

## **RUTH RAPPAPORT PAPERS, approximately 1929-1969 2012.431.1**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
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### **Descriptive summary**

Title: Ruth Rappaport papers

Dates: approximately 1929-1969

Accession number: 2012.431.1

Creator: Rappaport, Ruth, 1923-2010

Extent: 3.5 linear feet (6 boxes and 3 oversize folders)

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

Abstract: The Ruth Rappaport papers consists of biographical material, correspondence, diaries, and photographs relating to Ruth Rappaport's pre-war and wartime experiences fleeing Germany and immigrating to the United States. The collection also includes extensive correspondence, documents, and photographs relating to Ruth's work and travels as a journalist in Palestine and Israel from 1948-1949 preparing for a mission trip and reporting on the Israeli War of Independence.

Languages: German, English, 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.

Physical access: Negatives in the collection are kept in cold storage for preservation reasons and would require additional time for acclimatization before they can be served to researchers.

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), Ruth Rappaport papers (2012.431.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum received the Ruth Rappaport papers in 2012 from Peter Bartis, the executor of Ruth Rappaport's estate.

Separated material: Peter Bartis also donated a beige patch embroidered with Czechoslovakia owned by a Jewish refugee (2012.431.2) in 2012.

Related material: The Museum also holds an oral history interview conducted with Ruth Rappaport (2010.374).

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

Processing history: Morgan Voth, November 2018.

### **Biographical note**

Ruth Rappaport (1923-2010) was born in Leipzig, Germany to Chaja Helene Rubenstein (1885-1943) and Mendel Rappaport (1877-1944). Helene was born in Mielec, Poland. She had many relatives that immigrated to the United States and Australia, including her three brothers, an uncle, and a first cousin, also named Helene, who started a cosmetics company. Mendel was born in Rostoki, Romania (Roztoky, Ukraine). His family ran a lumber business, and Mendel moved to Leipzig to help expand the business. He left the lumber business to become a furrier. Mendel's first wife died in childbirth, prior to his marriage to Helene in 1910. He had three daughters from his first marriage, all of whom emigrated by 1939. The family attended the large modern Orthodox Brodyer synagogue and kept kosher. Ruth attended a private Jewish school run by Rabbi Carlebach and belonged to the Zionist youth group, Habonim. Mendel was a Zionist and wanted to go to Palestine, but Helene had family in Seattle, Washington, and wanted to go to America.

In 1933 anti-Jewish decrees were passed that restricted aspects of Jewish life. Ruth and her parents had Romanian passports, which did not state that they were Jewish, and they were not as restricted as other Jewish people. On November 8, 1938, their neighbors warned the family to stay inside the following day. Ruth decided to go out to see what was happening. She saw her synagogue on fire and Jewish property being destroyed during the November 9 - 10 Kristallnacht pogrom. Ruth told her parents what she saw, and soon after, the family left for Switzerland. After a short stay, Mendel and Helene decided to return home. Ruth did not want to return to Germany and jumped off the train just before it left the station. She became an au pair in Zurich for the Herzog family and attended daily English language classes. German laws forbid the export of currency, so Ruth's parents sent large quantities of nail polish for her to sell for extra money.

Although Ruth carried a Romanian passport, she was born in Germany, and this made her eligible for immigration to the United States under the US quota for Germany. One of her maternal uncles, Carl, agreed to sponsor her visa application. Ruth's parents were able to travel to Zurich and say goodbye before she left. On October 26, 1939, Ruth boarded the *SS Veendam* in Antwerp, Belgium and was met by her uncle in New York. Helene and Mendel purchased visas for Cuba and Carl had lawyers in Washington, DC working to get them US visas. However, once the US entered the war in December 1941, it became impossible for them to leave. Ruth later learned that Helene and Mendel had been deported to concentration camps. Her father was arrested on October 11, 1943, and hospitalized in Buchenwald, where he died of acute heart failure on January 13, 1944. Her mother was transported to Auschwitz and then to Buchenwald, where she was murdered in August 1943.

Ruth attended high school in Seattle, and then studied sociology, oriental studies, and library science at the University of Washington and the University of California, Berkeley. In February 1945, Ruth became a naturalized citizen. After graduation, she worked for a Jewish newspaper in Seattle and for the Zionist Emergency Council in San Francisco. On January 1, 1948, she went to Palestine as an advance person to prepare for a mission of wealthy San Francisco Jews. While she was there, the War of Independence began and she wrote news reports as a foreign correspondent and helped establish the Israeli National Photo Collection archives. After her return to the United States, she worked for the Department of Defense as a librarian, both overseas and in Washington, D.C.

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

The Ruth Rappaport papers consists of biographical material, correspondence, diaries, and photographs relating to Ruth Rappaport's pre-war and wartime experiences fleeing Germany and immigrating to the United States. The collection also includes extensive correspondence, documents, and photographs relating to Ruth's work and travels as a journalist in Palestine and Israel from 1948-1949 preparing for a mission trip and reporting on the Israeli War of Independence.

Biographical material includes Ruth's birth verification, United States passport application and passport, naturalization paperwork, certificate of naturalization, United Seamen's service cards, power of attorney documentation, and Department of Defense identification card as well as report cards, school identification cards, a diploma, graduation programs, and school notebooks for Ruth's schooling in Germany and Seattle. This series also includes immigration paperwork relating to Ruth's immigration and her parent's attempts to immigrate as well as restitution files relating to Ruth's attempts to claim loss of education, personal property damages, and costs for immigration.

