

VAMOS FAMILY PAPERS, 1907-1913
2017.335.1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
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Descriptive summary

Title: Vamos family papers

Dates: 1907-2013

Accession number: 2017.335.1

Creator: Vamos (Family : Wrocław, Poland)

Extent: .83 linear feet (2 boxes)

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

Abstract: The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Arthur and Ruth Vamos, originally of Breslau, Germany (now Wrocław, Poland), as they emigrated from Germany to Glasgow, Scotland in 1939 and to the United States in 1946. The collection includes biographical material such as identification papers, marriage certificates, and Arthur's British Army papers; immigration documents; correspondence; restitution paperwork; photographs; and two publications.

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

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Vamos family papers (2017.335.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Maureen Vamos Lighthall in 2017.

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, August 2017, updated September 2022

Biographical note

Arthur Vamos (born Artur Vámos, 1911-2006) was born on 19 February 1911 in Breslau, Germany (now Wrocław, Poland) to Ludwig and Emma (née Fuchs, b. 1887) Vamos. He had one brother, Erwin (b. 1917), and one sister, Edith (b. 1918). His family owned a spice business called Vámos Lajos and Co. where Arthur worked as a salesman.

He was in Dresden during Kristallnacht in 1938, and returned home immediately to learn that family and friends had been arrested. Arthur was staying with his non-Jewish girlfriend, Gisele, when he received a letter from the Gestapo ordering him to turn himself in. He did so and was released on the condition that he would leave the country. Arthur began to search for ways to emigrate. His relationship with Gisele had ended, and he began dating Ruth Haack. He was able to secure a transit-visa to Shanghai, but was not able to afford passage despite financial assistance from Ruth's family. Through a friend's connections, he contacted Moray Glasser in Glasgow, Scotland, a man who was a victim of anti-Semitism in Russia and was helping Jews in Europe escape to the United Kingdom. Through him, Arthur secured a manufacturing job in Glasgow. He traveled to Glasgow in April 1939 and Ruth, now his fiancé, followed a few weeks later.

In Glasgow, Arthur and Ruth married, and their daughter Maureen (now Maureen Vamos Lighthall) was born in 1941. Arthur's manufacturing job did not work out, but he found work for a tailor. After England declared war on Germany, Arthur was arrested as an enemy alien and sent to an internment camp. He was granted release upon the condition of joining the British Army. Ruth and Maureen followed Arthur to his different posts, but by 1944 had settled in Calne while he was overseas. Arthur was discharged from the Army in 1946, and the family immigrated to the United States on 1 November 1946. They settled in Chicago.

Arthur's family all perished during the Holocaust. His mother, Emma, was deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1942 and later sent to the Treblinka concentration camp where she perished.

Ruth Vamos (born Ruth Haack, 1913-2003) was born on 8 February 1913 in Liegnitz, Germany (now Legnica, Poland) to Maximilian Erherd August Haack (1867-1979) and Else Haack (née Wieland, d. 1959). Max was Catholic and Else was Jewish. They married in 1911. Ruth had one sister, Annelise (Ann Fox). Ruth went to art school, and worked as a window dresser for a department store in Breslau. She met Arthur through mutual friends.

In 1944, Max, who worked in various government agencies, was told that he would have to divorce Else. He refused and in October 1944 he was deported to Blankenburg and Hedersleben (likely Harzungen) subcamps of Mittelbau-Dora. He broke his back while in Blankenburg, which caused injuries for the rest of his life. After Max was deported, Else went into hiding and survived the war, but nearly went blind. Max was liberated on 11 April 1945 by the United States Army, and he and Else were reunited on 15

May 1945. They moved to a displaced persons camp in 1946, and immigrated to the United States in 1947.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the Holocaust-era experiences of Arthur and Ruth Vamos, originally of Breslau, Germany (now Wrocław, Poland), as they emigrated from Germany to Glasgow, Scotland in 1939 and to the United States in 1946. The collection includes biographical material such as identification papers, marriage certificates, and Arthur's British Army papers; immigration documents; correspondence; restitution paperwork; photographs; and two publications.

Correspondence includes letters written to Arthur and Ruth from his parents still in Breslau, a letter from Arthur to Ruth while he was serving in the army, letters from relatives and friends sent to Arthur and Ruth, and a telegram from Ruth to Arthur announcing the birth of their daughter Maureen in 1941.

Photographs include pre-war depictions of the Vamos and Haack families, wartime images of Arthur, Ruth, and Maureen in the United Kingdom, and Arthur in military uniform.

The publications consist of a driving map of the British Isles and a Jewish prayer book issued to members of the British Army.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as six series:

Series 1: Biographical, 1907-1979

Series 2: Immigration, 1939-1946

Series 3: Correspondence, 1939-1941 and undated

Series 4: Restitution, 1951-2013

Series 5: Photographs, circa 1920s-1948 and undated

Series 6: Publications, 1940

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

Indexing terms

Person:

Vamos, Arthur, 1911-2006.

Vamos, Ruth, 1913-2003.

Vamos, Maureen, 1941-

Corporate:

Great Britain. Army.

Topical Subject:

Jewish businesspeople--Germany.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)—Reparations

Geography:

Wrocław (Poland)

Glasgow (Scotland)

Great Britain--Emigration and immigration.

United States--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:
Photographs.
Prayer books.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Biographical, 1907-1979

Box	Folder	Title
1	1	Family papers, 1907-1979
1	2	Marriage certificates, 1939-1940
		Vamos, Arthur:
	3	Army, 1940-1946
	4	Identification papers, Germany, 1911-1939
	5	Identification papers, United Kingdom, 1939-1946
	6	Vámos Lajos and Co., circa 1930s
	7	Vamos, Maureen: Baptism certificate, 1942
		Vamos, Ruth:
	8	Identification papers, Germany, 1914-1946
	9	Identification papers, United Kingdom, 1939-1946

Series 2: Immigration, 1939-1946

Box	Folder	Title
	10	United Kingdom, 1939
	11	United States, 1945-1946

Series 3: Correspondence, 1939-1941 and undated

Box	Folder	Title
	12	Letter from Arthur to Ruth, undated
	13	Letters from Arthur's parents, 1939-1940 and undated
	14	Letters to Arthur and Ruth, 1939-1940
	15	Telegram from Ruth to Arthur, 1941

Series 4: Restitution, 1951-2013

Box	Folder	Title
	16	Folder, 1958-1987
	17	Folder, 1963-1974
	18	International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, 2003-2013
	19	Miscellaneous restitution documents
	20	1951-1957
	21	1958-1961
2	1	1962-1963
2	2	1964-1986

Series 5: Photographs, circa 1920s-1948 and undated

Box	Folder	Title
	3	Family and friends, circa 1920s-circa 1940s
	4	Vamos, Arthur, 1934-1945 and undated
	5	Vamos family, 1946-1948 and undated
	6	Vamos, Maureen, 1942-1945 and undated
	7	Vamos, Ruth, 1937-1940 and undated

Series 6: Publications, 1940

Box	Folder	Title
	8	<i>Dunlop Touring Maps of the British Isles, circa 1940</i>
	9	<i>Prayer Book for Jewish Members of H.M. Forces, 1940</i>