

GROOTKERK FAMILY PAPERS, 1930-1996 (bulk 1930-1951)
2002.22.1

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

Title: Grootkerk family papers

Dates: 1930-1996 (bulk 1930-1951)

Accession number: 2002.22.1

Creator: Grootkerk (Family : Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Added creators: Grootkerk, Hedwig, 1918-1992.
Grootkerk, Jacques, 1913-1999.

Extent: 1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)

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

Abstract: The Grootkerk family papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, personal narratives, photographs, and printed materials documenting Jacques and Hedi Grootkerk's marriage in Amsterdam, Jacques' flight to England via Spain and service in the Princess Irene Brigade, and Hedi's flight to Switzerland via France. The bulk of the collection is comprised of love letters between Jacques and Hedi while they were separated during the war.

Languages: Dutch, English, German, French

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), Grootkerk family papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Paul Grootkerk donated the Grootkerk family papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1991, 1993, 1994, and 2002. The accessions previously cataloged as 1991.119.2, 1993.39.1, and 1994.A.0234 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related materials: Paul Grootkerk also donated a military uniform jacket, trousers, and beret (1991.119.1), a War Memorial Cross for the Normandy landing (2002.22.2), and a Cross of Merit medal with three medal bars and a presentation box (2002.22.3) to the Museum.

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, December 2013

Biographical note

Jacques Grootkerk (1913-1999) was born in Amsterdam to Isaac (Isi) and Paula Grootkerk. In 1940 he married Hedwig (Hedi) Grootkerk (1918-1992), who was born in 1918 in Nieder-Ohmen, Germany, to Juda and Klara Justus and moved to Holland in 1934. Jacques was summoned by the Gestapo to be sent to a work camp but fled with his brother, Erich, via Belgium, France, and Spain (spending time in internment camps in France and Spain) to England. He joined the Princess Irene Brigade, survived Normandy, and returned to Holland as a liberator to find most of his family had perished in the Holocaust. Hedi Grootkerk fled with her brother, Herbert, via Belgium and France to Switzerland, where they survived the war. Jacques and Hedi were reunited in Paris after liberation and returned to Amsterdam where they had their son, Paul. Hedi's sister, Ruth, immigrated to the United States in 1936, and her brother Julius followed in 1940 with his wife, Alma, and son, Hans. Their brothers Herbert and Ludwig survived the war, but their sister Bertha Stern perished in Minsk in 1943, as did their mother, Klara, who was sent to Vught, Westerbork, and then Auschwitz in 1943. Jacques' parents were sent to Westerbork and then Sobibor in 1943 and perished.

Scope and content of collection

The Grootkerk family papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, personal narratives, photographs, and printed materials documenting Jacques and Hedi Grootkerk's marriage in Amsterdam, Jacques' flight to England via Spain and service in the Princess Irene Brigade, and Hedi's flight to Switzerland via France. The bulk of the collection is comprised of love letters between Jacques and Hedi while they were separated during the war.

Biographical materials include identification papers, ration books, military papers, and receipts documenting Jacques and Hedi Grootkerk's refugee status, Jacques' time in England, his military service, and his military decorations.

The two correspondence series primarily consists of letters and telegrams between Jacques and Hedi during the war, some of which were transmitted via Jacques' uncle Abraham Leuw. These series also include Leuw's letters to Jacques and Hedi, correspondence from Jacques' parents and brother and from Hedi's siblings, and official correspondence to Jacques in England and Hedi in Switzerland regarding their refugee status and his military service.

Personal narratives include Erich Grootkerk's *Onze Weg naar Engeland*; Jacques Grootkerk's untitled essay about his flight from the Netherlands, journey through Belgium, France, Spain, and England, and his military service in the Princess Irene Brigade; and notes and essays about the brothers' refugee experiences, including a talk on "Impressions of England" Jacques prepared for the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Photographs depict Jacques and Hedi individually, together, with family members, and with the Princess Irene Brigade in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and France.

Printed materials include a set of photo postcards documenting the German surrender, a booklet documenting the Princess Irene Brigade, and souvenirs from Jacques' time in England including a bus map, lecture and dance tickets, postcard, and laundry tag.

System of arrangement

The Grootkerk family papers are arranged as six series:

- Series 1: Biographical materials, 1930-1951
- Series 2: Correspondence sent, 1939-1945
- Series 3: Correspondence received,
- Series 4: Personal narratives, approximately 1942-1996
- Series 5: Photographs, 1938-1945
- Series 6: Printed materials, 1934-1950

Indexing terms

Netherlands--Koninklijke Landmacht--Irenebrigade

Jews--Netherlands--Amsterdam.

Jewish refugees--Spain.

Jewish refugees--England.

