

Joseph Wechsberg Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

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Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Latest revision: 2010 April

Collection Summary

Title: Joseph Wechsberg Papers

Span Dates: 1943-1983

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1964-1979)

ID No.: MSS56549

Creator: Wechsberg, Joseph, 1907-

Extent: 15,000 items ; 61 containers ; 24.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English and German, with French and Czech

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Author, lawyer, and musician. Correspondence, drafts of articles and books, notes, clippings, photographs, and other papers pertaining chiefly to Wechsberg's work as a journalist and author.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Alsop, Joseph, 1910-1989--Correspondence.
Auden, W. H. (Wystan Hugh), 1907-1973--Correspondence.
Bing, Rudolf, 1902-1997--Correspondence.
Bocuse, Paul, 1926- --Correspondence.
Boskovsky, Willi--Correspondence.
Brandt, Willy, 1913-1992--Correspondence.
Flanner, Janet, 1892-1978--Correspondence.
Guérard, Michel, 1933- --Correspondence.
Jaques, Ronny--Correspondence.
Kollek, Teddy, 1911-2007--Correspondence.
Lehmann, Lotte--Correspondence.
Monnet, Jean, 1888- --Correspondence.
Point, Fernand--Correspondence.
Reynolds, Paul Revere, 1904- --Correspondence.
Soulé, Henri--Correspondence.
Stern, Isaac, 1920-2001--Correspondence.
Szell, George, 1897-1970--Correspondence.
Wechsberg, Joseph, 1907-
Wiesenthal, Simon--Correspondence.
Wittgenstein, Paul, 1907- --Correspondence.

Organizations

Mekhon Vaitsman le-mada'.

Subjects

Architecture--Austria--Vienna.
Architecture--Austria.
Architecture--Europe.
Banks and banking--Europe.
Communism.
Cookery, Austrian.
Cookery, European.
Cookery--Austria--Vienna.
Gastronomy.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)
Music--Austria--Vienna.

Music--Austria.
Music--Europe.

Occupations

Authors.
Lawyers.
Musicians.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Joseph Wechsberg, author, lawyer, and musician, were given by Wechsberg to the Library of Congress in three installments between 1975 and 1980.

Processing History

The papers of Joseph Wechsberg were arranged and described in 1996. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Joseph Wechsberg is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Joseph Wechsberg are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Joseph Wechsberg Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1907, Aug. 29	Born, Mährisch-Ostrau, Austro-Hungarian Empire (now Ostrava, Czech Republic)
1925-1930	Attended Prague University Law School, Prague, Czechoslovakia; Hochschule für Welthandel and Vienna State Academy of Music, Vienna, Austria; and the Sorbonne, Paris, France
1926-1929	Worked intermittently as violinist and orchestra leader in Paris nightclubs and on French ocean liners
1929-1930	Attended officers' candidate school, Czechoslovak army
1930	Received law degree, Prague University Law School, Prague, Czechoslovakia
1930-1937	Apprenticed at law firms in Ostrava and Prague, Czechoslovakia, and wrote articles for various German-language newspapers
1934	Married Jo-Ann Novak

1938	Lieutenant, Czechoslovak army, commanding machine gun company on Polish frontier Sent to United States by Czechoslovak government as secretary of parliamentary commission to discuss Sudeten crisis Requested asylum following German occupation of Sudetenland Became free-lance journalist, writing in English
1943	Contributor, <i>The New Yorker</i> magazine
1944	Became United States citizen
1944-1945	Technical sergeant, psychological warfare division, United States army
1948	Staff member, <i>The New Yorker</i> magazine
1949	European correspondent, <i>The New Yorker</i> magazine
1953	Published <i>Blue Trout and Black Truffles</i> . New York, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf
1955	Published <i>The Self-Betrayed</i> . New York, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf
1961	Published <i>Red Plush and Black Velvet</i> . Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown & Co.
1966	Published <i>The Merchant Bankers</i> . Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown & Co.
1968	Published <i>Vienna, My Vienna</i> . New York, N.Y.: Macmillan
1969	Published <i>The Voices</i> . Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday
1970	Published <i>Prague, The Mystical City</i> . New York, N.Y.: Macmillan
1972	Published <i>The Opera</i> . New York, N.Y.: Macmillan Published <i>The Glory of the Violin</i> . New York, N.Y.: Viking Press
1973	Published <i>The Waltz Emperors</i> . New York, N.Y.: Putnam
1974	Published <i>Verdi</i> . New York, N.Y.: Putnam
1976, May 21	Awarded Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1. Klasse, Republic of Austria
1977	Published <i>Schubert: His Life, His Work, His Time</i> . New York, N.Y.: Rizzoli
1979	Published <i>The Vienna I Knew</i> . Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday
1983, Apr. 10	Died, Vienna, Austria

