



Canadian Jewish Heritage Network



Passport

<https://www.cjhn.ca/en/permalink/cjhn75217>

Collection: Montreal Holocaust Museum
Description Level: Item
Material Format: textual record
Physical Description: Passport : Paper : green, beige
Other Title: Documentary Artifact
Information:
Date: July 29, 1938
Language: German

Notes:

Green cover booklet, beige green pages with orange motif in watermark. Passport belonging to Gerhart Adolf Maass, a German Jew. First page stamped with red "J" and date 1/1/1939, circular ink stamp from the Police President of Hamburg and another green circular ink stamp. Second page has b&w identity photograph and 4 circular ink stamps from the Police President of Hamburg. Passport was issued on July 29, 1938 for a validity of one year. Pages contain stamps from travels to Sweden, Belgium and immigration to Canada (1938-10-13). On page 11 is a note stating that from 1939-01-06, the name "Israel" is added to the passport holder's name; this note as well as the red J were added by the German consul while Gerhart Maass was already living in Montreal. Narrative: The middle name Israel is added to Gerhart Maass' name as per the Second Ordinance on the Implementation of the Law on the Amendment of Surnames and Family Names of 17 August 1938. This law aimed to identify German Jews by their first names. Unless they already had a name "viewed by the German people as a typical Jewish name", they had to take the name Israel or Sara starting in January 1939. The Law on the Amendment of Surnames and Family Names and its amendments were prepared by the Ministry of the Interior and written by Hans Globke. The implementation of this regulation is seen as "the first attempt at a general, external marking of the Jews" (See reference: Uwe Dietrich Adam: Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich. Unv. Nachdr. Düsseldorf 2003, ISBN 3-7700-4063-5, S. 120.) Gerhart Adolf Maass (Hambourg 1918-Montreal 2009), also known as "Gerry", was the youngest son of Adolf Maass and Käthe Elsbach. In 1935, summoned by his parents to leave Germany, Gerhart had no other idea in mind than coming to Canada. He was well supported by a distant cousin of his father, Rudolf van der Walde, who owned an import business in Hamburg with several subsidiaries around the world. The idea was that once hired, Gerhart could be transferred to the Canadian office of the company. After having worked in Sweden for the Swedish subsidiary, and only after obtaining permission to come to Canada, Gerhart had to return to Germany in 1938 in order to renew his passport and seek a visa at the Canadian Consulate in Hamburg. Gerhart came to Canada in November 1938 and tried to help his parents out of Germany, but in vain. He enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1942 and in 1944 received his certificate of naturalization, which allowed him to be accepted into the Secret intelligence services. Gerhart served in France, Holland and Germany where he was stationed in the town of Oldenburg, in the British Zone and became the personal assistant of Major Morris DF. He returned to Herford at the end of the war, and recovered the family business (Elsbach co.) which had been confiscated by NSDAP authorities in 1938. After Liberation, he accessed the archives of the Gestapo in Hamburg and found hundreds of documents relating to his family. He learned that after being sent to Theresienstadt ghetto, his parents were deported and murdered in Auschwitz in 1944. Gerhart was the last Canadian soldier stationed in Oldenburg and was given the Canadian flag hanging over the entrance of the camp; he later donated it to the Canadian War Museum. Gerhart returned to Canada in September 1946 and settled in Montreal.

Accession No.: 2010.07.10
Name Access: Maass, Joan
Places: Hamburg, Germany, Europe
Archival /
Genealogical: Archival Descriptions
Repository: Montreal Holocaust Museum