

**MEREI FAMILY PAPERS, 1890-1991**  
**2015.571.1**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
Tel. (202) 479-9717  
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**Descriptive summary**

Title: Merei family papers

Dates: 1890-1991

Accession number: 2015.571.1

Creator: Merei family (Budapest :Hungary)

Extent: 1.33 linear feet (2 boxes, 2 oversize boxes, 2 oversize folders)

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

Abstract: The collection primarily documents the wartime and post-war experiences of Ernő and Ernestine (née Munk) Merei and their son John of Budapest, Hungary as they fled the country after Germany invaded in 1944. The papers document the Merei's trip out of Hungary on a train known as the Kasztner transport; their detainment at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and their eventual release to Switzerland; and their immigration to the United States in 1946. Included are biographical material, identification papers, naturalization certificates, restitution claims, correspondence, and photographs. There is also some material related to the Munk and Breuer families.

Languages: Hungarian, 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: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

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

Acquisition information: The Merei family papers were donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by John Merei in 2015.

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

Processing history: Adam Fielding, May-June 2016

### **Biographical note**

John Merei (later John Merey, b. 1940) was born in Budapest, Hungary to Ernő (Born Ernő Marmorstein, later Ernest Merey; 1897-) and Ernestine (née Munk, b. 1904) Merei. Ernő had one brother, Ladislav Merei (1900-1979), who immigrated to the United States in 1939. Ernő was a civil engineer, and Ernestine's father, Gabor Munk, was the Hungarian distributor for the Manor chocolate company. The family lived in Budapest until Germany invaded Hungary on March 19, 1944. Ernestine's brother-in-law Nisan Kahane learned of the planned transport out of Hungary organized by Rezső Kasztner, and 14 family members were able to book passage. They left Budapest on June 30, 1944, and the train traveled for several days before stopping at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. There, the Hungarian Jews were kept apart from the other prisoners. After six weeks, 11 of John's family members were released, but John and his parents remained in the camp until December 3, 1944, when they were released on a second transport to Switzerland. They arrived in St. Gallen, and then went to Montreux. The Merei family was sponsored by Ernő's brother Ladislav for immigration to the United States, and they arrived on April 27, 1946 aboard the *S.S. Walter M. Christiansen*. They settled in New York City. John later married Daisy Breuer and became a doctor.

Daisy Breuer (later Daisy Merei) is the daughter of Lily (née Roth) and Tibor Breuer. Lily and Tibor both grew up in Hungary. Tibor went to Italy to study medicine in Padua and Genoa. They married on a trip back to Budapest, and settled in Genoa where Tibor practiced dentistry and Lily cosmetology. Increasing antisemitism began to make their lives difficult. They then received notice that they had 48 hours to leave the country. They took a boat to Spain, but were not permitted to work. A 1923 treaty following WWI allowed citizens of Austro-Hungary to enter Tangier, Morocco without a visa, so Lily and Tibor arrived there by 1943. Tibor established a new dentistry practice, and Daisy was born soon after. The family remained in Tangier until the mid-1950s when they immigrated to the United States. Daisy attended Barnard College and medical school. Lily's grandparents in Budapest were deported to Auschwitz where they perished.

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

The collection primarily documents the wartime and post-war experiences of Ernő and Ernestine (née Munk) Merei and their son John of Budapest, Hungary as they fled the country after Germany invaded in 1944. The papers document the Merei's trip out of Hungary on a train known as the Kasztner transport; their detainment at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and their eventual release to Switzerland; and their immigration to the United States in 1946. Included are biographical material, identification papers, naturalization certificates, restitution claims, correspondence, and photographs. There is also some material related to the Munk and Breuer families.

The biographical materials contain papers related to Ernő and Ernestine Merei, their son John, Ernő's brother Ladislav Merei and his wife Luba, his father Samu Marmorstein, and Ernestine's father Gabor Munk. Included are birth certificates, identification papers, naturalization certificates, restitution claims,

Ernö's autobiography, and a research paper on the Kasztner transport by John's daughter DeAnne Merey. Ernő's wartime papers include documents regarding their safe deposit box in Lausanne, Switzerland; Ernő's ineligibility for the Hungarian draft; a certificate regarding Ernő's cousin Andor Vador in El Salvador; and permission to travel.

