

**Stettner family papers, 1875-2008 [bulk 1938-1942]
2013.513.1**

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

Descriptive summary

Title: Stettner family papers

Dates: 1875-2008 [bulk 1938-1942]

Accession number: 2013.513.1

Creator: Maximilian Stettner
Kathe Stettner
Walter Stettner
Ilse Stettner

Extent: 2 boxes

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

Abstract: Consists of documents and correspondence related to the Holocaust experiences of family of Maximilian and Kathe Stettner and their children, Walter and Ilse. As the family members were under different quotas, the documents concern Walter and Ilse's successful emigration to the United States, where Walter obtained a scholarship to Harvard University; Maximilian's unsuccessful attempts to emigrate to the United States from Trieste and his eventual emigration to Shanghai; and Kathe's unsuccessful attempts to emigrate to the United States or Cuba from the Netherlands and her subsequent internment and eventual deportation. Also includes pre-war documents and documents related to property confiscation and restitution.

Languages: German, 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: No restrictions on use.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Stettner family papers (2013.513.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Jean Stettner, wife of the late Dr. Walter Stettner, donated these papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2013.

Related archival materials: Additional material related to the Stettner family and in particular to Walter Stettner's work as an economist is located at the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives at SUNY Albany, as part of their German and Jewish Intellectual Émigré Collection.

Processing history: Rebecca Erbelding, August-September 2013

Biographical note

Maximilian Stettner was born in Prague on August 14, 1874, to Friedrich and Pauline (Wolfner) Stettner. Friedrich owned a fabric manufacturing company in Prague. On October 24, 1911, he married Katharina "Kathe" Zuckermann Stettner, who was born in Vienna on November 11, 1888 to Dr. Jacob and Serafina (Steiner) Zuckermann. On June 28, 1914, Kathe gave birth to a son, Walter Fritz, in Trieste, Italy. On January 20, 1917, a daughter, Ilse Marta, was born.

During World War I, Max joined the Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiments Nr. 37 on November 1, 1914, and was medically discharged on March 1, 1918. In 1920, Stettner moved his family to Trieste, where he worked as the Secretary General of the Union of Austrian Navigation, working with the Austro-Americana and Fratelli Cosulich shipping companies. In 1930, they moved from Trieste to Vienna, where Stettner was the assistant manager of the 1st Danube Navigation Company.

In June 1937, Walter Stettner received his juris doctorate at the University of Vienna. Due to his academic bona fides and to the fact that he was under the Italian quota, Walter was able to emigrate to the United States in December 1938. He obtained a scholarship from Harvard University and worked as an assistant in the economics department.

As the family were all under different quotas—Maximilian under the Czech quota, Kathe and Ilse under the Austrian quota, and Walter under the Italian quota—they split up in order to pursue the best opportunities for immigration. After Walter left for the United States, Maximilian traveled to Trieste, where he pursued immigration attempts to England and to the United States. In early spring 1939, Kathe and Ilse attempted to travel to England, where they had received an invitation from friends. However, when the friends did not come to meet the ship in Harwich, Kathe and Ilse were not allowed to disembark, and returned to the Netherlands. Ilse was able to emigrate to the United States in September 1939, but Kathe was forced to remain in the Netherlands.

Though Kathe Stettner had booked passage from the Netherlands in October 1941, she was unable to depart, as she had not yet obtained her exit visa, nor a visitors' visa to Cuba or any American visa that would allow entry into the United States. On December 1, 1941, Walter received word that his mother's Cuban entrance visa was being sent to her, but the declaration of war a week later ended her hope of emigration. After the outbreak of war, Kathe Stettner was interned in the Vremdelingen internment camp in Drente, the Netherlands. From there she was sent to Westerbork and, in January 1944, deported to Theresienstadt. In October 1944, she was deported to Auschwitz, where she perished.

In November 1939, Maximilian was informed that as he had lost his citizenship he was going to be forced to leave Trieste, so he booked passage to Shanghai on the “Conte Rosso,” leaving on February 9, 1940. Despite attempts to secure affidavits and passage for the United States, he was unable to do so. Maximilian Stettner died of heart disease on November 22, 1944 in Shanghai.

