

Henry Cassel fonds [textual record, graphic material] – [ca. 1900]-2000, predominant 1929-1947.



PART OF	Henry Cassel fonds
LEVEL	Fonds
FONDS	93
MATERIAL FORMAT	textual record graphic material
DATE	[ca. 1900]-2000, predominant 1929-1947
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	8 cm of textual records 3 albums (ca. 210 photographs) 2 photographs
ADMIN HISTORY/BIO	<p>Heinz Kassel (1912-2009) (later changed to Henry Cassel) was a German refugee during the Second World War who was classified as an enemy alien by the British government. He spent two years in an internment camp for prisoners of war (POWs) in Quebec. He later became a naturalized Canadian citizen and enlisted in the Canadian military.</p> <p>Heinz was born on October 25, 1912 in Aschaffenburg, Germany to Adolf and Olga Kassel. Adolf owned a successful banking business which he had inherited from his father. The family resided above the bank and lived a comfortable life during these early years. They moved to Frankfurt around 1920 after Adolf sold his business to buy a partnership in a bank there.</p> <p>Heinz's parents had hoped that he would one day become a corporate lawyer. In 1931, in preparation for his future career, he began studying law and economics at Frankfurt University. He enjoyed his initial university years. However, after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, he became alarmed when his non-Jewish university friends began ignoring him and when the German government passed laws forbidding Jews from practicing law in court. Determined to leave Germany and seek out a better life elsewhere, he begged his parents to immigrate with him to the United States. They refused to go, unwilling to leave behind the life they had worked so hard to build. In accordance with his parents' wishes, Heinz relocated to nearby Italy instead of the US in 1934. He learned Italian and eventually secured a job with an engineering firm.</p> <p>Sensing that the political climate in Italy was becoming dangerous for Jewish people, Heinz applied for immigration to the US in early 1939. Eager to leave Italy, he relocated to London to await the approval of his US visa. He left just in time: Britain declared war on Germany less than a week after his arrival. His parents, in turn, managed to escape to Holland. Soon after Britain's declaration, all immigrants from enemy countries were considered enemy aliens and suspected of being spies.</p> <p>On May 12, 1940, the British military arrested Heinz and interned him with other German immigrants and POWs. He believed his detainment was only a precautionary measure and that he would be cleared within a few days. However, the British shipped him to the Isle of Man where he remained for several months. Fearing an invasion, the British shipped 3,000 of the POWs, including Kassel, to Quebec, where he was briefly interned at a POW camp set up at the Plains of Abraham. In October 1940, he was moved with 736 other refugees to an abandoned railway yard (later known as "Camp N") in Newington, near Sherbrooke, Quebec. While there, he confronted a great deal of antisemitism from the guards.</p> <p>While he was interned in Quebec, the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) interviewed him and other Jewish prisoners in order to lobby for their release. Realizing that the internees were not POWs, the Canadian government declared the camp a refugee camp in 1941. By October 1942, the CJC was successful in helping Heinz secure employment with Benjamin Page & Company in Toronto.</p>

1 up to Company in Toronto.

Heinz met Reta Freeman in Toronto and they were married in November 1944. Reta was born and raised in Toronto. After their nuptials, they were both briefly classified as enemy aliens and had to report to the RCMP on a regular basis. Shortly thereafter, Heinz enlisted in the Royal Canadian Army and was sent to basic training in Manitoba. On January 21, 1946 he was granted landed immigrant status, and in April of that year, he became a citizen.

After the war, Heinz learned that his parents as well as other relatives had been transported to concentration camps and had not survived. He was certainly one of the few fortunate ones to leave the country, despite the circumstances of his removal. He resented being interned for so long, but did not blame the British for rounding him up with other Germans based on their initial fears regarding enemy aliens. His feelings about Canada's treatment of him during that time, however, were not as sympathetic.

The couple lived their lives in Toronto. They first resided at 2346 Yonge Street. Heinz legally changed his name to Henry Cassel. He worked as an accountant and later was a controller for the United Jewish Welfare Fund. The couple had two children: Andrew (b. 1947) and Richard (b. 1951). Reta passed away in August 1962 and Henry later remarried Esther Cassel. He passed away at the age of 96 on February 15, 2009.

CUSTODIAL HISTORY

Records were created and accumulated by Henry Cassel. His sons donated them to the OJA after his death.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Fonds consists of records documenting the life of Henry Cassel, particularly his attempt to emigrate from Europe prior to the Second World War and his internment in Canada as a German prisoner of war (POW). Included is personal correspondence between Cassel and his parents; correspondence written by Cassel to potential employers and Canadian Jewish agencies; legal documents and certificates, such as Cassel's birth certificate and passport; family photo albums documenting the family and lives of Henry Cassel and his wife Reta; Cassel's autobiography; a journal and notebook written by Cassel during his internment; and, other internment records, such as government forms and poems and songs written by internees. Also included are newspaper clippings, articles, financial statements, genealogical research, and antisemitic ephemera collected by Cassel. Of particular note are newsletters that were produced during the 1990s by ex-internees who had kept in touch over the years. Records are arranged into 16 files.

NOTES

Textual records in the fonds were reduced from ca. 20 cm to 8 cm. Please see accession record for further details about the culled material.

