

## **LOLA AND WALTER KAUFMAN PAPERS, circa 1925-1978 2002.54.1**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
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### **Descriptive summary**

Title: Lola and Walter Kaufman papers

Dates: circa 1925-1978

Accession number: 2002.54.1

Creator: Kaufman, Lola.

Additional creator: Kaufman, Walter.

Extent: .5 linear feet (2 folders)

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 Lola Kaufman (born Loncia Rein), originally of Czortkow, Poland (Chortkiv, Ukraine) and her husband Walter Kaufman, originally of Połaniec, Poland. The bulk of the collection consists of pre-war and post-war family photographs, including depictions taken in the Eschwege displaced persons camp. Also included is a pre-war autograph book and several post-war songbooks used while Lola was in Eschwege.

Languages: Polish, German, Hebrew

### **Administrative Information**

Access: Collection is open for use.

Physical access note: Collection is unprocessed

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), Lola and Walter Kaufman papers (2002.54.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Lola and Walter Kaufman in 2002.

Separated material: Embroidered dress worn by a Polish Jewish girl in hiding (2002.54.1)

Related archival materials: Lola Kaufman papers (2003.346.1)

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

Processing history: Updated by Adam Fielding, August 2020

### **Biographical note**

Loncia Rein was born on October 4, 1934, in Czortkow, Poland (now Chortkiv, Ukraine), to Yidl Yehuda and Dvoire Aschkenase Rein. Loncia, called Lola, was an only child. Both sides of her family were from Czortkow. Her father Yidl was born in 1889, the only child of Yakov and Reisil Nadler Rein. Yakov and Reisil owned a bakery. Lola's mother Dvoire was born in 1900 to Nachman and Ethel Salzinger Aschkenase. Nachman and Ethel, called Ekka, owned a tin shop. Dvoire had four brothers: Shmiel, Itce, Shia, and Gedale. Lola and her parents lived with her maternal grandparents in the apartment behind the tin shop. Yidl owned an upholstery store nearby. They lived in a Jewish area of the city. They kept kosher and spoke Yiddish and Polish. Lola attended a nursery school.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and on September 17, the Soviet Union invaded eastern Poland, including Czortkow. Lola and her mother went to see the Soviets march in, but shooting started so they hid in a building until they could go home. The Soviets nationalized all businesses, and Lola's father Yidl and grandfather Nachman lost their workshops. Yidl took a job as a baker for the Soviet Army. Lola saw Soviet soldiers shoot a man in the marketplace. On June 22, 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union. The Soviet Army fled Czortkow and many Jews fled east with them, including Lola's maternal uncles Itce and Gedale, who went to Lwow (Lviv, Ukraine). On July 6, the German Army occupied Czortkow. A Jewish council was established by the Germans to organize and control the Jewish population for them. Jews were soon required to wear Star of David armbands. The Germans began conducting Aktions in August, killing Jews or sending them to concentration and labor camps. Lola's oldest maternal uncle Shmiel and his family were killed during the first Aktion. Her uncle Shia was sent to a labor camp outside Czortkow.

On April 1, 1942, the ghetto was created. By this time, the Jewish population had been reduced from 8,000 to 6,800. Lola's home was at the edge of the ghetto, so they did not have to move. Lola's maternal grandfather Nachman became ill and died. In the summer, Lola's father Yidl was severely beaten by a group of Ukrainians. As a result, he became ill and died. Lola's paternal grandmother Reisil also died in 1942. In August and October, over 2,000 Jews were sent to Belzec killing center and Janowska concentration camp in mass deportation Aktions. Dvoire and Ekka had been warned beforehand, so the family hid between two walls in a storage building by their apartment. Another family hid in a different place in the same room. German and Ukrainian authorities searched the room and found the other family. The man told them that there were more Jews hiding in the room, so they continued searching. Dvoire held her hand tightly over Lola's mouth, so she would not make a sound. The Germans banged on the wall, but did not find them. Dvoire became a seamstress for the Germans and had a special pass to leave the ghetto for work. On March 21, 1943, on Purim, Dvoire, her cousin, and two other women

were arrested by an SS sergeant on their way to work. He took them to the jailhouse and shot them. People came to their home and told Ekka and Lola what had happened.

