
Remak and Mosenthal family papers 1988.1046

Finding aid prepared by Judith Janec

Tauber Holocaust Library

JFCS Holocaust Center

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Title: Remak and Mosenthal family papers

Identifier/Call Number: 1988.1046

Contributing Institution: Tauber Holocaust Library

Language of Material: German

Storage Unit: Archives Box 01

Physical Description: 3.0 Folder(s)

Date (bulk): Bulk, 1934-1959

Date (inclusive): 1884-1979

Language of Materials note: Materials are in German and English. English translation of some German materials is available.

Abstract: This collection documents the experiences of a Jewish German family from Berlin. Papers in German and English describe the multi-generational business of the Mosenthal family, family member's military service during World War I, arrest and imprisonment of family members, forced sale of business, emigration to England and then the United States. Letters to the United States Department of State document the separation of family members and attempts to rescue family members left behind in Germany. The collection includes biographical material, a family genealogy and photographs.

Conditions Governing Access note

There are no restrictions to access to this collection.

Conditions Governing Use note

There are no restrictions to use for this collection.

Arrangement note

Collection is arranged in separate folders for English language material, for German language material, for photographs, and for photocopied material.

Scope and Contents note

The collection is comprised of family papers of primarily the William (Curt) Mosenthal family, as well as a few items pertaining to the Remak family, spanning the years 1934-1992, but primarily relating to the years 1934-1946. The collection documents the experiences of a Jewish German family from Berlin, whose lives were imperiled and business confiscated by the Nazi regime, and describes their emigration to England (where Mr. Mosenthal was interned on the Isle of Man as an enemy alien), their resettlement in the United States, their attempts to free family members left behind, as well as restitution efforts after the war ended.

Documents include family and business papers, and photographs. Family papers include a letter describing the experiences of Mr. Mosenthal while imprisoned in Buchenwald concentration camp in October 1939; correspondence between the United States State Department and the Mosenthal family regarding Mr. Mosenthal's mother and her visa, and a family history written by Mr. Mosenthal's daughter Ursel (Joyce Remak). Also included are obituary notices of Johanna Mosenthal and William (Curt) Mosenthal for the Aufbau, a German language newspaper in New York City. Of interest is a German Youth Family Certificate issued to Ursel Mosenthal in 1934.

Business papers relate to the Mosenthal family business, a hardware store of many generations, and includes periodical articles regarding the Mosenthal family business - A. Mosenthal Hardware and business documents.

Photographs are both of family members, and street views of the Mosenthal business.

Preferred Citation note

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Biographical/Historical note

William C. Mosenthal (born Curt) was born in Eisenach, Germany on October 9, 1890. After high school, he served in the Germany Army during World War I as Acting First Sergeant in France and received the Iron Cross. In 1920 he married Johanna Eichengruen who was born in Witten/Ruhr. Daughter Ursel (later Joyce) was born on October 20, 1920, and Hans (later John) was born on July 16, 1922. The family lived in Eisenach with William Mosenthal's mother Kaethe.

Mr. Mosenthal was the manager of the A. Mosenthal Eisenhandlung Company in Eisenach. The business had been started by his grandfather Abraham Mosenthal in 1884. Mr. Mosenthal's father, Max, took over management in 1898, and William Mosenthal in turn inherited the management of the business after his father's death in 1929.

The night of November 9, 1938, Kristallnacht, William Mosenthal was arrested and sent to concentration camp Buchenwald. He was forced to sign a "sales" contract for his business on December 1, 1938 so that he could leave the camp and

emigrate. Johanna Mosenthal was dragged into a hall opposite the synagogue; she and other Jewish women were threatened to be thrown into the synagogue. Upon returning home, Mrs. Mosenthal found her apartment destroyed and all her possession vandalized.

Ursel and Hans were able to emigrated in May 1939 to England, to await their quota number for emigration to the United States. Hans came on a Kindertransport and Ursel was trained as a children's nurse in England. Mr. and Mrs. Mosenthal arrived in England on August 25, 1939. Because he was considered an enemy alien, Mr. Mosenthal was interned on the Isle of Man. In October 1940 the family emigrated to the United States, where they settled in Kew Gardens, New York. Mrs. Mosenthal took her life in February 1943, never having recovered from the traumas she endured, as well as the death of her family. One brother committed suicide when Nazi stormtroopers came to arrest him; a sister and her husband perished in Auschwitz.

