

JOHN AND BARBARA HELMAN PAPERS, 1937-1951
2006.165.2

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

Descriptive summary

Title: John and Barbara Helman papers

Dates: 1937-1951

Accession number: 2006.165.2

Creator: Helman, John, 1909-2002

Additional creator: Helman, Barbara, 1919-1988

Extent: 0.4 linear foot (4 folders)

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

Abstract: The John and Barbara Helman papers consist of biographical materials and photographs documenting the Helman and Wiewióra families from Łódź, John and Barbara's survival of the Łódź ghetto, John's survival of the Auschwitz and Görlitz concentration camps, and the couple's postwar marriage and refugee and immigration status.

Languages: German, English, Hebrew

Administrative Information

Access: There are no known restrictions on access to this material.

Reproduction and use: The donor, source institution, or a third party has asserted copyright over some or all of the material(s) in this collection. You do not require further permission from the Museum to use this material. The user is solely responsible for making a determination as to if and how the material may be used.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), John and Barbara Helman papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Carol Stulberg donated the John and Barbara Helman papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2006, 2007, 2015, and 2017. The accessions previously cataloged as 2006.165.1, 2007.251.1, and 2017.563.1 have been incorporated into this collection.

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

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, March 2016, revised March 2023

Biographical note / Administrative history

John (Janek) Helman (1909-2002) was born in Łódź to Szmaja (1868-1938) and Rywka (1895-1943) Helman. He had his six brothers and sisters. He fled Łódź after the German invasion and again after the formation of the Łódź ghetto but eventually joined his family in the ghetto and worked hauling human waste. He was beaten and suffered a spinal injury in the ghetto, and his mother died there in 1943. When the ghetto was liquidated in 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz with his sister, Elka, and her son. Elka was killed at Auschwitz, and her son was presumably killed there as well. Two weeks after his arrival, John was transferred to the Görlitz concentration camp, where he worked in a tank factory, suffered a foot injury, and had his foot amputated. He was liberated from Görlitz in 1945 by the Soviet Army and returned to Łódź. Among his family, only he and one brother, Tevye, and one sister, Laja (married name Pakin), survived the war. He traveled to the Bergen-Belsen displaced persons camp to find his sister and also found Bronia Wiewióra, whom he knew before the war. Barbara (Bronja/Bronde/Brainde/Bronia Wiewjura/Wewjura/Wewióra, 1919-1988) was born in Łódź and survived the Łódź ghetto, Auschwitz, Salzwedel, and Bergen-Belsen. Her parents, Abram Josef (1879-1944) and Kraindla (1872-1944), are believed to have been killed at Auschwitz. The couple married, moved to Hannover, had two children, Carol and Joseph, and immigrated to the United States in 1950.

Scope and content of collection

The John and Barbara Helman papers consist of biographical materials and photographs documenting the Helman and Wiewióra families from Łódź, John and Barbara's survival of the Łódź ghetto, John's survival of the Auschwitz and Görlitz concentration camps, and the couple's postwar marriage and refugee and immigration status.

Biographical materials include identification papers, certificates, and correspondence documenting John's status as a survivor of the Łódź ghetto, Auschwitz, and Görlitz; his marriage to Bronia Wiewióra; her survival of the Łódź ghetto; and the couple's refugee and immigrant status.

Photographs depict Barbara and John Helman, their young children, and their relatives including John's sisters Roszja and Elka and brother Shlomo, and Barbara's brother and sister-in-law, David and Bluma (nee Jangerson), another brother, Yael, cousins Oscar and Sam (Szlamek) Pakin; and aunt Laja Pakin. This series also includes a photograph of Barbara's friend Bella Pruszyńska (who married Albert Peters) standing with a group in the Łódź ghetto, a photograph of the Jewish Committee of Hannover, including Rabbi Abraham Lipshitz, and a copy print of Chaim Rumkowski and Hans Biebow in the Łódź Ghetto. Most of the photographs were taken in Łódź before the war, in the Łódź ghetto, or in Hannover after the war.

System of arrangement

The John and Barbara Helman papers are arranged as two series:

- Series 1: Biographical materials, 1945-1951
- Series 2: Photographs, 1937-1948

Indexing terms

Auschwitz (Concentration camp)

Görlitz (Concentration camp)

Jews--Poland--Łódź.

Jewish ghettos--Poland--Łódź.

Holocaust survivors--Germany--Hannover.

Łódź (Poland)

Hannover (Germany)

United State--Emigration and immigration.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Biographical materials, 1945-1951

Folder	
1	Helman, Janek and Bronia, 1945-1949
2	Helman, Janek and Bronia, 1950-1951

Series 2: Photographs, 1937-1948

Folder	
3	Helman and Wiewióra families, 1937-1948
4	Łódź ghetto, approximately 1940-1944