Ekka arranged for Lola, then 9, to hide with a Ukrainian woman who used to deliver milk to the family. Circa May, Lola snuck out of the ghetto at night. She went to the river and hid under a bridge until the woman arrived. Lola gave her a tin cup made by her grandfather, which had coins hidden under the false bottom. Lola and the woman walked through the fields until they reached her house. Lola had to stay inside in a narrow room. Whenever the dog barked because someone was at the door, Lola hid under the bed. A few times people saw Lola because the dog did not bark. Lola could not speak Ukrainian, so the family said that she was a relative who was deaf and mute. The woman's daughter and son-in-law also lived in the house. Her son-in-law hated Jews and treated Lola terribly. He told his mother-in-law that if she did not send Lola away, he would take her to the Gestapo. In the middle of the night in August, the woman woke Lola and took her to her sister, Mrs. Zacharczak. She was already hiding a Jewish woman, Roza Kalisher, her teenage brother, Duzco, and her daughter, Betka, in a hole dug in the barn. Mrs. Zacharczak's son was a Ukrainian policeman and would have killed them if he knew about them. They could only leave the hole to go to the bathroom and had to stay quiet. They lived in terrible conditions, with very little food. They could not bathe and became infested with lice. Roza and her family were not happy that they had to share their limited food and space with another person and mistreated Lola. In March 1944, Soviet forces liberated the area. Mrs. Zacharczak told them it was safe to return home, but they had to sneak out at night, so that no one would know she had hidden Jews.

Lola and the Kalishers returned to Czortkow. Lola learned that she had no family left. Her grandmother Ekka and uncle Shia had been killed when the ghetto was liquidated on June 16, 1943. Roza told Lola that she would not take care of her. Lola found her uncle Shia's brother-in-law, but he refused to help her. Lola joined a group of refugees leaving Czortkow and walked in the snow until she fainted. A Jewish man who was a friend of her father saw her and carried her on his back. He was too weak to care for her, but a group of Soviet soldiers approached and said they would take her. They brought her to their barracks, where she could eat and rest. After a few days, the soldiers left and Lola was alone again. She begged for food on the streets. Eventually, a Soviet soldier offered to take her to an orphanage in Kiev. His orders changed on the way, so he left her in Gritsev (now Hrytsiv, Ukraine) with the mayor. A Jewish man, Sergei, offered to take care of her. She stayed with Sergei and his family and attended school. Lola's maternal uncle Gedale had survived and was searching for Lola. He had been imprisoned in Lwow ghetto and Janowska concentration camp and escaped in October 1943, living in hiding until liberation. His wife did not survive. Lola's maternal uncle Itce also survived. Gedale remarried and lived in Krakow with his wife Estera (1920-2006), and their daughter Ada, born in 1945. Gedale sent a friend to get Lola and they were reunited in Krakow.

Gedale wanted to immigrate to the United States or Palestine, so the family illegally traveled from Poland to Germany. They went to Czechoslovakia, then Austria, staying in camps in Linz and Vienna. In late 1945, the family arrived in Germany. They lived in Eschwege displaced persons camp. Lola attended school, joined a Zionist organization, and took English lessons. In 1947, Gedale and Estera had a son, Nachman. In April 1949, Eschwege closed, so they moved to Kassel DP camp. On June 29, 1949, Lola and her family sailed from Bremerhaven on the USAT General Sturgis, arriving in Boston on July 1. They settled in New York. Gedale Americanized his name to George. Lola attended high school, then worked in a department store. In 1951, Lola began dating Walter Kaufman, who was born as Wolf Kaufman on January 26, 1923, in Polaniec, Poland, to Majer and Ruchel Pfeffer Kaufman. Walter and two of his brothers survived the Holocaust in hiding. Their parents and two other siblings perished. On May 3,

1953, Lola and Walter married. The couple settled in Long Island and had three children. Lola's uncle George, 90, died on March 14, 2001. Lola, 79, passed away on October 1, 2014.

Wolf (Velvel) Kaufman was born on January 26, 1923, in Polaniec, Poland, to Majer and Ruchl Pfeffer Kaufman. Wolf had four siblings: Rachel, born 1915, Abram, born 1920, and Cala and Chaia Sura (Sara), twins born 1926. Wolf's father Majer was born in 1889 to Liebisch Kaufman and had four sisters, who he to the United States. Wolf's mother Ruchl was born in 1892/3. Her sister Chana lived next door with her husband and 7 children. Majer was a butcher and sold kosher and non-kosher meat in 2 shops. The Wolf's family was observant. Wolf's grandfather Liebisch became ill, and returned from the US to Polaniec where he died 6 weeks later. Wolf attended a Jewish religious school until 7 and then attended the local Polish school. The Polish children were antisemitic and beat up the Jewish children. Wolf left school after 7th grade to apprentice as a tailor.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and occupied Polaniec on September 5. It was illegal to butcher animals, but Majer continued to work. Wolf still worked as a tailor and was paid with food by Polish farmers. Jews from nearby villages were brought to the town and Jewish refugees came to Polaniec, which was nearly midway between Lublin and Krakow, resulting in overcrowded living conditions. Jewish males were required to perform unpaid forced labor and Wolf was sent to dig ditches and drain the fields of Polish farmers for 2 weeks. His brother Abram had to work in a leather shop. A cousin was told to report for forced labor, but his father volunteered to go instead and never returned. In May 1942, more Jews were put in the town and, in June, the Germans made the town center a sealed ghetto. In mid-October, Polish officials who were friendly with Majer told him there would be an Aktion and all Jews would be taken away. On October 17, the day before the Aktion, Wolf's family fled on foot, carrying whatever they could. Wolf, his parents, and brothers Abram and Cala went to Pacanow. Wolf's sisters, Sara and Rachel, Rachel's husband, and sons Leibish, 3, and Yumen, 1, went to Nowy Korczyn to live with Rachel's in-laws. About a week later, Wolf and Abram returned to get belongings they had left with a Polish family, the Lowickis. They learned that elderly and disabled Jews were shot and the rest taken away. The next day, Lowicki told them that similar Aktions had occurred in Pacanow and Nowy Korczyn. Later, Lowicki brought their brother Cala to the house. Cala told them how all the Jews in Pacanow had been rounded up and marched to the train station in Szczucin. While the trains were being loaded, Cala ran away. Soldiers shot after him but he escaped to Polaniec to look for Wolf and Abram.

