

KESSLER FAMILY PAPERS, circa 1869-2015
2017.586.1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington, DC 20024-2126
Tel. (202) 479-9717
e-mail: reference@ushmm.org

Descriptive summary

Title: Kessler family papers

Dates: circa 1869-2015 (bulk 1914-1998)

Accession number: 2017.586.1

Creator: Kessler (Family : Vienna, Austria)

Extent: 2.25 linear feet (5 boxes, 5 oversize boxes, 2 book enclosures, 7 oversize folders)

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

Abstract: The collection documents the pre-war, wartime, and post-war lives of Alice and Jakob (later Jacques) Kessler and their son Hans (later John) of Austria, including the management of the Hotel-Pension Rauhenstein-Helenschlössl in Baden, their emigration from Austria in 1938 to England and their immigration to the United States in 1940. The collection also includes materials regarding Alice's parents Else and Max Neuhut, Alice's second husband Berthold Feld, and Hans's future wife Eva Bondy. The collection consists of biographical material, immigration papers, correspondence, restitution paperwork, writings and publications, and photographs.

Languages: German, English, Spanish, Hebrew

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), Kessler family papers (2017.586.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by John Otto Kessler in 2017.

Separated material: John Otto Kessler also donated the following objects:

Red Cross medal (2017.586.3)
Austro-Hungarian wound medal (2017.586.4)
Karl Troop Cross medal (2017.586.5)
Ram's Head Pin (2017.586.6)
Austro-Hungarian medal for bravery (2017.586.7)
Bronze medal for swimming (2017.586.8)
Sport-club swimming medal (2017.586.9)
Handball championship medal (2017.586.10)
Austro-Hungarian Field Regiment badge (2017.586.11)
"W" pin (2017.586.12)
Bravery clip (2017.586.13)
1921 Swimming medal (2017.586.14)
Austro-Hungarian Central Evidence Bureau badge (2017.586.15)
Star Shaped Applique (2017.586.16)
Fabric bar pin (2017.586.17)
Fabric bar pin (2017.586.18)
Suitcase (2017.586.19 a-b)
Medal (2017.586.20)
Medal (2017.586.21)
Medal ribbon (2017.586.22)
Medal ribbon (2017.586.23)
Metal paper holder (2017.586.24)
Wood Cigarette Holder (2017.586.25 a-b)
Typewriter and case (2017.586.26)
Wooden spoon (2017.586.27)
Wooden spoon (2017.586.28)
Wooden spoon (2017.586.29)
Wooden stirrer (2017.586.30)
KitchenAid Model G stand mixer with attachments (2017.586.31 a-z)
Power converter (2017.586.32)
Fuses (2017.586.33 a-k)
Ceramic insulators (2017.586.34 a-f)
Leaf-shaped metal pieces (2017.586.35 a-e)
Briefcase (2017.586.36)

Related archival materials: The museum also has several short films made by Alice Kessler.

Lizzy Kessler Amateur Film Collection:

A short film about the Kessler family dogs (2017.586.2, RG-60.1090, Film ID: 4368)

Cactus breeding; gymnast; skiing in Grinzing; boy plays with a telephone (2017.586.2, RG-60.1089, Film ID: 4367)

Two short amateur films featuring Hansi and the Kessler family pets; Hansi visits Schonbrunn zoo (2017.586.2, RG-60.1091, Film ID: 4369)

Hansi turns three; dream sequence with special effects (2017.586.2, RG-60.1088, Film ID: 4366)

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, September-October 2019; updated October 2020

Biographical note

Jakob Kessler (later Jacques Kessler, nicknamed Suzi (by his wife Lizzy only), 1890-1945) was born on 8 May 1890 in Dunajów, Galicia (Dunayev, Ukraine) to David Hersch Kessler and Scheindel Kessler (née Bernzweig). He had five sisters and two brothers: Anna (Boltuch), Elsa (Winter), Fanny (Kleinberg), Sabine (Bien), Perl/Peppy (Kavaler), Leon, and Willy. Jakob served with the Austro-Hungarian Army during World War I and was shot in a prone position. The bullet entered his shoulder and exited through his leg. He refused amputation of his partially frozen leg and eventually recovered his ability to walk. After his recovery, Jakob became an enthusiastic hiker and mountain climber in the Alps.

Alice Blanca Kessler (née Neuhut, later Alice Feld, nicknamed Lizzy, 1903-1981) was born on 26 December 1903 in Vienna, Austria to Maximilian Neuhut (Max, b. 1872) and Else (née Döry, 1876-1943) Neuhut. Her grandparents, Emil Deutsch (later Emil Döry, d. 1896) and Ilke (Ilona or Eleonore, d. 1922) Blass, converted from Judaism to Catholicism in 1888. Else studied Buddhism and was a published author. Her family was also active in sports. Max was "Underwater swimming champion" of Europe and a top water polo player. Max and Alice were also long distance swimmers.

