

## **BRUNN AND ORNSTEIN FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS AND DIARY, circa 1915-1950s 2004.225.2**

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: Brunn and Ornstein family photographs and diary

Dates: circa 1915-1950s

Accession number: 2004.225.2

Creator: Brunn (Family : Szendrő, Hungary)

Additional creator: Ornstein (Family : Hajdúnánás, Hungary)

Extent: 0.5 linear feet (5 folders and 1 oversize box)

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

Abstract: The Brunn and Ornstein family photographs and diary consists of photographs related to the families of Anna Brunn and Paul Ornstein, originally of Szendrő and Hajdúnánás, Hungary, respectively. Photographs include mainly pre-war and wartime originals and copies of Anna and Paul and their extended family in Hungary. Some of the photographs include captions provided by the donor and several photographic postcards have writing on the back. The collection also includes a pocket calendar used as a diary and carried by Paul's father, Lajos Ornstein, while in a Hungarian labor battalion on a forced march from June 1944-May 1945, ending in Mauthausen. In the diary Lajos writes the distance traveled, food eaten, and the route of travel.

Languages: Hungarian, 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), Brunn and Ornstein family photographs and diary (2004.225.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Paul and Anna Ornstein donated the Brunn and Ornstein family photographs and diary to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2004 and 2006, along with an accretion in 2012. The accessions previously numbered 2004.225.1 and 2006.102 have been incorporated in this collection.

Related material: An oral history given by Anna Ornstein was recorded by the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Onsite access to the oral histories is provided by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Museum's Library hold copies of *Versklavung und Befreiung: jüdische Schicksale aus Ungarn als zeitgemässe Pessachgeschichten* (DS135.H93 O76 2001) and *My mother's eyes: Holocaust memories of a young girl*, by Anna Ornstein (DS135.H93 O76 2004). The Library also holds *Knowing and not knowing the Holocaust* (RC451.4.H62 K596 1985) and *Healing their wounds: psychotherapy with Holocaust survivors and their families* (RC451.4.H62 H43 1989) which includes interviews with Anna Ornstein. Paul Ornstein published a memoir, *Looking Back: Memoir of a Psychoanalyst*, in 2015. Some of the photographs in this collection are individually cataloged by the Photo Archives: 10550, 10543, 36289, 36287, 36288, 48987, 48988, 10558, 10562, 10561, 10617, 10563, 10544, 10645, 48994, 10560, 10682, 48989, 10553, 10650, 10647, 48992, 10668, 48991, 48993, 56581, 56580, 36286, 10690, and 48990. Additional information on Lajos Ornstein and his diary can be found here: <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/collections-highlights/the-diary-of-lajos-ornstein>.

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: Morgan Voth, March 2019

### **Biographical note**

Anna Brunn (later Ornstein, b. 1927) was born on January 27, 1927 in Szendrő, Hungary to Wilmos (1883-1944) and Zsofi (née Furth, 1898-1961) Brunn and had two older brothers, Paul (b. 1922) and Endre (b. 1924). Wilmos owned a building materials and hardware store. The family was Orthodox Zionists but spoke Hungarian at home. Anna attended elementary school in a one room Jewish school attached to the synagogue, but she and her brothers had to go away for high school. Anna attended the Jewish Gymnasium in Debrecen where she lived with her Aunt Piri. However, since there were very few Jewish Gymnasiums in Hungary, Paul attended a Catholic high school and Endre attended a Protestant high school, both in Miskolc. While in Debrecen, Anna met Paul Ornstein (1924-2017), a cousin of her aunt, who stopped to visit on December 24, 1941. In July 1942 Paul rode his bicycle to Szendrő for a surprise visit, and the two maintained a long distance relationship through letters and infrequent visits.

After Germany invaded Hungary in 1944 Paul's younger brother unexpectedly arrived in Debrecen to escort Anna to the Ornstein home in Hajdúnánás. However, after a few days, Anna decided that she needed to return to her own parents in Szendrő. She arrived home to learn that her brothers had already been conscripted for forced labor. Anna and her parents were sent to a small ghetto consisting of three buildings then were transferred to a larger ghetto in Miskolc. From there, Anna, her parents and grandmother were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in June 1944. Her father and grandmother were killed immediately. After approximately two weeks, Anna and Zsofi were taken to work in a stone

quarry in Plaszow. Three months later, in September 1944, they returned to Auschwitz where they were tattooed. Anna was given the number A20071. Six weeks later, Anna and Zsofi were transferred to the Parschnitz labor camp in Czechoslovakia. Anna worked in the airplane factory while her mother worked outdoors with other elderly women cleaning rusty scrap metal. While in Parschnitz Anna contracted typhoid fever, but Polish prisoner nurses protected her to prevent her deportation back to Auschwitz.

Anna and her mother were liberated from Parschnitz on May 8, 1945 by the Soviet army and returned to Budapest with about fifty other women. They then moved to Rákosszentmihály where Anna finished high school and Zsofi directed a Jewish orphanage. They discovered that neither Anna's father nor her two brothers, Paul and Endre survived the war. However, Anna did reunite with her boyfriend, Paul Ornstein. Paul brought his father and Anna to Cluj (currently Cluj-Napoca, Romania) where they regained their strength while he finished a semester of medical school before returning to Budapest.

Paul and Anna married in March 1946 in the Rákosszentmihály orphanage, and the following month they fled to the West together with Paul's father and his best friend, Steve Hornstein. They spend a month in the Rothschild hospital in Vienna which was serving as a station for Jews fleeing Eastern Europe on the Bricha. From there they went to Germany where Paul and Steve enrolled as medical students in Munich. They later transferred to Heidelberg where Anna and Steve's wife Lucia, also enrolled as students. In 1948 Paul's father, Lajos Ornstein, immigrated to Israel. The same year, Anna's mother, Zsofi, fled Germany after an informant told the government that her orphanage was preparing children to immigrate to Palestine. Zsofi joined Anna and Paul in Heidelberg and worked as a cook for the Jewish Student Union. Anna and Paul immigrated to the United States on June 29, 1951. Anna returned to briefly to Germany in 1952 to complete her medical degree and then returned permanently to the United States. Her mother joined them in America the following year. They had three children Sharone, Miriam, and Rafael.

Paul Ornstein (1924-2017) was born on April 4, 1924 in Hajdúnánás, Hungary to Lajos (b. 1896) and Frieda (née, Cziment, b.1903) Orenstein and had four younger siblings: Judith (b. 1926), Zoltan (b. 1928), Tibor (b. 1931) and Lazlo (b. 1936). After serving in World War I, Lajos founded a bank only to lose his fortune in the 1929 crash. He then became an accountant and tax advisor for a flour mill. However, after anti-Jewish legislation prohibited him from working for non-Jewish firms, he again switched professions and became a secretary to the Jewish community. Paul helped support his family by tutoring younger children. The family was religiously observant but spoke Hungarian at home. Paul attended a secular elementary school and cheder. Paul attempted to immigrate to Palestine in 1939, but was unable to receive the necessary papers before the outbreak of the war. Instead he went to Budapest to study Jewish history and philosophy in the Neologue rabbinic seminary. His two brothers attended the Jewish gymnasium in Debrecen, and his sister studied to become a dental technician in Budapest. Paul's father, Lajos Ornstein, was conscripted into a forced labor battalion for six months in 1941.

