

ABSTRACTS

JULIA AND HER THINGS: RESTITUTION, RACISM, AND CONNECTIONS IN AND BEYOND THE SUDETENLAND

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Julia Culp, a world-renowned singer and early recording star, was the daughter of Dutch-Jewish parents. In 1919 she married Willy Ginzkey, a Bohemian-German Catholic industrialist, and settled with him in Maffersdorf/Vratislavice nad Nisou, a factory town in the Sudetenland. After the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia, she fled to Holland where she survived the Holocaust, in part, by living in hiding. Julia was an avid collector of art and antique furnishings. This article tells the story of her and her things. In 1941 in the Sudetenland the Gestapo seized her possessions as non-Aryan property; in 1945 officials of the restored Czechoslovak state expropriated them as German property. Following the Third Reich's defeat Julia undertook extensive efforts to secure the restitution of her collection and, with the help of family and foreign relations, she eventually succeeded. The story of Julia and her things sheds light on state-ascribed identity, persistent antisemitism after the Nazi Holocaust, entangled local and transnational history, and the importance of connections on playing fields of power in postwar Czechoslovakia and Europe.