Walter Stettner obtained a PhD in economics from Harvard University in 1944, and went on to a distinguished career as an economist. He and his wife Jean had two daughters. He passed away on May 11, 1998. Ilse Stettner earned a degree in philosophy at the University of Chicago in 1946. She married John Nicholson on July 16, 1949. They had one son, Peter. Ilse Stettner lives in Illinois.

Scope and content of collection

This collection relates to the lives and emigration attempts of the Stettner family. As the family members were all born in different countries—Maximilian and his daughter Ilse in Czechoslovakia, Kathe in Austria, and Walter in Italy—they were under different refugee quotas and had different opportunities for immigration. The collection illuminates the hardships imposed by circumstances of birth and the difficulties each family member faced. The correspondence between the family members—in the United States, Trieste, the Netherlands, and Shanghai, is a highlight of the collection for researchers. The collection also includes several letters between the Hay Internment camp in Australia (where a cousin was imprisoned) and Max Stettner in Shanghai, as well as correspondence from Helene Riegner to her brother, Gerhard Riegner, the World Jewish Congress’s representative in Geneva, regarding the case of Kathe Stettner.

System of arrangement

Walter Stettner arranged his family’s papers in the mid-1980s. The documents are in the folders and with the organization in which he placed them, though the order of the folders has been placed into series.

Series 1: Pre-war family papers, 1875-1944

Series 2: Wartime family correspondence and emigration attempts, 1938-1942

Series 3: Property and restitution documents, 1928-2008

Series 4: Correspondence with Ludwig Lasch, 1946-1954

Indexing terms

Stettner, Maximilian.

Stettner, Katharina.

Stettner, Dr. Walter.

Stettner, Ilse.

World War, 1939-1945--Jews--China--Shanghai

United States--Emigration and immigration

World War, 1939-1945--Confiscations and contributions

Austria--Emigration and immigration--History--1933-1945

Jewish refugees--United States--History--20th century

Vienna (Austria)

Trieste (Italy)

Hilversum (Netherlands)

Shanghai (China)

Correspondence.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Pre-war family papers (Box 1; 9 folders)

Box	Folder	
1	1	Max and Kathe documents including World War I, ca. 1890-1920
1	2	Related to Cosulich in Trieste, 1920-1927
1	3	Birth, wedding, and death certificates for Max Stettner, 1875-1944
1	4	Walter Stettner school certificates, 1936-1938
1	5	Documents related to Walter Stettner's emigration, 1935-1938
1	6	Walter Stettner financial receipts, 1921-1938
1	7	Financial documents, Stettner family, misc. pre-war
1	8	Correspondence drafts, ca. 1930s
1	9	Inventory of family documents, created 1985

Series 2: Wartime family correspondence and emigration attempts (Box 1; 14 folders)

Box	Folder	
1	10	Documents related to Max Stettner's attempts to emigrate, 1938-1941
1	11	Correspondence trying to get Max and Kathe to the United States, 1939-1941
1	12	Inventory of documents related to emigration, created 1985
1	13	Inventory of documents related to father, created 1985
1	14	Correspondence to Maximilian Stettner, 1936-1939
1	15	Correspondence from Maximilian in Trieste, 1939-1940
1	16	Correspondence with the State Department, 1938-1942
1	17	Correspondence to Max Stettner in Shanghai, 1940-1941
1	18	Correspondence from Kathe, Walter, Ilse, to Max, 1940-1942
1	19	Documents related to attempts to get to Cuba, 1939-1941
1	20	Correspondence from Max Stettner to his children, 1940-1941
1	21	Correspondence with US officials trying to get visa for Kathe Stettner, 1940-1941
1	22	Correspondence regarding trying to help Kathe Stettner, 1942
1	23	Correspondence from mother (Kathe), 1940-1941

Series 3: Property and restitution documents, 1928-2008 (Box 1-2; 5 folders)

Box	Folder	
1	24	Marienbad property, 1928-1936
2	25	Property in Vienna, 1938-1941
2	26	Attempts to get restitution, 1946-1951
2	27	Related to Marienbad property, 1946-1947
2	28	Restitution documentation, 2003-2008

Series 4: Ludwig Lasch correspondence (Box 2; 1 folder)

Box	Folder	
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2	29	Ludwig Lasch correspondence, 1946-1954
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