

KARPFEN FAMILY PAPERS, 1919-1941
2017.530.1

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

Title: Karpfen family papers

Dates: 1919-1941

Accession number: 2017.530.1

Creator: Karpfen (Family : Janczyn, Poland)

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (1 box)

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

Abstract: The Karpfen family papers primarily consist of letters from the Karpfen family in Janczyn, Poland (now Ivanovka, Ukraine, near Peremyshlyany) to Jack and Ruth Karp in New York between 1927 and 1941. The letters emphasize the difficulties they experience in their small town; thank Jack for money orders, packages of clothing, and newspapers he sent; and request more money and newspapers. In his final letter, Jack's father writes that his mother goes to sleep holding their granddaughter's baby picture. The correspondence files also include letters from Ruth's family, the Katzensteins. The collection also includes photographs (six original and two copy prints) depicting the Karpfen family in Janczyn, Poland, and receipts for money transfers Jack sent to his family in Poland.

Languages: Polish, Yiddish, German, Russian, Ukrainian

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), Karpfen family papers (2017.530.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Sandra Dugoff donated the Karpfen family papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2017. Sandra Dugoff is the daughter of Jack and Ruth Karp.

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

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, October 2019

Biographical note

Jack (Yankel) Karp (1906 or 1908-1999) was born in the village of Janzin, Austria (later Janczyn, Poland, now Ivanovka, Ukraine, near Peremyshlyany) to farmers Samuel Leib Karpfen and Rifke (Rebecca) Karpfen (née Stolzenberg). He had three sisters (Sarah, Esther, and Liza) and one younger brother (Markus). Jack decided to emigrate after two Cossack soldiers on horseback stole his new boots at rifle point while he was cutting down trees and loading logs onto his sleigh. A distant cousin named Phil who lived in Altoona, PA, sent Jack money around 1919 to help him migrate to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Jack spent three weeks aboard a ship in steerage, helped the kitchen staff, and was repaid with more food than he had ever had in the shtetl. In Buenos Aires, Jack worked in a factory painting brass beds during the day and went to school at night to learn Spanish. He immigrated to the United States in 1923 and became known as Jack Karp. He worked hard in New York City and sent money home to provide dowries for his three sisters. In 1931, Jack married Ruth Katzenstein (1906 or 1908-1985), who had immigrated from Wolfhagen, Germany in 1929. The couple's daughter Sandra was born in 1939. All contact with the Karpfen family ended in 1941 when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. The entire Karpfen family, apart from Jack, was killed in the Holocaust.

Scope and content of collection

The Karpfen family papers primarily consist of letters from the Karpfen family in Janczyn, Poland (now Ivanovka, Ukraine, near Peremyshlyany) to Jack and Ruth Karp in New York between 1927 and 1941. The letters emphasize the difficulties they experience in their small town; thank Jack for money orders, packages of clothing, and newspapers he sent; and request more money and newspapers. In his final letter, Jack's father writes that his mother goes to sleep holding their granddaughter's baby picture. The correspondence files also include letters from Ruth's family, the Katzensteins. The collection also includes photographs (six original and two copy prints) depicting the Karpfen family in Janczyn, Poland, and receipts for money transfers Jack sent to his family in Poland.

System of arrangement

The Karpfen family papers are arranged as three series:

Series 1: Correspondence, 1927-1941

Series 2: Photographs, 1919-1939

Series 3: Receipts, 1931-1939

Indexing terms

Personal names

Karp, Jack.

Topical terms

Jews--Poland.

Jewish families--Poland.

Geographic terms

Peremyshliany (Ukraine)

Genre terms

Correspondence.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Correspondence, 1927-1941

Folder	Description
1.1	Correspondence, 1927-1929
1.2	Correspondence, 1930
1.3	Correspondence, 1931
1.4-1.5	Correspondence, 1932 (2 folders)
1.6	Correspondence, 1933
1.7	Correspondence, 1934
1.8	Correspondence, 1935
1.9	Correspondence, 1936
1.10	Correspondence, 1937
1.11	Correspondence, 1938
1.12	Correspondence, 1939
1.13	Correspondence, 1940-1941

Series 2: Photographs, 1919-1939

Folder	Description
1.14	Karpfen family, 1919-1939

Series 3: Receipts, 1931-1939

Folder	Description
1.15	Receipts for money orders, 1931-1939