
Finding Aid to the Rosalie Meyer Stern papers, 1867-1996

Finding Aid written by The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life staff

The Bancroft Library

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Collection Number: BANC MSS 2010/604

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Date Completed:

June 2011

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Rosalie Meyer Stern papers

Date (inclusive): 1867-1996

Collection Number: BANC MSS 2010/604

Creators : Stern, Rosalie Meyer, 1869-1956

Extent: Number of containers: 5 cartons, 1 oversize box, and 1 oversize folder (Linear feet: 5.4)

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Abstract: This collection is primarily comprised of correspondence and ephemera documenting Rosalie Meyer Stern's familial and social life. Also included are diaries, biographical and genealogical material relating to Stern's maternal and paternal relations, newspaper clippings, some materials on Rosalie's paternal uncle, Leon Zadoc-Kahn, the Grand Rabbi of France, and photographs. Most of the collection centers on Rosalie Meyer Stern's life as a daughter, sister, cousin, mother, and grandmother. There is relatively little material relating to her role as a civic leader.

Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English, French, German, and Hebrew.

Physical Location: Many of the Bancroft Library collections are stored offsite and advance notice may be required for use. For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Access

Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Rosalie Meyer Stern papers, BANC MSS 2010/604, The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Alternate Forms Available

There are no alternate forms of this collection.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Stern, Rosalie Meyer, 1869-1956--Archives

Stern, Sigmund--Correspondence

Kahn, Zadoc, 1839-1905--Family

Jews--Cultural assimilation--California--San Francisco

Jewish women--California--San Francisco

San Francisco (Calif.)--Genealogy

Correspondence--California--San Francisco

Diaries--California--San Francisco

Diaries--California--San Francisco

Family papers--California--San Francisco

Photographs--California--San Francisco

Photographs--California--Los Angeles

Western Jewish History Center. 268

Judah L. Magnes Museum. WJHC 1971.003

Bancroft Library. Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life

Acquisition Information

The Rosalie Meyer Stern papers were gifted to The Bancroft Library by the Judah L. Magnes Museum in 2010.

Accruals

No future additions are expected.

System of Arrangement

Collection is arranged into eight series: Correspondence, Social Life, Diaries, Biographical and Genealogical, Meyer Family Essays, News Clippings, Leon Zadoc-Kahn Material, and Photographs. The Correspondence series is further divided into three subseries: Incoming, Outgoing, and Special Family Correspondence.

Processing Information

Processed by the Judah L. Magnes Museum staff in 1968. Additional processing by The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life staff in 2011.

Biographical Information

Rosalie Meyer Stern was a civic and social leader of San Francisco. In 1892, she married Sigmund Stern, the president of Levi Strauss and Company. Following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, Stern converted her house into a Red Cross factory. During World War I, she became the first woman associate field director for military relief in the West; worked with the Red Cross at Camp Fremont Base Hospital; helped furnish troops with supplies; and collected money. In 1917, she served on the Garden Committee of the San Francisco Park and Recreation Department; in 1918, she formed the Garden Hospital Committee for the United States Veterans Hospital Number 24; and in 1919 she was appointed the

president of the San Francisco Playground Commission. Stern also bought land that was scheduled for urban development and gave it to the city of San Francisco for the establishment of Sigmund Stern Grove, as a memorial to her husband and helped form a committee to underwrite free summer concerts held in the Grove. She also organized the San Francisco Junior Symphony and was a founder of the San Francisco Opera Association. She held board positions on the board of the World War I Fatherless Children of France (and received the Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur from France in 1938); Associated Jewish Charities; Pioneer Kindergarten Society and Children's Agency; Community Chest; and the Women's Board of the San Francisco Museum of Art. She funded construction of Stern Hall, at the University of California, Berkeley; took an active interest in forty-eight scholarships that were established at the University of California, Berkeley by Levi Strauss and Company; and served on the Entertainment Committee for the World's Fair that was held on Treasure Island (1939-1940). She also served on committees of the War Relief Fund and of the National Recreation Association, in addition to being an honorary member of the California Recreation Society.

