

**The Filson Historical Society**

**Topcik Family  
Papers, 1900-2020**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, contact the Collections Department.

Size of Collection:  
0.66 cu. ft.

Location Number:  
Mss. A T673

## **Topcik Family Papers, 1900-2020**

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection consists of records and materials, 1900-2020, primarily related to the personal and professional life of Evelyn “Evie” Topcik (b. 1939), as well as members of her extended family, including the Benovitz, Cohen, and Rosen families. The bulk of this collection is made up of materials from Evie’s teenage years including schoolwork, camp activities, and social clubs. This collection is a good example of the life and activities of a teenaged girl in the 1950s.

Folders 1-4 contain materials related to Evie’s parents and extended family, 1900-1962. Folder 1 consists mainly of family genealogies, as well as an interview with William Benovitz, Evie’s uncle. Folder 2 contains both marriage certificates of Devorah Benovitz to her first husband, Dan Cohen, and second husband, Charles Rosen. This folder also includes Evie’s birth certificate and letters of congratulations sent to her parents. Folder 3 holds materials related to the Berman Family Reunion Picnic, including a newspaper article, a speech by Isaac M. Berman, and an interview with Alex Berman. Folder 4 includes meeting minutes for the Ohio Specialty Co., owned by Evie’s stepfather Charles Rosen, loans, and real estate contracts.

Folders 5-10 consist of materials related to Evie’s teenage years, 1943-1957. Folder 5 contains Evie’s diary from 1954-1956, her sophomore and junior years of high school. Folder 6 includes Evie’s graduation certificate from Keneseth Israel in 1954, as well as the graduation ceremony program. Folder 7 includes programs for confirmation ceremonies from Adath Israel, Temple B’rith Sholom, and Anshei Sfar. Folder 8 contains Evie’s schoolwork, such as essays on her grandmother Bessie Benovitz, Henry Ford, and religions of the world. Also included is her typewriting homework. Folder 9 holds materials related to various Jewish youth social clubs that Evie participated in, such as the Keneseth Israel Sisterhood, Amitie, the Modern Femmes, Y.M.H.A., the JCC Teen Council, and Sigma Theta Pi. She was also a member of the Junior National Rifle Association. The bulk of these materials relate to dances or other events hosted by the clubs and new pledges for clubs. Folder 10 holds materials related to Bur Oaks Camp, including letters from Evie to her parents, camp songs and skits, and team activities.

Folders 11-13 relate to Evie’s adult life, 1963-2008. Folder 11 includes the wedding plans for Evie and Charles “Chuck” Topcik at the Kentucky Hotel in 1963. Folder 12 contains materials related to Chuck’s time as a member of the Kosair Funster’s clown unit as “Chuckles the Clown.” These materials include make-up instructions, newspaper articles, and Chuck’s Noble of Kosair Temple diploma. Folder 13 consists of materials related to Evie’s career as a librarian, including newspaper articles and a JCC Naomani Library pamphlet.

Folder 14, 1943-2020, includes death notices for Dan Cohen and Chuck Topcik, acknowledgement letters of donations made in memory of Dan Cohen and Charles Rosen, and

JNF tree memorials for Lasser Benovitz, Dan Cohen, and Evie Rosen (for when she was sick as a child).

Folder 15 contains miscellaneous materials, 1939-1998. These include a letter from Bessie Benovitz to her children, a certificate from Keneseth Israel honoring Charles Rosen's service in WWII, a Beau Gizzard membership card for Chuck Topcik, the Grotto Forms and Ceremonies M.O.V.P.E.R. booklet, a CJC patch, and Evie's job application for camp.