Associated material notes: for related records at other archives, please see: the UJRA case files at the National CJC Archive in Montreal and the holdings at Library and Archives Canada (such as, the Directorate of Internment Operations series in the Department of National Defense fonds R112-0-2-E)

NAME ACCESS

Cassel, Henry, 1912-2009

SUBJECTS

Europe--Emigration and immigration
Prisoners of war

ACCESS RESTRICTION

Partially closed. Researchers must receive permission from the OJA Director prior to accessing some of the records.

RELATED MATERIAL

See: Canadian Jewish Congress case files in RG 282 and accession #2005-10-1.

CREATOR

Cassel, Henry, 1912-2009

ACCESSION NUMBER

2010-4-5

Emigration records [textual record] – 1921-2000, predominant 1935-1939.

PART OF	Henry Cassel fonds
LEVEL	File
FONDS	93
FILE	5
MATERIAL FORMAT	textual record
DATE	1921-2000, predominant 1935-1939
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	1 folder of textual records
SCOPE AND CONTENT	File consists of correspondence and legal records documenting Henry Cassel's emigration from Germany and attempt to immigrate to the United States of America. Included is Henry's passport, nationality identification card, birth certificates, driving certificates, USA immigration sponsorship application, correspondence regarding his application to enter the USA, criminal background checks, a citizenship visa for Italy, and a registration card indicating Henry's place of employment. Also included are newspaper clippings that were collected by Henry regarding the Jewish community of Ferrara, Italy (a region that Henry had travelled through).
NOTES	Photocopies of some Italian and German records with translated titles are attached to the accession record.
ACCESS RESTRICTION	Closed. Researchers must receive permission from the OJA Director prior to accessing the records.
ACCESSION NUMBER	2010-4-5
SOURCE	Archival Descriptions

Harry Simon fonds [textual record, graphic material] – 1931-[198-].

PART OF	Harry Simon fonds
LEVEL	Fonds
FONDS	23
MATERIAL FORMAT	textual record graphic material
DATE	1931-[198-]
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	25 cm of textual records 17 photographs (6 negatives)

Harry Simon (1909-1993) was born in Russia on 15 July 1909 and immigrated to Canada with his parents and two younger brothers in 1923. In 1930, he married Eva Millman and together they had two sons, Morris and Norman. Simon was involved in a number of labour unions and organizations during his lifetime, namely the Fur Workers' Union, the AFL-CIO, the Canadian Labour Congress and the Labour Zionist Movement.

In 1926, at the age of 17, Simon left his schooling in Toronto and went to work in a fur factory. He joined the International Fur Workers' Union and at the age of 20, Simon held the distinction of being the youngest business agent elected to a union in Canada. He joined the Canadian Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in 1933 and ran as a political candidate in the 1937 provincial election for the St. Andrew riding in Toronto.

Simon also served as the Canadian representative for the American Federation of Labour from 1944 to 1956. In 1956, he was appointed to the Canadian Labour Congress, becoming the CLC's Ontario regional director of organization until his retirement in 1974. Simon also held the position of national chairman of the Jewish Labour Committee of Canada and as president of the Labour Zionist Movement of Canada. He was also a member of the national executive of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

After his retirement Simon often spoke about labour issues at various functions and events when requested. He died on 22 December 1993 at the age of 84.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This fonds consists of the records related to the professional career of Harry Simon. This includes meeting minutes, general correspondence, speeches, posters, flyers, booklets, programmes and photographs. The bulk of the material is in the form of correspondence sent to or from Harry Simon. There is also a small amount of biographical material and a number of photographs, which have been described at the item level.

NAME ACCESS

Simon, Harry, 1909-1993

SUBJECTS

Immigrants--Canada
Labor leaders

PHYSICAL CONDITION

Some photographs require conservation work.

ARRANGEMENT

The files were originally arranged by Harry Simon according to organization. This original order has been maintained by the archivist.

CREATOR

Simon, Harry, 1909-1993

ACCESSION NUMBER

1988-5-6

SOURCE

Archival Descriptions

International Fur Workers' Union / Fur Workers' Union (AFL) [textual record, graphic material] – 1934-[198-].



PART OF

[Harry Simon fonds](#)

LEVEL

File

FONDS

23

FILE

1

MATERIAL FORMAT

textual record
graphic material

DATE

1934-[198-]

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

3 cm of textual records
3 photographs : b&w ; 20 x 48 cm and 21 x 26 cm

ADMIN HISTORY/BIO

There was a major dispute within the International Fur Workers' Union in 1938, which is documented in the records of Harry Simon. It was due to the division between the Communist and anti-Communist elements of the union and resulted in the formation of a new fur workers' union affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL).

SCOPE AND CONTENT

File consists of textual and graphic records related to Harry Simon's work as an organizer and representative of the International Fur Workers' Union and an officer of the break-away Fur Workers' Union (AFL.). This includes correspondence, rally posters and flyers, anniversary books, a bulletin, and photographs. Of particular interest are the records detailing a heated dispute between the International Fur Workers' Union, its Toronto Joint Board leadership and many of its members. An oversized newsprint poster referring to Max Federman's dispute is included.

SUBJECTS

Labor unions

PHYSICAL CONDITION

One photograph requires conservation work.

SOURCE

Archival Descriptions