Jakob and Alice married in 1926, and she converted back to Judaism in an Orthodox ceremony. Their son Hans Otto Kessler (later John, nicknamed Hansi) was born on 26 November 1928 in Vienna. The Kesslers were then Jewish, but not actively religious. In 1934 Hans, his mother Alice, and his grandmother Else were baptized in the Lutheran church (*Evangelische Kirche*).

Alice was a professional leather worker, artist, and designer. She also studied cooking at the Grand Hotel in Vienna and reached professional status as a gourmet cook. Alice and her mother traveled to England to a leatherware fair where she sold her leather output, with original designs. Concurrently, she learned conversational English. She enjoyed and read only English novels (mostly detective novels) throughout her life.

In 1933 the Kesslers moved to Baden, approximately thirty-five miles from Vienna. Max retired from his position as the sales director for a light bulb company (which later became Tungsram and eventually Sylvania) and purchased the Hotel-Pension Rauhenstein-Helenenschlössl hotel (also known as Haus Lizzy). Alice worked as a chef at the hotel, and Jakob managed the finances.

In November 1938 Jakob was arrested and detained in Vienna, and preparations were being made to deport him to a concentration camp. He was not harmed, he believed, because he only spoke in a style emphasizing his military background. While in detention, he witnessed sadistic horrors perpetrated by the Austrian Nazi jailers. Meanwhile Alice went to a library, using her facility with the English language to read the London Times. She found an advertisement for a job for a "married couple", cook and butler. She long-distance telephoned the people who placed the ad and got the job. She then went to the British consulate and managed to obtain visas for herself, Jakob, and Hans. She used the exit visa to get Jakob out of jail, and within days they escaped by train from Austria to England via Germany and Belgium.

In England, Alice worked as a chef and Jakob worked as a butler in Fernhurst, Sussex. Hans attended Midhurst Grammar School, a boarding school nearby. The family immigrated to the United States in 1940. They briefly lived in New York, but decided to settle in Jacksonville, Florida. Hans attended boarding school in Connecticut for one year. Boarding school in Connecticut was paid for by his mother's Uncle Gaston Neuhut, who had emigrated to the U.S. from Austria before the 1930s. Hans joined his parents after they were able to establish themselves financially in Florida. Alice and Jakob opened a bakery by 1943. The bakery failed shortly thereafter and Alice started a catering business, mostly for Jewish family parties. Jakob, now going by Jacques, worked as a bookkeeper for \$20/week for a Jewish business.

Alice's parents Else and Max lost control of their hotel in Baden and immigrated to Cuba in 1941. They came to the United States in 1943 and settled in Jacksonville with the Kesslers. Max later moved to New York after Else died in 1943. He committed suicide around 1945 or 1946.

Else had twin brothers Hans (Paul) and Ivan Döry. Hans had been a banker for the Austrian Central bank, was president of the Vienna Tierschutzverein, the Austrian animal humane society. He and his wife fled Austria to France after the German annexation in March 1938, but were later deported back to Austria by the Vichy government. Hans was then deported to Auschwitz where he perished. Ivan survived the Holocaust in Ecuador. Before the war, he was an electrical engineer who worked on the electrification of the Austrian railway system. After his move to Ecuador, one of Ivan's projects was an attempt to disprove Einstein's theory of relativity.

After graduating Robert E. Lee high school in Jacksonville, FL, Hans, now John Kessler, attended Columbia University on a full scholarship. Jakob died in 1945, and the same year Alice moved to New York to be with her son. She married Berthold Feld (b. 1898) in 1948 and became a commercial artist. Hans graduated from Columbia University College in 1949 and received a PhD in Physics from Columbia in 1953. He married Eva Bondy in 1950. He worked as a physicist at RCA Laboratories (Princeton) and at the Princeton University high temperature plasma laboratory. In 1966 he became Professor of Physics at the University of Arizona.

Eva Magdalena Bondy (later Eva Kessler, 1926-2014) was born in Vienna to Alfred (1897-1972) and Emilie (née Rothziegel, b. 1897) Bondy. She had one brother, Michael. Her family moved to Zagreb (Croatia) when she was a child. Alfred was a manager at a Zagreb textile factory. Her family immigrated to the United States via Italy aboard the SS *Manhattan* in 1940. Alfred became the importer to the USA of BMW motorcycles through his company, Butler and Smith, based in New York City.

Scope and content of collection

The collection documents the pre-war, wartime, and post-war lives of Alice and Jakob Kessler and their son Hans (later John) of Austria, including the management of the Hotel-Pension Rauhenstein-Helenschlössl in Baden, their emigration from Austria in 1938 to England and their immigration to the United States in 1940. The collection also includes materials regarding Alice's parents Else and Max Neuhut, Alice's second husband Berthold Feld, and Hans's future wife Eva Bondy. The collection consists of biographical material, immigration papers, correspondence, restitution paperwork, writings and publications, and photographs.

