

Quotes by Hiram (Harry) Bingham IV:

“The whole world around us has the disease which we’ve feared for so long. We can only pray that the natural goodness of men will fight off the plague before it spreads too far.”

- **Hiram Bingham IV**, wartime diary entry

“Although we were not in the war, most of our government was on the side of the allies, the British and the French. But my boss who was the Consul General at that time, said, ‘The Germans are going to win the war. Why should we do anything to offend them?’ And he didn’t want to give any visas to these Jewish people. So in a way, I had to do as much as I could.”

- **Hiram Bingham IV**, oral family history

“And at one time he sent me to a camp where the French were interning Canadian and British pilots who were forced down and had escaped from the Germans. They came down to southern France and then they were put in a concentration camp.

“The French were rather eager to let them go and get back to England again. But we were not supposed to help them at all. The Consul General told me to tell the French manager, the general in charge of the camp, that we were not interested, that we were glad they were holding them so they couldn’t get back to England. And when I went to talk to the general, he said, ‘I know what you’ve come about, you want these fellows to get back to England. OK.’

“He was sure that we wanted them to. So he said, ‘Well, we won’t talk about it anymore. You haven’t said anything to me at all.’ So we agreed that he’d let them all escape, if he could.”

- **Hiram Bingham IV**, oral family history

“And I did help one admiral to get out of Marseille, who later became the head of the French fleet in London. He worked for De Gaulle when De Gaulle’s forces had their capital in London and Admiral Muselier [Emile Henri Muselier. French Admiral, born Marseilles 1882, died: 1965 and was one of the first high-ranking officers to join De Gaulle – ed.]

“I helped to get him on a ... to sneak on a boat so he could get back to England.”

- **Hiram Bingham IV**, oral family history

Quotes by Varian Fry :

*“**Harry Bingham** was a prince. He sympathized with the refugees and did everything he could to help them [...]*

*“I met the consul general and the vice-consul in charge of visas, **Harry Bingham**. I told them both what I had come over to do, showed them my credentials and letters of recommendation, and asked for their help. The consul general was extremely nervous, as Bohn had said, but **Bingham** was more friendly and sympathetic than I would have dared to hope, after my experiences with the consulate at Lisbon, and my visit to the visa division of the Marseille consulate the day before.... I’ll have a lot of hard words to say about the American foreign service officers in this book. But none of them will apply to **Harry Bingham**. Without his help I would never have been able to save the lives of many of the refugees I managed to get out of France.*

*“It was **Harry Bingham** who got Lion Feuchtwanger out of the camp of St. Nicolas, where he had been interned in May. Harry had arranged it all very carefully with Mrs. Feuchtwanger, who had been allowed to stay at the Feuchtwanger’s house at Sanary-sur-Mer, on the coast near Toulouse.” [...]*

*“A consul who would take the chances Harry had taken to save Feuchtwanger was obviously going to be immensely useful to me in the work I had to do in France. If I believed in a divine Providence which benevolently arranges human affairs, I’d say that it was that Providence which put **Harry Bingham** in the consulate at Marseille in the summer of 1940. Since I don’t believe in that kind of Providence, I have to say it was luck. But it was certainly extraordinary luck, the kind that happens all too seldom in this world, especially when it’s most needed, as it emphatically was then.*

*“After my talks with Bohn and **Bingham** I went back to the hotel feeling that my job was going to be a hell of a lot easier than I had thought when I left New York.”*

- **Varian Fry** (draft manuscript for *Surrender on Demand*, pp. 88a-92, Varian Fry Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York)

*“It was **Harry** who got Feuchtwanger out of that camp [Bohn said]. He arranged it all with Mrs. Feuchtwanger in advance, and she got word of their plans to her husband. Luckily she wasn’t interned, you see...”*

“‘Gosh’, I said, ‘he really is a prince, isn’t he! Where is Feuchtwanger now?’

“‘Hiding in Harry’s villa,’ Bohn said.”

(Varian Fry, *Surrender on Demand*, pp. 11-12)

*“**Harry Bingham** invited me to dinner at his villa, to meet Captain Dubois. Captain Dubois was a member of the Marseille staff of the Sûreté Nationale. Though a Vichy policeman, he was friendly to*

England and America, and Harry thought it would be useful for me to know him. "It was. Dubois was the first French official I had met who was familiar with my case and willing to talk about it. When I asked him what the police had against me, he said, with a sly smile I couldn't quite fathom, 'Smuggling people out of the country.'"

"Anything else?' I asked.

"Yes, trading in foreign exchange."

