

WALTER LUBRAN PAPERS, 1915-2016
1993.A.0009.2

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

Title: Walter Lubran papers

Dates: 1915-2016

Accession number: 1993.A.0009.2

Creator: Lubran, Walter, 1912-2000.

Extent: .83 linear feet (2 boxes, 1 oversize folder)

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

Abstract: The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Walter Lubran, originally of Sebnitz, Germany, including his immigration to the United States in 1938, his military career during World War II, and his restitution cases against the German government regarding property claims, insurance, and pensions. Included is a small amount of biographical material related to Walter and his father Benno Lubranitzki, letters from Walter to his wife Pearl while he was overseas with the Army, restitution paperwork, and a small amount of pre-war family photographs.

Languages: English, 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.

Physical access note: The pressed flowers in the correspondence series cannot be accessed. Only the digitized copies can be viewed.

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), Walter Lubran papers (1993.A.0009.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Bernard Lubran in 1993, 2017, and 2018. The collections previously numbered 1993.A.0009, 2017.621.1, and 2018.58.1 have been incorporated into this collection.

Separated materials: Also donated was the wedding dress of Walter's sister Alice Plocki (2018.58.2). The dress was shipped to the United States by Alice who believed she would be immigrating there from the Riga Ghetto.

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

Processing history: Adam Fielding, December 2018

Biographical note

Walter Heinz Lubran (1912-2000) was born Walter Lubranitzki on 29 July 1912 in Sebnitz, Germany to Benno (b. 1860) and Gertrude (née Posner, b. 1885) Lubranitzki. He had one sister, Alice (b. 1914, later Alice Plocki). Walter's parents owned the largest clothing store in Sebnitz. They owned the building where their store was, and lived above it. When he was a child, Walter's parents sent him to Dresden to receive a better education.

After Walter graduated in 1930, he wanted to become an attorney, but restrictions on the number of Jews that could attend college prevented him from pursuing this goal. His father arranged for him to have an apprenticeship with a department store called Hurwitz, possibly in Leibnitz or Leipzig. He returned to Sebnitz in 1932 to work for his father. By 1938, Benno was forced to sell his business and the building and received no compensation. Around 1939 Benno and Gertrude moved to Dresden while Walter remained in Sebnitz. Both of his parents later perished in the Holocaust.

Walter's sister moved to Berlin with her husband Robert Plocki. They applied for visas to immigrate to the United States with the help of Robert's brother Erich, who lived in New York. However, he was only able to secure a visa for his father. Robert and Alice were deported to the Riga Ghetto in 1941 where they both likely perished.

Through Abraham Fingerhut, a business connection of his father, Walter received a visa and immigrated to the United States in September 1938. He initially lived in New York, then found a job at Davidson's department store in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. While in Ambridge, Walter met his future-wife Pearl Amstey (1904-1974) through a refugee organization. In July 1939 he took a job at a department store in Cumberland, Maryland. Walter and Pearl married on 16 January 1942 and lived in Pittsburgh. They had three sons, Bernard, Albert, and Robert.

Walter was drafted in March 1943. He was sent to Camp Richie and trained in intelligence. His unit went overseas in September 1944 and were assigned to the 84th Infantry Division. Walter was later assigned to the 21st Armored Division and was stationed in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia after the end of the war. He returned home in December 1945 and was honorably discharged in January 1946 with the rank of Master Sergeant. He and Pearl moved to Steubenville, Ohio to run a clothing store with some of Pearl's relatives.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Walter Lubran, originally of Sebnitz, Germany, including his immigration to the United States in 1938, his military career during World War II, and his restitution cases against the German government regarding property claims, insurance, and pensions. Included is a small amount of biographical material related to Walter and his father Benno Lubranitzki, letters from Walter to his wife Pearl while he was overseas with the Army, restitution paperwork, and a small amount of pre-war family photographs.

Biographical material includes the affidavit by Abraham Fingerhut for Walter's visa to immigrate to the United States, documents related to Walter's military career, and a copy of a family history of Walter and his parents. Also included are copies of paperwork related to the forced sale of Benno Lubranitzki's property by Nazi Germany and a family tree.

Correspondence primarily consists of letters sent by Walter to his wife Pearl while he was overseas in 1945. Letters from 20 May 1945, 15 June 1945, 26/27 June 1945, and 27 July 1945 all contain pressed flowers housed separately (can be viewed digitally only). Other letters consist of a 1936 letter from an unknown sender and recipient and a 1945 postcard received by Erich Plocki, the brother of Walter's sister Alice's husband, inquiring about the fate of Alice and Robert.

Restitution papers consist of extensive paperwork and correspondence of claims by Walter to the German government regarding the forced sale of his father's business and assets, insurance, and pensions.

Photographs include prewar depictions of Walter with his family and his parent's store in Sebnitz.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as four series.

Series 1. Biographical material, circa 1935-circa 1990

Series 2. Correspondence, 1936-1945

Series 3. Restitution, 1947-2016

Series 4. Photographs, 1915-1938 and undated

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Person:

Lubran, Walter, 1912-2000.

Lubranitzki, Benno.

Lubranitzki, Gertrude.

Plocki, Alice.

Corporate:

United States. Army.

Topical Subject:

Jewish businesspeople--Germany.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Reparations.

Geography:
Sebnitz (Germany)
Dresden (Germany)
United States--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:
Correspondence.
Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Biographical material, circa 1935-circa 1990

Box/Folder	Title
OS 1	Family tree, undated
1.1	Lubran, Walter, 1938-circa 1990
1.2	Lubranitzki, Benno, circa 1935-1938 (photocopies)

Series 2. Correspondence, 1936-1945

Box/Folder	Title
1.3, pressed flowers stored separately	1945 May-June (pressed flowers stored separately)
1.4, pressed flowers stored separately	1945 July (pressed flowers stored separately)
1.5	1945 August
1.6	1945 September-October
1.7	1949 November-December
1.8	Empty envelopes, 1938-1941
1.9	Other correspondence, 1936, 1945

Series 3. Restitution, 1947-2016

Box/Folder	Title
1.10	1947-1969
1.11	1971-1985
1.12-1.13, 2.1	1990-1999 (3 folders)
2.2-2.4	2000-2016 (3 folders)
2.5	International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, 1997-2006

Series 4. Photographs, 1915-1938 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
2.6	Photographs, 1915-1938 and undated