Related Collections:

Topcik Family photo collection 021PC36

Museum items mainly related to Charles "Chuckles" Topcik's (1938-2020) clowning career, 2021.36.1-11

## **Topcik Family Papers, 1900-2020**

### **Biographical Note**

Laser Benovitz (1873-1949) and Bessie Hershberg Benovitz (1877-1963) immigrated from Eastern Europe to Louisville, KY, where Laser worked as a horse and cart peddler. Their daughter, Devora Benovitz (1906-1971) was born in Louisville and married Dan Cohen (1898-1943) in 1929. They had one child, Evelyn "Evie" Lou Cohen (b. 1939), and the family lived above the Dan Cohen Women's Clothing Store, located on the corner of Market and Shelby streets. Dan Cohen died when Evelyn was four years old and Devorah continued to run the store in his absence. In 1966, Devorah remarried Charlie Rosen (1906-1956) after he left the Navy. Charlie Rosen opened the Ohio Specialty Company on 2<sup>nd</sup> and Liberty Streets, which sold pinball machines, jukeboxes, and traveler televisions.

Evie graduated from Atherton High School in 1957 and attended Ohio State University, where she double majored in Social Studies and Education. In her senior year of university, Evie met Charles "Chuck" Melvin Topcik (1937-2020) at a party in Columbus, OH. Chuck graduated from Franklin University in Columbus, OH with a degree in Accounting. Chuck was called to the Berlin Call Up and was stationed in Eitan, France and he served in the Ohio National Guard. Evie and Chuck got married at the Kentucky Hotel in 1963. They lived in Columbus, OH for one year before resettling in Louisville, KY. They had four daughters, Carolyn Bleicher (b. 1965), Jeanne Aronoff (b. 1968), Laura Topcik (1969-1974), and Deborah Topcik (b. 1975).

Evie worked deeply with the development and upkeep of the libraries at Keneseth Israel and the JCC (the Naamani Library). While working part-time at the Naamani Library, Evie attended Spalding University to get her master's degree in Library Science. Later, she worked full time at the Bon-Aire Library as the children's librarian. After a few years, she moved jobs to the Collegiate School Library in 1988. Evie was responsible for the switch from catalogue cards to computers before her retirement in 2008. After retiring, she volunteered at the Our Lady of Peace Library.

Chuck worked for Seagrams before starting his own accounting office, that he later sold in his seventies. Charles joined the Kosair Shrine in the early 1970s, first in the Rope Pulling group and then later in the Kosair Funster's clown unit. He was known as "Chuckles the Clown" and was responsible for creating many of the skits his unit performed. The unit would perform for children in the Shrine Hospital for Crippled Children and compete in Shrine Clown conventions. Charles was later elected as the President of the Southeastern Shrine Clown Association.

**Topcik Family  
Papers, 1900-2020**

**Folder List**

Box 1

- Folder 1: Genealogy, 1900-2008
- Folder 2: Marriage and Birth Certificates, 1929-1966
- Folder 3: Berman Family Reunion Picnic, 1945-1979
- Folder 4: Ohio Specialty Company and Real Estate, 1956-1962
- Folder 5: Diary of Evie Rosen, 1954-1955
- Folder 6: Keneseth Israel Graduation, 1954
- Folder 7: Confirmation Ceremonies, 1954-1955
- Folder 8: Schoolwork and Materials, 1946-1957
- Folder 9: Social Clubs, 1943-1956
- Folder 10: Bur Oaks Camp, 1955
- Folder 11: Evie and Chuck Topcik Wedding, 1963
- Folder 12: Chuckles the Clown, 1969-1993
- Folder 13: Library, 1980-2008
- Folder 14: Death Notices and Memorials, 1943-2020
- Folder 15: Miscellaneous, 1939-1998

**Topcik Family  
Papers, 1900-2020**

**Subject Headings**

Adolescence.  
Ball games.  
Body image in women – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Camps.  
Clowns.  
Confirmation (Jewish rite).  
Dating (Social customs).  
Education, Secondary.  
Faith.  
Family reunions.  
Fraternal organizations.  
Grief.  
High schools – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Jews – Identity.  
Jews – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Jewish businesspeople – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Jewish National Fund.  
Jewish religious education.  
Jewish youth – Societies and clubs – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Librarians.  
Marriage.  
Mitchell, Margaret, 1900-1949. Gone with the wind.  
Part-time employment – United States.  
Typewriters.  
Women – Social life and customs.  
Youth – Societies and clubs.