

HENRY (HEINZ) WACHS FAMILY PAPERS, 1850-2015
(bulk, 1920-1950)
2016.443.1

Descriptive summary

Title: Henry (Heinz) Wachs family papers

Dates: 1859-2015 (bulk, 1920-1950)

Accession number: 2016.443.1

Creator: Wachs, Henry.

Extent: 4 boxes, 1 oversize box, 1 oversize folder.

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

Abstract: The Henry (Heinz) Wachs family papers consist of correspondence, documents, and photographs related to his family's life in Prussia and Berlin in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, his education and training as a typesetter and graphic designer during the 1930s, his immigration to the United States as a response to Nazi persecution in 1938, and his subsequent efforts to help his brother, parents, and other relatives emigrate. Also documented are the experiences of his brother, Alfred, in emigration and as a detainee in internment camps in England and Australia, 1940-1942; as well as his parents in emigration in Belgium, and his father's internment by the Germans in France, 1940-1941.

Languages: English, German, Polish, Yiddish.

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), Henry (Heinz) Wachs family collection (2016.443.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Gift of Henry Wachs, via his children, Frederic Wachs, Thomas Wachs, and Deborah Wachs, 2016.

Related material: The Henry (Heinz) Wachs family collection also includes the Hermes typewriter (and ribbon) used by Henry Wachs to type and send letters to his brother, parents, and other family and friends; samples of currency from Poland and Germany from the 1910s and 1920s; and luggage tags and labels used when Henry Wachs immigrated to the United States in 1938.

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

Processing history: Processed by Brad Bauer, February-March 2017.

Biographical note

Henry Wachs was born Heinz Wachs, on 17 July 1916, the son of the businessman Isidor Wachs (1883-1943?) and his wife, Herta (née Salomon, 1893-?) Wachs, in Mrotschen, in what was then the Prussian province of Posen (modern day, Mrocza, Poland), and the family had roots in the town of Rogasen (present-day Rogozno, Poland), just to the south. The Wachs family had another son, Alfred, and Herta moved with her two sons to Berlin during the war, where Isidor joined them afterward. Since their home region was ceded to Poland after World War I, they opted to retain German citizenship and remain in Berlin. Heinz Wachs completed his schooling in Berlin in 1933, but since his way to university studies was barred by anti-Semitic regulations of the newly ascendant Nazi regime, he chose to pursue a trade, and began an apprenticeship with the printing firm of Martin Philipsen, studying to be a typesetter. During this period, he continued vocational schooling in the evenings, in order to learn graphic design, and completed his apprenticeship and training in 1937. When he sought to find a position, as well as further training opportunities, he soon realized that his opportunities were limited due to the increasing anti-Semitic regulations and he began to explore the possibilities for emigration, as his older brother Alfred, and many of his friends were already doing. Through a number of contacts, including the family of Theodor Schocken, for whose department store he had designed advertisements—and whose family knew the Wachs and Salomon families from their shared origins in Rogasen—he had learned of distant relatives of the Wachs and Salomon families that had immigrated to the United States decades earlier, and had settled in the San Francisco Bay Area. Eventually, members from those families agreed to sponsor him, and he left for the United States in the fall of 1938. After arrival, he was employed as a graphic designer, and built a successful career in this field, based in San Francisco. He married Gloria Rosenthal (1919-2007) in 1947, and the couple, who settled in Marin County, California, had four children.

In the mid-1930s, Henry's older brother, Alfred, left Germany with the hopes of training at a Zionist-sponsored camp in Yugoslavia, in order to learn agricultural techniques that he could use in his planned immigration to Palestine. He later trained at similar camps in Italy and England, but after the start of World War II, he was interned in England by British authorities, as an enemy alien, and was sent with other refugees from Germany and Austria on the transport ship *Dunera* to Australia, where he was interned in a succession of camps until his release in 1942. Following that, he immigrated to Palestine, and subsequently made his home in Israel for the rest of his life.

