

MANEK AND ILONA WERDIGER PAPERS, 1927-1947
2005.287.1 (RG-10.474)

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Manek and Ilona Werdiger papers

Dates: 1927-1947

Accession number: 2005.287.1

Creator: Manek Werdiger

Extent: 2 folders

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

Abstract: The Manek and Ilona Werdiger papers contain photographs and identification documents relating to Manek Werdiger, his parents, and siblings. Included in the collection are identification documents for Manek's family, and photographs from before and after the war, depicting Manek's family and his wife.

Languages: English, German

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: Manek and Ilona Werdiger papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The Manek and Ilona Werdiger papers were donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in two separate donations on August 8, 1991 and June 13, 2005. The

papers were given two separate accession numbers: 1991.162 and 2005.287.1. These papers were unified on January 28, 2009, and are now together as a single accession under 2005.287.1.

Related archival materials: Manek and Ilona Werdiger both have given oral histories to the USC Shoah Foundation. Both interviews can be found online through the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive.

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

Processing history: Michael Folkerts, May 2015

Biographical note / Administrative history

Manek Werdiger was born Manek Springut, in Krakow, Poland to Nathan and Malka Springut. He had an older brother named Henryk and an older sister named Teresa. Born into a Jewish middle class family, Manek attended private Jewish schools, and graduated months before Germany invaded Poland. The Springut family stayed together in Krakow, where they were forced into labor until March 1941, when they were forced into the Krakow ghetto. In October 1942, Jews were brought out into the street where the Gestapo separated the young from the old and weak. Nathan and Malka Springut were separated from their children, and sent to Belzec where they perished. The Springut children remained in the ghetto until March 1943, where they were sent to the Plaszow concentration camp. Henryk was murdered several months later after being accused of stealing food. In August 1944, Manek was sent to Mauthausen to work in a factory. He then told officers he was a mechanic, and was sent to St. Valentin to work in a factory. After an allied bombing, Manek was left injured and sent back to Mauthausen. Once he had somewhat recovered, Manek was sent on a death march to Gunskirchen, where he remained for several weeks. At one point, the guards had left and U.S. forces liberated the camp. Manek was sent to the Polish displaced persons camp in Linz, where he got typhus. Manek survived, but learned that the rest of his family did not. While at Linz he met Ilona Mandel, and married her in 1948. Manek worked as an accountant for the Joint Distribution Committee, before immigrating to the United States in 1949.

Ilona Mandel Werdiger was born in 1925 in Przemysl, Poland. In 1939, as war broke out in Poland, Przemysl was divided in two and occupied by the Germans and Soviets, and Ilona lived under Soviet control. In June, 1941, Germany invaded and the Jews were placed in ghettos. The Mandel family paid another family to hide them in the meantime. They lived with the family until the end of 1943, when they were given up to the Gestapo. Ilona was separated and she never saw her parents again. Ilona was put on a cattle train, but managed to climb out of a hole and jumped from the moving train. As she landed, she was knocked unconscious until the night when she woke up and walked back to Przemysl, where she stayed with a family friend. In February 1944, the remaining Jews were gathered and Ilona was sent to Plaszow for six months, before then moving to Auschwitz and later Birkenau. She then worked at a munitions factory in Chemnitz, Germany, where she could hear the front lines of the war coming closer. As the armies neared, Ilona was sent to Theresienstadt to be killed, but the Red Cross had taken over the camp by the time of her arrival. She left the camp and stayed in Prague where she learned her family was killed. On a trip to visit a friend in the Polish displaced persons camp in Linz, she met Manek Werdiger and married him in 1948, before moving to the United States in 1949.

Scope and content of collection

The Manek and Ilona Werdiger papers contain primarily identification and photographs of the Springut family prior to and during their incarceration in the Jewish ghettos in Krakow, Poland. The identification papers are from the Jewish Community of Krakow, and identify his mother Malka and brother Henryk, and his cousins as Jewish. The photographs are family portraits and group photos of the Springut family and Manek's wife, Ilona Mandel.

System of arrangement

The Manek and Ilona Werdiger are arranged as a single series.

Indexing terms

Werdiger, Manek
Springut, Manek
Werdiger, Ilona Mandel
Springut, Malka
Springut, Nathan
Springut, Henryk
Springut, Ozjasz
Springut, Leopold
Springut, Rita
Springut, Teresa
Springut, Berta
Springut, Laura
Leder, Ahalia

Bergen-Belsen (Concentration camp)
Belzec (Concentration camp)
Gunskirchen (Concentration Camp)
Plaszow (Concentration Camp)
Birkenau (Concentration camp)
Theresienstadt (Concentration camp)

Jewish ghettos--Poland--Krakow
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)
Jewish ghettos--Europe.
Concentration camps--Europe.

Krakow (Poland)
Sankt Valentin (Austria)
Gunskirchen (Austria)
Linz (Austria)
Przemysl (Poland)

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Manek and Ilona Werdiger papers, 1927-1947

Folder	Title
1	Jewish Community of Krakow identification, 1940
2	Photographs, 1927-1947