

**LORENZ SCHMUHL PAPERS, approximately 1918-1985 and undated
(bulk 1939-1945)
1995.A.1119**

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

Title: Lorenz Schmuhl papers

Dates: approximately 1918-1985 and undated (bulk 1939-1945)

Accession number: 1995.A.1119

Creator: Schmuhl, Lorenz, 1898-1988

Extent: 1 linear foot (2 boxes, 1 oversize box, and 3 oversize folders)

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

Abstract: The Lorenz Schmuhl papers consist of correspondence, writings, diaries, photographs, and documents relating to Major Lorenz Schmuhl's service as the first American commander of the Buchenwald concentration camp after liberation and his work at a DP camp in Wiesbaden, Germany. The collection also includes information about Karl Koch, Kommandant of Buchenwald during World War II, and his wife, Ilse Koch, as well as testimonies and writing about Buchenwald and Lorenz. Photographs include originals and copies of Buchenwald during and after the war.

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 photograph series cannot be accessed physically. Only the digitized copies can be viewed. Negatives in the collection are kept in cold storage for preservation reasons and would require additional time for acclimatization before they can be served to researchers.

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), Lorenz Schmuhl papers (1995.A.1119), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Robert A. Schmuhl, son of Lorenz Schmuhl, donated the Lorenz Schmuhl papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1995. Prior to his death, Lorenz Schmuhl gave enlarged photographs with captions to journalist R.P. Harrison, who donated them to the Library of Congress's Veterans History Project. In 2014, the Library of Congress deaccessioned the material so it could be added to the USHMM's collection, which was accomplished with the help of Lorenz Schmuhl's grandson, Charles Crowley.

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, February 2019.

Biographical note

Lorenz C. Schmuhl (1898-1988) was born in Three Oaks, Michigan where he worked as the deputy warden for the Indiana State Prison System and was married to a school teacher. Lorenz enlisted in the United States Army at the age of 18 and served in World War I. During World War II he was deployed in May 1944 and arrived at Buchenwald on April 15, 1945 where he served as the first American commander of Buchenwald after liberation. He worked to establish a hospital and bring aid to the area. On April 24, 1945 he was assigned to a DP camp in Wiesbaden, Germany where he continued his efforts. Lorenz retired as a Major in the U.S. Army and had two children, Dorothy and Robert (1925-1997).

Scope and content of collection

The Lorenz Schmuhl papers consist of correspondence, writings, diaries, photographs, and documents relating to Major Lorenz Schmuhl's service as the first American commander of the Buchenwald concentration camp after liberation and his work at a DP camp in Wiesbaden, Germany. The collection also includes information about Karl Koch, Kommandant of Buchenwald during World War II, and his wife, Ilse Koch, as well as testimonies and writing about Buchenwald and Lorenz. Photographs include originals and copies of Buchenwald during and after the war.

Correspondence includes letters, announcements, reports, and other documents regarding requests for assistance, war crime investigations, invitations for gatherings, and other official business as well as some personal correspondence relating to Lorenz's time as commander of Buchenwald and his work at a DP camp in Wiesbaden. The series also includes correspondence from the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.

The Buchenwald series includes a blank identification card for internees, programs and correspondence for a memorial service, and reports on activity at the camp. The series also includes newspaper clippings relating to the war, Ilse Koch, and interviews with Lorenz about his wartime experiences.

Writings include articles and papers relating to tattooing in camps and the development of Buchenwald. The article *First American Commander of Buchenwald*, by R.P. Harrison is based off of an interview with Lorenz and includes enlarged photographs of original images along with captions. This series also includes two diaries written in English by Lorenz Schmuhl from 1942-1945 documenting his time stationed at Fort Benjamin Harrison and his wartime experiences including entries from when he first

entered Buchenwald and throughout his time stationed there and at the DP camp. Also included is testimony a several poems provided by various people, some anonymous, acquired by Lorenz.

Photographs include an album as well as originals and enlarged copies of Buchenwald during the war and post-liberation including images of Karl and Ilse Koch.

System of arrangement

The Lorenz Schmuhl papers are arranged as four series.

Series 1: Correspondence, approximately 1918-1985

Series 2: Buchenwald, 1945-1978 and undated

Series 3: Writings, approximately 1942-1985 and undated

Series 4: Photographs: approximately 1937-1962

Indexing terms

Schmuhl, Lorenz, 1898-1988.

Buchenwald (Concentration camp)

Refugee camps.

World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives, American.

World War, 1939-1945--Concentration camps--Liberation.

Mannheim (Germany)

Correspondence.

Diaries.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Correspondence, approximately 1918-1985

Box/Folder	Title
1.1-1.2	Buchenwald, 1945 (2 folders)
1.3	Commander of Buchenwald, 1945
1.4	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, 1945
1.5-1.6	Wiesbaden, 1945 (2 folders)
1.7	Miscellaneous, approximately 1918-1985

Series 2: Buchenwald, 1945-1978 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
1.8	Identification card, undated
1.9	Latvian displaced persons, 1945
1.10	Memorial service, 1945

1.11 OS 1-3	Newspaper clippings, 1945-1978 (4 folders)
1.12	Reports, 1945

Series 3: Writings, approximately 1942-1985 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
1.13	<i>A Contribution to the Tattooing Question</i> , Frederick Timm, undated
1.14	Diary, 1942
1.15-1.16	Diary, 1944-1945 (2 folders)
1.17	<i>Die Entwicklung des Konzentrationslagers Buchenwald, 1937-1945</i> , undated
1.18-1.19	<i>First American Commander of Buchenwald</i> , undated (2 folders)
1.20	Testimony, approximately 1945-1985

Series 4: Photographs: approximately 1937-1962

Box/Folder	Title
2.1-2.4, 3.1 Pressed flower and negatives stored separately	Buchenwald, approximately 1937-1945 (5 folders) (Pressed flowers and negatives stored separately)
2.5 Negatives stored separately	Buchenwald post-liberation, 1945 (Negatives stored separately)
2.6	Gravesite, 1962
2.7	Signal Corps, 1945
2.8	Miscellaneous, approximately 1945