

**FRIEDMAN FAMILY PAPERS, 1921-2009**  
**2009.348.2**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
Tel. (202) 479-9717  
e-mail: [reference@ushmm.org](mailto:reference@ushmm.org)

**Descriptive summary**

Title: Friedman family papers

Dates: 1921-2009

Accession number: 2009.348.2

Creator: Friedman (Family : Mukachevo, Ukraine)

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (1 box)

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

Abstract: The Friedman family papers consist of biographical materials, photographs, and restitution files documenting the Friedman family from Mukachevo, their prewar lives, the deaths of family members in the Holocaust, the immigration of surviving family members to the United States, and their efforts to receive restitution for their persecution and suffering during the Holocaust.

Languages: English, Hungarian, Czech, German, Russian, Hebrew

**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: Friedman family papers (2009.348.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Ruth Cohen donated the Friedman family papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2009, 2010, and 2014. Collections accessioned as 2009.348, 2010.73, 2010.466.1, 2014.135.1, and an accretion to 2014.135.1 have been incorporated into this collection.

Processing History: Julie Schweitzer, June 2019

### **Biographical note**

Ruth Renee Cohen was born Raizel Friedman on April 26, 1930 in Mukačevo, Czechoslovakia (later Munkács, Hungary, now Mukachevo, Ukraine) to Herman and Bertha (Breinde, née Schwartz) Friedman. Her father and uncle manufactured wine, liquor, and beer. Their business was primarily wholesale, but Jewish customers came each Friday afternoon to buy wine for the Sabbath. Ruth and her older sister Teresa (Terezie, later Fischgrund, b. 1923) and younger brother Aharon (Aaron, Arie) helped her father fill their bottles. Ruth's grandfather, Shimshon Friedman, passed away in 1938, and her grandmother Esther Friedman lived with her family. The family was both Orthodox and Zionist and were followers of the Spinker and Belzer rebbes. The children attended the Hebrew Gymnasium. Aharon, a very gifted student who supplemented his school studies with private tutoring, dreamed of becoming the chief rabbi of Chicago.

Ruth and her family began feeling the effects of the Holocaust after the break-up of Czechoslovakia, when Herman could no longer own his own business, but he continued to work there. Around 1940 or 1941 the Friedman's German governess, who had been quite devoted to the family, received a letter from her parents telling her she had to come home as she was not allowed to work for Jews any more. Then in 1942, the Friedmans lost contact with Bertha's family in Slovakia. They learned that her brother Avraham Yosef Schwartz, a rabbi in Ormeny, near Nitra, had been killed. Bertha's sister Rosa Jonap was also arrested. Bertha went into mourning upon hearing the news and stopped listening to music or attending entertainment events. Rosa's daughter Hedwig Haber sent her two younger children, Leo and Esther Haber, to live with the Friedmans as Jewish life in Mukachevo was still relatively safe. Bertha's other brother, Rabbi Moritz Schwartz, ran a vocational hachshara in Hlohovec and saved 137 people in his attic.

In March 1944, Germany occupied Hungary and immediately began imposing anti-Semitic ordinances. In April the Friedmans were forced to move to a ghetto and the following month they were sent to a brick factory next to the railroad tracks. After a day or two, they were told to board a deportation train. Ruth's biology teacher refused to board the train and was shot. When the family arrived at Auschwitz, Ruth's mother and brother were sent to the left and killed. Herman was selected for labor with other able-bodied men, and Ruth and Teresa were sent to a woman's barracks. Teresa fortunately found a friend from summer camp, Miriam Leitner, who had been deported from Slovakia two years earlier and was now a Blockaelteste. Miriam took the sisters under her wing and gave them a little bit of food and somewhat better work. Ruth became a runner. Her job was to wait by the entrance of the compound and be available to deliver messages as needed. At one point Ruth developed typhoid fever and was in the infirmary for about a week, but she was allowed to return to work afterwards. The girls learned that their father was still alive and managed to see him once. They also regularly met their mother's younger brother Elish (Shia) who came to Auschwitz from Terezin. One day he stopped coming to their regular rendezvous, and they learned that he, too, had been murdered. In late October, shortly after the resistance blew up the crematoria, the sisters were sent in a transport of approximately 500 women to Nuremberg to work in a factory that manufactured airplane parts. Conditions were much better than in Auschwitz. Their supervisors were civilians who sometimes smuggled in extra food for the women. However, soon afterwards, the Allies began bombing Nuremberg. The women could no longer work and spent their days in bunkers. They were then transferred to Holleischen concentration camp (a sub-camp of Flossenbürg in Holýšov, Czechoslovakia). Ruth became quite ill and was only able to work for a few