Henry's parents, Isidor and Herta, remained in Berlin until early 1939, when they immigrated to Belgium. Following the German invasion and occupation of Belgium and France in 1940, Isidor was arrested, as was his brother-in-law and nephew, Wilhelm and Siegfried Flatow, and sent to a succession of camps in

France, including St. Cyprien (September 1940), Récébédou (December 1940), from which he was deported in August 1942 to Auschwitz, and is presumed to have died there. Herta Wachs remained in Belgium, in hiding, until she was discovered by the Gestapo, arrested, and deported to a concentration camp, where she also died.

Scope and content of collection

The Henry (Heinz) Wachs family papers consist of correspondence, documents, and photographs related to his family's life in Prussia and Germany (Berlin) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, his education and training as a typesetter and graphic designer during the 1930s, his immigration to the United States as a response to Nazi persecution in 1938, and his subsequent efforts to help his brother, parents, and other relatives emigrate. Also documented are the experiences of his brother, Alfred, in emigration and as a detainee in internment camps in England and Australia, 1940-1942; as well as his parents in emigration in Belgium, and his father's internment by the Nazis in France, 1940-1942.

The Biographical series contains documents not only pertaining to Henry Wachs and his immediate family (parents, and brother Alfred), but also to other members of his extended family, including his grandfather, Nathan Wachs, dating to the mid-19th century. Included are birth certificates, identification documents, educational records, military service records, vaccination records, and membership cards from Jewish sports organizations, as well as other general documents and ephemera. Items of note include an album assembled for the wedding of Henry's parents, Isidor and Herta, in 1913, containing congratulatory telegrams, poems, and a mock-newspaper announcing the wedding. Military records from Nathan Wachs show his service in the Prussian Army prior to German unification, and his son, Isidor's, service in the German Army during World War I. In addition, residency and citizenship papers for Isidor Wachs document his choice of German citizenship after World War I, when changing boundaries placed his homeland in Polish territory.

The Correspondence series contains letters from many of Henry's friends in Berlin, as well as extensive correspondence to and from his brother, Alfred, and his parents, primarily following Henry's departure from Germany. Correspondence from his friends includes letters from those who left for other countries, such as Britain and South Africa, and includes correspondence from his friend Heinz Bing ("Bebi") after the latter was interned by the British and sent to a camp in Canada in 1940. One further correspondence file, of letters sent to Florence Oser of Chico, California in the mid-1950s, documents her efforts to help individual residents of Berlin with humanitarian assistance (CARE packages) after World War II, and contains letters of gratitude from them. Oser was an aunt of Gloria Wachs, and through this connection these letters were joined with this collection.

Correspondence within the Wachs family includes some pre-war postcards and letters sent from family members in Rogasen, as well as letters received by Henry from aunts, uncles, and cousins (from the Salomon and Flatow families) after he had settled in the United States, and was trying to help them obtain visas to immigrate. The most extensive correspondence, though, consists of letters to and from his brother and parents. Correspondence from Alfred Wachs began after he left Germany to learn agricultural skills on a farm in Yugoslavia, in preparation for his planned immigration to Palestine, as well as later training in Italy, and a period spent in Switzerland and England. In mid-1940, Alfred was arrested in Britain as an enemy-alien, and was placed in a camp before being deported to Australia on the *Dunera*, where he spent the better part of two years in a prison camp that housed emigres from Germany and Austria. During this period, Henry corresponded extensively with his brother—often saving carbon copies of his outgoing letters along with letters he received from his brother—and

documenting his efforts both to obtain his brother's release, and to send him financial and other assistance during his internment. Following his release, Alfred immigrated to Palestine, and subsequent correspondence from Israel during the 1950s relates to his life there.

Henry's correspondence to his parents began when he made a trip to Italy in 1935, and then continues with letters he received from them after his departure from Germany in 1938. His correspondence with his parents continued after they moved to Belgium in early 1939, and included letters to and from both parents, as well as correspondence between Henry and his father after the latter was arrested and interned by the Germans in 1940, in a succession of camps in France. Also included from this period are letters to and from his mother, as she sought to cope with the arrest of her husband, and as Henry sought to provide financial assistance for both of them from the United States, as documented by the numerous receipts included in these files.

