

EISENSTADT FAMILY PAPERS, CIRCA 1900-1957

2015.583.1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Eisenstadt family papers

Dates: circa 1900-1957

Accession number: 2015.583.1

Creator: Eisenstadt family (Pinsk :Belarus)

Extent: 5 folders

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

Abstract: The collection contains pre-war photographs of the Eisenstadt family of Pinsk, Belarus, and post-war photographs of Boris Eisenstadt and his wife Rachel Eisenstadt (née Bak, later Burstein) of Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania and her son Alex in the Landsberg displaced persons camp in Bavaria, Germany. The documents are identification papers of Rachel from Landsberg and Israel. There is also a letter regarding her visa application to the United States from Canada, 1957.

Languages: Hebrew, 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), Eisenstadt family papers (2015.583.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Betty Eisenstadt in 2015. An accretion was also donated in 2015.

Related archival materials: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has a copy of Rachel Eisenstadt's unpublished memoir. Eisenstadt, Rachel. *Journey Through the Holocaust*. [Canada], 1986. DS135.L53 E47 1986

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

Processing history: Adam Fielding, July 2016

Biographical note

Rachel Eisenstadt (1918-1990, née Bak, later Burstein) was born in Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania to Abraham (1899-1944) and Batya Bak. She had one brother, Hershel, and one sister, Leah (1916-1944). Her father owned flour mills and cattle in Kovno, and her brother Herschel worked with him. Before the war, she was married to factory owner Pinchas Burstein (1906-1945, born in Vilkomir, Lithuania). They had one son, Eliyahu (Alex) Burstein born on July 7, 1939.

In June 1940 the Soviet Union annexed Lithuania. Both Rachel and Pinchas's factory and home were nationalized, and Rachel's aunt and uncle were deported to Siberia. The Germans invaded Lithuania in 1941, and by August 1941 all the Jews in Kovno were sent to the ghetto. Pinchas worked in a workshop and Rachel collected firewood. They kept Alex hidden, successfully preventing him from being sent to the Ninth Fort on March 27, 1944 with the other Kovno children who would all perish. Rachel then asked her work supervisor, a woman named Lucy, to hide Alex, and she agreed. Rachel's brother, Herschel, escaped from the ghetto around this time as well. In July 1944 the Germans began the final liquidation of the Kovno ghetto in advance of liberating Soviet troops. They deported the residents to Dachau and burned down the ghetto killing those who remained, including Rachel's parents and sister, Leah. Her sister-in-law Chana (Herschel's wife) jumped into a ditch from the train to Dachau, and later rejoined her husband. From Dachau, all the women were sent on to the Stutthof concentration camp. Pinchas contracted tuberculosis as a result of exposure to dust in an ammunition factory, and passed away in March, 1945. Rachel was liberated there in May, 1945.

After liberation, Rachel returned to Kovno to look for Alex. She found him together with her brother Herschel and his wife Chana, who had recovered him assuming that Rachel had perished. Lucy couldn't keep Alex safe during the German's final liquidation action, so Herschel grabbed his nephew and kept him in the woods with him. Alex and Rachel moved to Vilkomir, and then Poland under forged papers. They then went to Germany, first staying at the Schlachtensee displaced persons camp in Berlin, and then moving to the Landsberg displaced persons camp in Bavaria. There Rachel met and later married Boris Eisenstadt. In 1948, Boris, a committed Zionist, moved to Israel to fight in Israel's War of Independence. After the war ended, Rachel and Alex joined him in Israel and settled in Bnei Brak. In 1951 Rachel gave birth to a daughter Betty. About a year later, they moved to Winnipeg, Canada to join Boris's cousins.

Boris Eisenstadt (Berko, Dov, born Ajzensztat; 1916-1985) was born in Pinsk, Belarus to Shmuel (1899-1944) and Bella (née Mandelman; ca. 1900-1944) Ajzensztat. He had two sisters, Tzippe (ca. 1917-1944) and Haya (ca. 1918-1944). During the war, Boris served in the Red Army. After the war, he went to Landsberg where he met Rachel. The rest of his family perished in the war.

Scope and content of collection

The collection contains pre-war photographs of the Eisenstadt family of Pinsk, Belarus, and post-war photographs of Boris Eisenstadt and his wife Rachel Eisenstadt (née Bak, later Burstein) of Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania and her son Alex in the Landsberg displaced persons camp in Bavaria, Germany. The documents are identification papers of Rachel from Landsberg and Israel. There is also a letter regarding her visa application to the United States from Canada, 1957.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged alphabetically as five folders.

Indexing terms

Person:

Eisenstadt, Rachel, 1918-1990

Eisenstadt, Boris, 1916-1985

Burstein, Alex, 1940-

Eisenstadt, Betty, 1951-

Corporate:

Schlachtensee (Displaced persons camp)

Dachau (Concentration camp)

Topical Subject:

Refugees, Jewish--Germany--Landsberg am Lech.

Emigration and immigration--Israel--1940-1950.

Canada--Emigration and immigration.

Jewish families--Lithuania--Kaunas.

Jewish families--Belarus.

Displaced persons camps.

Geography:

Landsberg am Lech (Germany : Refugee camp)

Pinsk (Belarus)

Genre/Form:

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Folder	Title
1	Documents, 1949-1957
	Photographs:
2	Eisenstadt, Boris, circa 1919-1951
3	Eisenstadt family, circa 1900-1933
4	Eisenstadt family: Landsberg displaced persons camp, circa 1949
5	Eisenstadt, Rachel, circa 1930s-circa 1940s