Jewish refugees--Switzerland.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Personal narratives.

World War, 1939-1945--Jewish participation.

Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Miranda de Ebro (Spain)

Wolverhampton (England)

Saint-Gervais-les-Bains (France)

Clarens (Switzerland)

Montreux (Switzerland)

Kapelle (Zeeland, Switzerland)

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Biographical materials, 1930-1951

Box	Folder	Title
1	1	Grootkerk, Hedi, 1942
1	2	Grootkerk, Jacques, 1930, 1939-1945, 1951

Series 2: Correspondence sent, 1939-1945

Box	Folder	Title
1	3	Grootkerk, Erich, 1943-1945
1	4	Grootkerk, Hedi to French and Swiss authorities, 1942-1943
1	5	Grootkerk, Hedi to Grootkerk, Jacques, 1942
1	6-11	Grootkerk, Hedi to Grootkerk, Jacques, 1943 (6 folders)
1	12-13	Grootkerk, Hedi to Grootkerk, Jacques, 1944 (2 folders)
1	14	Grootkerk, Hedi to Leuw, Abraham, approximately 1942-1945
1	15	Grootkerk, Isi and Paula, 1943
1	16	Grootkerk, Jacques (as D. Ritmeester) to Grootkerk, Hedi, 1942
1	17	Grootkerk, Jacques to Grootkerk, Hedi, 1942
1 2	18-23 1-5	Grootkerk, Jacques to Grootkerk, Hedi, 1943 (11 folders)
2	6-16	Grootkerk, Jacques to Grootkerk, Hedi, 1944 (11 folders)
2	17-19	Grootkerk, Jacques to Grootkerk, Hedi, 1945 (3 folders)
2	20	Grootkerk, Jacques to Miscellaneous, 1942-1945
3	1	Justus, Ruth and Julius, and Stern, Bertha, 1939-1942
3	2	Leuw, Abraham to Grootkerk, Hedi, 1942-1944
3	3	Leuw, Abraham to Grootkerk, Jacques, 1942-1943
3	4	Leuw, Abraham to Miscellaneous, 1942

Series 3: Correspondence received, 1942-1945

Box	Folder	Title
3	5	Grootkerk, Erich, 1943
3	6	Grootkerk, Hedi, 1942-1944
3	7	Grootkerk, Jacques, from the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1942
3	8	Grootkerk, Jacques, from Burger J.A.W., 1943
3	9-10	Grootkerk, Jacques, from friends and family, 1942-1945 (2 folders)
3	11	Grootkerk, Jacques, from the London Committee of the Netherland Red Cross Society, 1942-1944
3	12	Grootkerk, Jacques, from Milhado, A. and <i>Vrij Nederland</i> , 1942
3	13	Grootkerk, Jacques, from Netherland Troop Detachment, London, 1943
3	14	Grootkerk, Jacques, from the Netherlands Consulates General in Lisbon and Geneva, 1942

3	15	To Grootkerk, Jacques, from the Postal and Telegraph Censorship Department and Bank of England, approximately 1943
3	16	To Grootkerk, Jacques, from the Welfare Committee for the Netherlands Fighting Forces, approximately 1943
3	17	Justus, Herbert, possibly from Justus, Klara, 1942

Series 4: Personal narratives, approximately 1942-1996

Box	Folder	Title
3	18	Grootkerk, Erich, <i>Onze Weg naar Engeland</i> , 1996
3	19	Grootkerk, Jacques, approximately 1994
3	20	Notes and essays, approximately 1942-1945

Series 5: Photographs, 1938-1945

Box	Folder	Title
3	21	Grootkerk, Hedi, Switzerland, approximately 1943-1944
3	22	Grootkerk, Jacques and Hedi, After liberation, 1945
3	23	Grootkerk, Jacques and Hedi, Engagement party, wedding, reception, and after liberation, 1938, 1940, 1945
3	24	Grootkerk, Jacques, <i>Het Parool</i> photograph of Princess Irene Brigade in a liberation parade, 1945
3	25	Grootkerk, Jacques, Princess Irene Brigade and training, 1942-1945
3	26	Grootkerk, Jacques, with Grootkerk, Erich and James, approximately 1943-1944
3	27	Grootkerk, Jacques, with Grootkerk, Erich and Justus, Herbert, 1945

Series 6: Printed materials, 1934-1950

Box	Folder	Title
3	28	Book, <i>Princess Irene Gedenkboek</i> , 1945 (Not Digitized)
3	29	Booklet, "Kon. Ned. Brigade Prinses Irene Garderegiment," approximately 1950
3	30	Photo postcards, "Foto's Capitulatie-Onderhandelingen Nederland," approximately 1945
3	31	Souvenirs from England, 1934, approximately 1942-1944