- **Varian Fry** (1945). *Surrender on Demand* (pp. 89-90). New York: Random House.

"Then **Harry Bingham** was recalled, and his place at the head of the visa service at the American Consulate was taken by a vice-consul who seemed to delight in making autocratic decisions and refusing as many visas as he possibly could....

"By the end of June, the American Consulates in France received new instructions forbidding them to grant any visas at all except on specific authorization from the State Department. Even transit visas had to be authorized by the Department, and all the refugees who had been patiently building up immigration-visa dossiers at the Consulates now had to begin all over again in Washington. No one with a close relative in Italy, Germany or any of the occupied countries, including the occupied part of France, could get a visa under any circumstances.

- **Varian Fry** (1945). *Surrender on Demand* (pp. 215-216). New York: Random House.

"Many American consuls would have refused to give an affidavit in lieu of passport to a refugee who already had a passport, on the grounds that the man had a passport and it was no business of the American Consulate whether the passport was valid in Spain or not. **But Harry Bingham wasn't a run-of-the-mill Consul.** He made out the affidavits without any hesitation at all and transferred the visas to them. Then, since the Victors had spent all their money by this time, I advanced them some and they set out for the frontier again. This time they didn't come back."

- **Varian Fry** (unpublished manuscript, pp. 117-118, Box 14, Folder 1, Varian Fry Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York)

"Johannes Schnek's dossier has at last arrived from Paris, but the affidavits are too old to be any good. Nevertheless **Harry Bingham** has agreed to give him a visa...."

- **Varian Fry** (unpublished manuscript, p. 553, Box 14, Folder 3, Varian Fry Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York)

Quote by Charlie Fawcett, Fry's Assistant

*"You know the American Consulate didn't like us very much. Hugh Fullerton was the Consul General and his instructions were to get us out as quickly as he could.... **Harry Bingham** was our friend. He really helped us."*

- **Charlie Fawcett**, one of Fry's important assistants

*"Credit must be given to the intelligent and understanding cooperation of the American consular officials in Marseille, notably **Hiram Bingham** and Myles Standish. Without their aid we could not have been so successful at this time. They minimized formalities instead of creating barriers to the departure of refugees ... The United States Consul continued to cooperate with us in minimizing delays in issuing visas and in arranging necessary interviews well in advance, so that prospective passengers could leave by the first available vessel."*

- **Danny Bénédite**, Marseille, November 6, 1941, *Administrative Report: The Stages of the Committee's Development* [draft], Emergency Rescue Committee, p. 7

Quotes by Miriam Davenport

*"There were two more influential, albeit not publicized, backers of Varian's work: in the United States, Eleanor Roosevelt, the President's wife, and, in Marseilles, the American Vice-Consul, **Hiram Bingham**."*

- **Miriam Davenport**, member of the Emergency Rescue Committee

*"I caught sight of **Hiram Bingham's** imposing figure pacing the lobby not far off, bless him! His towering height and prematurely white hair made everyone else in the lobby look insignificant. In triumph, I was able to conclude, 'And, Messieurs, if you have any doubts about the truth of my statements, you have only to look over there where the American Consul is carefully observing this scene, so great is his interest in the outcome!'"*

"That did it. There was a short police huddle. Then one broke away to tell me that they would telephone to their chief. On his return, he told me that the chief had agreed to give us ten minutes to get a new doctor's certificate for Mr. Mehring and, if we succeeded, they would leave him free."

- **Miriam Davenport**, member of the Emergency Rescue Committee

Quote by Lena Fishman, Assistant to Varian Fry:

Lena Fishman was Jewish and a valued member of the Emergency Rescue Committee in Marseille. She stayed back to help other refugees escape. She was able to leave Marseille and enter Spain and Portugal on one of Vice Consul Hiram Bingham's visas. [- Eric Saul, Director, *Visas for Life* exhibition – Ed.]

*"P.S. I did get that time my immig[ration] Visa and was home at 10.45. It was really swell of **Mr. Bingham**. I shall send him some red ribbons for it since they seem to have difficulties in getting them."*

- **Lena Fishman** (letter to Varian Fry, dated February 12, 1941, Varian Fry Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York)

"Then I spoke, explaining the dangerous situation in which we found ourselves. Many of us were wanted by the Nazis and were under prosecution in Germany. Several of us had death sentences hanging over us. In the Nazi newspapers and radio speeches many of us were referred to as the ranking enemies of the regime. We were lost if we fell into the hands of the Nazis."

- **Lion Feuchtwanger**, *The Devil in France*