

WEIDHORN FAMILY PAPERS, circa 1920-2006
2022.29.1

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

Title: Weidhorn family papers

Dates: Circa 1920-2006, undated (bulk 1932-1948)

Accession number: 2022.29.1

Creator: Weidhorn family.

Extent: 2 boxes, 1 oversize folder

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 Manfred Weidhorn and his parents Anne and Aron Weidhorn, including their flight from Vienna, Austria after the German-annexation of Austria in March 1938, Aron's immigration to the United States in 1939, and Manfred and his mother's immigration to the United States via Cuba in 1941. Included are biographical and identification documents, records related to Aron's fur businesses in Europe and the United States, immigration paperwork, photographs, correspondence, and a diary kept by Aron in 1940, shortly after his arrival in the U.S.

Languages: German, English, Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish

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), Weidhorn family papers (2022.29.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Manfred Weidhorn in 2022.

Separated material:

2022.29.2 Children's book, Felix et Zizi

2022.29.3 Children's book, Blanche-neige et les sept nains

2022.29.4 Miniature dictionary, Le tout-petit dictionnaire, Francais-Allemand

2022.29.5 Miniature dictionary, Le tout-petit dictionnaire, Deutsch-Franzosisches

2022.29.6 Miniature dictionary, Le tout-petit dictionnaire, Francais-Espagnol

2022.29.7 Miniature dictionary, The Tiny One, English-French Dictionary

2022.29.8 Deck of cards about the American presidents

2022.29.9. Oral History

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, July 2022

Biographical note

Manfred Weidhorn was born on 10 October 1931 in Vienna, Austria to Aron and Anne Weidhorn. His father, Aron Weidhorn (1900-1948), was born in Rava-Ruska, Galicia (Rava-Ruska, Ukraine) to Peisach Weidhorn and Juette Freude. His family was Orthodox, and his father taught Hebrew at a yeshiva. He had an older brother and two sisters. As a young man, Aron lived in the Hague, Netherlands for three years where he was a Hebrew teacher. He moved to Vienna in 1930. Manfred's mother, Anne Ratze Weidhorn (née Chana Gelber, 1909-2008), was born in Rava-Ruska to Elias Gelber (b. 1879) and Neschi Kurzer Spritzer (b. 1876). Her family was Orthodox, and her father owned a clothing factory. She had two sisters: Frieda and Renee.

Manfred's parents met and married in Vienna in 1930, and he was born a year later. Aron became a business partner of his father-in-law. In 1935 Aron moved to Palestine with the intention of starting a fur business there. His family joined him in March 1936 and they lived in Haifa, Palestine (Haifa, Israel) until 1937. The family returned to Vienna, but Aron soon moved to Paris to set up a fur business there. Manfred and his mother lived with her parents in Vienna, with the idea they would join Aron in Paris after the business was established. After the German annexation of Austria in March 1938, Manfred, his mother, and her parents fled to Paris to be reunited with Aron. Aron planned to immigrate to the United States with the help of relatives in the U.S., and then bring his family over. In August 1939 the family moved to Antwerp, Belgium.

On 30 December 1939, Aron boarded the Henry Jasper and sailed to the United States using a business visa obtained while in Paris. He settled in the Bronx, New York and lived with Anne's

cousin Anshel Berger, whom he also worked for. Manfred and Anne remained in Antwerp with family until the German invasion of Belgium on 10 May 1940. They fled the city with relatives. Manfred's relatives later returned to Antwerp, but he and his mother went back to Paris. Anne would learn after the war that both her parents perished at Auschwitz.

Aron's business visa eventually expired. He managed to obtain an immigration visa through the American Consul in Montreal, and was readmitted to the country on 2 April 1941. Manfred and his mother fled Paris in spring 1941 to Marseille. In July 1941 Manfred and Anne secured visas to go to Cuba. They arrived in Havana, Cuba via Bilbao, Spain. After receiving their American visas, the mother and son arrived in New York in early November 1941. The reunited family settled in Brooklyn. Anne learned diamond cutting through her sister Renee, who also immigrated to the U.S., and taught the skill to Aron. Aron tried to establish himself in the furrier business, but after several years of difficulties, he eventually switched careers, and they both worked as diamond cutters.

