

**RIESENFELD FAMILY PAPERS, 1897-2001**  
**2017.389.1**

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

Title: Riesenfeld family papers

Dates: 1897-2001 [bulk 1938-1949]

Accession number: 2017.389.1

Creator: Riesenfeld (Family : Würzburg, Germany)

Extent: .5 linear feet (1 box)

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

Abstract: The collection documents the experiences of Bruno and Frieda Riesenfeld and their children Ernst and James, originally from Würzburg, Germany, who fled to the Netherlands and immigrated to the United States in 1940. Included are identification papers, immigration documents, financial documents related to the forced sale of Bruno's paint factory in 1938, wartime correspondence with Frieda's mother, Dora Schwabacher in Würzburg, and photographs.

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), Riesenfeld family papers (2017.389.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Susan Driscoll in 2017.

Related materials: Steamer trunk used by the Riesenfeld family when immigrating to the United States in 1940 (IRN#220137), part of the Riesenfeld family collection.

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: Adam Fielding, October 2017

### **Biographical note**

Bruno Kurt Riesenfeld (1899-1974) was born on 27 October 1899 in Würzburg, Germany to Alfred (1866-1936) and Jenny (née Brauer, 1866-1938) Riesenfeld. He had two sisters, Betti (later Betty Suessmann, 1896-1976) and Margot (1895-1943), and one brother, Walter (1901-1984).

Frieda Therese Riesenfeld (née Schwabacher, 1908-2012) was born on 16 April 1908 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany to Emil (1873-1919) and Dora (née Schwabacher, 1881-1943) Schwabacher. She had one sister, Henny (1906-1918).

Bruno and Frieda married in 1931, and their first son, Ernst, was born in 1935. Bruno owned a paint factory in Heidingsfeld, near Würzburg. In 1938, he was forced to sell his business and then arrested. Frieda helped secure his release, but he was arrested again several months later and sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp. After his release, they left Germany to go stay with Bruno's sister Margot in Amsterdam while they continued to wait for U.S. visas. Their son, James was born 17 April 1939 in Amsterdam. On 14 March 1940 the family sailed out of Rotterdam for the United States on the *Veendam*. They settled in New York.

Bruno's sister Margot perished during the Holocaust at the Sobibór extermination camp in 1943. Frieda's mother Dora was deported from Würzburg to the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1943 where she perished.

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

The collection documents the experiences of Bruno and Frieda Riesenfeld and their children Ernst and James, originally from Würzburg, Germany, who fled to the Netherlands and immigrated to the United States in 1940. Included are identification papers, immigration documents, financial documents related to the forced sale of Bruno's paint factory in 1938, wartime correspondence with Frieda's mother, Dora Schwabacher in Würzburg, and photographs.

Biographical materials include immigration documents, identification papers, education and employment papers, restitution documents, and a family book of genealogy. Also included are financial documents related to the forced sale of Bruno's paint factory in 1938, a narrative statement by Frieda detailing their experiences in Germany and the Netherlands leading up to their immigration to the United States in 1940, and a Red Cross document describing the fate of Bruno's sister, Margot Riesenfeld, who was deported and murdered in the Holocaust.

Correspondence includes wartime letters from Bruno's sister Betty Suessmann and Frieda's mother, Dora Swabacher, and her uncle Anton Schwabacher. Also includes some post-war correspondence with friends and relatives.

Photographs consist of depictions of the gravestone for Bruno's parents, Alfred and Jenny Riesenfeld, and the Wenzel family. There is also a family photograph album depicting pre-war family life in Würzburg, the Riesenfelds aboard the *Veendam* on their way to the United States, and family life in New York.

### **System of arrangement**

The collection is arranged as three series:

Series 1: Biographical, 1897-2001

Series 2: Correspondence, 1939-1974

Series 3: Photographs, 1901-1949

Folders are arranged alphabetically. Documents are arranged chronologically.

### **Indexing terms**

Person:

Riesenfeld, Bruno, 1899-1974.

Riesenfeld, Frieda, 1908-2012.

Riesenfeld, Margot, 1895-1943.

Schwabacher, Dora, 1881-1943.

Corporate:

Veendam (Ocean liner)

Topical Subject:

Jews--Germany--Würzburg.

Jewish businesspeople--Germany.

World War, 1939-1945--Refugees.

Geography:

Würzburg (Germany)

Amsterdam (Netherlands)

United States--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:

Photographs.

Photograph albums.

Correspondence.

Personal narratives.

## **CONTAINER LIST**

### **Series 1: Biographical, 1897-2001**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Title</b>
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1.1	Family book, undated
1.2	Immigration, 1938-1938
1.3	Immigration, 1940-1982
1.4	Miscellaneous, circa 1939-1981
1.5	<i>Meyers Taschenatlas</i> , 1938
1.6	Restitution, 1949-1966
1.7	Riesefeld, Alfred, 1934-1936
	Riesefeld, Bruno:
1.8	Employment, Germany, 1920-1933
1.9	Employment, United States, 1956-1966
1.10	Financial documents, 1897-1939
1.11	Identification papers, 1905-1990
1.12	Report cards, 1909-1915
1.13	Riesefeld, Bruno and Frieda: Marriage certificates, 1938-1939
1.14	Riesefeld, Ernst: "Who's Who in the East" application, 1982
	Riesefeld, Frieda:
1.15	Education, 1960
1.16	Insurance and pension, 1974-1981
1.17	Narrative statement, 2001
1.18	Riesefeld, James: Employment, 1981
1.19	Riesefeld, Jenny: 1938
1.20	Riesefeld, Margot: Red Cross report, 1960

**Series 2: Correspondence, 1939-1974**

Box/Folder	Title
	Riesefeld, Bruno:
1.21	Riesefeld, Margot, 1945
1.22	Suessmann, Betty, 1941-1949 [includes photographs]
1.23	Wenzel, Luise, 1949
1.24	1939-1974
	Riesefeld, Bruno and Frieda:
1.25	Schwabacher, Benno and Anne, 1965-1966
1.26	Schwabacher, Dora, 1939-1941
1.27	Riesefeld, Frieda: Schwabacher, Anton, 1940-1941

**Series 3: Photographs, 1901-1949**

Box/Folder	Title
1.28	1947-1949
1.29	Photograph album, 1901-1953