

## **GEORGE BIRMAN PAPERS, 1930-2002**

**1993.41.2**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
Tel. (202) 479-9717  
e-mail: [reference@ushmm.org](mailto:reference@ushmm.org)

### **Descriptive summary**

Title: George Birman papers

Dates: 1930-2002

Accession number: 1993.41.2

Creator: Birman, George, 1922-2009

Extent: 2.0 linear feet (1 document box and 3 flat boxes)

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

Abstract: The George Birman papers consist of an admission ticket to the International Military Tribunal, eight pocket size daily agenda planners, biographical materials, photographic materials, and printed materials documenting George Birman's childhood in Lithuania, his confinement with his father, Abel Birman, in the Kovno (Kaunas) ghetto, his work at the Kedahnen (Kedainiai) labor camp, and his postwar education and work with displaced persons in Vienna.

Languages: Hebrew, German, Lithuanian, English

### **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), George Birman papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: George and Pola Birman donated the George Birman papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993, 1995, 2010, and 2012. The accessions formerly

cataloged as 1999.155.1, 2010.107.1, and 2010.107.4 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related materials: George and Pola Birman also donated a wristwatch (1999.155.2), a hunting knife (1999.155.3), a belt (2010.107.2), and pliers (2010.107.3) to the Museum. An oral history interview conducted with George Birman on May 12, 1995 that forms part of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute Visual History Archive can be viewed onsite at the Museum.

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

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, January 2016

### **Biographical note / Administrative history**

George (Hirsch) Birman (1922-2009) was born in Königsberg, East Prussia (now Kaliningrad, Russia) to Abel (b. 1887) and Zlata Birman (d. 1939) and grew up near Klaipėda, Lithuania, in the nearby Gargzdai shtetl, and in Kovno (Kaunas). He and his father were forced into the Kovno ghetto after the German occupation in 1941. George was assigned to work the night shift digging up the Kovno airfield. In September 1942, George volunteered to go to the nearby Kedahnen (Kedainiai) labor camp where he shoveled gravel into railroad cars. He later became the chief electrician and installed lighting and wiring at the Kedahnen airfield and barracks. George and Abel escaped Kedahnen in June 1944 while the camp was being evacuated to Kovno. They returned to Kovno after its liberation by the Soviet Union and traveled to Poland and Czechoslovakia before settling in Vienna in September 1945. They lived at the Rothschild Hospital and worked for the illegal immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine. In August 1946, George served as camp leader at Rupertusplatz displaced persons camp. He entered the Technological Institute of Vienna and obtained an engineering degree in 1951. He planned to relocate to Israel, but when the Jewish Agency in Vienna ran out of eligible people to send to the United States in February 1952, George and his father were pressed into American immigration.

### **Scope and content of collection**

The George Birman papers consist of an admission ticket to the International Military Tribunal, eight pocket size daily agenda planners, biographical materials, photographic materials, and printed materials documenting George Birman's childhood in Lithuania, his confinement with his father, Abel Birman, in the Kovno (Kaunas) ghetto, his work at the Kedahnen (Kedainiai) labor camp, and his postwar education and work with displaced persons in Vienna.

The admission ticket permitted entrance to the visitor's gallery of the International Military Tribunal during session 116.

Eight pocket size daily agenda planners include daily and weekly notes about George Birman's postwar activities in Europe from April 1945 through January 1953.

Biographical materials include identification papers, citizenship records, certificates, and employment records documenting Abel and George Birman's wartime and postwar activities in Lithuania and Austria and student and medical records related to George Birman. This series also includes two Polish Red

Cross registration certificates for Cwi Egosz, Aba Gachelet, Margo Bartos, Moses Joffe, Chana Tehora, Jofi Lechuchot, Cwi Chotil, Kosrona Lanegen Leli Lanegen, and Techoh Jericho.

Photographic materials include four albums, six folders of loose photographs, and a box of negatives. The photo albums contain photographs dating from 1930 through 1950 depicting George Birman, his family, and his friends in prewar Lithuania and postwar Austria, Italy, Lithuania, Germany, Palestine, and France. Loose photographs date from 1931-1954 and are minimally identified. They depict George and Abel Birman, friends, students, and children in Lithuania, Austria, and France. Photographs include portraits, school rooms, demonstrations, meetings, street scenes, the Rupertusplatz displaced persons camp, and the Gargzdai shtetl. The box of negatives corresponds to photo album 3.

Printed materials include clippings, postcards depicting the MS *General C.H. Muir*, and a commemorative booklet about the Kaunas ghetto.

### **System of arrangement**

The George Birman papers are arranged as five series:

- Series 1: Admission ticket, approximately 1945-1946
- Series 2: Agendas, 1945-1952
- Series 3: Biographical materials, 1939-2002
- Series 4: Photographs, 1930-1954
- Series 5: Printed materials, 1952-1997

### **Indexing terms**

Jews--Lithuania--Kaunas.  
Jewish ghettos--Lithuania--Kaunas.  
Forced labor--Lithuania--Kaunas.  
Forced labor--Lithuania-- Kėdainiai.

Kaunas (Lithuania)  
Klaipėda (Lithuania)  
Gargždai (Lithuania)  
Kėdainiai (Lithuania)  
Vienna (Austria)

Photographs

## **CONTAINER LIST**

### **Series 1: Admission ticket, approximately 1945-1946**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	
1.1	Admission ticket, approximately 1945-1946

**Series 2: Agendas, 1945-1952**

Box/Folder	
1.2-1.9	Agendas, 1945-1952 (8 folders)

**Series 3: Biographical materials, 1939-2002 (bulk 1939-1969)**

Box/Folder	
1.10	Birman, Abel, 1940-1957, 1965-1969
1.11, 2.1	Birman, George, 1939-1956, 1962, 2002
1.12	Polish Red Cross registration certificates for Cwi Egosz, Aba Gachelet, Margo Bartos, Moses Joffe, Chana Tehora, Jofi Lechuchot, Cwi Chotil, Kosrona Lanegen Leli Lanegen, and Techoh Jericho, 1945

**Series 4: Photographs, 1930-1954**

Box/Folder	
1.13, 2.2	Album 1, 1930-1940
1.14, 2.3	Album 2, 1944-1946
1.15, 3.1	Album 3, 1946-1949
1.16, 3.2	Album 4, 1949-1950
1.17-1.22	Photographs, 1931-1954 (6 folders)
Box 4	Photographic negatives removed to cold storage (negatives correspond to Album 3), approximately 1946-1949

**Series 5: Printed materials, 1952-1997**

Box/Folder	
1.23	Clippings, 1987
1.24	Postcards depicting United States Naval ship <i>General C.H. Muir</i> , 1952
1.25	<i>Pro Memoria</i> , 1997