

**CHARLES VOGEL PAPERS, approximately 1937-2001 and undated
(bulk 1945-1949)
2010.500.1**

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: Charles Vogel papers

Dates: approximately 1937-2001 and undated (bulk 1945-1949)

Accession number: 2010.500.1

Creator: Vogel, Charles, c.1883-1960

Extent: 2.5 linear feet (3 boxes, 1 book enclosure, and 8 oversize folders)

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

Abstract: The Charles Vogel papers consist of documents, diaries and testimonies, correspondence, photographs, and newspaper clippings acquired by Charles Vogel during his efforts to document and record what occurred to the 350 American soldiers held prisoner at Berga an der Elster. The collection also includes originals and photocopies of trial documents relating to the war crimes trial of Erwin Metz and Ludwig Merz.

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.

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), Charles Vogel papers (2010.500.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Mark and Martin Vogel donated the Charles Vogel papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2010.

Related material: The Sydney Goodman papers (2011.148.2) and the Anthony Acevedo papers (2010.440.1) provide additional details on those mentioned in the Charles Vogel papers.

Separated material: Mark and Martin Vogel also donated three issues of *The Cub of the Golden Lion* and a map of Germany with International boundaries as of January 1938 and September 1939 from the National Geographic Society, 1944, to the Museum's Library in 2010.

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, September 2018

Biographical note

Charles Vogel (c.1883-1960) was a World War I veteran and a lawyer in Brooklyn, New York. His brother, Harry, and sister-in-law, Jean Vogel had two sons, Bernard ("Jack" 1924-1945) Vogel and Martin (1926-) Vogel. Bernard and Martin were in college at the beginning of the World War II. Bernard was drafted in 1944 and served with the 106th Infantry Division. He was deployed later that year. Martin enlisted in 1944 and served with the 372nd Engineers. During the Battle of the Bulge on 17 December 1944, Bernard was captured by German forces in Luxembourg and sent to Stalag IX B, a German prisoner-of-war camp, in Bad Orb, Germany. He was one of 350 American soldiers sent to the forced labor camp Berga an der Elster, a sub-camp of Buchenwald concentration camp where he was killed after attempting to escape. After Bernard's family learned of his death, Charles worked pro bono to gather evidence about what occurred at Berga. In his attempts to build a case and generate support he corresponded with the State Department and the War Department. He also contacted Berga survivors and family members and asked them to fill out questionnaires and provide any useful information, such as testimonies. He passed along his finding to the War Crimes Branch of the United States War Department in hopes that his evidence would be used during the 1946 War Crimes trial of Erwin Metz and Ludwig Merz, Commanders of Berga, in Germany. Some of the material was used, but no survivors were asked to testify. After Metz and Merz's sentences were reduced, Charles petitioned for President Truman, Defense Secretary James Forrestal, and Secretary of State George Marshall to call for a new trial. However, Metz and Merz were both free by 1955. Charles continued his search for answers and justice for the survivors and victims of Berga until he passed away in 1960.

Scope and content of collection

The Charles Vogel papers consist of documents, diaries and testimonies, correspondence, photographs, and newspaper clippings acquired by Charles Vogel during his efforts to document and record what occurred to the 350 American soldiers held prisoner at Berga an der Elster. The collection also includes originals and photocopies of trial documents relating to the war crimes trial of Erwin Metz and Ludwig Merz.

Correspondence includes letters sent from Charles to Berga survivors and family members regarding his efforts to collect information to present to the War Department and letters from survivors and family members providing information, trying to locate information on family member, and thanking Charles for his efforts. The series also includes correspondence between Charles and the War Department relating to his nephew, Bernard, and other soldiers as well as his attempts to obtain information about the mistreatment of prisoners of war in Berga.

This series includes wartime and post-war diaries, testimonies, and statements acquired by Charles from Berga survivors and family members during his efforts to document what occurred at Berga.

Trial preparations include documents relating to Charles and his family's attempts to obtain information on what happened to Bernard Vogel after the war, a list of soldiers who were at Berga, and correspondence and documentation relating to public attention of the case. This series also includes questionnaires Charles sent to Berga survivors and their families and petitions organized by Charles calling for President Truman to order a new trial after the sentencing of Metz and Merz.

Trial documents include photocopies of an appeal for clemency, interrogation statements, and trial documents, exhibits, and evidence from the war crimes trial for Erwin Metz and Ludwig Merz, Commanders of Berga. The series also includes photocopies of photographs and documents relating to life at Berga.

Subject files include a pamphlet and list of soldiers of the 106th Infantry Division and correspondence, memos, and meeting minutes for the Berga Survivors Organization as well as correspondence and a resolution adopted by the Jewish War Veterans of the United States. This series also includes a press release from the Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality.

