

**GEORGE ROTHMAN PAPERS, 1912-circa 2018  
2019.592.2**

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

Title: George Rothman papers

Dates: 1912-circa 2018 [bulk 1939-1948]

Accession number: 2019.592.2

Creator: Rothman, George.

Extent: 8 folders, 1 oversize folder

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

Abstract: The George Rothman papers document the Holocaust-era experiences of George Rothman (born Georges Bardenstein) and his parents Emmanuel and Esfira Bardenstein in Bordeaux and Paris, France, including Emmanuel's enlistment in the French Army, George's hospitalization due to a severe illness, his parent's deportation to Drancy and Auschwitz, and his survival as a hidden child in a Catholic orphanage. Included are pre-war biographical papers, correspondence, photographs, and a memoir.

Languages: French, English, Russian, Hungarian

**Administrative Information**

Access: Collection is open for use.

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), George Rothman papers (2019.592.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection and two accretions were donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by George Rothman in 2019. This collection is comprised of the collections previously cataloged as 2019.592.1, 2019.593.1, and 2019.594.1.

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 2022

### **Biographical note**

George Rothman was born Georges Bardenstein on 1 September 1933 in Strasbourg, France to Emmanuel and Esfira Bardenstein. His father Emmanuel Bardenstein (1904-1942) was born on 7 August 1904 in Kharkow, Russia (Kharkiv, Ukraine) to Abram Bardenstein and Perle (née Rachman) Bardenstein. He had two sisters, Dina and Sarah. Emmanuel studied architecture and engineering. George's mother Esfira Bardenstein (1909-1942) was born Esfira Chor on 12 October 1909 in Sculeni, Romania (Sculeni, Moldova) to Moise Chor and Leia Libmann. She worked as a pharmacist. George and Esfira met in Strasbourg and married in 1933. The family moved to Bordeaux in 1935.

Emmanuel joined the French Army in 1939, primarily in an attempt to gain French citizenship. Germany invaded France in May 1940, and France and Germany signed an armistice on 22 June 1940. George's family moved to Paris in June 1941. Unable to find work as a pharmacist, Esfira began working as a maid, and Emmanuel as a busboy. They also converted to Catholicism in an attempt to avoid antisemitic laws. George became severely ill with a kidney inflammation (Acute glomerulonephritis) in April 1942 and had to be hospitalized. His parents arranged for Philippe and Martha Lequien, a Parisian couple whom Esfira used to clean for, to care for George if they were unable to. Emmanuel and Esfira were deported from Paris to Drancy on 9 August 1942 and then sent to Auschwitz on 21 August 1942 where they both perished.

As George recovered, he was moved from the hospital to a convalescent home, and then with the Lequien family. In December 1942 he was hidden in a Catholic orphanage under the name of George Bardin. After the war, he lived with the Lequiens again. In 1946, George's paternal great uncle, Isaac Rothman, who lived in the United States, learned that Emmanuel and Esfira had likely perished, but that George had survived. He began corresponding with George and the Lequiens, and in March 1947 George immigrated to the United States to live with Issac and his wife Emma Rothman in Los Angeles. The Rothmans adopted George in 1948, and he later changed his name to George Rothman. He went on to have a career as a dentist. He and his wife Gail had two children.

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

The George Rothman papers document the Holocaust-era experiences of George Rothman (born Georges Bardenstein) and his parents Emmanuel and Esfira Bardenstein in Bordeaux and Paris, France, including Emmanuel's enlistment in the French Army, George's hospitalization due to a severe illness, his parent's deportation to Drancy and Auschwitz, and his survival as a hidden child in a Catholic orphanage. Included are pre-war biographical papers, correspondence, photographs, and a memoir.

The bulk of the biographical materials consists of correspondence and immigration documents regarding George's Great Uncle Isaac Rothman, living in Los Angeles, California, discovering George survived the Holocaust, and the process to bring him to the United States. The correspondence is primarily between George, Isaac, and Philippe and Martha Lequien, who hid George during the war, and cared for him afterwards in Paris. There is also a small amount of wartime correspondence. Other material consists pre-war documents of Emmanuel and Esfira Bardenstein including marriage certificate, family book, employment records, French Army papers, and post war correspondence regarding their fate during the

Holocaust. Files of George Rothman include his French passport, military entry permit card, and memoir entitled "My Life is a Series of Miracles." Photographs include Holocaust-era depictions of George as a child, his parents Emmanuel and Esfira, various relatives, and Philippe and Martha Lequien.

**System of arrangement**

The collection is arranged as two series.

Series 1. Biographical material, 1927-circa 2018

Series 2. Photographs, 1912-1949

**Indexing terms**

Person:

Rothman, George.

Bardenstein, Emmanuel, 1904-1942.

Bardenstein, Esfira, 1909-1942.

Rothman, Isaac.

Lequien, Philippe.

Lequien, Martha.

Corporate:

Drancy (Concentration camp)

Auschwitz (Concentration camp)

Topical Subject:

Jews--France--Paris.

Holocaust survivors--France--Paris.

Deportation--France.

Orphanages--France.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Children.

Hidden children (Holocaust)--France.

Geography:

Paris (France)

Bordeaux (France)

United States--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:

Personal narratives.

Photographs.

Letters.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1. Biographical material, 1927-circa 2018

Folder	Title
1 , OS 1	Bardenstein, Emmanuel and Esfira, 1927-1948
2	Rothman, George, 1946-circa 2018
3	Correspondence, 1939-1944
4-5	Correspondence and immigration documents, 1945-1963 (2 folders)

### Series 2. Photographs, 1912-1949

Folder	Title
6	Bardenstein, Emmanuel and Esfira and relatives, 1912-1939
7	Lequien, Philippe and Martha, 1946-1949
8	Rothman, George, 1936-1947