

PRESSMAN FAMILY PAPERS, approximately 1932-1935 1991.69.4

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Pressman family papers

Dates: approximately 1932-1935

Accession number: 1991.69.4

Creator: Pressman (Family: Berlin, Germany)

Extent: 0.5 linear feet (1 folder, 1 oversize box, and 3 book enclosures)

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

Abstract: The Pressman family papers include three diaries written by Hermann Pressman, in German shorthand, from 1932-1935. In his diaries, Hermann writes about daily life, economic and political changes, the violence and harassment his family endures, his escape to Belgium to live with his cousin David Mendelsohn, the process of gathering paperwork in order for his family to leave Germany, their immigration to the United States, and his experiences and challenges when they first arrive in America. The collection also includes photographs and picture postcards of the Pressman family in Germany, Poland, and Belgium including photographs of extended family in Poland, Zysia Pressman's friends, and images of Sonia, Hermann's sister, in Belgium prior to the family's immigration in 1933.

Languages: German

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), Pressman family papers (1991.69.4), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Sonia Pressman Fuentes donated the Pressman family papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1991 and 2009. The accessions previously numbered 1991.69 and 2009.266.1 have been incorporated in this collection.

Related material: Sonia Pressman Fuentes also donated a wooden clothing hanger from her father's store in Berlin (2017.308.1) in 2017.

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

Processing history: Morgan Voth, October 2018.

Biographical note

Zysia (Siegmond) Pressman (b. 1892) married Hinda Dombek (b. 1892) in 1913 and they had two children, Hermann (b.1914 in Frankfurt am Main) and Sonia (later Fuentes, b. 1928 in Berlin). Zysia and Hinda lived in Poland until 1913 when they moved to Germany. They settled in Berlin in 1919 and Zysia rented and managed a men's clothing store and factory, the Siegmund Pressman Herren Kleider Fabrik. On April 1, 1933 Zysia's store was officially boycotted along with other Jewish-owned businesses and Hermann became concerned for his family. Hermann fled to Antwerp, Belgium to live with his cousin, David Mendelsohn. A few months later he was joined by his parents and sister. In April 1934, the family immigrated to the United States aboard the Red Star Line's *SS Westernland*. They arrived in New York City in May and settled in the Bronx. Sonia later attended Cornell University and the University of Miami School of Law. She became the first female attorney in the Office of the General Counsel at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and a founding member of the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Scope and content of collection

The Pressman family papers include three diaries written by Hermann Pressman, in German shorthand, from 1932-1935. In his diaries Hermann writes about daily life, economic and political changes, the violence and harassment his family endures, his escape to Belgium to live with his cousin David Mendelsohn, the process of gathering paperwork in order for his family to leave Germany, his family's immigration to the United States, and his challenges and experiences when they first arrive in America. The collection also includes photographs and picture postcards of the Pressman family in Germany, Poland, and Belgium including photographs of extended family in Poland, Zysia's friends, and images of Sonia in Belgium prior to the family's immigration in 1933.

System of arrangement

The Pressman family papers are arranged as a single series.

Indexing terms

Pressman, Hermann.

Pressman, Sonia.

Pressman, Zysia.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Germany--Personal narratives.

Berlin (Germany)

United States--Emigration and immigration—History.

Diaries.
Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Pressman family papers, approximately 1932-1935

Box/Folder	Title
BE 1	Diary, 1932-1933
BE 2	Diary, 1933-1935
BE 3	Diary, 1935
Folder 1 Box 1	Photographs, approximately 1932-1935 (2 folders)