

KAHN FAMILY PAPERS, 1908-1979
2015.613.2

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

Title: Kahn family papers

Dates: 1908-1979 (bulk 1939-1947)

Accession number: 2015.613.2

Creator: Kahn (Family : Sulzburg :Germany)

Extent: 1 linear foot (2 boxes, 1 book enclosure, 1 oversize folder)

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

Abstract: The collection documents the Kahn family's experiences in Germany, France, and Switzerland during the Holocaust. The bulk of the collection consists of letters written to Ruth Kahn in Switzerland from her parents Leo and Elfriede Kahn and her sister Marga Kahn in Sulzburg, Germany and internment camps in southern France at Rivesaltes, Gurs and Les Milles. Also included is other correspondence, identification papers, restitution paperwork, immigration documentation, and a photograph album.

Languages: German, 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), Kahn family papers (2015.613.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Related archival material: A copy of Die Familie Kahn von Sulzburg/Baden : ihre Geschichte und Genealogie / von Ludwig David Kahn. (CS629.K32 K3 1963) was donated and transferred to the library.

Acquisition information: The Kahn family papers were donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Judy Pitson and Marga Birnbaum in 2015. Two accretions were donated in 2017.

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, December 2015, updated in April 2019, July 2022

Biographical note

Ruth Kahn (1923-2015, later Ruth Marx) was born on 8 July 1923 to cattle dealer Leo Louis (1884-1942) and Elfriede (1889-1942) Kahn in Sulzburg, Germany. She had two sisters, Marga (b. 1927, later Marga Birnbaum) and Paula (b. 1924, later Paula Finkelstein), and one brother, Sally or Solly Josef (b. 1929, later Bezalel). The Kahns were Orthodox Jews and Leo was a veteran of World War I.

As anti-Semitism increased in Sulzburg, the Kahns began to search for ways to emigrate. In 1936, Paula left Sulzburg to stay with Leo's sister in New York. In 1937, Leo lost his commercial license and was forced to sell his house. In early 1938 they applied for visas to Switzerland, but were not successful in obtaining them. During Kristallnacht, the family apartment was ransacked, and Leo was arrested and briefly sent to Dachau concentration camp. Ruth went to Flehingen and babysat for a cantor and his wife for a short while. In January 1939, Ruth, Sally, and their cousin Hermina were put on a Kindertransport to Switzerland. Ruth and Sally were separated. She went to a children's home in Heiden, Switzerland and he went to Basel where he lived with a Jewish family.

In 1940, Leo, Elfriede, and Marga were deported to internment camps in southern France at Rivesaltes, Gurs and Les Milles. In 1942, Marga was hidden in several locations including Chateau du Couret, Haute-Vienne Chateau de Couret, and Chateau du Couret Maison. She arrived in Switzerland in May 1943. In August, 1942, Leo and Elfriede were sent to the Drancy internment camp in Paris and then deported to Auschwitz concentration camp where they were killed.

Ruth and Marga immigrated to the United States from Switzerland in 1946 aboard the SS *Minot Victory*. Sally immigrated to the United States around the same time. Marga married Menashe Birnbaum (b. 1923) in 1951. Ruth would later marry Gunther Marx (1927-1974), son of Hugo (b. 1888) and Klara (b. 1893) Marx, who also fled Germany in the 1940s.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the Kahn family's experiences in Germany, France, and Switzerland during the Holocaust. The bulk of the collection consists of letters written to Ruth Kahn in Switzerland from her parents Leo and Elfriede Kahn and her sister Marga Kahn in Sulzburg, Germany and internment camps in southern France at Rivesaltes, Gurs and Les Milles. Also included is other correspondence, identification papers, restitution paperwork, immigration documentation, and a photograph album.

Biographical material includes Ruth's birth certificate, a religious school report card, and a registration document from Basel; Marga's 1943 day planner from Switzerland; restitution paperwork; Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, Inc. (C.A.R.E.) receipts issued to Max Kahn in Israel; a 1939 Hanukkah program from the Jewish School in Freiburg; and German identification papers belonging to Ruth's husband Guenther Marx's parents, Hugo and Klara Marx.

Correspondence primarily consists of letters written to Ruth in Switzerland from her parents and sister Marga in Sulzburg, 1939-1940, Gurs, 1940-1941, Rivesaltes, 1941-1942, and Les Milles, 1942. The last letters received by Ruth from her parents are from early August 1942. Other correspondence includes letters from Marga to Ruth after she fled France for Switzerland in 1942, her other sister Paula in the United States, and her brother Sally.

Immigration papers include an inventory of Ruth's belongings she took with her on the 1939 Kindertransport and documents related to her time in Switzerland, Marga's 1943 train ticket to Nimes on her way to Switzerland, and two 1942 documents to the American Consulate and German Consulate regarding emigration efforts of Hugo and Klara Marx.

The photograph album includes pre-war depictions of the Kahn family, wartime and post-war Ruth Kahn and her husband Gunther Marx.

System of arrangement

The Kahn family papers are arranged as four series.

Series 1: Biographical material, 1908-1969

Series 2: Correspondence of Ruth Kahn, 1939-1979

Series 3. Immigration, 1939-1945

Series 4. Photographs, 1924-1947 and undated

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Person:

Kahn, Ruth

Kahn, Leo Louis

Kahn, Elfriede

Kahn, Paula

Kahn, Sally Josef

Kahn, Marga

Marx, Hugo

Marx, Klara

Corporate:

Gurs (Concentration camp)

Rivesaltes (Concentration camp)

Les Milles (Concentration camp)

Topical Subject:

Jewish children in the Holocaust--Germany.

Jewish refugees--Switzerland.

Hidden children (Holocaust)--France.

Jews--Germany.

Geography:

Switzerland--Emigration and immigration.

Sulzburg (Germany)
Heiden (Switzerland)

Genre/Form:
Correspondence.
Photograph albums.
Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Biographical material, 1908-1969

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, Inc. (C.A.R.E.) receipts, 1951-1952
1.2	Hanukkah program, 1939
1.3	Kahn, Marga, 1943, 1952
1.4	Kahn, Ruth, 1937-1946
1.5	Marx, Hugo and Klara, 1908-1941
1.6	Restitution papers, 1957-1969 and undated

Series 2: Correspondence of Ruth Kahn, 1939-1979

Box/Folder	Title
1.7	Bial, Ella, 1941
1.8	Brenner, Jenny, 1946
1.9	Kahn, Else, 1941-1942 and undated
1.10-1.11, OS 1	Kahn, Leo, Elfriede, and Marga, 1939 (2 folders)
1.12-1.13	Kahn, Leo, Elfriede, and Marga, 1940 (2 folders)
1.14-1.15	Kahn, Leo, Elfriede, and Marga, 1941 (2 folders)
1.16	Kahn, Leo, Elfriede, and Marga, 1942
2.1	Kahn, Marga, 1942-1943
2.2	Kahn, Paula, 1939
2.3	Kahn, Sally, 1940-1945 and undated
2.4	Krebs, Gerda, 1941
2.5	Miscellaneous, 1939-1945
2.6	Yad Vashem, 1979

Series 3. Immigration, 1939-1945

Box/Folder	Title
2.7	Kahn, Marga, 1943
2.8	Kahn, Ruth, 1939-1945
2.9	Marx, Hugo and Klara, 1942

Series 4. Photographs, 1924-1947 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
2.10	Marx, Hugo and Klara, circa 1942
BE 1	Photograph album, 1924-1947 and undated