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Joseph Wechsberg (1907-1983) span the years 1943-1983, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period between 1964 and 1979. The collection focuses on Wechsberg's work as a journalist and author and consists of three series: [Correspondence](#), [Writings](#), and [Miscellany](#). Included in the papers are correspondence, drafts and related material,

notes, newspaper and magazine clippings, photographs, and other material pertaining to Wechsberg's career. Roughly a third of the collection is written in German with small amounts in French and Czech. The remainder is in English.

The Correspondence series contains letters to and from Wechsberg's literary agent in the United States, Paul Revere Reynolds, as well as many of his publishers, such as Alfred A. Knopf, Doubleday, G. P. Putnam's Sons, Kindler & Schiermeyer Verlag, Little, Brown & Company, Macmillan Company, Rowohlt Verlag, S. Fischer Verlag, Time-Life Books, Viking Press, and Weidenfeld & Nicolson. The series also contains correspondence with authors, journalists, political figures, musicians, chefs, restaurateurs, and other notables, such as Joseph Alsop, W. H. Auden, Rudolf Bing, Paul Bocuse, Willi Boskovsky, Willy Brandt, Janet Flanner, Michel Guérard, Ronny Jaques, Teddy Kollek, Lotte Lehmann, Jean Monnet, Fernand Point, Henri Soulé, Isaac Stern, George Szell, Simon Wiesenthal, and Paul Wittgenstein.

The Writings series constitutes the largest portion of the collection and is divided into three major sections: articles, books, and notebooks. During his writing career, Wechsberg authored hundreds of articles and over two dozen works of nonfiction. His works were published in numerous magazines and journals, including *Canadian Food Journal*, *Esquire*, *Feinschmecker*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Gourmet*, *Holiday*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Opera*, *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, *Travel & Leisure*, and *Die Welt*. Articles are arranged alphabetically by title according to drafts and printed versions and include newspaper columns, magazine articles, essays, special features, profiles, letters from abroad, musical program notes, restaurant reviews, travel narratives, and other short literary forms.

Much of Wechsberg's writing is imbued with nostalgia for life during the waning days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and disappointment with its successor states. His works reflect fundamental themes of traditional Viennese life and culture, namely appreciation of music, haute cuisine, and the architectural beauty and charm of the grand old cities of the former Empire coupled with reprehension for what he felt was a banal and dreary existence imposed by communism on most of Central Europe after World War II.

Wechsberg was an accomplished amateur violinist and chamber musician and owned a violin made by the famous Italian maker Stradivarius. He wrote several books on music and musicians including biographies of Nellie Melba (*Red Plush and Black Velvet*), Giuseppe Verdi (*Verdi*), Franz Schubert (*Schubert: His Life, His Work, His Time*), and the Strauss family (*The Waltz Emperors*), as well a history of opera (*The Opera*) and the violin (*The Glory of the Violin*).

Wechsberg devoted much of his life to the appreciation of gastronomy. His extensive gustatory experiences and numerous friendships with many of Europe's leading chefs and restaurateurs is evident in *Blue Trout and Black Truffles*, *Dining at the Pavillon*, *The Best Things in Life*, and *The Cooking of Vienna's Empire*. Based on his own extensive travels and observations, Wechsberg portrays the bygone splendor of Central Europe's grand old cities in such works as *Vienna, My Vienna*; *Prague, the Mystical City*; *Dream Towns of Europe*; and *The Lost World of the Great Spas*. Wechsberg's distaste and contempt for communism surface in many of his works. *Journey through the Land of Eloquent Silence* reveals daily life under communism in East Germany; *The Voices* details the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968; and his novel, *The Self-Betrayed*, deals with love, political ambition, and communism and their effects upon one another in his postwar homeland. Wechsberg's broad scope of interest is further manifest in his histories of nineteenth-century banking in Europe (*The Merchant Bankers*) and of the Weizmann Institute in Israel (*A Walk through the Garden of Science*). Works of a more autobiographical nature include *The First Time Around* and *The Vienna I Knew*. In 1967 Wechsberg coauthored with Simon Wiesenthal *Murderers among Us*, a collection of essays recounting atrocities of the Holocaust and the pursuit of Nazi war criminals.