Printed materials include wartime and post-war newspaper clippings relating to the treatment of prisoners of war, survivors testimonies, and the Isla Koch trial. The series also includes issues of *Collier's* and *Official Detective Stories* which include articles about Nazi atrocities and the conditions at Berga.

Photographs include color copy prints of the Vogel family from 1942-1944 including Bernard, Martin, Jean, Harry, and Charles Vogel.

System of arrangement

The Charles Vogel papers are arranged as seven series.

Series 1: Charles Vogel correspondence, approximately 1944-1948

Series 2: Diaries, testimonies, and statements, 1937-1949

Series 3: Trial preparation, approximately 1946-1949

Series 4: Trial documents, 1945-1951 and undated

Series 5: Subject files, approximately 1945-1949

Series 6: Printed materials, approximately 1945-2001

Series 7: Photographs, 1942-1944

Indexing terms

Vogel, Charles.

Berga (Concentration camp)

United States. Army. Infantry Regiment, 106th (1940-1947)

War crimes trials--Germany.

World War, 1939-1945--Prisoners and prisons, German.

Prisoners of war--Germany--Diaries.

Berga (Thuringia, Germany)

New York (N.Y.)

Diaries.

Correspondence.

Trial and arbitral proceedings.

Photographs.

Newspapers.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Charles Vogel correspondence, approximately 1944-1948

| Box/Folder | Title |
|------------|--|
| 1.1-1.3 | Survivors and soldiers families, 1945-1946 (3 folders) |
| 1.4-1.6 | War Department, 1944-1948 (3 folders) |
| 1.7 | Miscellaneous, approximately 1944-1948 |

Series 2: Diaries, testimonies, and statements, 1937-1949

| Box/Folder | Title |
|---------------|--|
| 1.8 | Abrams, Alvin, 1948 |
| 1.9 | Katimaris, Costa, Robert Lamb and Stephen James Schweitzer, 1946 |
| 1.10 | Czarny, Stanley, 1945-1949 |
| 1.11 | Daub, Robert, 1949 |
| 1.12 | Diamant, Alexander, 1949 |
| 1.13 | Fahrer, Seymore, 1949 |
| 1.14 | Gerenday, George, 1948 |
| 1.15 | Goldin, David, 1948 |
| 1.16 and OS 1 | Goodman, Sydney, 1949 |
| 1.17 | Irving, Walter Lee, 1948 |
| 1.18 | Markowitz, Joseph, 1948 |
| 1.19 | Molnar, Paul, 1948 |
| 1.20 and BE 1 | Schweitzer, Stephen James, 1937-1945 |
| 1.21 | Steckler, Daniel, 1945-1948 |

Series 3: Trial preparation, approximately 1946-1949

| Box/Folder | Title |
|------------|--|
| 1.22 | General, approximately 1944-1948 |
| 1.23 | Information regarding Bernard Vogel, 1945 |
| 1.24 | List of soldiers names at Berga, approximately 1946-1948 |
| 1.25 | Petitions against sentencing, 1948 |
| 2.1 | Public attention, 1945 |

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| 2.2 | Questionnaires, 1946-1949 |
| 2.3 | Blank questionnaires, 1940s |

Series 4: Trial documents, 1945-1951 and undated

| Box/Folder | Title |
|--------------|--|
| 2.4 | Action of the Modification Board, 1951 |
| 2.5-2.7 | Clemency Part I, 1945-1951 (3 folders) |
| 2.8-2.11 | Clemency Part II, 1946-1948 (4 folders) |
| 2.12-2.15 | Interrogation transcripts and statements, 1945 and undated (4 folders) |
| 3.1 and OS 2 | Life at Berga, 1945 and undated |
| 3.2 | Photographs of Berga, 1945 |
| 3.3 | Prosecution exhibits, 1945-1946 |
| 3.4 | Review of trial, 1947 |
| 3.5 | Trial documents and exhibits, 1945 |
| 3.6 | Trial evidence, 1945 |

Series 5: Subject files, approximately 1945-1949

| Box/Folder | Title |
|------------|--|
| 3.7 | 106th Infantry Division, approximately 1945-1949 |
| 3.8-3.11 | Berga Survivors Organization, approximately 1945-1949 (4 folders) |
| 3.12 | Jewish War Veterans of the United States, 1945 |
| 3.13 | Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, 1945 |

Series 6: Printed material, approximately 1945-2001

| Box/Folder | Title |
|---------------------|--|
| OS 3 | <i>Collier's</i> , 1945 |
| 3.14 | Conduct of Ilse Koch War Crimes Trial, 1948 |
| 3.15-3.16 OS 4-7 | Newspaper clippings, approximately 1945-2001 (2 folders) |
| OS 8 | <i>Official Detective Stories</i> , 1945 |
| 3.17 | War Claims Act of 1948, 1948 |

Series 7: Photographs, 1942-1944

| Box/Folder | Title |
|------------|-------------------------|
| 3.18 | Vogel family, 1942-1944 |