

Gary Sternberg small stamp album front and back exhibit pages (with drawing)

Front:



Gary Sternberg in Shanghai: Stamps, Football, and "Packs"

In February 1943, to appease their German ally, the occupying Japanese established the "Designated Area For Stateless Refugees," commonly known today as the Shanghai Ghetto. Gary's family was forced into the ghetto living alongside Chinese, many of whom were also refugees. The Sternbergs moved to the old university that was converted to an enclosed group of hospital and European residential buildings during the war years. Gary's address as noted on the stamp album was Chaufoong Road 680, House 78, Room 316.

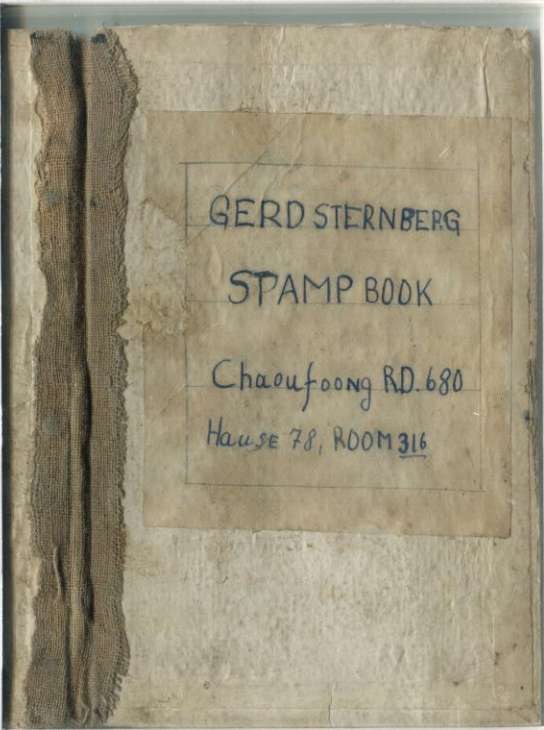
There were no ghetto walls or barbed wire fences but everyone had an ID card of some type to show at various check points. Unlike their Jewish father, Gary, his sister, and mother were Protestant in the eyes of the Japanese. They were issued passes to move in and out of the street boundaries without difficulty.

Gary was about 13 years old when he made the stamp albums. "People were just giving me stamps. I thought they were pretty. I had to put them somewhere, so I made the albums. I don't think I considered myself a collector," he said. Gary focused more on playing football (soccer) and "Packs," a form of marbles made out of folded cigarette packages."

Gary said "I am horrible at drawing." He does not remember why he doodled Hitler and the tanks. He was well aware of Hitler and news of the war but did not seem as pre-occupied or anxious like his parents must have been. Gary was focused on being a boy.

Left: 1946-47 Gary swimming. "We called the lake 'Leprosy Lake' because of the skeletons. The lake was a burial ground for many poor Chinese people."
Right: Gary on his 1947 UNRA Refugee ID photo trying to get out of China.



Backside of exhibit page showing only pages 30 and 35 (other middle pages lost) of the "album" including Gary's drawing of Hitler's face with guns pointing at him:

