Werner von Boltenstern Travel Records Collection

Collection number: MS119

William H. Hannon Library
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Werner von Boltenstern travel records collection
Dates: 1929-1975
Collection number: MS119
Creator: Werner von Boltenstern

Collection Size: 2 archival document boxes; 1 oversize box (2.1 linear feet)
Repository: Loyola Marymount University. Library. Department of Archives and Special Collections.
Los Angeles, California 90045-2659

Abstract: The Werner von Boltenstern Travel Records Collection chiefly consists of government travel documents and the personal record-keeping that von Boltenstern maintained during his world-wide travels.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English, Latin, German, Chinese

Access
Collection is open to research under the terms of use of the Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loyola Marymount University.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Box and Folder number, Werner von Boltenstern Travel Records Collection, MS119, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

Acquisition Information

Werner von Boltenstern Biography

Werner von Boltenstern (1904-1978) was born in Berlin, Germany, and supposedly earned two doctorates. He also developed a keen interest in photography and postcards. A world traveler beginning in 1929, von Boltenstern travelled through Africa, the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, and China.

Von Boltenstern moved to the United States by 1950 (Los Angeles). Von Boltenstern was a keen collector of postcards, and his passion for them was realized here. He became the program director of the Southern California Postcard Club and authored numerous pieces on postcards, including the pamphlet “An Introduction to Postcard Collecting,” a fine guide to this pursuit. His own collecting was prodigious, as evidenced by his million postcard collection, which he donated to Loyola Marymount University in 1967, where it is now the "Werner von Boltenstern Postcard Collection."

1904 Birth of Werner von Boltenstern in Berlin, Germany.
1929 Werner von Boltenstern begins his world-wide travels, arriving in Portugal.
1929-1935 Von Boltenstern reaches Africa. Travels to all parts of the continent over the next six years.
1935 Von Boltenstern arrives in Ramadi, Iraq.
1935 Von Boltenstern travels through the Middle East, reaching India (Jodhpur).
1937 After spending two years in India, von Boltenstern moves on to Burma (Myanmar) and then proceeds to
Thailand and next to Vietnam. He also probably travels through Cambodia.
1938 Von Boltenstern arrives in the Philippines.
1939 Von Boltenstern travels to China, reaching Shanghai, where he will live for the next ten years.
1949 Von Boltenstern leaves Shanghai for Taiwan.
1949 Von Boltenstern arrives in Hong Kong.
1950 Von Boltenstern immigrates to the United States, where he lives (Los Angeles) until his death in 1978.

Collection Description
The Werner von Boltenstern Travel Records Collection consists of government identity and travel documents, letters of
reference for Werner von Boltenstern, his travel logs, and some personal items. A German citizen born in Berlin in 1904,
Werner von Boltenstern undertook his world travel in 1929, travelling through Europe, Africa, the Middle East, India,
Southeast Asia, and China. In 1939 he reached Shanghai, where he lived until 1949. Perhaps caused by the Chinese
Communist takeover of Shanghai in 1949, he left the city that same year and eventually came to the United States in 1950,
where he settled in Los Angeles. His identity documents always list his occupation as photographer, and he probably
earned money through this means, on his travels. It was true for his ten-year residence in Shanghai, which resulted in a
large number of photographs of the Jewish refugee community there. The collection is now part of the holdings of the
Department of Archives and Special Collections. To consult the collection guide, select this title: Collection 50, Shanghai
Photograph and Negative Collection.

The ledger found in Box 2, Folder 1, served as a travel log for his world journey from 1929 to 1939. It contains
governmental stamps and written notices of von Boltenstern’s stay at places along his travels. He probably secured such
official notices to receive authorization for his stay in a locale, as well as to document his travels.

Of particular interest are the letters of reference that von Boltenstern obtained from persons in Shanghai, including
members of the Jewish refugee community there. The letters testify to his good relations with the community and his
anti-Nazi sentiments. As such the letters stand as a source for understanding life in that important Jewish refugee
community, composed of Jewish exiles from Nazi-ruled Germany and Europe.

Arrangement
This small collection came with no original order. Too small for series, the materials have been grouped in the box and
folder list by subject, eg, passports are found in folders 1 and 2 of Box 1.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.
Boltenstern, Werner von, 1904-1978
Travel—Boltenstern, Werner von, 1904-1978
Jewish ghettos -- China -- Shanghai -- History -- 20th century -- sources
Jewish refugees -- China -- Shanghai -- History -- 20th century

Related Collections
Digital Collection
The photographs and negatives that Werner von Boltenstern took of Shanghai, including its Jewish refugee community, are
now Collection 50, Shanghai Photograph and Negative Collection, in the Department of Archives and Special Collection.

They have been digitized and can be viewed by selecting the following title:
Werner von Boltenstern Shanghai Photograph and Negative Collection

Werner von Boltenstern Postcard Collection
For information on his million postcard collection at Loyola Marymount University, see the collection guide for the Werner
von Boltenstern Postcard Collection, Collection 042.

Box:Folder 1:1 Werner von Boltenstern United States passport. 1974
Box:Folder 1:2 "Deutsches Reich" (German Reich) passport of Werner von Boltenstern. Photocopy
substituted for original because of fragility. 1942-1945
| Box:Folder 1:3 | Identification card and pass of Werner von Boltenstern issued by Taipei, Taiwan, police. 1949 |
| Box:Folder 1:4 | United States "Document in Lieu of Passport" affidavit for Werner von Boltenstern. 1949 |
| Box:Folder 1:5 | Italian document re Werner von Boltenstern presence in Asmara, Eritrea. 1933 |
| Box:Folder 1ov:1 | International Red Cross identification document for Werner von Boltenstern. Place of issue: Hong Kong. 1949 |
| Box:Folder 1ov:2 | Statement re support for Shanghai Jews and anti-Nazi positions of Werner von Boltenstern. From fifteen Jewish residents of Shanghai. undated |
| Box:Folder 1:6 | Letters of reference re character and anti-Nazi positions of Werner von Boltenstern. Written by Shanghai residents, including Jewish residents. From envelope entitled "Shanghai Papers Historical value..." 1946-1949 |
| Box:Folder 1:7 | Road map of Europe. Guide in German to postmarks. undated |
| Box:Folder 1:8 | Letter to Werner von Boltenstern from daughter Erica von Boltenstern. undated |
| Box:Folder 1:9 | Day planner of Werner von Boltenstern. Note pad re trips and addresses. 1974-1975 |
| Box:Folder 1:10 | Verlaengerungen ("Extensions") document for travels of Werner von Boltenstern, containing official stamps and permissions to stay. 1929-1935 |
| Box:Folder 2ov:1 | Travel ledger of Werner von Boltenstern containing official stamps and permissions to stay. 1929-1950 |