

**ROSS BAKER COLLECTION, 1933-2005**  
**2006.265.1**

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

Title: Ross Baker collection

Dates: 1933-2005 (bulk 1933-1938)

Accession number: 2006.265.1

Creator: Baker, Ross, 1886-1978

Extent: 2 linear feet (1 box, 2 oversize boxes, and 5 oversize folders)

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

Abstract: The collection was gathered by Ross Baker and his family while living in Austria and documents the Anschluss in 1938, the treatment of Jews, and the family's experiences as a non-Jewish American family living in Vienna in the late 1930s. The collection includes a diary written by Helen Baker; letters written by Baker family members; leaflets, newspapers, and magazines relating to the Anschluss; US Coast Guard photographs of Cherbourg and the invasion at Normandy; liberation photographs of Ebensee; and a document specifying that the Baker family owed no taxes or fees and could leave the country. The green markings throughout the collection were made by Stanley Baker, Ross Baker's son, when he used the material for presentations and teaching.

Languages: German, English, Italian

**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), Ross Baker collection (2006.265.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Stanley A. Baker, the son of Ross Baker, donated the Ross Baker collection to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2006.

Separated material: In 2006, Stanley A. Baker also donated a camera (2006.265.3), toy figurines (2006.265.4-.11), postage stamps (2006.265.13-.153), "Uns geht die Sonne nicht unter" (2006.265.154), posters (2006.265.1.6-.10), eight film recordings (2006.265.2), and a Peruvian scrip (2006.265.155). The following publications were transferred to the Library:

- Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Fuhrer, undated
- Fuhrer Wir Danken Dir, undated
- Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, Der Furher in Wien, undated
- Municher Illustrierte Zeitung April 2, 1938
- Municher Illustrierte Zeitung April 2, 1938
- Die Fahne Hoch, sheet music

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

Processing history: Morgan Voth, June 2019 and December 2019

### **Biographical note**

Ross Allen Baker (1886-1978) was born in Greencastle, Indiana, to Philip and Luemma Baker (née Allen). Ross received a BA in chemistry in 1906 from DePauw University and a PhD in 1914 from the University of Wisconsin. He married Helen Fredericka Porter (1889-1964) on December 30, 1914. The couple had five sons: Philip Schaffner (1916-1986), Porter (1918-1987), Frederick Ross (1920-?), Stanley Allen (1921-?), and Raymond Davis (1921-1958). Ross held various teaching positions at universities throughout the United States and England. He was a national counselor in chemistry for the Boy Scouts of America, and helped write the merit badge booklet. During World War I (1914-1918), Ross served in the Chemical Warfare Service, specializing in the use of mustard gas. He later became active in efforts to have nations ban the use of biological and chemical weapons in the League of Nations, and later in the United Nations. In 1928, he was a US delegate for an International Union of Chemistry meeting at the League of Nations, and in 1938, he was a US delegate to the International Congress of Chemistry in Rome, Italy.

In 1930, Ross began teaching at the College of the City of New York, and in 1937, he was given a sabbatical leave to take courses in microchemistry at the University of Vienna. Ross, his wife, and their sons lived in Vienna during the academic year 1937-1938. The boys attended school while in Europe and the family travelled during the summers. During that time, Austria was in the midst of an economic depression, which facilitated the growth of antisemitic and pro-Nazi sentiments. The Baker family was in the city on March 13, 1938, when Austria was annexed into Germany, in what became known as the "Anschluss." Helen kept a detailed diary describing what she saw as Austria was absorbed into Nazi Germany. The university closed temporarily, so Ross took his 16mm camera to film the events of the Anschluss and its aftermath in Vienna. As an American delegate to a convention, Ross had a badge that allowed him to film Hitler and others at close range.

Following the Anschluss, many tourists left the country, but the Bakers remained, as Ross was slated to attend a chemistry convention in Rome in May. On April 10, there was a formal vote in support of Hitler

as Fuhrer, and the newspapers were filled with Nazi propaganda. Following the elections, the German authorities immediately enacted anti-Jewish laws stripping Jews of their rights as citizens, including the right to vote. Ross filmed the widespread defacement and boycotting of Jewish businesses. There were financial problems as the banks closed to convert from shillings to German marks, and the Reichsbank froze foreign money exchanges to prevent withdrawals as people sought to leave. Although their American passports gave Ross and Helen a sense of security, their Jewish friends were anxious to escape Austria. In May 1938, the family accompanied Ross to Rome and witnessed public events for the summit meeting between Hitler and Mussolini. The family travelled the rest of the summer, and sailed from France back to the United States at the end of August.