Wechsberg wrote the majority of his books in English, many of which were published simultaneously in the United States and in Great Britain but by separate publishers under different titles. Many of these works were also later translated and published in German and other languages. For the most part, Wechsberg's books are organized in this collection by the title published in the United States with related material by differing titles filed appropriately. *Freude am Wein*, *Land mit zwei Gesichtern*, and *Lebenskunst und andere Künste* appear not to have been published in English. The Writings series also contains several unpublished works as well as a small number of book reviews by Wechsberg and contributions to works by others. Throughout the years, Wechsberg kept notes and jotted down ideas in hundreds of small notebooks which are arranged alphabetically according to subjects he supplied.

The Miscellany series consists of biographical material, menus from French restaurants, newspaper clippings, photographs, and printed matter citing Wechsberg.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Correspondence, 1947-1979](#)
- [Writings, 1944-1979](#)
- [Miscellany, 1943-1983](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-9

Series

Correspondence, 1947-1979

Letters sent and received with attached and related material.
Arranged alphabetically by name of person or organization.

BOX 10-61

Writings, 1944-1979

Drafts of books, articles, essays, books reviews, contributions to works by others, background material, advertisements, draft fragments, and notebooks.

Articles are organized as drafts and as printed versions and alphabetically thereunder. Books are arranged alphabetically by title and thereunder by type of material. Notebooks are organized alphabetically by subject. Book reviews by Wechsberg and contributions to works by others are arranged chronologically.

BOX 61

Miscellany, 1943-1983

Biographical material, menus, newspapers clippings, photographs, and other items.
Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.

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BOX 1-9	Correspondence, 1947-1979 Letters sent and received with attached and related material. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or organization.
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BOX 1	Alsop, Joseph, 1953-1963, 1974-1976
BOX 1	Auden, W. H., circa 1953
BOX 1	"A" miscellaneous, 1955-1978
BOX 1	Beham, Yohanan, 1960-1962, 1974
BOX 1	Bing, Rudolf, 1957, 1965-1973, undated
BOX 1	Bocuse, Paul, 1977-1978, undated
BOX 1	Boskovsky, Willi, 1977, undated
BOX 1	Brandt, Willy, 1973
BOX 1	"B" miscellaneous, 1954-1979, undated (3 folders)
BOX 1	Calame, R., 1957-1958
BOX 1	<i>Canadian Food Journal</i> , 1960-1966, undated (2 folders)
BOX 1	Christian Dior, 1975, undated
BOX 1	"C" miscellaneous, 1955-1978, undated
BOX 1	Doubleday, 1967-1979, undated
BOX 2	Druian, Rafael, 1973-1978, undated
BOX 2	"D" miscellaneous, 1954-1979, undated
BOX 2	<i>Esquire</i> , 1961-1977, undated
BOX 2	"E" miscellaneous, 1954-1978, undated
BOX 2	<i>Feinschmecker</i> , 1975-1979, undated
BOX 2	Flanner, Janet, undated
BOX 2	<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i> , 1966-1971, undated
BOX 2	Frey, Fritz, 1956-1979
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BOX 3	Guerard, Michel, 1964, 1974-1975
BOX 3	"G" miscellaneous, 1954-1979, undated
BOX 3	Harragan, Edwin J., 1953-1964, 1973, undated
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BOX 3	<i>Holiday</i> , 1962-1975
BOX 3	Humes, John P., 1970-1976, undated
BOX 3	"H-I" miscellaneous, 1954-1979, undated (3 folders)

