

RUTH LOEWENSTEIN PAPERS, 1914-1963
2017.613.1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Ruth Loewenstein papers

Dates: 1914-1963

Accession number: 2017.613.1

Creator: Loewenstein, Ruth, 1929-

Extent: 0.6 linear foot (1 box, 1 oversize folder)

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

Abstract: The Ruth Loewenstein papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, and photographs documenting the Loewenstein family from Munich, the family haberdashery business called JKA, Willy Loewenstein's military service during World War I, his imprisonment in Dachau following Kristallnacht, the family's flight to England, their immigration to the United States, and their embroidered handkerchief business Wil-Low Handkerchiefs in America.

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), Ruth Loewenstein papers (2017.613.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Ruth Loewenstein donated the Ruth Loewenstein papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 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: Julie Schweitzer, July 2018

Biographical note

Ruth Loewenstein was born in Munich, Germany in 1929 to Willy Loewenstein (1894-1957) and Annie Cahen Loewenstein (1902-1992) and had one younger sister named Marianne ("Janne," 1932-2008). Willy Loewenstein served in the German Army during World War I, and his family owned a haberdashery store called JKA. Willy was arrested on November 10, 1938 during Kristallnacht, imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp, and released in December 1938 on the condition that he would leave Germany. In March 1939 the Loewenstein family obtained entry visas to the United Kingdom, and they left Germany on July 25th, 1939. Ruth and Marianne carried hand sewn dolls their mother had given them and wore a tiny gold bracelet on their wrists. As they left Germany, the German guard tore off the bracelets but ignored the dolls, not realizing that the girls' mother had hidden jewelry in the heads of each doll. During the blitz, Ruth and Marianne were evacuated to Northampton and lived with Ted and Elsie Mitchell and their son John, and Willy was interned as an enemy alien on the Isle of Man. The Loewensteins received US immigration visas on July 24, 1940, sailed from Glasgow to New York at the end of August aboard the *SS Cameronia*, and arrived in America on September 10. Their sponsors were cousins Bertha and Milton Oettinger. The Loewensteins lived in New York with relatives David, Lotte, and Margot Loewenstein; Henny, Meinhold, and Joseph Rothschild; and Willy's mother Marianne Loewenstein. Willy and Annie sold the jewelry hidden in the dolls to pay for tickets to bring Annie's parents, Gustav and Alice Cahen, from Havana to New York. The Loewensteins started a business in 1945 creating and importing embroidered handkerchiefs from Switzerland. Marianne Loewenstein married Harold Hammerschlag in 1954 and had three children.

Scope and content of collection

The Ruth Loewenstein papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, and photographs documenting the Loewenstein family from Munich, the family haberdashery business called JKA, Willy Loewenstein's military service during World War I, his imprisonment in Dachau following Kristallnacht, the family's flight to England, their immigration to the United States, and their embroidered handkerchief business Wil-Low Handkerchiefs in America.

Biographical materials include identification papers, military papers, and immigration records documenting the Loewenstein family, Willy Loewenstein's service during World War I, the family haberdashery business in Munich, their flight to England and immigration to the United States, and the sale of jewelry Annie hid in her daughters' dolls so it would not be confiscated during the family's departure from Germany.

Correspondence includes postcards and receipts from Willy as a prisoner at Dachau, Gestapo letters documenting Annie's attempt to obtain Willy's release from Dachau as a wounded World War I veteran and his subsequent obligation to attempt to emigrate, letters from Ruth and Marianne to their parents describing their life in Northampton, letters documenting Willy's loss of German citizenship and veteran

pension benefits when he emigrated to England, letters from Annie's parents as they immigrated to the United States in 1941, and a letter from the Mitchell family who housed Ruth and Marianne during the blitz.

Photographs depict the Loewenstein family's haberdashery store JKA in Munich, the Loewenstein family primarily before the war, and the Loewenstein's American handkerchief business Wil-Low Handkerchiefs.

System of arrangement

The Ruth Loewenstein papers are arranged as three series:

- Series 1: Biographical materials, 1914-1956
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1920-1941
- Series 3: Photographs, approximately 1920-1963

Indexing terms

Dachau (Concentration camp).

Jews--Germany--Munich.

Jewish refugees--England.

Jewish refugees--New York (State)

World War, 1914-1918--Participation, Jewish.

Munich (Germany)

Northampton (England)

New York (N.Y.)

Germany--Emigration and immigration.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Biographical materials, 1914-1956

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Cahen, Gustav, 1938, 1956
1.2	Loewenstein, Annie, 1927, 1938-1939
1.3	Loewenstein, Marianne, 1939
1.4	Loewenstein, Ruth, 1939
1.5	Loewenstein, Willy, 1914-1943
1.6	Immigration, England, 1933-1940
1.7, OS 1	Immigration, United States, 1938-1943, 1957 (2 folders)
1.8	JKA, approximately 1930s
1.9	Loewenstein stationery, approximately 1930s-1940s

1.10	Receipt for jewelry hidden in dolls, 1941
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Series 2: Correspondence, 1920-1941

Box/Folder	Title
1.11	Cahen family, 1941
1.12	Gestapo, 1938-1939
1.13	Loewenstein, Abraham (photocopy), 1920
1.14	Loewenstein, Ruth and Marianne, 1936, 1940
1.15	Loewenstein, Willy, from Dachau and Wittelsbacher Palais, 1938
1.16	Mitchell, Ted, Elsie, and John, 1941
1.17	<i>Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland</i> and <i>Versorgungsamt</i> , 1941

Series 3: Photographs, approximately 1920-1963

Box/Folder	Title
1.18	JKA, approximately 1924-1933
1.19	Loewenstein family, approximately 1920-1945
1.20	Wil-Low Handkerchiefs, approximately 1963