The Immigration series relates primarily to Henry's journey from Germany to the United States in 1938, and in particular contains correspondence to and from his American sponsors, A.C. Karski of San Francisco (a nephew of Henry's maternal grandmother) and Lionel Wachs of Oakland. This correspondence documents the initial contacts with Karski and Lionel Wachs, his eventual sponsorship, and efforts to secure a job for Henry prior to his arrival. Also include are naturalization papers, the affidavit provided by Lionel Wachs, Henry's German passport, and other related materials.

The Photograph series contains pre-war photographs of the Wachs and Salomon families in Germany, including photographs of the family from the early 20th century. Also included are photographs of Isidor and Hertha at their wedding and as a young couple, Henry as a young man, as well as more recent photographs from his 99th birthday in 2015.

The Professional series documents Henry's training as an apprentice typesetter in Berlin from 1933-1937, with the firm of Martin Philipsen, coursework he completed as part of that training, his certification as a journeyman in 1937, and his efforts to find further employment and training in graphic design following that. Also documented is his connection with the Jewish-owned company, Schocken, AG in Zwickau, which owned a major department store where his brother, Alfred, had previously worked, and for whom he submitted graphic designs for advertisements. In addition, he sought the help of company chairman Theodor Schocken, who was acquainted with Henry's family from their period in Rogasen, in his efforts to emigrate, in the hope of making connections with Schocken affiliates in the United States. Samples of his typesetting work for Martin Philipsen and Schocken are also included, as are typesetting manuals that he used at this point in his career.

System of arrangement

The collection is organized into the following series, and arranged within each series alphabetically by folder title: I. Biographical, II. Correspondence, III. Immigration, IV. Photographs, V. Professional.

Indexing terms

Personal names:

Wachs, Isidor

Wachs, Herta

Wachs. Alfred

Corporate headings:

Kaufhaus Schocken.
Récébédou (Concentration camp)
Gurs (Concentration camp)

Topical headings:

Emigration & immigration--United States.
Jewish families--Germany--Berlin.
Jewish refugees--California.
Typesetting--Germany.
Graphic arts--Germany--Berlin.
Graphic arts (Typography)

Geographic headings:

Berlin (Germany)
Mrocza (Poland)
Rogozno (Poland)
Saint-Cyprien (Pyrénées-Orientales, France)

CONTAINER LIST

I. Biographical, 1850-1969

| Box | Folder | |
|-----|--------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Salomon, Samuel: memorial (Jahrzeits-Buch), 1934 |
| 1 | 2 | Wachs, Alfred: General, undated |
| 1 | 3 | Wachs, Alfred: Identification papers, 1933-1935 |
| 1 | 4 | Wachs, Alfred: Immigration to United States (attempted), 1938 |
| 1 | 5 | Wachs, Alfred: Resume, circa 1955 |
| 1 | 6 | Wachs, Alfred: Swimming certificates, 1927-1928 |
| 1 | 7 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Birth certificate, 1916, and Polish copy, 1921 |
| 1 | 8 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Books. Lists of, undated |
| 1 | 9 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Calendar, pocket, 1938 |
| 1 | 10 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Education: Bötzw-Vorschule, Berlin, 1922-1926 |
| 1 | 11 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Education: Grunewald-Gymnasium, Berlin, 1932-1933 |
| 1 | 12 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Education: Sophien-Gymnasium, Berlin, 1926-1932 |
| 1 | 13 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Education: religious school, Berlin, 1926-1929 |
| 1 | 14 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Education: school notebooks, undated, circa late 1920s |
| 1 | 15 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Ephemera: includes ticket stubs, pamphlet about Heinrich Mann, map of greater Berlin. |
| 1 | 16 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Expenses, 1938 |
| 1 | 17 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): General, 1937-1948, and undated |