- 1861 Eugene Meyer immigrates to Los Angeles from Strasbourg, France.
1867 Meyer marries Harriet Newmark.
1869 Rosalie Meyer is born.
1871-1884 Eugene and Harriet add four daughters and three sons to their family.
1883 Eugene accepts a position at the London, Paris and American Bank. The family relocates to San Francisco.
1891 Rosalie is engaged to Emil Greenebaum but breaks engagement at the request of her father.
1891-1892 Rosalie travels to Paris with Eugene and sister, Elise. Meets Sigmund Stern.
1892 Marries Sigmund Stern.
1893 Gives birth to daughter, Elise.
1895 Eugene Meyer accepts partnership with Lazard Freres and relocates Harriet and Rosalie's siblings to New York City.
1900 Rosalie and Sigmund build a house on Pacific Street in San Francisco.
1906 Rosalie and Sigmund purchase land in Atherton for a summer home.
1914 Elise marries Walter Haas.
Rosalie enrolls in Jessica Peixotto's American History class at the University of California, Berkeley.
1916 Elise gives birth to Walter Haas, Jr., Rosalie's first grandchild.
1917 Rosalie joins boards of the Pioneer Kindergarten Society and the Children's Agency.
1918 Rosalie appointed Associate Field Director of Military Relief for the American Red Cross.
Peter Haas is born.
1919 Rosalie appointed to San Francisco's Recreation and Park Commission.
1925 Rhoda Haas is born.
1928 Sigmund dies of cancer.
1931 Rosalie purchases a tract of land, later named the Sigmund Stern Recreation Grove, and donates it to the City.
1939 Elise is appointed president of the board of Mt. Zion Hospital.
1955 Elise is appointed as trustee of the Museum of Modern Art.
1956 Rosalie dies.
1964 Elise is elected as president of the board of the Museum of Modern Art.
1990 Elise dies.

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection is primarily comprised of correspondence and ephemera documenting Rosalie Meyer Stern's familial and social life. Also included are diaries, biographical and genealogical material relating to Stern's maternal and paternal relations, newspaper clippings, some materials on Rosalie's paternal uncle, Leon Zadoc Kahn, the Grand Rabbi of France, and photographs. Most of the collection centers on Rosalie Meyer Stern's life as a daughter, sister, cousin, mother, and grandmother. There is relatively little material relating to her role as a civic leader.

Correspondence, the largest series in the collection, offers insight into the experience of Rosalie Meyer Stern as well as the lives of multiple generations of her extended family (including the Meyers, the Sterns, the Haases, and the Newmarks). Rosalie Meyer Stern's incoming correspondence constitutes the bulk of the correspondence series and dates from 1878 through 1955. The majority of the letters were written by family members to Rosalie between 1880 and 1930. While many of the letters were penned from Los Angeles, there are also those that were written by relatives living in San Francisco, New York, St. Louis, and France, and some travel letters from various parts of the United States and from abroad. There are letters from or about Rosalie's paternal aunt and uncle, Ernestine and Leon Zadoc Kahn, the Grand Rabbi of France, Judah Magnes, Felix Frankfurter, Florence Prag Kahn, Justice Brandeis, Michael Stein (Gertrude's brother), and Levi Strauss. There is extensive correspondence from Rosalie's parents, Eugene and Harriet Newmark Meyer; Rosalie's brothers, Eugene, Jr. (an appointed government official and owner of the Washington Post), Walter (an investment banker), and Edgar (who died

on the Titanic); and her sisters, Elise (who first married Abraham Stern, Sigmund's brother, and later married De Souza Dantes), Florence (a philanthropist married to George Blumenthal), Ruth (Mrs. George Cook), and Aline (Mrs. Charles Liebman). There is also a fair amount of correspondence from and to Rosalie's daughter and son-in-law, Elise Stern and Walter Haas. In the Special Family Correspondence subseries is an especially notable 1867 letter from Rosa Newmark (Rosalie's grandmother) in Los Angeles, California to Sarah Newmark describing in detail Harriet Newmark's Los Angeles wedding, house, and trousseau.

The other major component of the collection is ephemera from Rosalie Meyer Stern's social life. These materials paint a picture of the social milieu in which the Meyer, Stern, and Haas families lived. There are invitations to weddings and other social events, calling and business cards, dance cards, ocean liner passenger lists, itineraries, as well as wills, lists of condolence senders, a few financial records, and information about clubs and societies.

Series 1 Correspondence. 1867-1965

Physical Description: Cartons 1-3; Carton 4, folders 1-7; Oversize Box 1; Oversize Folder 1B

Subseries 1.1 Incoming Correspondence. 1878-1955

Physical Description: Cartons 1-2; Carton 3, folders 1-43; Oversize Box 1

Scope and Content

Contains files (arranged chronologically) of general incoming correspondence from 1878 through 1955 and files of incoming correspondence from identified correspondents including: Eugene Meyer, Harriet Newmark Meyer, Lucy Simon, Rosalie Meyer's siblings (including Florence Meyer Blumenthal, and Ruth Meyer Cook), Ernestine and Leon Zadoc-Kahn, and Elise Stern Haas and Walter Haas Jr. There are also some files of incoming correspondence in this subseries on particular topics, including congratulatory letters for Rosalie's silver wedding anniversary and letters regarding war orphans, civic work, Judah Magnes, and the Paderewski controversy. Also included in this subseries is an oversize scrapbook of congratulatory telegrams sent to Sigmund and Rosalie Meyer Stern on the occasion of their wedding in 1892.