Aron learned after the war that all his siblings perished during the Holocaust.

Manfred graduated from Columbia College in 1954. He was then drafted into the army. After he was discharged in 1956, he attended Columbia University, and received his Ph.D in English in 1963. He went on to become a professor of English Literature at Yeshiva University, and the author of several books.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Manfred Weidhorn and his parents Anne and Aron Weidhorn, including their flight from Vienna, Austria after the German-annexation of Austria in March 1938, Aron's immigration to the United States in 1939, and Manfred and his mother's immigration to the United States via Cuba in 1941. Included are biographical and identification documents, records related to Aron's fur businesses in Europe and the United States, immigration paperwork, photographs, correspondence, and a diary kept by Aron in 1940, shortly after his arrival in the U.S.

Biographical material includes personal and identification papers such as birth and death certificates; family history; records regarding Aron's fur businesses in Europe, Palestine, and the United States; his later diamond cutter career; notebook, day planner, and address book used by Aron in Paris and the United States; and a diary kept by Aron in 1940, shortly after his arrival in the United States.

Immigration paperwork documents the Weidhorn family's immigration from Europe, first with Aron arriving in January 1940 via Antwerp, and Manfred and Anne arriving in November 1941 via Havana. Included are sponsorship documents and letters of support, correspondence, passports, and naturalization certificates.

Correspondence includes wartime letters from Chaskel Silber, who worked with Aron in the furrier business, Anne's sister Frieda and her husband Chaim, who fled to Haifa, Palestine.

Photographs include prewar, wartime, and post-war depictions of the Weidhorn family in Europe and the United States. Included are depictions of Aron and Anne's prewar lives in the 1920s, Anne's Gelber family relatives, Weidhorn family life in Vienna, Haifa, Paris, Havana, and the United States. Many of the photographs are annotated on the back.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as 4 series.

Series 1. Biographical papers, 1921-2006, undated

Series 2. Immigration, 1938-1949

Series 3. Correspondence, 1940-1946, undated

Series 4. Photographs, circa 1920-1946

Indexing terms

Person:

Weidhorn, Manfred, 1931-

Weidhorn, Aron, 1900-1948.

Weidhorn, Anne, 1909-2008.

Corporate:

Topical Subject:

Men--Personal narratives.

Jews--Austria--Vienna.

Refugees, Jewish--Belgium.

Refugees, Jewish--Cuba.

Refugees, Jewish--France--Paris.

Fur trade.

Diamond cutters.

Geography:

Vienna (Austria)

Haifa (Israel)

Antwerp (Belgium)

Havana (Cuba)

United States--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:

Diary.

Letters.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Biographical papers, 1921-2006, undated

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Weidhorn, Aron: Address book, circa 1939
1.2	Weidhorn, Aron: Day planner, 1939
1.3	Weidhorn, Aron: Diamond cutting trade, 1943-1946
1.4	Weidhorn, Aron: Diary and translation, 1940
1.5	Weidhorn, Aron: Fur business, 1937-1942
1.6	Weidhorn, Aron: Notebook, 1939
1.7, OS 1	Weidhorn, Aron: Personal papers, circa 1936-1948
1.8	Weidhorn family: Personal papers, 1921-2006
1.9	Rava-Ruska, Poland history, undated

Series 2. Immigration, 1938-1949

Box/Folder	Title
1.10-1.11	Immigration, 1939-1949 (2 folders)
1.12	Passports (Polish), 1938-1939
1.13	Sponsors and letters of support, 1940-1941

Series 3. Correspondence, 1940-1946, undated

Box/Folder	Title
1.14	Weidhorn, Aron: Silber, Chaskel, 1940-1942
1.15	Rumelt, Frieda and Chaim, 1944
1.16	General correspondence, 1942-1946, undated

Series 4. Photographs, circa 1920-1946

Box/Folder	Title
2.1	Weidhorn, Anne and Gelber family, circa 1920-1938
2.2	Weidhorn, Aron, 1923-1941
2.3	Weidhorn family: Europe and Cuba, 1932-1941
2.4	Weidhorn family: United States, 1941-1946