Biographical material consists of personal documents related to the Alice and Jakob Kessler, their son Hans, Alice's parents Else and Max Neuhut, Else's brother Ivan Döry, Alice's second husband Berthold Feld, and Hans's future wife Eva Bondy. Included are birth, marriage, and death certificates;

identification documents; financial papers; report cards; passports; employment papers; genealogy notes; and records related to Jakob's service with the Austro-Hungarian Army during World War I. There are also documents regarding Hans's baptism into the German Lutheran church (*Evangelische Kirche*) in 1934.

Immigration papers primarily consist of documents related to the Kessler's emigration from Austria to England in 1938 and their immigration to the United States in 1940 and Else and Max Neuhut's immigration to Havana, Cuba and the United States. The papers related to the Kessler's immigration to England include Austrian emigration paperwork, correspondence regarding employment, ration cards, and medical cards. Papers related to the Kessler's immigration to the United States include Affidavits of Support, immigrant identification cards, naturalization correspondence and naturalization certificates. Else and Max Neuhut's immigration papers include identification documents, Affidavit in Lieu of Passports, and naturalization paperwork. Also included are Berthold Feld's re-entry permit for the Dominican Republic and the Bondy family's souvenir log for the SS *Manhattan*.

Correspondence chiefly consists of wartime letters received by the Kesslers from relatives and family including Else's brother Ivan Döry and his son Hans Döry, Gaston Neuhut, and Max Neuhut. There are also post-war letters to Alice from her second husband Berthold Feld and various relatives regarding restitution and other matters.

The Hotel-Pension Rauhenstein-Helenschlössl materials include ledgers, a small amount of financial paperwork, a letter of recommendation for Alice Kessler, postcards, and a blueprint of the hotel layout.

Restitution records consist of large amounts of documents and correspondence regarding reparations for Alice and Hans; Alice's uncle Paul Döry, who was murdered at Auschwitz; Berthold Feld; and the Kessler's Austrian business the Hotel-Pension Rauhenstein-Helenschlössl. Much of the restitution paperwork for Paul Döry and Berthold Feld was handled by Alice.

Writings, publications, and ephemera include personal narratives, articles, poems, and recipe books. Eva Bondy's "The Story of My Life" is an illustrated personal narrative written as a teenager after she immigrated to the United States. Else Neuhut's "Der Kanari Simba" is a typed manuscript of a children's story she wrote. The October 1942 issue of *El Informativo Mitteilungen* features an article in German by Else entitled "Mein schwarzer Spitzenhut" chronicling her and Max's flight from Vienna to Cuba. *The United Yugoslav Relief Fund of America News Bulletin* features a photograph of Eva Bondy in Yugoslav attire for a Yugoslav bazaar in 1946. Additionally, there are 10 handwritten recipe books in German.

Photographs consist of prints and albums primarily depicting the pre-war lives of the Kessler, Neuhut, and Bondy families. The Kessler family subjects include candid family scenes, portraits, Hans's childhood, Jakob in uniform in the Austrian Army during World War I, various relatives, and the family's hotel in Baden. The Neuhut photographs are primarily of Else and Max, along with other relatives. The Bondy family photographs include depictions of family vacations to resorts in Austria, Croatia, and the World's Fair in New York; Eva's childhood; portraits; and candid family scenes. There is also one photograph of Alice's second husband Berthold Feld.

System of arrangement

This collection is arranged as seven series.

Series 1. Biographical material, 1872-2015

- Series 2. Immigration, 1938-1953
- Series 3. Correspondence, 1914-1965
- Series 4. Hotel-Pension Rauhenstein-Helenschlössl, 1933-1969
- Series 5. Restitution, 1939-1998
- Series 6. Writings, publications, and ephemera, 1939-1943 and undated
- Series 7. Photographs, circa 1869-1950 and undated

Indexing terms

Person:

- Kessler, John Otto.
- Kessler, Alice, 1903-1981.
- Kessler, Jakob, 1890-1945.
- Neuhut, Else, 1876-1943.
- Neuhut, Max.
- Bondy, Eva, 1926-2014.
- Döry, Ivan.
- Döry, Hans.

Topical Subject:

- Jews--Austria--Vienna.
- Jews--Croatia--Zagreb.
- Jewish businesspeople--Austria.
- Jewish refugees--Cuba--Havana.
- Holocaust survivors--United States.
- Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Reparations.
- World War, 1914-1918--Veterans.

Geography:

- Vienna (Austria)
- Baden (Austria)
- Cuba--Emigration and immigration.
- United States--Emigration and immigration.
- England--Emigration and immigration.