Subseries 1.2 Outgoing Correspondence. 1882-1965

Physical Description: Carton 3, folders 44-47; Carton 4, folders 1-3

Scope and Content

Consists of one folder of general outgoing correspondence and six folders of correspondence from Rosalie Meyer Stern to Elise Stern Haas and Walter Haas, Jr.

Subseries 1.3 Special Family Correspondence. 1867-1939

Physical Description: Carton 4, folders 4-7, Oversize Folder 1B

Scope and Content

Subseries consists of an 1867 letter (in English, with transcription) from Rosa Newmark (Rosalie's grandmother) in Los Angeles, California to Sarah Newmark describing in detail Harriet Newmark's Los Angeles wedding, house, and trousseau; letters to Eugene Meyer and Harriet Newmark Meyer from his family in France sent between 1867 and 1879 (written in French, German, and Hebrew or Yiddish); a copy of an 1867 letter in Hebrew or Yiddish from Sephora Meyer to her children (in oversize folder 1B); an 1892 telegram from Sigmund Stern to Eugene Meyer asking for Rosalie's hand in marriage as well as correspondence between Sigmund Stern and Eugene Meyer and the Meyer and Stern families regarding the engagement; and one folder of correspondence of Walter Meyer (1935-1939), including a 1935 letter from Justice Louis Brandeis.

Series 2 Social Life. 1875-1956

Physical Description: Carton 4, folders 8-39; Carton 5, folders 1-7; Oversize Box 1

Scope and Content Note

This series contains an assortment of materials that document Rosalie Meyer Stern's social and family life, including invitations, programs, dance cards, household documents, travel itineraries, calling cards, wills, and a Lowell Birthday Book from 1893 (in oversize box).

Series 3 Diaries. 1881-1892

Physical Description: Carton 5, folders 8-10

Scope and Content Note

This series contains Rosalie's diaries, including one from January to March 1886, written while living in San Francisco, one from her trip to Paris with Elise and Eugene Meyer in 1891-1892, and fragments written on special occasions during 1881-1888.

Series 4 Biographical and Genealogical. 1943-1964

Physical Description: Carton 5, folders 11-23

Scope and Content Note

This series contains mostly unpublished biographical material, including family histories and memoirs of the extended Meyer-Newmark family. "Ship's Log Around the Horn 1853" is the published version of the diary kept by Rosalie's maternal grandfather, Meyer Newmark, on his trip as a 12 year old from New York to San Francisco. There is a undated, typed manuscript, written by Rosalie, which includes an account of the 1906 earthquake. This series also includes a number of handwritten genealogies of the extended Meyer-Newmark family and a certificate of induction into the French Legion of Honor given to Rosalie Meyer Stern in 1938 (in oversize folder 1B).

Series 5 Meyer Family Essays. 1884-1926

Physical Description: Carton 5, folders 24-27

Scope and Content Note

This series contains a variety of family papers and essays, including an academic paper by Edgar Meyer and a series of short essays by Rosalie Meyer Stern.

Series 6 Newsclippings. 1892-1996

Physical Description: Carton 5, folders 28-35; Oversize Folder 1B

Scope and Content Note

This series contains newsclippings about Rosalie Meyer Stern and her extended family.

Series 7 Leon Zadoc-Kahn Materials. 1897-1930

Physical Description: Carton 5, folders 36-40; Oversize Box 1

Scope and Content Note

This series contains pamphlets (mostly in French) and clippings pertaining to Leon Zadoc-Kahn, the Grand Rabbi of France who testified at the trial of Alfred Dreyfus.

Series 8 **Photographs and Pictorial Material. circa 1885-1957**

Physical Description: Carton 5, folders 41-53

Scope and Content Note

This series is comprised of photographs of Rosalie Meyer Stern's family. Included are images of the following: Joseph and Rosa Levy Newmark (circa 1885); Eugene and Harriet Meyer Newmark in front of their Los Angeles home (circa 1890-1900); the Meyer, Newmark, Loeb, and Kaufmann children (circa 1885); Meyer family headstones (circa 1955); Sigmund Stern, Rosalie Meyer Stern, and Elise Stern (circa 1913-1925); Walter Meyer; Walter and Elise Stern Haas and family (circa 1903-1920); Walter Jr., Rhoda, and Peter Haas (circa 1923-1925); Pacific Avenue homes damaged in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire (stereograph); Sigmund Stern's old house on Powell Street; Rosalie Meyer Stern's travel in the 1950s; Walter S. Heller in a biplane (circa 1914); miscellaneous unidentified individuals. There is also a photo album (circa 1900) with unidentified images.