

**BERG AND HERMANN'S FAMILIES PAPERS, approximately 1880-1957
1989.232.31**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
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Descriptive summary

Title: Berg and Hermann's families papers

Dates: approximately 1880-1957

Accession number: 1989.232.31

Creator: Berg (Family : Lechenich, Germany)

Additional creator: Hermann's (Family : Mönchengladbach, Germany)

Extent: 2.3 linear feet (5 boxes, 3 oversize folders)

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Berg and Hermann's families papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, and photographs documenting the Berg family and their escape to Kenya and the Hermann's family and Julius Hermann's journey aboard the *MS St. Louis*, return to Europe, and internment.

Languages: German, English, Dutch

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Berg and Hermann's families papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Inge and Werner Katzenstein and Jill and Kurt Pauly donated the Berg and Hermann's families papers (1989.232.3) to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1989, 1995,

1998, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008, and 2011. Accessions previously cataloged as 1989.305, 1989.306, 1995.A.0322, 1998.148.1, 1999.206.1, 2000.398, 2000.399, 2000.400, 2000.573.1, 2003.342, 2004.96, 2005.235.1, 2008.382.1, and 2011.54 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related archival materials: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum also holds an Oral History interview with Inge Berg Katzenstein (RG-50.106*0144) and two Oral History interviews with Jill Pauly (RG-50.119*0107 and RG-50.106*0092). An oral history conducted with Jill Pauly on February 20, 1997 that forms part of the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archives can also be consulted onsite at the Museum. Jill Berg Pauly also donated a cake server (1989.232.2), silver spoon (2004.31.1), steamer trunk (2008.199.1), and prayer book (1989.232.1) to the Museum. The Museum also holds an Oral History interview with Jilly Pauly's husband, Kurt Pauly (RG-50.106*0079). The Egon Berg papers (2004.571.1) contain materials related relatives of Inge Berg Katzenstein and Jill Pauly who also fled to Kenya. The Werner Katzenstein postcards (2014.307.1) document Inge Berg Katzenstein's husband.

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at collections.ushmm.org for further information.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, July 2014, revised December 2016

Biographical note

Joseph and Klara (Meyer) Berg lived in the small farming community of Lechenich (Erfstadt), Germany (near Cologne) where Joseph Berg made his living as a cattle dealer. The Berg family had lived in the area since the 1600s. They had two daughters: Inge (b. 1929, now Inge Katzenstein) and Gisela (b. 1933, now Jill Pauly). After the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9-10, 1938, the family hid in Cologne. The following week, Joseph Berg, along with his brother, George, and cousin, Ernest, fled to Holland to escape arrest, but they were imprisoned upon their arrival for illegal entry. Klara's brother, Herman Meyer, who had been living in Holland, contacted the head of the Jewish community in Rotterdam and hired an attorney to secure their permission to remain in the Netherlands. After this experience, the family decided to look for another country of refuge. A cousin named Rosa (Marx) Berg had a close relative who had previously immigrated to England, where he had become a successful businessman. Rosa called him daily from Cologne, asking him to help the family get out of Germany. He, in turn, asked his younger brother, Herman Strauss, who worked for a prestigious law firm in Kenya, to help secure visas for the Berg family. Herman Strauss paid the mandatory 50 pounds per person for entry papers to Kenya. After nine months in an internment camp, Joseph, Ernest, and George were finally released so that they could leave for Kenya. They were the first members of the Berg family to arrive and rented a large house in Nairobi. That June they were joined by more than a dozen members of the extended family, including Klara, Gisela, Inge, Klara and Marcus (Max) Berg (Josef's parents), and Bertha Meyer (Klara's mother). This group sailed from Genoa, Italy to Mombasa, Kenya on board the *SS Usambara*. In all, seventeen family members fled Nazi Germany for Kenya, the youngest of whom, Egon (the son of Karl and Rosa Berg), was only two years old. After war broke out in September 1939, the British government arrested all male foreign nationals, including Joseph Berg and his brothers. They were released a week later on condition that they work on the farms of British citizens conscripted for war service. Throughout the war, the Bergs had the status of enemy aliens and could leave their homes only with the permission of a police commissioner. In the fall of 1939, the Bergs purchased a 375-acre farm in Limuru and an additional 125 acres in Maguga. The large family lived in two farmhouses about a mile apart. Each day Joseph commuted to the Maguga farm, stopping to perform his mandatory farm work on a third farm midway between his own. After the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940, the Dutch branch of the family, including Herman Meyer and

Adolf, Erna, and Hannah Baum, also fled to Kenya aboard the last ship out of the country. Another member was added to the family group with the birth of Philip Berg to Ernest and Else Berg in 1942. Joseph, Klara, and their daughters remained in Kenya for eight years, immigrating to the United States in 1947. Max and Klara Berg died in Kenya in 1942 and 1945 and are buried there.

