

MARGOT SCHWARZSCHILD WICKI PAPERS, 1941-2003

2006.464.1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Margot Schwarzschild Wicki papers

Dates: 1941-2003

Accession number: 2006.464.1

Creator: Margot Schwarzschild Wicki

Extent: 17 folders

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

Abstract: The Margot Schwarzschild Wicki papers contain documents and photographs relating to her family's stay at the Gurs and Rivesaltes camps, and their eventual rescue by the Swiss Red Cross. These documents are primarily identification papers, including certificates of internment, baptism and vaccination documents, and identity cards. The material from the Schwarzschild's time with the Swiss Red Cross includes invitations to join, correspondence, and a bound hand-book given by the children to the Elsa Ruth. The post-war documents include return visits that Margot made to Gurs, and an anniversary ceremony in Kaiserslautern, her birthplace. Also included are various photographs of the Schwarzschild family and Kaiserslautern.

Languages: English, French, 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: Margot Schwarzschild Wicki papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: The Margot Schwarzschild papers were donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2006 by Margot Schwarzschild Wicki.

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, April 2015

Biographical note

Margot Schwarzschild (1931-) was born in Kaiserslautern, Germany to a Jewish father, Richard, and a Catholic mother, Aloisia (Luisi). She had one older sister, Hannelore. In 1938, the sisters were not allowed to attend school due to their Jewish upbringing. During the Kristallnacht, their father Richard was arrested and sent to Dachau concentration camp, before eventually being released. In October 1940, the family was deported, and sent to Gurs internment camp in France. Richard was separated to a different section of the camp, where he led a youth group. In February 1941, Richard was sent to a prison in Pau, because members of his youth group smuggled bread into the camp. In March, Luisa, Margot and Hannelore were sent to Rivesaltes internment camp, where Richard was eventually sent in June. The Swiss Red Cross aided the children in Rivesaltes, providing additional rations, and eventually assisting Margot and Hannelore to live at a private school in Pringy, France. The sisters returned to Rivesaltes in the summer, staying there until August 1942. The family was scheduled for deportation to Auschwitz, but with the assistance of a photo of Luisi's first communion, she was able to convince authorities that she and her daughters were Catholic. Richard could not be saved, and was sent to Auschwitz. Friedel Reiter (later Bohny) of the Swiss Red Cross was able to help arrange the family to leave the camp, and had the sisters sent back to Pringy, while Luisi worked at a Swiss Red Cross station nearby in Cruseilles. After Hannelore's and Margot's graduation from school, the sisters joined their mother in Cruseilles. With the end of the war, the family moved to Bern, Switzerland in May 1945, to wait for Richard, as they had discussed previously this is where they would meet if they became separated. The family soon learned that he was killed in Auschwitz, and they returned to Kaiserslautern in October 1946 where the girls could finish their schooling. Hannelore became a Kindergarten teacher and Margot an interpreter. In 1952, Hannelore married Franz Wicki, and in 1956 Margot married his brother Josef. The two settled in Switzerland.

Scope and content of collection

The Margot Schwarzschild Wicki papers contain documents and photographs from her family's time in Gurs and Rivesaltes internment camps, and their subsequent stay with the Swiss Red Cross. Other material in this collection include items from Margot's return visit to Kaiserslautern and Gurs decades later. The official documents are primarily for identification and verification purposes, including certificates of internment, baptism and vaccination papers, and identification cards. The baptism certificate was awarded after convincing authorities that Luisi, Margot and Hannelore were Catholic, thus sparing them from deportation to Auschwitz. The documents pertaining to the Schwarzschild's time with the Swiss Red Cross include correspondence received from both Margot's paternal and maternal grandmothers, and Simon Salzmänn, who lived with Margot during the war. Other items include mission orders for Luisi, the invitation for the children to return to school in Pringy, and a hand-bound notebook created by the schoolchildren at Pringy, and given to their Director Elsa Ruth for her birthday. Also included is a song card, which has the lyrics to one of the many songs the children sang

while at school. The post-war documents include copy prints for art drawn by Freidel Reiter (Bohny) and inspired by the sights she saw at Gurs internment camp. Other material are documents relating to a commemoration in 2000 of the anniversary of the deportation of Jews from Kaiserslautern, and photos from the Gurs memorial that was erected after the war. A letter recommending Friedel Bohny-Reiter and August Bohny for inclusion to Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations. The photographs include portraits of the Schwarzschild family, and of Kaiserslautern before the war. Of particular note is the photographs of Luisi's first communion, which was crucial in convincing authorities at Gur that her family was not Jewish and escaping deportation to Auschwitz.

System of arrangement

The Margot Schwarzschild Wicki papers are arranged as four series:

- Series 1: Official documents, 1941-1951
- Series 2: Swiss Red Cross, 1942-1946
- Series 3: Post-war, 1942-2000
- Series 4: Photographs, 1927-2003

Indexing terms

Wicki, Margot Schwarzschild
Wicki, Hannelore Schwarzschild
Schwarzschild, Aloisia
Schwarzschild, Richard
Wicki, Franz
Wicki, Josef
Ruth, Elsa
Bohny, Friedel Reiter
Bohny, August

Rivesaltes (Concentration camp)
Gurs (Concentration camp)
Auschwitz (Concentration camp)
Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz.

Righteous Gentiles in the Holocaust.
World War, 1939-1945--Concentration camps--France
World War, 1939-1945--Jews--France
World War, 1939-1945--Children--France.
Jewish children in the Holocaust.
Jewish children--France.
Jewish refugees--France.

Pringy (Haute-Savoie, France)
Cruseilles (France)
Kaiserslautern (Germany)
Rivesaltes (France)

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Official documents, 1941-1951

Folder	Title
1	Baptism certificate, 1941
2	Certificates of internment, 1945-1951
3	Charges against Richard Schwarzschild, 1941
4	Identification cards, 1949
5	Release papers from Camp de Rivesaltes, 1942
6	Vaccination certificate, 1941

Series 2: Swiss Red Cross, 1942-1946

Folder	Title
7	Correspondence, 1943-1946
8	Hand-bound notebook presented to Elsa Ruth, 1943
9	Invitation to return to Pringy, 1942
10	Mission Order, 1946
11	Song card, 1943

Series 3: Post-war, 1942-2000

Folder	Title
12	Anniversary of deportation to Gurs, 2000
13	Art reproductions, 1942-1980
14	Gurs internment camp memorial, 2000
15	Timeline of events, undated
16	Yad Vashem recommendation for Friedel Bohny-Reiter and August Bohny, 1990

Series 4: Photographs, 1927-2003

Folder	Title
17	Various, 1927-2003