

Basic Detail Report

00015926

Title

Postcard with poem entitled 'Doors'

Date

14 June 1939

Primary Maker

Arthur Lederer

Medium

Cardboard, ink

Dimensions

Overall: 140 x 86 mm

Name

Postcard

History

Born in Vienna, Austria in 1889, Arthur Lederer was a talented tailor who made gala uniforms for European royalty and high society. On the eve of Adolf Hitler's march into Vienna in March 1938, Lederer was working on Archduke Otto of Austria's crowning robes, believing that the exiled monarch would return. In November 1938 Arthur Lederer, his wife Valerie and their son Walter attempted to escape the escalating Jewish persecution in Nazi-occupied Austria. They travelled by taxi from Vienna to the Austria-Czechoslovakia border but were held up by the German Gestapo and thrown into jail. They were released after three days and returned home to Vienna. Four weeks later they made another attempt to escape. The family purchased passports in December 1938 and travelled by Austrian Airlines to Prague, Czechoslovakia. The League of Nations (forerunner to the United Nations) issued them with Nansen passports, an internationally recognised identity card provided to stateless refugees. Arthur then started appealing to his well-connected clients for help to escape Europe. Most clients did not respond, perhaps fearing they would be persecuted by the Nazis for assisting Jews. Eventually Lady Max Muller, wife of the British Ambassador to Spain, provided them with tickets to Australia and the £300 arrival money required by the Australian Government. The family travelled to Australia on the Orient liner SS ORAMA, which departed Toulon, France on 17 June 1939. ORAMA stopped at Naples, Italy, Port Said, Egypt, Aden, Yemen and Colombo, Ceylon before arriving in Fremantle, Western Australia. From Fremantle the Lederers sailed to Sydney, where they began their new life in Australia.