

Sawicz Family Collection

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Languages: English, Lithuanian

Provenance

The Cambridge Historical Commission acquired this collection on September 10, 2002. Genevieve Sawicz, who was the last of her family to occupy 94-96 Pine St., died on May 8, 2001. A salvage company was hired to empty the house and many items, including personal and family photos and papers, were discarded. Cynthia Abatt and Karan Marsh, neighbors of 94-96 Pine St., found the items in this collection in a dumpster outside 94-96 Pine St. after Genevieve died and donated them to the CHC.

Collection ID: CHC005

Dates:

Extent: 1 box

Prepared by: Molly Alexander and Maeve Strucker. Finding aid updated February, 2017 by Emily Magagnosc.

Access: Collection is available for research under the CHC rules of use.

Collection Description

This collection relates to the Sawicz family who lived at 94-96 Pine St. from ca. 1930 to 2001. It consists of one box which contains photographs, immigration and naturalization papers, bills and invoices, bankbooks, passports, letters and cards from Lithuania, and other related items. For the most part, the content relates to a father, mother, and two daughters, but there are also nearly 20 photographs of unidentified individuals included in the collection.

Biography

Lithuanian immigration to Cambridge began around 1901, mostly immigrants already in South Boston, but increasingly directly from Lithuania. They came to the United States to escape an oppressive Russian government and terrible economic conditions in Lithuania. Lithuanians settled in the Cambridgeport area of Cambridge. In 1910 there

were approximately 1,200 Lithuanians living in Cambridge, and by 1920 there were 15,000 in the Boston area. They had industrial jobs at local packing, boiler, machine, and rubber shops. The children went to local and parochial schools, but often left school early to work in factories. Once Lithuanian couples married, it was common for the wife to run a boarding house if they had extra room. The Lithuanian community formed social organizations, churches, stores, mutual aid societies, political organizations, trade unions, and cultural institutions. An example of this is the American-Lithuanian Citizens Club, which was active in Cambridge from 1916 until 1971. It was into this already established immigrant community the Sawicz family moved in the late 1920's, early 1930's.

Andry (Andrew) and Joana (Jennie) Sawicz were Lithuanian immigrants. Jennie Staponkiute was born on May 9, 1895 and immigrated to the United States in 1929. Andrew Sawicz was born ca. 1889, and it is not known when he immigrated to the United States. They were married on February 16, 1930. They had two daughters, Adele and Genevieve. Adele was born May 25, 1934, it is not known when Genevieve was born. Andrew died ca. 1943, and it is not known when Jennie died. The sisters lived at 94-96 Pine St. until their deaths, Adele on May 2, 1981 and Genevieve until on May 8, 2001. According to Ms. Abatt, who salvaged and then donated the collection, Genevieve suffered from schizophrenia and after her sister Adele's death insisted on being called by her late sister's name. Neither sister married nor had children.

Scope and Content

This collection contains photographs; immigration and naturalization papers; bills and invoices; bankbooks; passports; letters and cards from Lithuania; and other related items. For the most part, the contents relate to Jennie, Andrew, Genevieve and Adele Sawicz. There are also nearly twenty photographs of unidentified individuals included in the collection. This collection is useful for research on immigrant families in Cambridge, and has some documents regarding rent control and landlord / tenant issues.

Container List

Folder I: Andrew and Jennie Sawicz

This folder contains US immigration and naturalization papers, Jennie's Lithuanian passport, their marriage certificate, bills, postcards, bills, photographs and a few other items.

Folder II: Rent Control Documents

This folder contains four rent control documents for 94-96 Pine St., Cambridge, MA.

Folder III: Genevieve Sawicz

This folder contains Federal Withholding Statements (W-2), letter and booklet regarding Coty perfumes, photographs, a few other items, and a Certificate of Baptism for Eugenia Savicius dated May 24, 1928.

Folder IV: Adele Sawicz

This folder contains handwritten notes on first aid procedures, repair bills, savings account passbooks, two passports, photographs and a few other items.

Folder V: Unidentified People

This folder contains nearly twenty photographs of unidentified people.

Folder VI: Additional Folder

This folder contains a baptismal record for Adele Sawicz, a Parenti Sisters business card, and thirty-seven letters and cards in Lithuanian.

****Full inventory in box.****

Related Sources

Cambridge Historical Commission. "Lithuanians in Cambridge" folder, filed under "Groups"

Woods, Robert A. and Albert J. Kennedy. The zone of emergence: observations of the lower middle and upper working class communities of Boston, 1905-1914. Abridged and edited by Sam Bass Warner, Jr. Cambridge, Mass., M.I.T. Press [1969, c. 1962]

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