Genre/Form:

- Photographs.
- Photograph albums.
- Personal narratives.
- Letters.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1. Biographical material, 1872-2015

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Bondy family, 1922-2015
1.2, OS 1	Döry, Ivan, 1946 and undated
1.3	Feld, Berthold, 1938-1967

1.4	Financial papers, 1936-1957
1.5	Genealogy: Kessler family
1.6	Genealogy: Neuhut family
1.7	Kessler, Alice, 1923-1981
1.8	Kessler, Alice and Jakob: marriage, 1926-1961
1.9	Kessler, Hans: report cards, 1935-1940
1.10	Kessler, Hans, 1934-1945
1.11, OS 2	Kessler, Jakob: Austro-Hungarian Army, 1910-1933
1.12, OS 3	Kessler, Jakob, 1894-1947
1.13	Kessler, Scheindel: Austrian passport, 1930
1.14	Kessler's Bakery, 1941
1.15	Neuhut, Else, 1934-1947
1.6, OS 4	Neuhut, Max, 1872-1947

Series 2. Immigration, 1938-1953

Box/Folder	Title
1.17	Bondy family, 1940
1.18	Feld, Berthold, 1945-1953
1.19	Kessler family: England, 1938-1940
1.20	Kessler family: United States, 1938-1946
1.21	Neuhut, Else and Max, 1941-1949

Series 3. Correspondence, 1914-1965

Box/Folder	Title
1.22	Bondy, Eva, 1940
1.23	Kessler, Alice: Döry, Hans, 1947-1957
1.24	Kessler, Alice: Döry, Ivan, 1942, 1945
1.25	Kessler, Alice: Feld, Berthold, 1948-1956
1.26	Kessler, Alice, 1941-1965
1.27	Kessler, Alice and Hans: Neuhut, Gaston, 1939-1945
1.28	Kessler, Jakob, 1914-1942
1.29	Kessler family, 1938-1940 and undated
1.30	Neuhut, Max, 1938-1947

Series 4. Hotel-Pension Rauhenstein-Helenschlössl, 1933-1969

Box/Folder	Title
2.1	Documents, 1938-1943 and undated
OS 5	Floorplan blueprint, 1958
2.2	Ledger, 1933-1938, 1969
2.3	Ledger, 1937-1938

Series 5. Restitution, 1939-1998

Box/Folder	Title
OS 6	Clippings, 1964-1981
2.4-2.5	Döry, Paul (received by Alice Kessler), 1939-1967 (2 folders)
2.6	Feld, Berthold, 1956-1967

2.7-2.8	Hotel-Pension Rauhenstein-Helenschlössl, 1949-1974 (2 folders)
3.1-3.2	Kessler, Alice, 1946-1982 (2 folders)
3.3	Kessler, Hans, 1996-1998

Series 6. Writings, publications, and ephemera, 1939-1943 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
3.4	Bondy, Eva: "The Story of My Life", 1941
OS 7	<i>El Informativo Mitteilungen</i> , 1942
3.5	Kessler, Alice: poem, undated
3.6	<i>The Midhurstian</i> , 1939
3.7	Neuhut-Döry, Else: <i>Der Kanari Simba</i> , undated
3.8	Receipts and ephemera, 1944-1947
3.9-3.12, 4.1-4.6	Recipe books, circa 1930s (10 folders)
4.7	<i>United Yugoslav Relief Fund of American News Bulletin</i> , 1943

Series 7. Photographs, circa 1869-1950 and undated

Box/Folder	Title
4.8	Bondy, Eva, 1926-1936 and undated
4.9	Bondy family, 1928-1941 and undated
BE 1	Bondy family: photograph album, "Saalbach. Fieberbrunn," 1931
BE 2	Bondy family: photograph album, 1933
6	Bondy family: photograph album, vacation, circa 1935
7	Bondy family: photograph album, travel, 1937
8	Bondy family: photograph album, Summer, 1938
4.10, 9	Bondy family: photograph album, World's Fair, New York, 1939
4.11	Bondy family: loose photograph album pages, Dalmatian Coast, circa 1930
4.12	Bondy family: loose photograph album pages, 1930 and undated
4.13	Family and friends, circa 1869-1945
5.1	Feld, Berthold, circa 1940s
5.2	Kessler, Alice, circa 1920-circa 1940
5.3	Kessler, Hans, 1928-1950
5.4	Kessler, Jakob, circa 1914-circa 1943
5.5	Kessler family, 1925-circa 1938
5.6, 10	Kessler family: photograph album, brown album, circa 1915-circa 1938
5.7	Kessler family: photograph album, small brown album, 1929-1940 and undated
5.8	Neuhut, Else, circa 1940 and undated
5.9	Neuhut, Max, circa 1900-circa 1950
5.10	Neuhut family, 1897-1942 and undated