

**OTTO PAPERNIK FAMILY PAPERS**  
**2013.204.1**

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

Title: Otto Papernik family papers

Dates: 1924-1970 (bulk, 1930-1951)

Accession number: 2013.204.1

Creator: Papernik, Otto.

Extent: 1 box (0.5 linear feet)

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

Abstract: Papers of Otto and Irene Papernik, including birth certificates, travel documents, immigration forms, and an unpublished memoir of Otto Papernik, describing his experiences after the annexation of Austria by Germany, his escape to Luxembourg, and after 1940, to southern France, and eventually the Dominican Republic. Collection also contains documents related to Papernik's mother, Karoline, including travel documents and her death certificate, showing that she died at Gurs in 1940.

Languages: German, English, Spanish

**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), Otto Papernik family papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Gift of Peter Papernik, 2013.

Custodial history: Documents were given to Otto Papernik's nephew, Peter Papernik, who subsequently donated them to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2013.

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: Brad Bauer, August 2013

### **Biographical note**

Otto Papernik, born in Vienna in 1907, was a cabinet maker by profession, and following the annexation of Austria by Germany, he planned to emigrate, and left for Luxembourg in the summer of 1938. After settling there, he sought to bring his family, but only his brother and mother managed to arrive after his brother's release from Buchenwald in early 1939. Following the invasion of Luxembourg in May 1940, Papernik escaped on a convoy headed to southern France and then Spain, but once inside Spain, it was turned back to France, and the passengers were interned in Bayonne. During this period, a group of Americans visited the camp, on behalf of the organization seeking to bring Jewish refugees to the Dominican Republic. Papernik was selected for this group, as was a woman he had met on the convoy, who by then had become his fiancée, Irene Koppel. The two travelled together to Marseille, and eventually onward to Spain, Portugal, and the United States, arriving in the Dominican Republic in May 1941, where they were married in August 1941, and settled in Sosua. Otto's brother, Julius, who had migrated to Belgium in 1940, was captured by the Germans and interned in Gurs, in France, as was his mother, Karoline Papernik, who subsequently died at Gurs in August 1940. When Julius was released, he eventually made his way to Sosua as well, rejoining his brother, and the two worked together in carpentry and cabinet making in the settlement. In 1951, Otto and Irene Papernik and their family immigrated to the United States, settling in New York.

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

The papers of Otto and Irene Papernik include birth certificates, travel documents, immigration forms, and an unpublished memoir of Otto Papernik, describing his experiences after the annexation of Austria by Germany, his escape to Luxembourg, and after 1940, to southern France, and eventually the Dominican Republic. The collection also contains documents related to Papernik's mother, Karoline, including travel documents and her death certificate, showing that she died at Gurs in 1940.

### **System of arrangement**

The collection is divided into two series: Writings and Documents. Writings contains a photocopy of the typescript memoir of Otto Papernik, which is undated, but approximately from the 1970s or later. The documents are arranged by individual, and then by type of document, the latter listed in alphabetic order.

### **Indexing terms**

Jews--Dominican Republic--Sosúa.  
Land settlement--Dominican Republic--Sosúa.  
Agricultural colonies--Dominican Republic--Sosúa.  
Jewish refugees--Dominican Republic--Sosúa.  
Jews--Persecutions--Austria--Vienna.  
World War, 1939-1945--Luxembourg.

## CONTAINER LIST

Box    Folder

### Writings

1        1        Memoir, untitled, 102 pages, undated

### Documents

#### Otto Papernik

1        2        Birth certificate, reissued in 1970  
1        3        Divorce from first wife, marriage to second, 1938-1942  
1        4        Education and professional, 1924-1940  
1        5        Identification, 1934-1947  
1        6        Travel documents and immigration, 1940-1951

#### Irene Koppel Papernik

1        7        Birth certificate of father, issued 1930  
1        8        Identification, 1942  
1        9        Travel, 1940-1955

#### Karoline Papernik (née Berger)

1        10       Birth and death certificates  
1        11       Travel documents