Correspondence includes pre-war, wartime, and post-war correspondence between Ruth and various friends, family members, and colleagues. A large portion of the correspondence is from Ruth's time in Palestine and Israel. In the correspondence they discuss daily life, her career, and various political events. This series also includes two Red Cross messages from Ruth's father, Mendel, checking in on her and telling Ruth how much they miss her.

Diaries and notebooks include calendars, daily notes, diaries, and notebooks kept by Ruth from 1936-1949. In her diaries Ruth writes about daily life, fleeing Germany, and immigrating to the United States. This series also includes daily notes Ruth kept while in Palestine and Israel from 1948-1949. In the notes she documents events and news relating to the Israeli War of Independence, places she visited, and daily activities mainly relating to her work as a journalist.

Work and travel papers include tickets, brochures, pamphlets, boarding passes, invitations, and advertisements acquired by Ruth during her travel on missions and for work. This series also includes official correspondence relating to Ruth's career and press cards and reports gathered by Ruth during her career as a journalist including a State of Israel identification book.

Photographs include pre-war photographs and negatives of Ruth and her family in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Ukraine, photographs and negative of Ruth in Washington D.C. and Seattle after she immigrated to the United States, and photographs and negatives of Ruth during her time in Israel and Palestine.

### **System of arrangement**

The Ruth Rappaport papers are arranged as five series.

Series 1: Biographical material, 1929-1969

Series 2: Correspondence, approximately 1938-1966

Series 3: Diaries and notebooks, approximately 1936-1949 and undated

Series 4: Work and travel papers, approximately 1937-1966

Series 5: Photographs, approximately 1935-1949 and undated

Folders are arranged alphabetically and the documents are arranged chronologically.

### **Indexing terms**

Rappaport, Ruth.

Journalism.

World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945).

Israel-Arab War, 1948-1949.

Leipzig (Germany)

Palestine.

Tel Aviv (Israel)

United States--Emigration and immigration--History.

Diaries.

Photographs.

Correspondence.

## CONTAINER LIST

### **Series 1: Biographical material, 1929-1969**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Title</b>
1.1-1.2	Immigration, 1938-1941 (2 folders)
1.3-1.4	Rappaport, Ruth, 1936-1969 (2 folders)
1.5-1.8	Restitution, 1957-1964 (4 folders)
1.9-1.10	School records, 1929-1958 (2 folders)

### **Series 2: Correspondence, approximately 1938-1966**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Title</b>
1.11	Allen, Kelly, 1947-1949
1.12	Atterman, Lynn, 1948-1955
1.13	Bell, Vladimir, 1951-1952
1.14	Bergman, Fred, 1948-1959
1.15	Bernstein, Alice, 1944-1947

1.16	Blumenfeld, Edith, 1947-1959
1.17	Brown, Helen, 1950-1958
1.18	Dove, 1940s
1.19	Elbaum, Esther, 1944-1954
2.1	Eve, approximately 1950-1959
2.2	Farnese, approximately 1943-1944
2.3	Gross, Jakob, 1938-1939
2.4	Jane, Felisa, 1956-1958
2.5	Judy, 1955
2.6	May, 1959
2.7	Phyllis, 1944-1958
2.8	Rappaport, Mendel, 1943
2.9-2.14	Rappaport, Ruth, approximately 1939-1966 (6 folders)
2.15	Ruelf, Caroline, 1944-1949
2.16-2.18	To Ruth, 1938-1966 (3 folders)
2.19	Zionist Organizations, 1944-1947
2.20	Miscellaneous, approximately 1939-1959

**Series 3: Diaries and notebooks, approximately 1936-1949 and undated**

Box/Folder	Title
2.21	Calendar, 1939
2.22	Calendar, 1941-1943
3.1-3.3	Daily notes, 1948 (3 folders)
3.4-3.5	Daily notes, 1949 (2 folders)
3.6-3.7	Daily notes, approximately 1948-1949 (2 folders)
3.8	Diary, 1939
3.9-3.10	Diary, 1939-1940 (2 folders)
3.11	Diary, 1941-1942
3.12	Diary, 1941-1942
4.1	Diary, 1942
4.2	Notebook, 1936-1946
4.3	Notebook, 1948
4.4	Notebook, undated

**Series 4: Work and travel papers, approximately 1937-1966**

Box/Folder	Title
4.5	Correspondence, 1948-1966
4.6-4.7 OS 1	Journalism, 1948- (3 folders)
4.8-4.10	Reports, 1947-1949 (3 folders)
4.11-4.14 OS 2	Travel, approximately 1937-1958 (5 folders)

4.15 OS 3	Printed material, approximately 1943-1950 (2 folders)
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**Series 5: Photographs, approximately 1935-1949 and undated**

Box/Folder	Title
5.1	Empty photograph sleeves, undated
5.2 Negatives stored separately	France, 1939 (Negatives stored separately)
5.3-5.4 Negatives stored separately	Germany, 1935-1939 (2 folders) (Negatives stored separately)
5.5-5.6 Negatives stored separately	Israel, 1948-1949 (2 folders) (Negatives stored separately)
5.7 Negatives stored separately	Jerusalem, 1948 (Negatives stored separately)
5.8	Photograph notebooks, undated
6.1-6.3 Negatives stored separately	Switzerland, 1937-1939 (3 folders) (Negatives stored separately)
6.4 Negatives stored separately	Ukraine, 1936 (Negatives stored separately)
6.5 Negatives stored separately	Seattle, 1940-1943 (Negatives stored separately)
6.6 Negatives stored separately	Washington D.C. and Virginia, 1943 (Negatives stored separately)
6.7 Negatives stored separately	Miscellaneous, approximately 1935-1949 (Negatives stored separately)