Correspondence, 1947-1979

Container

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BOX 3	Jaques, Ronny, 1975-1979
BOX 3	"J" miscellaneous, 1955-1976
BOX 3	Kanin, Garson, 1958
BOX 3	Kindler & Schiermeyer Verlag, 1967-1968, undated
BOX 3	Kollek, Teddy, 1973-1976, undated
BOX 3	"K" miscellaneous, 1954-1979, undated
BOX 3	Lehmann, Lotte, 1968-1974
BOX 3	Little, Brown & Co., 1959-1971
BOX 3	Lyceum Books, 1970-1975, undated
BOX 4	"L" miscellaneous, 1954-1979, undated
BOX 4	Macmillan Co., 1970-1971, undated
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BOX 4	"M" miscellaneous, 1954-1979, undated (2 folders)
BOX 4	<i>New York Times</i> , 1963-1964, 1972
BOX 4	<i>New Yorker</i> , 1954-1979, undated (4 folders)
BOX 4	"N" miscellaneous, 1956-1977, undated
BOX 4	<i>Opera</i> , 1954, 1963, 1973-1978, undated
BOX 4	Paul R. Reynolds, Inc.
BOX 4	1947-1953 (2 folders)
BOX 5	1954-1964 (11 folders)
BOX 6	1965-1971 (12 folders)
BOX 7	1972-1979, undated (10 folders)
BOX 8	<i>Playboy</i> , 1966-1976
BOX 8	Point, Fernand, 1954-1975, undated
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BOX 8	"P-Q" miscellaneous, 1954-1979, undated (2 folders)
BOX 8	<i>Reader's Digest</i> , 1956-1958, 1973-1979, undated (3 folders)
BOX 8	Richter, Conrad, 1960
BOX 8	Robinson, Francis, 1957-1962
BOX 8	Roth, Lee Wurlitzer, 1971-1976, undated
BOX 8	Rowohlt Verlag, 1961-1968
BOX 8	"R" miscellaneous, 1954-1978
BOX 8	S. Fischer Verlag, 1969-1975, undated
BOX 8	Soulé, Henri, 1954, 1962, undated
BOX 8	Stern, Isaac, 1963-1965, 1973, undated
BOX 8	Stout, Rex, 1971
BOX 8	<i>Stuttgarter Zeitung</i> , 1962-1972
BOX 8	Szell, George, 1964-1968

Correspondence, 1947-1979

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 8	"S" miscellaneous, 1954-1979, undated (2 folders)
BOX 9	Time-Life Books, 1966-1968, undated
BOX 9	<i>Travel & Leisure</i> , 1973-1977
BOX 9	Tsuji, Shizuo, 1975-1979
BOX 9	"T-U" miscellaneous, 1953-1978 (2 folders)
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BOX 9	Wallace, Irving, 1955-1960
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BOX 9	Wechsberg, Hans (cousin), 1968-1972
BOX 9	Wechsberg, Josephine Hermine ("Poppy") (daughter), 1957-1979, undated
BOX 9	Wechsberg, Max and Renée (brother and sister-in-law), 1954-1963, 1972-1978
BOX 9	Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1958-1977, undated (3 folders)
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BOX 9	"W-Z" miscellaneous, 1953-1979, undated (3 folders)
BOX 9	Unidentified, 1954-1978, undated
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BOX 10	Ac-Bo, 1960-1979, undated (9 folders)
BOX 11	Br-Cu, 1964-1978, undated (10 folders)
BOX 12	Da-Ev, 1970-1978, undated (8 folders)
BOX 13	Fa-Ge, 1965-1977, undated (9 folders)
BOX 14	Gi-Hi, 1961-1972, undated (9 folders)
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Writings, 1944-1979

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BOX 19	Mo-Mu, 1965-1979, undated (7 folders)
BOX 20	My-Pa, 1964-1977, undated (10 folders)
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BOX 28	Unidentified fragments, undated
BOX 28	Printed versions
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BOX 29	G-Q, 1950-1976, undated (13 folders)
BOX 30	R-Z, 1945-1978, undated (7 folders)
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BOX 30	Books
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Writings, 1944-1979

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BOX 31	Reviews, 1953-1965 (2 folders)
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BOX 31	Reviews, 1968-1969
BOX 31	<i>Danube</i> , chapter 2, 1974
BOX 31	<i>Dining at the Pavillon</i>
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BOX 31	<i>Dream Towns of Europe</i>
BOX 31	Drafts, undated (2 folders)
BOX 32	Galley proofs, undated
BOX 32	Reviews, 1977
BOX 32	<i>First Time Around</i>
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BOX 42	Drafts
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BOX 43	Reviews, 1970
BOX 43	<i>Red Plush and Black Velvet</i>
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BOX 43	Reviews, 1961-1965
BOX 43	<i>Schubert: His Life, His Work, His Time</i>
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Writings, 1944-1979

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BOX 59	Strauss, Johann-Verdi, Giuseppi, 1967, undated (3 folders)
BOX 60	Vienna-World cruise, undated (3 folders)
BOX 61	Unidentified, undated
BOX 61	Miscellany, 1943-1983 Biographical material, menus, newspapers clippings, photographs, and other items. Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.
BOX 61	Biographical material, 1943-1983, undated
BOX 61	Czechoslovakia, Soviet invasion of, 1968
BOX 61	Menus, 1949-1977, undated

Miscellany, 1943-1983

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
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BOX 61	Photographs, undated
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