Wolf, Abram, and Cala left Polaniec and joined a group of 15 to 20 Jewish boys in the forest. The partisan groups in the area refused to accept Jews. The group stayed together for a few days, but it was too difficult to get enough food, so they dispersed. Wolf, Abram, and Cala stayed in the woods, occasionally sneaking into town to buy food from Lowicki. They needed a warm place to stay and decided to hide in the Tarnowski barn, without their knowledge. They hid behind hay bales and snuck out at night to find food. Workers came into the barn, but they were not discovered until around May 1943. Mrs. Tarnowski discovered them while gathering eggs and they had to leave that night. The grain in the fields was very tall, so Wolf, Abram, and Cala hid in the fields. They met other hidden Jews from Polaniec, a family of 5 and a young couple. The group decided to hide in the brush next to the Vistula River. In the summer, the group was surrounded by Polish men from Polaniec, who began shooting them. They scattered; Wolf jumped into the river. He hid until they left, and then went to the home of a Polish friend in Polaniec. He was reunited with Abram, but Cala never arrived. At night, they went back to the river and found Cala hiding in an orchard. The other young man from their group also survived, but his wife and the family were killed. The four decided to hide in an abandoned house. The other man wanted to go to Polaniec to retrieve belongings from a Polish friend and Abram went with him. When they arrived, the Polish man called others over and tried to kill them. Abram hid in a barn. The other

man hid in the fields and was found and killed. Wolf and Cala heard the shooting and thinking Abram was killed, went to the home of their Polish friend in Polaniec, where they found Abram.

It was nearly winter and Wolf, Abram, and Cala needed a new hiding place. They approached Jozef Majsak, a farmer in Masnik, who worked for the mayor. He agreed to take them, but had to build a hiding place. While waiting, the brothers hid near the river. Wolf was discovered and taken to the mayor's house, who let him go. They went to Jozef's, who had dug a hole in his shed. Only Jozef's older children Talka and Jurek knew they were hiding Jews and brought them food. His 4 year old daughter Stasia, his mother-in-law, and 3 brothers-in-law did not know. Jozef, Abram, and Cala were contacted by Franciszek Korczak, a Polish farmer who had hidden them briefly. He was hiding another Jew, Morris Slachter, and asked the brothers if Morris could stay with them. Jozef agreed, so Morris also hid in the shed. During the winter, they had to stay inside because Jozef's in-laws worked in the barn. In spring and summer, they worked the fields, so the men could get out of the hole and move around the shed. Once Stasia saw them and told her uncle she had seen devils in the shed, but he did not believe her. In August 1944, the region was liberated by Soviet forces.

Wolf, Abram, and Cala returned to Polaniec. Their house was gone because the Germans had destroyed all the wooden Jewish houses. Few Jews returned. Wolf's parents and sisters were killed in Treblinka killing center in October 1942. Polish people formed a militia, which harassed Wolf and his brothers but did not harm them because of the Soviet soldiers. Wolf was a tailor for the Soviet Army. In winter 1944, the Soviets left. The militia broke into Wolf's house and stole their possessions. The brothers moved to another city, then to Łódź. Some of the Jews who remained in Polaniec were murdered by the militia.

The war ended in May 1945. Wolf and his brothers wanted to go to the US. They got false papers and illegally went to Munich, Germany, to Landsberg displaced persons camp for 2 months, and then to Turkeim. In February 1949, Wolf left for New York on the SS Marine Tiger. His brothers joined him two weeks later. Abram became Abraham and Cala, Carl. They settled in New York. Wolf was a tailor, but eventually became a clothing designer. Abraham and Carl were butchers. In 1951, Walter met Lola Rein, who was born October 4, 1934, in Czortkow, Poland (now Chortkiv, Ukraine). Lola survived the Holocaust in hiding. Her parents and grandparents perished. On May 3, 1953, Lola and Walter married. The couple settled in Long Island and had three children. Abraham, 78, died in 1998. Lola, 79, passed away on October 1, 2014.

