

By Way of a Preface

I had heard the voyage part of the following story from my mother, but it wasn't until 1996 that we could piece everything together. This is because some of the pictures were scattered -- and not completely identified -- in my mother's album, and others were only found in a shoebox after my mother-in-law died.

My father Sigmund Fischler was born in Leipzig and had emigrated to the U.S. in 1925. He had however returned to Germany and Poland several times, including two extended stays in the 1930s.

My father-in-law Albert Herz from Haiger (Hesse) had -- thanks to a warning from the mistress of a local SS officer -- fled to France in early September 1935. In Belfort he met Coralie Weill, a friend of his sister. The couple were married on February 3, 1936 and they eventually moved to Paris.

Ruth Holländer, my mother, came from the small town of Hilchenbach (Westphalia). She left Germany on November 1, 1937 and her last photographic record of Germany is a picture of her father Joseph taken in Cologne on that day. The next day, November 2, she was in Paris where she stayed with her cousin Albert Herz. They took three photographs in front of a Parisian park. Then on November 3 Coralie Weill took my mother to the boat train and my mother took a picture from her compartment.

From November 3 to November 9, my mother sailed to the USA on the Aquitania. The man sitting next to my mother in two of the contact prints and standing on the right in the photograph with the little girl is my father. The story that I had heard was that some US sailors wished to speak to my mother, but not being conversant in German they asked my father to act as an interpreter ...

My parents were married on March 19, 1939 and in February 1940 I was born. Three years later, in January 1943, in a tiny hamlet near Limoges, France -- where Albert Herz had been demobilized from the French Foreign Legion in 1941 -- Eliane Herz was born. The Herz family emigrated to the US in 1958 and on their second day in their new country, Albert Herz reversed the 1937 roles and took his family to see his cousin Ruth Holländer. Eliane Herz and Roger Fischler were married on April 12, 1964.

N.B. See the frontispiece for the marriage photographs.

Contact Prints Found in the Album of Ruth Holländer, New York

Contact print 11: Munich, November 1, 1937; Joseph Holländer is on the right in the foreground.

Contact print 12: Albert Herz, Coralie Weill; Paris, November 2, 1937.

Contact print 13: Coralie Weill, Ruth Holländer; Paris, November 2, 1937.

Contact print 14: Albert Herz, Ruth Holländer; Paris, November 2, 1937.

Preface



Contact print 27: Sigmund Fischler, third from the right; *Aquitania*, November 3-9, 1937.

Contact print 28: Sigmund Fischler, third from the right; Ruth Holländer, second from the right; *Aquitania*, November 3-9, 1937.



Preface

Large Size Prints Found in the Album of Ruth Holländer and a Shoebox belonging to Coralie Weill



photo 12: Albert Herz, Coralie Weill, Paris, November 2, 1937; album



photo 13: Coralie Weill, Ruth Holländer, Paris, November 2, 1937; sent to Paris

Preface



photo 15?: Coralie Weill, train station, sending off Ruth Holländer
Paris, November 3, 1937; sent to Paris

photo 30: Sigmund Fischler, on the right; *Aquitania*, November 3-9, 1937; album
A note on the back of the photograph says that the name of the little girl is Gretl
Schlesinger. This photograph corresponds to contact print 30.