The Bergs' cousin, Julius Hermanns (1891-1942), was born in Neersen (Willich), Germany, to Michael and Rosalie Hermanns. He owned a linen store with his three surviving siblings: Fritz, Sofia, and Henrietta (two brothers had died in World War I). His wife Margarete (1899-1944) was born in Gelsenkirchen to Meyer and Paulina Goldbaum and had two sisters, Erna and Else. The couple had one daughter, Hilde (1923-1944), born in Mönchengladbach. Julius was imprisoned in Dachau in September 1938, transferred to Buchenwald the following month, and released in April 1939 on the condition that he would leave the country. His sister Henrietta had immigrated to the United States in 1938 with her husband, Sol Meyer. Sol and Julius Kaufmann, another relative, were able to afford and arrange for a single Cuban landing certificate, so Julius sailed alone on the *MS St. Louis*, leaving Margarete and Hilde behind. When the *St. Louis* was returned to Europe, Julius found temporary refuge in France until he was arrested as an enemy alien at the outbreak of war. He was held in internment camps in Fresnay-sur-Sarthe, Saint Cyprien, Gurs, and Les Milles before being deported in August 1942 via Drancy to Auschwitz, where he was killed. Meanwhile, Margarete, Hilde, and Sofia were deported to the Riga ghetto in December 1941, and Hilde and Margarete were transferred in October 1944 to Stutthof, where they were killed.

Scope and content of collection

The Berg and Hermanns families papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, and photographs documenting the Berg family and their escape to Kenya and the Hermanns family and Julius Hermanns' journey aboard the *MS St. Louis*, return to Europe, and internment.

The Berg family papers consist primarily of biographical materials, correspondence, and photographs documenting the Berg family from Germany and their escape to Kenya. Biographical materials include birth certificates, a military passbook, a marriage certificate, two family registers, certificates of good conduct, a letter of recommendation, travel papers, permissions, passports, a certified list of belongings Klara Berg took to Kenya, Kenyan certificates of registration, a miniature date book, an autograph book, and German and American identification cards documenting the Berg family and the Pauly family (Gisela Berg's husband and his parents). Correspondence consists of letters and postcards among Berg family members, Pauly family members, and Berg relative Ella Schweizer. Berg family correspondence includes letters from Berg family members in Germany to those in Kenya as well as Red Cross inquiries about relatives deported to Theresienstadt and about family friends in Rotterdam. Pauly family correspondence consists of letters to Selma Pauly from family friend Josef Kausen relating family news. Ella Schweizer postcards contain greetings.

Photographs depict members of the Berg family and their relatives in Germany and Kenya. Printed materials include a clipping showing a map of Allied advances into North Rhine-Westphalia, a pocket calendar gifted to the Berg family from N. Menachemson, a program from a Nairobi Hebrew Congregation prayer service, and a survey map of Berg property in Kenya. Restitution materials include Pauly family correspondence and affidavits about their loss of property, health, and education during the Holocaust.

The Hermanns family papers consist primarily of correspondence documenting Julius Hermanns' efforts to flee Germany; his voyage aboard the *MS St. Louis*; his internment in Fresnay-sur-Sarthe, Saint Cyprien, Gurs, and Les Milles; and his relatives' efforts to discover his fate as well as that of his wife and daughter

and of Sol Meyer's brother, Karl Meyer. Postcards from Karl to Sol describe his wartime life in Köln. The papers also include identification papers for Sol and Henrietta Meyer, clippings about the *St. Louis* and about Theresienstadt, Karl Meyer's drawing of his mother, a satirical poem about the difficulties of emigration, and a report about Buchenwald. Photographic materials include photographs of a liberated concentration camp (possibly Buchenwald), Julius Hermanns, and Sol and Henrietta Meyer, and a photo album depicting the Hermanns family in Germany and the Meyers' immigration voyage to New York in 1938.

System of arrangement

The Berg and Hermanns families papers are arranged as two series and ten subseries:

- Series 1: Berg family papers, approximately 1880-1957
 - Subseries 1: Biographical materials, 1915-1947
 - Subseries 2: Correspondence, 1913-1957
 - Subseries 3: Photographs, approximately 1880-1945
 - Subseries 4: Printed materials, 1941-1950
 - Subseries 5: Restitution files, 1956

- Series 2: Hermanns family papers, 1900-1956
 - Subseries 1: Biographical materials, 1900-1942
 - Subseries 2: Correspondence, 1908-1956
 - Subseries 3: Photographs, approximately 1910-1945
 - Subseries 4: Printed materials, 1938-1939, 1945
 - Subseries 5: Drawing, poem, and report, approximately 1938-1939

Indexing terms

St. Louis (Ship)
Fresnay-sur-Sarthe (Concentration camp)
Saint Cyprien (Concentration camp)
Gurs (Concentration camp)
Les Milles (Concentration camp)
Buchenwald (Concentration camp)

Jews--Germany--Lechenich.
Jews--Germany--Mönchengladbach.
Jews--Germany--Cologne.
Jewish refugees--Kenya--Nairobi.
Concentration camp inmates--France--Correspondence.