| | | |
|---------|---------|--|
| 1 | 18 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Insurance policies, 1942 |
| 1 | 19 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Membership, Makkabi-Kreis, 1936-1938, and Reichsverband der Jüdischen Kulturbund, 1938 |
| 1 | 20 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Military registration, Germany and United States, 1936-1942 |
| 1 | 21 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Restitution, 1959-1969 |
| 1 | 22 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Swimming certificate. 1927-1928 |
| 1 | 23 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Taxes, income, 1939-1940 (showing his support for parents in Europe) |
| 1 | 24 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Transit (public) and travel, 1935-1937 |
| 1 | 25 | Wachs, Henry (Heinz): Vaccination, 1917 |
| 1 OS | 26 1 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: General, 1914-1939 (2 folders) |
| 1 | 27 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: German residency and citizenship, 1921-1939 |
| 1 | 28 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: Identification documents, Herta, 1917-1937 |
| 1 | 29 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: Military service (Isidor), 1915-1918 |
| 1 | 30 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: Vaccinations (Isidor), 1883-1886 |
| 1 | 31 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: Wedding, 1913 |
| 5 | 1 2 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: Wedding: congratulatory telegrams and poetry, in bound volume, 1913 (2 folders) |
| 1 | 32 | Wachs, Martin: birth certificate, 1879, vaccination, 1891, school record, 1893 |
| 1 | 33 | Wachs, Meier and Paula, vaccination certificates, 1880-1893 |
| 1 | 34 | Wachs, Minna: memorial (Jahrzeits-Buch), 1921 |
| 1 | 35 | Wachs, Nathan: Certificates: including attaining rank of master in trade, military service, and other, 1850-1879 |
| 1 | 36 | Wachs, Nathan: Identification: military pass, 1862, passport, 1871 |
| 1 | 37 | Wachs, Nathan: Memorial (Jahrzeits-Buch), 1922 |
| 1 | 38 | Wachs family (Oakland, CA): news clipping about, 1956 |

II. Correspondence, 1902-1999

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | 39 | Addresses, undated |
| 1 | 40 | Alexander, Heinz and Else, 1937-1938 |
| 1 | 41 | Ascher, Fred, 1937-1938 |
| 1 | 42 | Bing, Heinz: 1934-1939 |
| 2 | 1 | Bing, Heinz: 1940 (during internment in Canada) |
| 2 | 2 | Bing, Heinz: 1941-1945 |
| 2 | 3 | Dobe, Friedrich, 1937-1947 |
| 2 | 4 | Flatow family, 1938-1939 |
| 2 | 5 | Jacobsohn, Heinz and Kiddy, 1938-1939 |
| 2 | 6 | Jacobsohn, Max, 1937-1939 |
| 2 | 7 | Krüger, Paul, 1938 |
| 2 | 8 | Oser, Florence (Chico, CA), responses to aid packages received, 1955-1956 |
| 2 | 9 | Salomon, Hugo, 1941 |
| 2 | 10 | Salomon, Max (uncle), 1939 |

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| 2 | 11 | Salomon, Sally, 1938-1940 |
| 2 | 12 | Schmoller, Hans, 1940 |
| 2 | 13 | Schulz, Gerhard, 1947 |
| 2 | 14 | Steinhardt, Walter (from Australian internment camp), 1941 |
| 2 | 15 | Unidentified friends and acquaintances, 1932-1958 |
| 2 | 16 | Unidentified correspondence in Yiddish |
| 2 | 17 | Wachs, Alfred: 1935-1937 |
| 2 | 18 | Wachs, Alfred: 1938 |
| 2 | 19 | Wachs, Alfred: 1939, January-February |
| 2 | 20 | Wachs, Alfred: 1939, March-May |
| 2 | 21 | Wachs, Alfred: 1939, June-August |
| 2 | 22 | Wachs, Alfred: 1939, September-December |
| 2 | 23 | Wachs, Alfred: 1940, January-June |
| 2 | 24 | Wachs, Alfred: 1940, July-December: from internment camps |
| 2 | 25 | Wachs, Alfred: 1941, January-May: from internment camps |
| 2 | 26 | Wachs, Alfred: 1941, June-August: from internment camps |
| 2 | 27 | Wachs, Alfred: 1941, September-December: from internment camps |
| 2 | 28 | Wachs, Alfred: 1942: from internment camps |
| 2 | 29 | Wachs, Alfred: 1940: letters from others, regarding Alfred's interment |
| 2 | 30 | Wachs, Alfred: 1941-1942: internment camps, receipts for supplies sent by Henry to Alfred |
| 2 | 31 | Wachs, Alfred: 1945-1947 |
| 2 | 32 | Wachs, Alfred: 1949-1950 |
| 2 | 33 | Wachs, Alfred: 1956-1960, plus envelopes |
| 3 | 1 | Wachs, Henry: To his parents, during time in Italy, 1935 |
| 3 | 2 | Wachs, Henry: To and from wife and children, 1947-1999 |
| 3 | 3 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: 1938-1939: postcards sent from parents, to Henry, from Berlin |
| 3 | 4 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: 1939: letters sent from parents, to Henry, from Belgium |
| 3 | 5 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: 1940: letters sent from parents, to Henry, from Belgium |
| 3 | 6 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: 1940-1941: letters sent from Isidor to Henry, from internment camps in France |
| 3 | 7 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: 1940-1942: letters from Henry to his father, in internment camps, France |
| 3 | 8 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta: Correspondence responding financial support Henry sent to his father, in camp |
| 3 | 9 | Wachs, Herta: letters sent to and from Henry, following father's internment, 1940-1941 |
| 3 | 10 | Wachs, Herta: returned Red Cross letter, and postcard from uncle, about family's fate, 1943-1944 |
| 3 | 11 | Wachs family, Berlin, 1938-1939, and undated |
| 3 | 12 | Wachs family, Rogasen (Germany and Poland), 1902-1921 |