days while she was there. In early May the prisoners noticed that their guards began leaving, and then, shortly before the end of the war, Russian and Ukrainian partisans liberated the camp. Ruth and Teresa made their way back to Mukachevo where they reunited with their father, who had returned home from Buchenwald the previous month. Ruth lived at home for about a month and then for the next year recuperated in different hospitals and sanatoria. Throughout this period the family corresponded with Ruth's maternal aunt and uncle, Aaron and Fanny Stern, who had immigrated to the United States before the war. Though not wealthy themselves, the Sterns regularly sent them packages and later visas and boat tickets. Ruth and her father immigrated to the United States on April 24, 1948; Teresa followed about six months later. Herman found work as presser of neckties, and Ruth also worked. At the age of 22, she married Benjamin Cohen, whom she met while working as a cashier in the Educational Alliance.

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

The Friedman family papers consist of biographical materials, photographs, and restitution files documenting the Freidman family from Mukachevo, their prewar lives, the deaths of family members in the Holocaust, the immigration of surviving family members to the United States, and their efforts to receive restitution for their persecution and suffering during the Holocaust.

Biographical materials include certificates of birth, marriage, death, citizenship, and good conduct; identification papers, immigration papers, a partial list of former Holleischen inmates, Ruth Cohen's personal narrative about Holleischen, records documenting her father's importation of alcohol supplies from Czechoslovakia after the war, and Ruth's fourth grade school booklet.

Photographs depict the Friedman family in Mukachevo before the war; Ruth's relative Rabbi Moritz Schwartz and his hachschara in Hlovec; and Ruth with other survivors after the war at a sanatorium in the Tatry Mountains.

Restitution papers include applications, forms, correspondence, affidavits, and decisions document the Freidman family's attempts to receive restitution from Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Hungary for their Holocaust losses.

### **System of arrangement**

The Friedman family papers are arranged in three series:

Series 1: Biographical materials, 1921, 1940-1949, 2009

Series 2: Photographs, circa 1930-1947, 1992

Series 3: Restitution papers, 1933, 1945-1963, 1997

### **Indexing terms**

#### **Personal Names**

Cohen, Ruth Renee, 1930-

Friedman, Herman.

Friedman, Bertha.

Freidman, Aharon.

Freidman, Esther.

Fischgrund, Teresa, 1923-

### Corporate Names

Holleischen (Concentration camp)

### Topics

Jews--Ukraine--Mukacheve.

Holocaust survivors.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Reparations.

### Geographic Names

Mukacheve (Ukraine)

United States--Emigration and immigration.

### Genre

Photographs.

Identification cards.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1: Biographical materials, 1921, 1940-1949, 2009

Folder	Title
1.1-1.2	Certificates of birth, marriage, death, citizenship, and good conduct, 1921, 1945-1947 (2 folders)
1.3	Identification papers, 1945-1946
1.4	Immigration papers, 1947-1949
1.5	Partial list of former Holleischen inmates, 1945
1.6	Personal narrative about Holleischen, 2009
1.7	Receipt for 730 Kroners, Abraham Schwarcz, 1942
1.8	Schimmel & Co (alcohol supplies), 1948
1.9	School booklet, fourth grade, 1940-1941

### Series 2: Photographs, circa 1930-1947, 1992

Box/Folder	Title
1.10	Prewar family photographs, circa 1930-1944, 1992
1.11	Rabbi Moritz Schwartz and his hachschara in Hlovec, circa 1936-1940
1.12	Postwar photographs, circa 1947

### Series 3: Restitution papers, 1933, 1945-1963, 1997

Box/Folder	Title
1.13	Czech applications and forms, 1945-1948
1.14-1.15	Czech correspondence and affidavits, 1933, 1946-1948 (2 folders)

1.16	German applications and forms, 1953-1957
1.17	German correspondence and affidavits, 1947-1959
1.18	German decisions, 1956-1963
1.19	Hungarian documents, 1945-1946, 1997