Cologne (Germany)
Lechinich (Germany)
Nairobi (Kenya)
Limuru (Kenya)
Fresnay-sur-Sarthe (France)
Saint Cyprien (Dordogne, France)

Gurs (France)
Les Milles (France)
Germany--Emigration and immigration--History--1933-1945.
Kenya--Emigration and immigration--History--20th century.

Photographs

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Berg family papers, approximately 1880-1957

Subseries 1: Biographical materials, 1915-1947

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Berg, George, 1924-1942
1.2	Berg, Gisela, 1939
1.3	Berg, Inge, 1939, 1945
1.4	Berg, Josef (1891), 1926, 1939-1943
1.5	Berg, Josef (1896), 1915, 1922, 1939-1947
1.6	Berg, Klara (1869), 1939-1943
1.7	Berg, Klara (1904), 1939-1943
1.8	Berg, Max, 1939
1.9-1.10	Berg, Sara, 1916, 1939-1943 (2 folders)
1.11	Meyer, Berta, 1936
1.12	Meyer, Leopold, 1938
1.13	Ochs, Dr. Jul., II, 1939
1.14	Pauly, Hugo, 1936
1.15	Pauly, Kurt, 1936
1.16	Pauly, Selma, 1936

Subseries 2: Correspondence, 1913-1957

Box/Folder	Title
1.17	Berg family, 1939-1941
1.18	Pauly family, 1947, 1955-1957
1.19	Schweizer, Ella, 1913, 1939

Subseries 3: Photographs, approximately 1880-1945

Box/Folder	Title
1.20	Berg family, approximately 1900-1945
1.21	Berg, Gisela with her friend Ilsyen, approximately 1939
1.22	Berg, Klara, Inge, and Gisela, approximately 1939
1.23	Davids family, approximately 1880-1945

1.24, 3.1	Family photographs, approximately 1920s-1930s
1.25	Herz, Levy and Karoline Menken, approximately 1910
1.26	Meyer, Bertha, approximately 1939
1.27	Schwartz, Sarah, Carl, Joseph, and Gustav, approximately 1939

Subseries 4: Printed materials, 1941-1950

Box/Folder	Title
1.28	Clipping, Map of Allied advances into North Rhine-Westphalia, 1945
1.29	Jewish National Fund pocket calendar, 1941
1.30	Program from Nairobi Hebrew Congregation, 1945
OS 1	Survey of land in Kiambu district, Kenya, South of Limuru Township, 1950

Subseries 5: Restitution file, 1956

Box/Folder	Title
1.31	Pauly family restitution correspondence and affidavits, 1956

Series 2: Hermanns family papers, 1908-1956

Subseries 1: Biographical materials, 1900-1942

Box/Folder	Title
2.1	Meyer, Hans Gottlieb, 1942
2.2	Meyer, Henrietta, 1900, 1922, 1936
2.3	Meyer, Sol, 1908, 1923-1928, 1935-1938

Subseries 2: Correspondence, 1908-1956

Box/Folder	Title
2.4	Bacharach, Albert, 1938
2.5	Hermanns, Julius, 1939-1941
2.6	Hermanns, Margarete, 1939
2.7	Hermanns, Walter, 1940
2.8	Hermanns family, 1940
2.9	Kaufmann, Julius, 1939
2.10	Meyer, Karl, 1938-1941
2.11	Meyer, Paula, 1908, 1940-1941
2.12	Meyer, Sol, 1939, 1946, 1956
2.13	Süsskind, Benno, 1945
2.14	Telegrams, approximately 1939-1941
2.15	Various, to Meyer, Sol, 1939-1945

Subseries 3: Photographs, approximately 1910-1945

Box/Folder	Title
2.16	Blaut, Arnold, 1945
2.17	Concentration camp at liberation, possibly Buchenwald, 1945
2.18	Gebrüder Hermanns storefronts, approximately 1930s
2.19	Hermanns family photographs, approximately 1910-1938
2.20	Hermanns, Julius, approximately 1915
2.21, 4.1	Meyer, Henrietta and Sol, 1920s-1930s
5.1	Meyer, Henrietta and Sol photograph album, 1922-1941

Subseries 4: Printed materials, 1938-1939, 1945

Box/Folder	Title
2.22, OS 2, OS 3	Clippings, 1938-1939, 1945

Subseries 5: Drawing, poem, and report, approximately 1938-1939

Box/Folder	Title
2.23	Karl Meyer's drawing of his mother, 1938
2.24	Poem about efforts to emigrate, approximately 1939
2.25	Report about Buchenwald, approximately 1938