III. Immigration, 1938-1948

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| 3 | 13 | Affidavit from Lionel Wachs, 1938 |
| 3 | 14 | Correspondence: Karski, A.C. (Oakland, CA), 1937-1938, 1948 |
| 3 | 15 | Correspondence: Kennedy, R.L. (Oakland, CA), 1938 |
| 3 | 16 | Correspondence: Kugelmann, Dr. L. (London), 1938 |
| 3 | 17 | Correspondence: Leonard, Eric (Chicago), 1937-1938 |
| 3 | 18 | Correspondence: Wachs, Lionel (Oakland, CA), 1937-1938 |
| 3 | 19 | Naturalization documents, United States, 1938-1944 |
| 3 | 20 | Passport, German, 1937-1938 |
| 3 | 21 | Storage of belongings, 1939-1942 |
| 3 | 22 | Voyage to United States, 1938 |

IV. Photographs, 1913-2015, and undated

| | | |
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| 3 | 23 | Salomon, Leo, circa 1930s |
| 3 | 24 | Schocken family, circa 1900-1930s |
| 3 | 25 | Unidentified friends and relatives, Germany, 1932-1941, and undated |
| 3 | 26 | Wachs family apartment, Berlin, postcard (1914) and photographs, circa 2001 |
| 3 | 27 | Wachs, Henry, circa 1930s-1950s |
| 3 | 28 | Wachs, Henry, 2015 |
| 3 | 29 | Wachs, Herta, circa 1910s-1930s |
| 3 | 30 | Wachs, Isidor, circa 1930s |
| 3 | 31 | Wachs, Isidor and Herta, 1913 |
| 3 | 32 | Wachs and Salomon families, circa 1900-1916 |

V. Professional, 1933-1945, 2002, and undated

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| 4 | 1 | Berufsschule für das graphische Gewerbe, Berlin, 1933-1937 |
| 4 | 2 | Certification as journeyman typesetter, 1937 |
| 4 | 3 | Contempora Lehratelier (Prof. F.A. Breuhaus), 1934-1937 |
| 4 | 4 | Correspondence, 1933-1938 |
| 4 | 5 | Martin Philipsen, Berlin: documents related to employment, 1933-1937 |
| 4 | 6 | Martin Philipsen, Berlin: letters of reference, 1937-1938 |
| 4 | 7 | Notes and notebooks, undated, circa 1934-1937 |
| 4 | 8 | Printed material: <i>Typoskizzenkartei</i> (type samples), undated |
| 4 | 9 | Printed material: training manuals, undated |
| 4 | 10 | Printed material: "Zum Konzern Schocken," 2002 |
| 4 | 11 | Resumes, undated, circa 1937-1945 |
| 4 | 12 | Samples of typesetting work from Wachs: general, 1937 and undated |
| 4 | 13 | Samples of typesetting work from Wachs: Kaufhaus Schocken, Zwickau, undated |
| 4 | 14 | Schocken, AG, Zwickau: correspondence |
| 4 | 15 | Technikum für Buchdruckerei, Leipzig, 1935 |