Mr. Mosenthal had purchased a small hardware store upon emigration. He remarried in 1950, and moved with his wife to Mill Valley, California in 1969. He died there in 1972.

Ursel Mosenthal married William Remak (an emigrant from Berlin) in 1954. She worked as a practical nurse/office assistant in a doctor's office until 1960, and lives in Sausalito, San Francisco.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Buchenwald (Concentration camp).

Mosenthal family

Remak family

Remak, Joyce

Exit permits -- Germany

Family papers -- Germany

Isle of Man

Jewish businesspeople -- Germany

Jewish families -- Germany

Jewish refugees -- England

Jews -- Germany

Restitution and indemnification claims (1933-) -- Germany (West)

United States -- Emigration and immigration

German language materials 1934-1959, 1978, undated

Language of Material: German

Physical Description: 1.0 Folder(s)

Ursel Mosenthal (Joyce Remak) German Youth Festival Certificate, 1934 June 23

Language of Material: German

Newspaper clipping announcements - 1884, 1939, 1943, 1972

Language of Material: German

Abstract: Clippings announce the opening of the Mosenthal family business (January 11, 1884); the forced closing of the business (May 27, 1939); announcement of the death of Johanne Mosenthal (February 19, 1943), including a receipt from the newspaper Aufbau to Mr. M. Strauss, brother of Mrs. Mosenthal; announcement of the death of William Curt Mosenthal on February 16, 1972.

William C. Rosenthal biographical sketch of Johanna Mosenthal, 1959 December 17

Language of Material: German

A. Mosenthal Hardware inventory list, undated

Language of Material: German

William Curt Mosenthal letter, 1939 October 8

Language of Material: German

A. Mosenthal Hardware Handelsregister (Trade Register), 1939 May 16

Language of Material: German

General note

Includes one piece of blank business stationery.

Newspaper articles on Mosenthal Hardware, 1935 January

Language of Material: German

General note

Two clippings from two separate periodicals -- "Eisen und Stahl-Spaene und Brocken" and "Der Eisenhaendler (vormals Bunzlau), Berlin" -- contain articles about the 50th year anniversary of the opening of the Mosenthal firm.

Ursel Mosenthal Abmeldung (Notice of Departure), 1939 May 17

Language of Material: German

General note

Police document regarding the departure of Ursula Mosenthal (Joyce Remak) from Eisenach, Germany.

Book fragment describing Walter Mosenthal World War I military service, undated

William C. Mosenthal letter to Willy Thobrock, 1952 May 7

Language of Material: German

English language materials 1940, 1946, 1992, undated

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 1.0 Folder(s)

William Curt Mosenthal letter to State Department, Visa Division, Washington, D.C., 1940 December 4

Language of Material: English

Abstract: Letter is signed by William Curt Mosenthal and Erna Bianka Elsas, requesting that the State Department assist in the visa application process of Mrs. Kathi Mosenthal, the mother of the two.

William Curt Mosenthal letter from Department of State, Washington, 1940 December 23

Language of Material: English

Abstract: Letter written by Eliot B. Coulter, Acting Chief, Visa Division, informs Mr. Mosenthal that there is nothing the Department of State can do to expedite his mother's visa application.

William Curt Mosenthal Affidavit of Support, 1940 May 24

Language of Material: English

Abstract: Affidavit of Support completed by Albert L. Walter, uncle of William Curt Mosenthal.

Joyce Remak "History of the Family Mosenthal", undated

Language of Material: English

Photographs 1920, 1938-1939, 1954, undated

Physical Description: 1.0 Folder(s)

Mosenthal family photographs -- 1920, 1936, 1938, 1954

A. Mosenthal Eisenhandlung (business) photographs, undated
Photocopied material undated

Mosenthal family genealogy, undated

Language of Material: English

Remak Family letter, 1938 November 23

Language of Material: German

Scope and Contents note

Document outlining terms of sale of Aryanized Remak family business.

Ursel Mosenthal prayerbook pages, 1888-1978

Language of Material: German