After the March 1944 German invasion, rabbinic students were forced to work in a transit camp at site of the seminary, though they still were permitted to live in their dormitory. However, in June, Paul had to join a forced labor battalion on the outskirts of Buda where he was put to work building an airfield. After six weeks he was sent to the Russian front to dig ditches for brutal Hungarian soldiers and barely avoided being shot. After the Russians broke through the Carpathian Mountains, Paul escaped by feigning appendicitis and returned to Budapest. He went to the home of his aunt and uncle and learned that his sister, Judith, was killed during the American bombing of Budapest the evening of Yom Kippur. Paul then discovered that Zionist friends from the rabbinic seminary were hiding in an annex of the Swiss consulate. Paul moved in with them and worked for the Zionist underground from October

until early January when Russians liberated Budapest. During the last days of the war, Paul and a friend escaped to Debrecen and made their way home to Hajdúnánás to try to find relatives. He learned that his brothers and mother had been deported to Auschwitz where they perished.

After liberation Paul went to Bucharest in the hope of eventually going from there to Palestine and enrolled in a Hungarian medical school in Cluj. However, after he learned that his father and Anna survived, he returned to Hungary. His father, Lajos Ornstein, survived a death march and was liberated from Mauthausen. Paul and Anna married in March 1946. The following month they fled to the West together with Paul's father and his best friend, Steve Hornstein and spent a month in the Rothschild hospital in Vienna. From there they went to Germany where Paul and Steve enrolled as medical students in Munich. They later transferred to Heidelberg where Anna and Steve's wife Lucia, also enrolled as students. In 1948 Paul's father, Lajos Ornstein, immigrated to Israel in 1948. Anna and Paul immigrated to the United States in June 29, 1951. They had three children Sharone, Miriam, and Rafael.

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

The Brunn and Ornstein family photographs and diary consists of photographs related to the families of Anna Brunn and Paul Ornstein, originally of Szendrő and Hajdúnánás, Hungary, respectively. Photographs include pre-war and wartime originals and copies of Anna and Paul and their extended family in Hungary. Some of the photographs include captions provided by the donor and several photographic postcards have writing on the back. The collection also includes a pocket calendar used as a diary and carried by Paul's father, Lajos Ornstein, while in a Hungarian labor battalion on a forced march from June 1944-May 1945, ending in Mauthausen. In the diary Lajos writes the distance traveled, food eaten, and the route of travel.

Photographs of the Brunn family include images of Anna as a young girl, with her brothers, and with her best friend, Lili Gartner, post-war photographs of Zsofi and the children at the orphanage she opened after the war, and a collection of photographs of the Furth family. Also included are photographs of Anna's aunt Margit, Wilmos Brunn, Zsofi Brunn, Paul Brunn, Endre Brunn and Anna's cousins.

Photographs of the Ornstein family include a passport photograph and images of Lajos Ornstein in his World War I uniform, pre-war and wartime photographs of Lajos, Frieda, Judith, Zoltan, and Tibor, and a post-war photograph of Paul and Anna as interns at a hospital in Israel. Also included are photographs of Paul Ornstein in Hajdúnánás, with friends at rabbinical school, and on his bicycle on his way to visit Anna.

### **System of arrangement**

The Brunn and Ornstein family photographs and diary are arranged as a single series.

### **Indexing terms**

Person:

Brunn, Anna, 1927-

Brunn, Paul, 1922-1944

Ornstein, Lajos, 1896-1944.

Corporate:

Auschwitz (Concentration camp)

Mauthausen (Concentration camp)

Topical Subject:

Forced labor.

Jews, German--Hungary--Diaries.

World War, 1939-1945--Underground movements--Hungary.

World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives.

Geography:

Szendrő (Hungary)

Hajdúnánás (Hungary)

Genre/Form:

Diaries.

Photographs.

## CONTAINER LIST

**Series 1: Brunn and Ornstein family photographs and diary, circa 1915-1950s**

Box/Folder	Title
1 of 5	Brunn, Anna, circa 1940s
2 of 5	Brunn family, circa 1920s-1950s
3 of 5	Ornstein, Lajos, circa 1915-1950s
4 of 5	Ornstein, Paul, circa 1917-1945
5 of 5	Ornstein family, circa 1930s-1940s
1	Diary, 1944-1945