

BECKER FAMILY PAPERS, 1909-1946 and undated 2018.359.2

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

Title: Becker family papers

Dates: 1909-1946 and undated

Accession number: 2018.359.2

Creator: Becker (Family : Budapest, Hungary)

Extent: 6.27 linear feet (1 box, 2 oversize boxes, 3 book enclosures, 2 oversize folders)

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

Abstract: Biographical materials and photographs documenting the Holocaust-era experiences of the Becker family of Budapest, Hungary. Biographical materials include Ivan Becker's Swedish protection document issued by Raoul Wallenberg and postwar documents from the Bad Gastein displaced persons camp; identification documents of his father Dezsö Becker, grandmother Frida Becker, and sister Anna Becker; his mother Kato Becker's handwritten Hungarian cookbook; and a family history. Photographs include depictions of World War I, family photographs, and postwar photographs from Bad Gastein.

Languages: Hungarian, 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), Becker family papers (2018.359.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Nancy Greenglass Becker in 2018. An accretion was also donated in 2018. The previous accessions 2018.359.1 and 2018.360.1 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related materials: Two oral history interviews conducted with Ivan Becker are available through USHMM (1995.A.0023.18, 1995.A.1259). An oral history interview with Ivan was also conducted by the Shoah Foundation.

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, September 2018

Biographical note

Dezső Becker (1896-1945) was born in 1896 in Bistra, Alba, Romania to Mátyás (1861-1935) and Frida Becker (1867-1952). He had five siblings: Leopold, Izső, Anna (b. 1900), Ester, and Leslie. Anna and Ester immigrated to the United States in the 1920s. Frida joined her daughters there in 1937. Dezső was a veteran of World War I and married Kato Irsai (Schwarz, 1899-1945?). Kato was born in Budapest, and had one brother, István (1896-1968). Dezső worked as a bookkeeper and he and Kato lived in Budapest. They had one son, Ivan Endre Becker (nicknamed Van in the U.S., 1929-2009).

In 1940 Dezső was conscripted into a forced-labor brigade. He was later deported to the Buchenwald concentration camp where he perished. Dezső's brothers also perished during the Holocaust. Ivan attended school until the German occupation of Budapest in March 1944. In December 1944 Ivan and his mother were marched with other Jews to a brickyard in Budapest and then towards the Austrian border. Ivan was separated from Kato at the Hegyeshalom railroad station and never saw her again. He was rescued by Raoul Wallenberg or one of his associates, and sent back to Budapest Ghetto where he survived the duration of the war in a Swedish-protected safe house.

After Budapest was liberated in January 1945, Ivan returned to his family's apartment. He then travelled to Oradea, Romania searching for surviving relatives from his father's family. Finding none, Ivan left Hungary with the Aliyah Bet and went to the Bad Gastein displaced persons camp in Austria. He immigrated to the United States in 1946 and settled in New York. He served with the United States Army during the Korean War. Ivan married Nancy Greenglass (b. 1941) in 1962 and had a successful career in the plastics business. Ivan and Nancy had two sons: David Michael (b. 1964) and Kenneth Andrew (b. 1967). After his retirement, he was involved in Holocaust education and served on the board of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Scope and content of collection

Biographical materials and photographs documenting the Holocaust-era experiences of the Becker family of Budapest, Hungary. Biographical materials include Ivan Becker's Swedish protection document issued by Raoul Wallenberg and postwar documents from the Bad Gastein displaced persons camp; identification documents of his father Dezső Becker, grandmother Frida Becker, and sister Anna Becker; his mother Kato Becker's handwritten Hungarian cookbook; and a family history. Photographs include depictions of World War I, family photographs, and postwar photographs from Bad Gastein.

Biographical materials include an affidavit from 1938 for Dezső, Kato, and Ivan to immigrate to the United States; report cards of Anna Becker, Dezső's Hungarian passport and a message sent to him

through the American Red Cross from his grandmother Frida Becker in the United States; birth, marriage, death, identification, and naturalization certificates for Frida and her husband Mátyás; Kato's handwritten cookbook in Hungarian; Ivan's Swedish protection document issued by Raoul Wallenberg, a document regarding Ivan's forced labor, and post-war DP documents from Bad Gastein; bookplates, a CV, and modern copies of artwork by Kato's brother Istvan Irsai; a family history in Hungarian authored by one of Ivan's cousins; and a manuscript from 1922 written in Cherbourg that was possibly authored by one of Ivan's sisters.

Photographs include pre-war and wartime family photographs, depictions of World War I possibly taken by Dezsö, depictions of Ivan with childhood friend Chippy and his cousins Miriam and Robbi Irsai, Ivan's class photographs, photograph albums of Ivan as a child, and a primarily postwar photograph album of Ivan in Bad Gastein and the United States.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as two series.

Series 1. Biographical material, 1909-1946 and undated

Series 2. Photographs, 1915-1946 and undated

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Person:

Becker, Ivan, 1929-2009.

Wallenberg, Raoul, 1912-1947.

Corporate:

Bad Gastein (Displaced persons camp)

American Red Cross.

Topical Subject:

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Hungary--Budapest.

Forced labor--Hungary.

Geography:

Budapest (Hungary)

United States--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:

Photographs.

Photograph albums.

Affidavits.

Cookbooks.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Biographical material, 1909-1946 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Affidavit, 1938
1.2	Becker, Anna, 1909-1915
1.3	Becker, Dezsö, 1936-1942
1.4	Becker, Frida and Matyás, 1935-1944
1.5	Becker, Ivan, circa 1944-1946
BE 1	Becker, Kato: Cookbook, circa 1930s
1.6	Becker, Kato: Cookbook loose recipes
1.7	Family history, undated
1.8	Irsai, Istvan, undated
1.9	Manuscript, 1922

Series 2. Photographs, 1915-1946 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
1.10	Becker family, circa 1932-1940
1.11	Becker family apartment before and after the war, circa 1940-circa 1945
1.12	Becker, Dezsö, circa 1915-1940
1.13	Becker, Frida, 1946
1.14 OS 1-2	Becker, Ivan: Class photographs, 1936-1942 (3 folders)
1.15	Becker, Ivan and Chippy, 1939
1.16	Becker, Ivan and Istvan Kertesz, circa 1940-1944
1.17	Becker, Ivan and Miriam and Robbie Irshai, circa 1942
1.18	Becker, Ivan, circa 1933-circa 1945
1.19	Becker, Kato, 1915-circa 1935
1.20	Becker, Leslie, 1932 and undated
1.21-1.22	World War I, circa 1914-circa 1918 (2 folders)
2.1	Photograph album: Bad Gastein, circa 1936-circa 1946
1.23	Photograph album: Bad Gastein loose photographs
3.1	Photograph album: Blue album 1, 1929-circa 1931
BE 2	Photograph album: Blue album 2, circa 1931-circa 1933
BE 3	Photograph album: Blue album 3, circa 1933-1936