The correspondence primarily consists of letters from Ernő and Ernestine Merei and Andor Vador in Budapest to Ladislav Merei in the United States, 1939-1941. There are also small amounts of correspondence to Ernő Merei, Ernestine Merei, and Lily and Tibor Breuer.

The photographs document the Merei, Munk, and Breuer families. There are prewar, wartime, and postwar photographs, and Included are childhood albums of Ernő Merei and Daisy Breuer along with an album of Ladislav and Luba Merei.

### **System of arrangement**

The collection is arranged alphabetically as three series:

Series 1: Biographical materials, 1890-1991

Series 2: Correspondence, 1939-1969

Series 3: Photographs, circa 1900-circa 1987

### **Indexing terms**

Person:

Merei, Ernő, 1897-

Merei, Ernestine, 1904-

Merei, Ladislav, 1900-1979

Merey, John, 1940-

Merey, Daisy

Breuer, Lily

Breuer, Tibor

Kasztner, Rezső Rudolf, 1906-1957.

Corporate:

Bergen-Belsen (Concentration camp)

Topical Subject:

World War, 1939-1945--Jews--Rescue--Hungary--Budapest.

Jewish families--Hungary--Budapest.

Holocaust survivors.

Holocaust (1939-1945)--Personal narratives.

Emigration & immigration--United States--1940-1950.

Geography:

Budapest (Hungary)

Tangier (Morocco)

Switzerland.

Genre/Form:

Photographs.  
Photograph albums.  
Correspondence.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1: Biographical materials, 1890-1991

Box	Folder	Title
1	1	Marmorstein, Samu, 1890-1914
		Merei, Ernestine:
1	2	1904-1945
1	3	Naturalization certificate, 1951
		Merei, Ernő:
1	4	1913-1976.
OS	1	<i>Oversize school documents in OS 1</i>
1	5	Autobiography, circa 1980
1	6	Immigration papers, 1946; 1951
1	7	Wartime documents, 1939-1944
1	8	Merei, John: "My Autobiography" school essay, 1956
1	9	Merei, Ladislav, 1945-1979
1	10	Merei, Luba: Naturalization certificate, 1945
1	11	Merey, DeAnne: "The American Role in the Rescue of the Kastner Transport" research paper, 1991
		Munk, Gabor:
1	12	Property floorplans, circa 1910s
1	13	Will, 1939
1	14	Munk, Irma; Identification document, 1944
1	15	Restitution claims, 1945-1967

### Series 2: Correspondence, 1939-1969

Box	Folder	Title
1	16	Breuer, Lily and Tibor, circa 1940s-1969
1	17	Merei, Ernestine: Merei, John, 1948
1	18	Merei, Ernő: 1944-1948
		Merei, Ladislav:
1	19	1940-1942
1	20	Merei, Hermann, 1940-1941
1	21	Merei, Ernő and Ernestine; Vándor, Andor, 1939
1	22-23	Merei, Ernő and Ernestine; Vándor, Andor, 1940 (2 folders)
1	24	Merei, Ernő and Ernestine; Vándor, Andor, 1941

### Series 3: Photographs, circa 1900-circa 1987

Box	Folder	Title
3	1	Breuer, Daisy photograph album, circa 1943-circa 1955
2	1	Breuer, Daisy photograph album loose photographs
2	2	Breuer family photograph album, circa 1915-circa 1987
2	3	Merei, Ernestine, 1938-circa 1940s

2	4	Merei, Ernő, circa 1930s-circa 1944
2	5	Merei family, circa 1900-1938
2	6	Merei family, 1940-1946
		Merei, John:
2	7	1941-1946
4	1	Baby book, 1940
4	2	Photograph album, 1941-1946
2	8	Merei, Ladislav and Luba photograph album, circa 1925-circa 1975
OS	2	Munk, Adolf and Rosalia Stein, 1932
2	9	Munk family, circa 1900-circa 1920