

HIRSCH FAMILY PAPERS, 1938-1995, and undated 2016.472.1

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

Title: Hirsch family papers

Dates: 1938-1995, and undated

Accession number: 2016.472.1

Creator: Hirsch family (Grodków: Poland)

Extent: 7 folders

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

Abstract: Documents, photographs, artwork and ephemera related to the family of Martin and Hertha Hirsch and their daughters, Dorothea and Stephanie, related to their immigration from their native Germany to the United States in 1938-1939. Includes passport of Martin Hirsch, copy prints of photographs, and other items brought with them from Germany, as well as a copy of the memoir of Dorothea Hirsch Bartha's memoir, written circa 1995.

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), Hirsch family papers (2016.472.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Gift of Annemarie Voitel, daughter of Dorothea Hirsch Bartha, 2016.

Related archival materials: The Hirsch family papers belongs to the Hirsch family collection, which also includes five books that were brought by the Hirsch family with them from Germany, as well as an artwork, each of which are cataloged separately as artifacts. In addition, two family photographs loaned by the donor and returned to her have been imaged and added to the Photograph Reference Archive of the museum. The museum also has a separate collection of materials from Benjamin Buchsbaum (2016.464.1), which includes correspondence sent to him by the Hirsch family.

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

Processing history: Brad Bauer, January 2017.

Biographical note

Martin B. Hirsch (1895-1961) was a businessman, who was born in Grottkau, Upper Silesia (modern day Grodków, Poland) on 16 June 1895, the son of Berthold and Hulda (née Wendriner) Hirsch. After service in the German army during World War I, Hirsch ran his family's department store in Grottkau, along with his brother Fritz, until the latter's immigration to the United States in 1926. Hirsch married Herta Schwenk (1902-1958), the daughter of Max and Hedwig (née Hirsch) Schwenk. Martin and Herta had two daughters, Dorothea (1926-2014) and Stephanie (1931-1997). Following the rise of the Nazis in 1933, the Hirsch family faced increasing anti-Semitic persecution in Grottkau, including Nazi-organized boycotts of their department store. As a result, they planned to emigrate as soon as possible, and in November 1938, Martin had already made plans to leave for the United States, with the intention of making arrangements so that his family could join him.

During the Kristallnacht pogrom, a sympathetic local policeman advised the family to come stay at the local jail for their own protection, which they did for several days (the younger daughter, Stephanie, arrived home after her parents and sister had left, and crying over the absence of her parents, was brought to the jail by neighbors). Following that, Martin left for the United States, arriving shortly thereafter in Philadelphia, while Herta and the two daughters went to live with Herta's extended family in Habelschwerdt (modern-day Bystrzyca Kłodzka, Poland). Martin's initial efforts to find affidavits and other support needed to bring his wife and daughters to the United States was unsuccessful, with various Jewish aid groups unable to help. An acquaintance recommended that he contact local businessman Ben Buchsbaum, and thanks to Buchsbaum's efforts, Herta Hirsch and her two daughters, along with her sister, Erna Schwenk, were able to immigrate the following year, sailing on the SS Veendam and arriving in Hoboken, New Jersey on 10 November 1939. The family subsequently settled in the Philadelphia area, and it appears that Martin's mother, Hulda, was also able to join them there.

Scope and content of collection

The Hirsch family papers consist of documents, photographs, artwork and ephemera related to the family of Martin and Hertha Hirsch and their daughters, Dorothea and Stephanie, documenting their immigration from their native Germany to the United States in 1938-1939. Includes passport of Martin Hirsch, copy prints of photographs, and items (artwork reproductions and childrens' books) brought with them from Germany, as well as a copy of the memoir of Dorothea Hirsch Bartha's memoir, written circa 1995.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged in one series, by document type.

Indexing terms

Personal names:

Hirsch, Martin (1895-1961)
Hirsch, Hertha
Bartha, Dorothea Hirsch
Gorchov, Stephanie Hirsch
Buchsbaum, Benjamin.

Topical headings:

Germany--Emigration and immigration.
Jews--Silesia, Upper (Poland and Czech Republic)
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Silesia--Personal narratives.
Jewish refugees--Pennsylvania.

Geographic headings:

Grodzów (Poland)

CONTAINER LIST

- 1 Memoir: Dorothea Hirsch Bartha, typescript, 13 pages, undated, circa 1995
- 2 Passport: Martin Hirsch, issued in Grottkau, March 1938
- 3 Photograph (copy print): Hirsch family business, Grottkau, with Nazi protesters standing
In front, ca. 1934
- 4 Photograph (copy print): Unidentified woman and two children
- 5 Postcard: Der alte Geck, by Josef Frank, undated, circa 1930s
- 6 Postcard: Ein verträumtes Gasschen, by Josef Frank, undated, circa 1930s
- 7 Postcard: Kleinstadtklatsch, by Josef Frank, undated, circa 1930s