

SINGER FAMILY PAPERS, 1891-1968
2018.489.1

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

Title: Singer family papers

Dates: 1891-1968 (bulk 1938-1948)

Accession number: 2018.489.1

Creator: Singer (Family : Vienna, Austria)

Extent: .5 linear feet (1 box, 1 oversize folder, 1 book enclosure)

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

Abstract: The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Elsa and Paul Singer, along with their daughter Eva Singer, including their flight from Vienna, Austria in 1938, Paul's internment in the Meslay du Maine internment camp, and their immigration to the United States from Paris in 1940. Included are biographical and identification documents, immigration paperwork for the Singers and Paul's brother Georg and his wife Leopoldina Nemelka Singer, a small amount of wartime correspondence, and photographs.

Languages: German, Italian, English, Portuguese

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), Singer family papers (2018.489.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Cynthia Peterman in 2018. Cynthia is the daughter of Eva Singer.

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, March 2019

Biographical note

Paul Leon Singer (1892-1972) was born on 14 May 1892 in Trieste, Italy to Sigismund and Emma (née Pardo, 1852-1937) Singer. He had four siblings: Georg (George, 1883-1945), Mercedes (1885-1918), Rosa (1887-1970), and Arrigo (1890-1915). Paul and his family moved to Vienna, Austria by 1901, and he completed his schooling there. He and his brother Georg both served in World War I. By 1928 Paul and Georg ran an import/export business called G. Singer & Co. with some relation to the Japanese firm Au Mikado.

Elsa Singer (née Stern, 1891-1972) was born on 8 May 1891 in Brno, Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic) to Max and Rosalie (née Fuchs). She had 5 siblings: Irma, Heinrich (b. 1881), Robert, Olga, and Regine. Elsa was briefly married with the last name Chiavacci and lived in Vienna.

Paul and Elsa met in the Alps and married in 1923. Their daughter Eva Mercedes Singer (later Eva Gaizband, 1925-2010) was born in 1925 in Vienna.

After the German annexation of Austria in March 1938, Eva stayed briefly with their housekeeper Margarte Dvorak (Grete, Gretl) in the Austrian countryside. Elsa, Paul, and Eva then went to Brno to be with Eva's grandparents before going to Paris by November 1938 to stay with Elsa's brother Robert and his wife Juliette Spanjaard (1893-1963). On 9 September 1939 Paul was deported to the Meslay du Maine internment camp. He was released on 12 February 1940. They received an affidavit from Ludwig Hopfenberg, a stranger, and immigrated to the United States in February 1940 aboard the SS *De Grasse*. They settled in New Jersey. Elsa and Paul moved to Nice, France in 1950. Eva married Aaron Gaizband (1919-2005) and had one daughter, Cindy (later Cindy Peterman).

Paul's brother George, his wife Leopoldina (Polly), and their son Arrigo (Erich, 1924-2012) fled Austria for Brazil. Elsa's brother Robert and his wife Juliette remained in France and were involved with the Resistance. Three of Elsa's siblings, Heinrich, Irma, and Olga all perished in the Holocaust.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Elsa and Paul Singer, along with their daughter Eva Singer, including their flight from Vienna, Austria in 1938, Paul's internment in the Meslay du Maine internment camp, and their immigration to the United States from Paris in 1940. Included are biographical and identification documents, immigration paperwork for the Singers and Paul's brother Georg and his wife Leopoldina Nemelka Singer, a small amount of wartime correspondence, and photographs.

The biographical material includes birth and marriage certificates, report cards, documents related to Paul and Georg's World War I military service, papers related to Paul and Georg's import/export business, Singer family history, and Catholic conversion documents for Georg and his son Arrigo. Also included are Eva's autograph book and recipe book (in German).

Immigration papers for Elsa, Paul, and Eva include identification cards, Vienna police documents, ORT (Organization for Rehabilitation through Training) papers, an affidavit in lieu of passport, and naturalization certificates. Immigration papers for Georg and Leopoldina include identification documents and Brazilian registration papers.

Correspondence consists of letters sent to the Singer family's housekeeper Margarete Dvorak, who briefly kept Eva with her in the Austrian countryside in 1938 and wartime letters exchanged with family members including Elsa's niece Vally and her brother Robert. Included are donor-provided transcriptions and translations of select letters.

Photographs include depictions of the Singer and Stern families and Eva Singer.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as four series:

Series 1. Biographical material, 1891-1968

Series 2. Immigration, 1938-1948

Series 3. Correspondence, 1930-1946 and undated

Series 4. Photographs, 1920-circa 1937 and undated

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Person:

Singer, Elsa, 1891-1972.

Singer, Paul, 1892-1972.

Singer, Eva, 1925-2010.

Singer, Georg, 1883-1945.

Singer, Leopoldina Nemelka, 1890-1974.

Corporate:

Meslay du Maine (Concentration camp)

Topical Subject:

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Austria--Vienna.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--France--Paris.

Geography:

Vienna (Austria)

Brno (Czech Republic)

Paris (France)

United States--Emigration and immigration.

Trieste (Italy)

Brazil--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:

Photographs.

Cookbook.

Correspondence.
Autograph books.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Biographical material, 1891-1968

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Singer, Elsa, 1911-1927, 1968
1.2	Singer, Elsa and Paul: Marriage certificates, 1923
BE 1	Singer, Eva: Autograph book, 1938-1940
1.3	Singer, Eva: Recipe book, circa 1940s
1.4	Singer, Eva, 1925-1942
1.5, OS 1	Singer, Georg and Leopoldina Nemelka Singer, 1891-1941
1.6	Singer, Paul, 1893-1968
1.7	Singer family, 1895-1951

Series 2. Immigration, 1938-1948

Box/Folder	Title
1.8	Singer, Elsa, Paul, and Eva, 1939-1948
1.9	Singer, Georg and Leopoldina Nemelka Singer, 1938-1942

Series 3. Correspondence, 1930-1946 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
1.10	Dvorak, Margarete, 1938 and undated
1.11	Singer family and friends, 1930-1946 and undated

Series 4. Photographs, 1920-circa 1937 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
1.12	Singer family, 1920 and undated