

HENRY ALTER PAPERS, 1840-1998
2000.248

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: Henry Alter papers

Dates: 1840-1998 [bulk 1939-1955]

Accession number: 2000.248

Creator: Alter, Henry, 1918-1999.

Extent: 2 boxes, 3 oversize folders

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

Abstract: The Henry Alter papers primarily document his family's pre-war history; his immigration to the United States in 1939; and his service in the military, including training at Camp Ritchie and working as a Film Theater and Control Officer for the Information Services Branch, 1943-1946.

Languages: German, English, Hungarian, Czech, Italian, Serbo-Croatian

Administrative Information

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

Reproduction and use: The donor, source institution, or a third party has asserted copyright over some or all of the material(s) in this collection. You do not require further permission from the Museum to use this material. The user is solely responsible for making a determination as to if and how the material may be used.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Henry Alter papers (2000.248), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Andrew C. Alter in 2000. Andrew is the son of Henry Alter.

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

Processing history: USHMM staff, 2000; arrangement and description updated by Adam Fielding, April 2023

Biographical note

Henry Alter (1918-1999), was born Heinrich Andreas Karl Alter in Vienna, Austria, on June 14, 1918 to Heinrich Alter (1879-1935) and Karoline Genschik Alter (1883-1963). He had one younger brother, Karl (b. 1920, later Charles Alter). Henry's father was born Jewish and converted to Catholicism before marrying Karoline. The family spent several years in Volosca-Abbazia, Italy after World War I, where Heinrich worked as a dentist. Henry's father committed suicide in Vienna in 1935.

Henry emigrated from Austria to the United States in June 1939. He settled in Scranton, Pennsylvania to attend the University of Scranton. He moved to California in 1940 to attend the University of California. In 1942 he became the private secretary for Austrian actor Paul Henreid. In October 1943 he was recruited into the United States Army, graduating as a private from the Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie, MD (Fort Ritchie), in April 1944. He was sent to England in July 1944 and then transferred to France where he was tasked to the Film Theater and Control Office in Occupied Territory, eventually working with the Film and Theater Information Services branch of the US Forces in Berlin and later in Austria. He served in Europe until 1946. He was honorably discharged in 1946 and then worked for Paramount Pictures in the censorship offices. His brother survived World War II in Australia, and his mother survived in Vienna. They both later immigrated to the United States.

Scope and content of collection

The Henry Alter papers primarily document his family's pre-war history; his immigration to the United States in 1939; and his service in the military, including training at Camp Ritchie and working as a Film Theater and Control Officer for the Information Services Branch, 1943-1946. Biographical material includes birth certificates, education materials, and immigration paperwork. Military service records include paperwork and memorandums related to his training at Camp Ritchie and his service overseas, including correspondence with Martin F. Hertz and memorandums from the theater and music section of the Information Services Branch. Correspondence includes letters exchanged with his brother Charles Alter, Paul Henreid, and Herbert von Karajan.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as three series.

Series 1. Biographical material, 1840-1955

Series 2. Military service, 1942-1983

Series 3. Correspondence, 1939-1998

Indexing terms

Person:

Alter, Henry.

Corporate:

Camp Albert C. Ritchie (Md.)

National Catholic Welfare Conference.

United States. Army.

Topical Subject:

World War, 1939-1945--Veterans--United States.

Geography:

United States--Emigration and immigration.

Vienna (Austria)

Genre/Form:

Passports.

Correspondence.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Biographical material, 1840-1955

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Alter, Charles, 1947-1948
1.2, OS 1	Alter, Heinrich, 1933-1934
1.3	Alter, Henry: Education, 1925-1940
1.4	Alter, Henry: Film and theatre industry, 1937-1949
1.5	Alter, Henry: Immigration, 1937-1955
1.6	Alter, Karoline, 1909-1946
1.7, OS 2	Alter family, 1840-1940
1.8	Gentschik family, 1874-1911
1.9	Austrian and German currency, 1910-1948
1.10	Viennese newspapers, 1940-1944

Series 2. Military service, 1942-1983

Box/Folder	Title
1.11-1.12, OS 3	Personnel files, 1942-1955
1.13-1.14	Herz, Martin F. files and memorandums, 1942-1983
1.15-1.16	Theater and music section memorandums, 1945-1949

Series 3. Correspondence, 1939-1998

Box/Folder	Title
2.1	Alter, Charles, 1939-1949
2.2	Henreid, Paul, 1943-1946
2.3	von Karajan, Herbert, 1946-1990
2.4	Correspondence regarding Henry Alter's personal papers, 1977-1998
2.5	Other correspondence, 1941-1949