Biographies by Amanda Eckstein

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

The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Lola Kaufman (born Loncia Rein), originally of Czortkow, Poland (Chortkiv, Ukraine) and her husband Walter Kaufman, originally of Polaniec, Poland. The bulk of the collection consists of pre-war and post-war family photographs, including depictions taken in the Eschwege displaced persons camp. Also included is a pre-war autograph book and several post-war songbooks used while Lola was in Eschwege.

### **System of arrangement**

The collection in unprocessed.

### **Indexing terms**

Person:

Kaufman, Lola.

Kaufman, Walter.

Corporate:  
Eschwege (Displaced persons camp)

Topical Subject:  
Refugee camps--Germany.  
Refugees, Jewish--Germany.  
Jewish ghettos--Poland.

Geography:  
Chortkiv (Ukraine)  
Polaniec (Poland)  
Eschwege (Germany)  
Türkheim (Bavaria, Germany)

Genre/Form:  
Songbooks.  
Atlases.  
Autograph albums.  
Photographs.

## PRELIMINARY INVENTORY

Series 1. Printed material, circa 1930-1946

Autograph Book; which belonged to Elka Edith Stempler Strudel Ashkenazy, donor's adoptive mother and her uncle's Gedalia second wife; dated: c. 1930; location: Stanislawów, Poland; in Polish

Songbook; "Songs of Beitar"; published in Munich 1946 and used by the donor in Eschwege DP camp in Germany

Songbook; "Soldiers' Songs"; published in Tel Aviv 1945 and used by the donor in Eschwege DP camp in Germany

Songbook; used by the donor in Eschwege DP camp in Germany (no cover page)

School Geography Atlas; published by UNRRA and used by the donor in Eschwege DP camp in Germany

Series 2. Photographs, circa 1925-1978

Photograph; portrait of Ekke Aschkenase, donor's maternal grandmother, who arranged hiding place for Lola; dated: c. 1938; location: Chortkov, Poland

Photograph; portrait of Nachman Aschkenase, donor's maternal grandfather, dated: c. 1938; location: Chortkov, Poland

Photograph; portrait of Yidl Yehuda Rein, donor's father; dated: c. 1925; location: Chortkov, Poland

Photograph; portrait of Szmil Aschkenase, donor's maternal uncle; his wife, Yenta and his mother-in-law; Szmil and his family perished; dated: c. 1925; location: Chortkov, Poland

Photograph; portrait of Dwojre Aschkenase Rein and Yidl Rein, donor's parents; dated: c. 1930; location: Chortkov, Poland

Photograph; wedding portrait of donor's cousin, Golde and her groom; dated: c. 1935; location: Chortkov, Poland

Photograph; portrait of Lola Rein, the donor, wearing a dress sewn and embroidered by her mother; dated: c. 1937-1938; location: Chortkov, Poland

Photograph; portrait of Sabina Aschkenase, uncle Gedalia's first wife and their daughter Lucia; dated: c. 1942; location: Lvov ghetto

Photograph; portrait of Sabina Aschkenase, uncle Gedalia's first wife and their daughter Lucia; dated: c. 1940; location: Lvov, Poland

Photograph; portrait of Gedalia and Sabina Aschkenase; dated: c. 1938; location: Lvov, Poland

Photograph; portrait of Lola Rein posing with a bear mascot in a park; dated: 1946; location: Krakow, Poland

Photograph; portrait of Lola Rein; dated: 1946; location: Krakow, Poland

Photographs; group portraits of Jewish children, members of "Beitar"; dated: c. 1948; location: Eschwege DP camp, Germany

Photographs; group portraits of Jewish children attending school in a DP camp; dated: 1947-1949; location: Eschwege DP camp, Germany

Photograph; group portrait of survivors from Chortkov during a memorial service; dated: September 1948; location: Wroclaw, Poland

Photograph; group portrait of members of a drama club named after I.L. Peretz in Chortkov, Poland; c. 1938

Photographs; group portraits of DP Jewish children in the Eschwege DP camp in Germany

3 copy photographs; depicting Walter's parents and siblings in Polaniec, Poland

Photograph; group portrait of the Majsak family, who saved Walter's and his brothers lives; dated: c. 1950; location: Polaniec, Poland

Photographs; depicting Jewish DP's and their activities (demonstrations, memorial services and sports activities) in the Turkheim DP camp; dated: c. 1946 – 1948

Photograph; portrait of three young Jewish men, survivors of the Lodz ghetto, friends of Walter (unidentified); dated: 1945; location: Lodz, Poland

2 contemporary photographs; depicting the shed in which the Kaufman brothers were hidden by the Majsak family and group portrait with the Majsak family members during their reunion in 1978