and had two daughters while in Gera, Germany. Charlotte (Lottie) was born in 1905 and Helene (Leni) was born in 1907. From 1896-1933, Herman Sklow worked at the department store Hermann Tietz. In 1933 Hermann was forced to resign from his position as the branch director. The Sklow family then moved to Berlin. Hermann attempted to escape Nazi persecution but was arrested and put on trial. He died in custody at the police headquarters in Berlin on October 18, 1938. Upon receiving her husband's ashes, Betty was informed by the German police that Hermann had committed suicide. In 1939 Betty obtained passage on the MS *St. Louis*. After the ship was denied entry to Cuba and the United States, Betty finally disembarked in the Netherlands. She stayed in Bussum, Netherlands with Leopold Rosenthal, the brother of her son-in-law, and his family. On April 26, 1940, Betty departed Antwerp, Belgium on the SS *Pennland* and arrived in New York on May 16, 1940. The passenger manifest lists Betty as being able to read both German and English. Betty joined her daughters in the United States and became a naturalized citizen on January 15, 1946 in New York. Betty Sklow died on October 15, 1961 in New York.

In 1923, Charlotte Sklow (1904-1985) married William Rosenthal (Willy, 1896-1972) and had three children: Brigitte (later Brita Williams, 1925-1983), Ursula Frangiamore (1928-?), and Peter (later Peter Roark, 1929-2000). By 1939, the Rosenthal family had fled Germany and immigrated to the United States. Helene Sklow (1907-1979) also fled Germany and immigrated to Cuba. By the time her mother arrived in New York in May 1940, Helene Sklow had already left Cuba and been reunited with her sister Charlotte Rosenthal in New York.

Scope and content of collection

The Betty Sklow papers contain correspondence written by Betty Sklow and her daughters Charlotte Rosenthal and Helene Sklow. The letters contain detailed description of Betty Sklow's experiences aboard the MS *St. Louis* in 1939, her disembarkation in the Netherlands, her experiences negotiating travel to the United States, and her journey to the United States aboard the SS *Pennland* in 1940. The papers also include photographs of Betty Sklow and her husband Hermann Sklow, as well as a printed cabin plan for the MS *St. Louis*, February 1939.

Betty Sklow's letters written aboard the MS *St. Louis* provide insight into the experiences of the immigrants on the ship and include observations about the other passengers, her battle with sea sickness, her feelings about the passage, deaths aboard the ship, and religious celebrations. Betty also records the reactions of passengers, their struggles with depression and suicidal thoughts upon learning that the ship would be denied entry to Cuba and the United States. While in Cuba, her letters record brief meetings with her daughter Helene. Betty's letters also record her impressions of Miami, Florida, as well as the passengers' participation in English and Spanish language classes to pass the time. The remaining letters reveal Betty's experiences upon disembarkation in the Netherlands, the passengers' quarantine upon arrival, and her efforts in negotiating passage to the United States, as well as her experiences aboard the SS *Pennland* in 1940.

System of arrangement

The Betty Sklow papers are arranged in three series:

Series 1: Correspondence, 1939-1940

Series 2: Photographs, 1897-1949

Series 3: Printed materials, February 1940

Indexing terms

People:

Sklow, Betty, 1880-1961.

Sklow, Hermann, 1870-1938.

Rosenthal, Charlotte, 1904-1985.

Sklow, Helene, 1907-1979.

Corporate:

St. Louis (Ship)

Topic:

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)

Jewish refugees.

Refugees.

United States--Emigration and immigration.

World War, 1939-1945.

World War, 1939-1945--Civilian relief--Europe.

World War, 1939-1945--Refugees.

World War, 1939-1945--Refugees--Germany.

Geography:

Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Bussum (Netherlands)

Cuba.

Havana (Cuba)

Netherlands.

New York

Gene / Format:

Correspondence.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Correspondence, 1939-1940

Folder:	Title:
1 of 7	May 1939
2 of 7	June 1939
3 of 7	August - December 1939
4 of 7	January - March 1940
5 of 7	April 1940
6 of 7	May 1940

Series 2: Photographs, 1897-1949

Folder:	Title:
7 of 7	Betty and Hermann Sklow, 1897-1949

Series 3: Printed materials, February 1939

Folder:	Title:
OS 1	MS <i>St. Louis</i> Cabin Plan, February 1939