Biography by Jenn Briggs

### **Scope and content of collection**

The collection was gathered by Ross Baker and his family while living in Austria and documents the Anschluss in 1938, the treatment of Jews, and the family's experiences as a non-Jewish American family living in Vienna in the late 1930s. The collection includes a diary written by Helen Baker; letters written by Baker family members; leaflets, newspapers, and magazines relating to the Anschluss; US Coast Guard photographs of Cherbourg and the invasion at Normandy; liberation photographs of Ebensee; and a document specifying that the Baker family owed no taxes or fees and could leave the country. The green markings throughout the collection were made by Stanley Baker, Ross Baker's son, when he used the material for presentations and teaching.

The Baker family series includes correspondence mainly from Helen to family members including her mother, and between Stanley and his parents, Helen and Ross, as well as a document specifying that the Baker family owed no taxes or fees and can leave the country. The diary, written by Helen Baker in 1933 and from 1937-1938, documents her experience mainly in Austria in 1938. In her entries she writes vividly of the chaos in the streets, the overwhelming amount of propaganda disseminated in the run up to the April vote, the distress of her Jewish acquaintances, and the treatment of Jews. She also writes about visiting the central cemetery in Vienna and seeing the alarming number of new graves in the Jewish section and of her visits to several Jewish shops guarded by Nazis to see if she will be allowed to enter.

Printed material was collected by Ross and his family while living in Austria and includes mainly newspapers, clippings, and magazines related to the Anschluss and the war in general. Newspapers and clippings are dated March and April 1938. Leaflets, booklets, and a broadside relate to rallies, calls for donations, and other propaganda.

Photographs consist of US Coast Guard photographs of Cherbourg and the invasion at Normandy and an album page which includes liberation photographs of Ebensee and information relating to Stanley's experience and service in WWII.

### **System of arrangement**

The Ross Baker collection is arranged as three series:

Series 1: Baker family, 1933-1938

Series 2: Printed material, 1935-1943

Series 3: Photographs, 1944-2005

### **Indexing terms**

#### **Person:**

Baker, Ross, 1886-1978.

Baker, Helen, 1889-1964.

#### **Topical Subject:**

Americans--Austria--History.

Jews--Austria--Vienna.

Propaganda.

World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives, American.

#### **Geography:**

Austria--History--Anschluss, 1938.

Vienna (Austria)

#### **Genre/Form:**

Correspondence.

Diaries.

Leaflets.

Photographs.

## **CONTAINER LIST**

### **Series 1: Baker family, 1933-1938**

| <b>Folder/Box</b> | <b>Title</b>             |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1.1               | Correspondence, 1937     |
| 1.2               | Correspondence, 1938     |
| Box 3             | Diary, 1933, 1937-1938   |
| 1.3               | Family papers, 1935-1938 |

### **Series 2: Printed material, 1935-1943**

| <b>Folder/Box</b>      | <b>Title</b>                                 |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1.4                    | Booklets, 1938                               |
| 2.1                    | Broadside, circa 1938                        |
| 2.2                    | Certificates, 1936-1943                      |
| OS 1<br>2.3-2.4<br>1.5 | Clippings, 1938                              |
| 2.5<br>OS 2            | <i>Deutscher Telegraf</i> , April 8, 1938    |
| 1.6-1.7                | Leaflets, 1935-1938 (2 folders)              |
| 2.6                    | <i>Life</i> magazine, 1938                   |
| 2.7-2.12               | <i>Neue Freie Presse</i> , March-April, 1938 |

|             |                                                    |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| OS 3-5      | <i>New York Herald Tribune</i> , March 1938        |
| 2.13<br>1.8 | Newspapers, 1938                                   |
| 2.14        | <i>Wiener Neueste Nachrichten</i> , March 11, 1938 |

**Series 3: Photographs, 1944-2005**

| <b>Folder/Box</b> | <b>Title</b>              |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1.9               | Album page, 1945-2005     |
| 1.10              | US Coast Guard, 1944-1945 |