

ADA ABRAHAMER PAPERS, CIRCA 1930S-CIRCA 1980S 2015.442.1

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

Descriptive summary

Title: Ada Abrahamer papers

Dates: circa 1930s-circa 1980s [bulk 1941-1948]

Accession number: 2015.442.1

Creator: Abrahamer, Ada

Extent: .5 linear feet (1 box)

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

Abstract: The Ada Abrahamer papers primarily consist of a diary and photographs related to Ada Abrahamer's wartime experiences in work camps and concentration camps in Poland, as well as her postwar life in displaced persons camps in Austria. Abrahamer kept a diary from September 1939 until March 1946, but the only remaining pages are from spring 1944 to March 1946. The surviving pages describe her experiences in Oskar Schindler's airplane parts factory, Plaszów concentration camp, Auschwitz concentration camp, the Lichtewerden bei Freudenthal (Consolidated Flaxspinning Factory) in Sudetenland, and displaced persons camps in Austria. The photographs include several pictures taken in Kraków, Poland during the war, displaced persons camps in Austria, and the Abrahamers on the USS General Black immigrating to the United States.

Languages: Polish, English

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), Ada Abrahamer papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Nora Abrahamer donated the Ada Abrahamer papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2015.

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

Processing history: Adam Fielding, October 2015

Biographical note

Ada Breitkopf Abrahamer (1921-2009) was the only child born to Gustaw Breitkopf and Eleonora Ernestina (Erna) Reif. Ada and her parents were in Kraków, Poland when Germany invaded in 1939. Her father, Gustaw, fled east under the common assumption that only men were in danger. Ada, her mother and grandmother remained at home until they were forced into the Kraków ghetto in April 1941. Ada worked clearing snow, cleaning and disinfecting military installations and working at the Feldzeugdienststelle Munitions Factory. Shortly before the ghetto was liquidated, Ada's grandmother Ida Maria Reif passed away, and in March 1943 Ada and her mother were sent to the Plaszów concentration camp. After a month spent under horrific conditions, they were selected to work in Oskar Schindler's airplane parts factory, the Neue Kuehler Fabrik. They remained there until September 1944. Ada was then returned to Plaszów for a month and then deported to Auschwitz where she stayed for three weeks. In November 1944, she was sent to the Lichtewerden bei Freudenthal (Consolidated Flaxspinning Factory) in Sudetenland. Ada was finally liberated by the Russian Army on May 6, 1945. Her mother Erna was sent to different concentration camps and died in 1944 in Skarżysko-Kamienna Werk C. Throughout her ordeal, Ada kept a diary recording her experiences in the various camps. It was confiscated on three occasions, but she was able to retrieve it each time. After liberation, Ada returned briefly to Krakow before making her way to Austria where she settled in the Bindermichl displaced persons camp near Linz. There she met Rafael Abrahamer (b. 1913), a jeweler who fled east in the beginning of the war and joined the Polish army. He was captured by the Russians and spent the bulk of the war in prisoner of war camps in Siberia. They married on March 30, 1947 and immigrated to the United States on October 30, 1948.

Though Ada survived the Holocaust, all of her immediate relatives perished including her two grandmothers, Ida Maria Reif and Shifra Breitkopf, her Uncle Adolf and Aunt Sara Breitkopf and their children Blanka, Nussa, Tadek, Yurek and Edward, her Uncle Ignatz Breitkopf, Uncle Jacob Breitkopf, Uncle Max Reif and Aunt Basha Reif.

Biograph note by Judith Cohen, 2015

Scope and content of collection

The Ada Abrahamer papers primarily consist of a diary and photographs related to Ada Abrahamer's wartime experiences in work camps and concentration camps in Poland, as well as her postwar life in displaced persons camps in Austria. Abrahamer kept a diary from September 1939 until March 1946, but the only remaining pages are from Spring 1944 to March 1946. The surviving pages describe her experiences in Oskar Schindler's airplane parts factory, Plaszów concentration camp, Auschwitz concentration camp, the Lichtewerden bei Freudenthal (Consolidated Flaxspinning Factory) in Sudeten

Germany, and displaced persons camps in Austria. The photographs include several pictures taken in Kraków, Poland during the war, displaced persons camps in Austria, and the Abrahamers on the USS General Black immigrating to the United States.

The diary contains handwritten pages describing Abrahamer's experiences in work camps and concentration camps. It covers her time in Schindler's airplane parts factory, the Neue Kuehler Fabrik, spring 1944-September 1944; Plaszów concentration camp, September 1944-October 1944; Auschwitz concentration camp, October 1944-November 1944; and Lichtewerden bei Freudenthal (Consolidated Flaxspinning Factory), November 1944-May 1945. Other documents include a Polish border pass used by Abrahamer to cross the Czechoslovakian border in July, 1945, drawings by Ada, and biographical notes chronicling her wartime years.

The photograph series contains an annotated photograph album along with loose photographs primarily related to Ada and Rafael Abrahamer's life in displaced persons camps in Austria, 1945-1947. Included are photographs of Ada and Rafael Abrahamer, Rafael's brother Henryk and his aunt Joska Singer, friends from the Bindermichl displaced persons camp near Linz and the displaced persons camp near Bad Gastein, Austria, several photographs taken in Kraków during the war and Plaszów in 1947, and the Abrahamers on the USS General Black immigrating to the United States. There are also photographs of Rafael Abrahamer in his Polish army uniform and with fellow soldiers. The photograph album chiefly contains annotated photographs of friends in Bad Gastein and Linz.

System of arrangement

The Ada Abrahamer papers are arranged as two series:

Series 1: Diary and other papers, 1944-circa 1980s

Series 2: Photographs, circa 1930s-1948

Series 1 is arranged in chronological order, and Series 2 is arranged in alphabetical order, by name and/or subject.

Indexing terms

USS General Black

Bad Gastein (Displaced persons camp)

Work camps--Poland.

Holocaust survivors--Poland.

Auschwitz (Concentration camp)

Plaszów (Concentration camp)

Lichtewerden (Concentration camp)

Bindermichl (Displaced persons camp)

Emigration & immigration--United States.

Krakow (Poland)

Linz (Austria : Refugee camp)

Diary.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Diary and other papers, 1944-circa 1980s

Folder	Title
1	Biographical notes, circa 1980s
2	Diary, 1944-1946 March
3	Drawings, 1947
4	Polish border pass, 1945

Series 2: Photographs, circa 1930s-1948

Folder	Title
5	Abrahamer, Ada, 1942-1946
6	Abrahamer, Ada and Rafael, 1947-1948
7	Abrahamer, Henryk, circa 1930s
8	Abrahamer, Rafael, 1933-1947
9	Bad Gastein, Austria, 1946
10	Elbaum, Doba, circa 1939-1944
11	Friends and family, circa 1930s-1948
12	Honeymoon, Dachstein Mountains, Austria, 1947
13	Kraków, Poland, circa 1941-1944
14	Linz, Austria, 1945-1946
15	Plaszów concentration camp, Kraków, Poland, 1947
16	Photograph album, 1945-circa 1947 <i>Photograph album cover is in OS1 (Not Digitized)</i>
17	Singer, Joska, 1948
18	USS General Black, 1948