

**Archives and Special Collections
Shadek-Fackenthal Library
Franklin and Marshall College**

**Charles H. Kessler Family Papers
MS 53**

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Historical/ Biographical Information
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Contact information:

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Summary Information

Creators

Kessler, Charles H., 1921-2005
Kessler Family
Kessler, David
Kessler, Robert, d. 1945
Kessler, Anna

Title

Charles H. Kessler Family Papers

Dates

1935-1948, 1943-1945 (bulk)

Extent

.5 LF (1.5 ms boxes)

Arrangement

The collection is organized into six groups: the first four groups consists of correspondence and documents relating to a specific family member (David, Charles, Robert, and Anna) and the remaining two include newspapers and miscellaneous letters and items. Members of the family include: parents, David and Anna; sons Robert and Charles; daughters Rita and Rhoda; and the children's aunts and uncles Gene, Irwin, Rose, Sam and Helen.

Language of Materials

All materials in English.

Abstract

This collection consists of correspondence between members of the Jewish-American Kessler family of Pottstown, Pennsylvania dating from the World War II period (1940-1948). Also included in the collection are newspapers and other items relating the war and the Kessler Family. The bulk of the collection includes the letters to home written by father

David, and sons Charles and Robert Kessler while the three served in the armed forces of the United States. Particularly poignant are the materials relating to Robert who died in German captivity in April 1945.

Subjects

Kessler, Charles H., 1921-2005 --Correspondence
Kessler Family--Pennsylvania--Pottstown--Correspondence
Kessler, David--Correspondence
Kessler, Robert, d. 1945--Correspondence
Kessler, Anna--Correspondence
World War, 1939-1945--Correspondence.
Jews--United States--Correspondence.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Charles H. Kessler, Lancaster, PA, Gift, 2001.

Custodial History (Provenance)

Charles H. Kessler, a 1970 graduate of the Associate Degree Program at Franklin and Marshall College, donated this collection to the College in 2001. The materials were personally collected and maintained by Charles Kessler.

Access Restrictions

Access unrestricted.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

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Preferred Citation

Charles H. Kessler Family Papers (MS 53), Archives and Special Collections, Franklin and Marshall College.

Processing Information

Processed by Leslie Margolis, October 2001. Description based on DACS.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Additional Information

No additional information.

Historical/Biographical Information

After service in World War II as a Sergeant in the 636th Tank Destroyer Division, Charles Kessler began a career as a reporter and author, first for the *Reading Eagle-Times*, and later, the *Lancaster New Era* where he retired in 1984. Kessler also authored several pamphlets and books on local history including *Lancaster in the Revolution* in 1975 and *President Buchanan: Trapped in a Whirlwind*, 2003.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of correspondence between members of the Jewish-American Kessler family of Pottstown, Pennsylvania dating from the World War II period (1940-1946). Also included in the collection are newspapers and other items relating the war and the Kessler Family. The bulk of the collection includes the letters to home written by father David, and sons Charles and Robert Kessler while the three served in the armed forces of the United States. Particularly poignant are the materials relating to Robert who died in German captivity in April 1945.

Inventory/Contents

Box 1

I. David Kessler

- A. Correspondence from family (1943, V-Mail)
 - 1.) Anna, Charles, Robert, Rita, Rhoda
- B. Correspondence to (primarily) Anna and family (1943, Handwritten)
- C. Correspondence to family (1943-1945, V-Mail)
- D. Correspondence to Anna, Rita, and Rhoda (1944, Handwritten)
- E. Correspondence to and from extended family (V-Mail)
 - 1.) Irwin, Rose, Sam, and Helen Kessler
- F. Correspondence from Gene (Mrs. M. Moses)
- G. Marriage Certificate
- H. Documents from Military
 - 1.) Discharge Certificate
 - 2.) Medical Form for Discharge
 - 3.) Selective Service letter concerning Robert
- I.) Correspondence Concerning Robert's MIA status and death

II. Charles H. Kessler

- A. Correspondence to Family
 - 1.) 1940 and 1942
 - 2.) 1943
 - 3.) 1944
 - 4.) 1945
- B. Western Union Telegrams to Anna Kessler
- C. Scrapbook of V-Mail Correspondence to family, 1943-1945
- D. Correspondence from Gene and from Dan
- E. Narratives
 - 1.) Commemorative for Robert Kessler
 - 2.) Personal narratives
- F. Military Correspondence and Documents
 - 1.) Certificate of Retention
 - 2.) Honorable Discharge
 - 3.) Condolence from Veterans' Affairs, David's death (1984)
- G. Newspaper Clippings
 - 1.) Article by Chas. Kessler re: Rapido River crossing
 - 2.) Map of American forces in Germany 1945
 - 3.) Shipment Home
- H. 1944 Calendar/ personal journal

Box 2

III. Robert Kessler

- A. Correspondence to Family (1943-1944, V-Mail)
- B. Correspondence to Family (1944)
- C. Correspondence from Family
- D. Correspondence to family from Kriegsgefangenenpost (POW camp)
- E. Newspaper clippings
 - 1.) Nazi Torture of POWs
 - 2.) "Name This Paper"

IV. Anna Kessler

- A. Correspondence from Gene and Irving
- B. Correspondence to/from family. See letters to Robert, David and Charles above
- C. Correspondence concerning Robert's Death
 - 1.) Addresses of men who knew Robert at POW camp
 - 2.) Letter from Captain Armriton
 - 3.) Western Union telegrams from Military
 - 4.) Combat Infantryman Badge (response to Anna's inquiry)
 - 5.) War Dept. Letter (Combat Infantryman Badge awarded)

V. Newspapers

- A. T-Patch, 36th Division News
 - 1.) Vol. 2. No. 12- Nov 25, 1944
 - 2.) Vol. 3. No. 2- April 15, 1945
 - 3.) Vol. 4. No. 2- May 20, 1945
 - 4.) "From the Riviera to the Rhine"
- B. Stars and Stripes
- C. Beachhead News
- D. The Cub - September 16, 1945

VI. Miscellaneous

- A. Dwight Eisenhower Message
- B. Correspondence to David and Family
 - 1.) Response regarding David's letter to President, 1935.
 - 2.) Letter from Freddie Roth, 1942
- C. Narratives
 - 1.) Article on POW camp conditions
 - 2.) Personal narrative, "Why are G.I.'s Fighting?"
- D. Publications
 - 1.) U.S. Naval Ship Barrett
 - 2.) "Pennsylvanians on the Western Front"
 - 3.) The Club of the Golden Lion (Veteran's Magazine) June-July 1948
 - 4.) Buick M-18 Tank Ad from Magazine
 - 5.) Gasoline Ration Card
- E. Empty Envelopes