

**KURZ FAMILY PAPERS, 1903-CIRCA 2011**  
**2011.281.1**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
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**Descriptive summary**

Title: Kurz family papers

Dates: 1903-circa 2011 (bulk 1903-1959)

Accession number: 2011.281.1

Creator: Kurz family (Vienna :Austria)

Extent: 1 linear foot (2 boxes)

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

Abstract: The Kurz family papers contain biographical materials, correspondence, immigration papers, business records, and photographs related to the lives of Meilech Kurz and his wife Klara Kurz-Biberstein in Vienna, Austria, and with their children Alfred and Doriane in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Westerbork transit camp, Netherlands, and Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. The papers include letters Meilech wrote to Klara, birth and marriage certificates, identification cards, government registration papers, immigration papers for Palestine and the United States, papers related to Meilech's optical frames family business, and family photographs.

Languages: Dutch, English, German, Polish, Hebrew

**Administrative Information**

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

Reproduction and use: Material(s) in this collection may be protected by copyright and/or related rights. 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), Kurz family papers (2011.281.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Alfred Kurz donated the Kurz family papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2011.

Related archival materials: Doriane Kurz oral histories (1990.420.1, 1997.A.0431), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; the Doriane Kurz collection consists of artifacts related to the experiences of Doriane Kurz following her liberation from Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and her postwar life in Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, and during her journey to the United States. Included are a doll (2010.194.1 a-c), burlap purse (2010.194.2), leather coin purse (2010.194.3 a-f), dark blue dress (2010.194.4), dish towel (2010.194.5), red wool felt cap (2010.194.6), and white lace collar (2010.194.7).

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: Adam Fielding, August 2015; updated by Adam Fielding, September 2023

### **Biographical note**

Meilech (Emil) Kurz (1897-1942) was born in Tarnow, Poland to Aron Kurz and Dora Weiss. He had three brothers, Benjamin (1902-1957), Charles, and Michael, and one sister, Lola. His family owned an optical frames business with branches in Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Egypt among other places. By 1915 they had moved to Vienna, Austria to operate the branch there. By 1941, His father Aron, his brothers Benjamin and Charles, and his sister Lola had immigrated to the United States.

Klara Biberstein (1908-1946) was born in Husiatyn, Poland (now Ukraine) to Abraham Josef and Sara Biberstein. Her father worked for a firm that exported eggs from Russia to Germany. She had one brother, Eliot, and one sister, Mary. Klara's mother and brother immigrated to Palestine around 1936.

Klara and Meilech married in Vienna in 1934, and had two children, Doriane (1936-2005) and Alfred (b. 1938). In 1939, they moved to Maastricht, Netherlands, where the Dutch branch of the business was located. They moved to another branch in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 1940. In 1942, the Amsterdam branch was confiscated, and shortly after Meilech and Klara were arrested. On August 6 Meilech was sent to the Vught transit camp. In late October, he was sent to Amersfoort concentration camp and then to Westerbork transit camp on November 7, 1942. During this time, Meilech was able to correspond with his family. Klara contacted officials at the Jewish Committee in Amsterdam to try to keep him from being transported to a death camp. The last letter Klara received from Meilech was from November 10, 1942, written during his deportation to the Auschwitz concentration camp. He was killed on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Klara and the children hid in Amsterdam with the assistance of non-Jewish neighbors. She received certificates for her and the children to immigrate to Palestine, but was sent to Westerbork on October 19, 1943. Doriane and Alfred joined her there shortly. They were sent to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on February 15, 1944. They were put on a train to Theresienstadt concentration camp in April 1945, but were liberated by Russian troops near Tröbitz, Germany.

They were transferred to Leipzig, Germany and then a displaced persons camp in Maastricht. Klara was very ill with typhus by the time they were liberated. Benjamin and Charles Kurz assisted them to make arrangements to immigrate to the United States. Klara died in March 1946 from breast cancer, and Alfred and Doriane soon moved to Stockholm, Sweden. They emigrated from Goteborg, Sweden to the United States aboard the *SS Gripsholm* in July 1946, where they would live with their Uncle Benjamin.

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

The Kurz family papers contain biographical materials, correspondence, immigration papers, business records, and photographs related to the lives of Meilech Kurz and his wife Klara Kurz-Biberstein in Vienna, Austria, and with their children Alfred and Doriane in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Westerbork transit camp, and Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. The papers include letters Meilech wrote to Klara, birth and marriage certificates, identification cards, government registration papers, immigration papers for Palestine and the United States, papers related to Meilech's optical frames family business, and family photographs.

The biographical material primarily contains material related to Meilech Kurz and Klara Kurz-Biberstein. Included are birth certificates, Klara's will and obituary, identification cards, government registration papers, and Meilech's school report cards. Along with Klara's will is some inheritance correspondence. Also included is a testimony by Klara describing her family's experiences in Amsterdam from 1940-1945, including their internment in Westerbork transit camp and Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

The correspondence chiefly contains letters sent to Klara, along with small amounts of correspondence of Meilech, Doriane, and Alfred. The bulk of letters to Klara from Meilech are from 1932-1933, along with three from November 8-10, 1942, which were the last letters Klara received from him. Much of the correspondence of Doriane and Alfred relate to their immigration to the United States from Sweden on the *SS Gripsholm*.

The emigration and immigration papers contain documents related to attempts for the family to emigrate from Amsterdam to the United States, and Klara's planned immigration to Palestine in 1943. The A. Kurz & Company business records contain business correspondence and financial paper work. There is also substantial correspondence related to attempts by Charles and Benjamin Kurz to transfer Meilech's dividends from the company to Alfred and Doriane. The photographs are primarily family pictures, including Meilech and Klara's wedding day and a photo that is likely of Klara's parents in Palestine. Also included is a photograph of Alfred and Doriane on the *SS Gripsholm* on their way to the United States from Sweden. The printed material consists of food stamps, postcards, a prayer book, and some receipts.

### **System of arrangement**

The Kurz family papers are arranged as six series:

- Series 1: Biographical material, 1903-circa 2011
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1920-1955
- Series 3: Emigration and Immigration papers, 1939-1947
- Series 4: A. Kurz & Company business records, 1935-1959
- Series 5: Photographs, circa 1900s-1946
- Series 6: Printed material, 1917-1946

The papers are arranged chronologically by subject.

### **Indexing terms**

United States—emigration and immigration  
Displaced persons camps.  
Holocaust survivors—Netherlands

Jewish businesspeople.  
Westerbork (Concentration camp)  
Bergen-Belsen (Concentration camp)  
Vught (Concentration camp)  
Gripsholm (Ocean liner)

Vienna (Austria)  
Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Photographs

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1: Biographical material, 1903-circa 2011

Box	Folder	Title
1	1	Family genealogy, 1994
1	2	Kurz, Alfred, vaccination certificate and prescription, 1938-1940
1	3	Kurz, Doriane: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum identification card, circa 2011
1	4	Kurz, Doriane: Vaccination certificate, 1936
1	5	Kurz, Klara: Birth certificate and obituary, 1939-circa 1946
1	6	Kurz, Klara: Government registration papers, 1932-1941
1	7	Kurz, Klara: Identification cards, 1924-1942
1	8	Kurz, Klara: Poem, circa 1930s-circa 1940s
1	9	Kurz, Klara: Testimony, circa 1945
1	10	Kurz, Klara: Will and inheritance, 1946-1959
1	11	Kurz, Meilech: Birth and marriage certificates, 1903-1934
1	12	Kurz, Meilech: Government registration papers, 1915-1942
1	13	Kurz, Meilech: Military papers, 1919
1	14	Kurz, Meilech: School report cards, 1904-1917
1	15	Roos-Asscher family, Bar Mitzvah invitation and photograph, Amsterdam, 1950

### Series 2: Correspondence, 1920-1955

Box	Folder	Title
1	16	Kurz, Alfred and Doriane, 1937-1948
1	17-18	Kurz, Klara: Friends and family, 1920-1945
1	19	Kurz, Klara: Jewish Council for Amsterdam, 1942-1943
1	20-21	Kurz, Klara: Kurz, Meilech, 1931-1942
1	22	Kurz, Meilech, 1934-1942
1	23	Kurz and Biberstein families, 1924-1955

**Series 3: Emigration and Immigration papers, 1939-1947**

Box	Folder	Title
1	24	Alfred and Doriane Kurz on the <i>SS Gripsholm</i> clippings, 1946
1	25	Immigration to Palestine, 1942-1943
1	26	Immigration to United States, 1939-1947

**Series 4: A. Kurz & Company business records, 1935-1959**

Box	Folder	Title
1	27	Correspondence and financial documents, 1935-1952
2	1-3	Dividend claims for Alfred and Doriane Kurz, 1951-1959
2	4	Lippmann, Rosenthal and Co., 1941-1943

**Series 5: Photographs, circa 1900s-1946**

Box	Folder	Title
2	5	Biberstein family, Palestine, circa 1936
2	6	Kurz, Alfred and Doriane on the <i>SS Gripsholm</i> , 1946
2	7	Kurz family, circa 1910-circa 1920s
2	8	Kurz, Klara, circa 1930s
2	9	Kurz, Klara and Meilech, wedding portrait, 1934
2	10	Kurz, Klara and Meilech, with automobile, circa 1930s
2	11	Kurz, Meilech, circa 1900s-circa 1930s
2	12	Kurz, Meilech, with Alfred and Doriane Kurz, circa 1939

**Series 6: Printed material, 1917-1946**

Box	Folder	Title
2	13	Food stamps, 1917, 1946
2	14	Postcards, circa 1920s
2	15	Prayer card, 1936
2	16	Receipts, 1920, 1937