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## Guide to the Bodo Zimmermann Papers

Special Collections & Archives

University Library

California State University, Northridge

18111 Nordhoff Street

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**Contributing Institution:** Special Collections & Archives

**Title:** Bodo Zimmermann Papers

**Creator:** Zimmermann, Bodo, 1928-2007

**Identifier/Call Number:** OCH.BZ

**Extent:** 0.21 linear feet

**Date (inclusive):** 1996-2003

**Abstract:** Bodo Zimmermann was born in 1928 in Berlin, Germany, and moved to Shanghai with his family in 1940 after their home and business were confiscated by Nazi officials. The family was left destitute after the move, so at age 13 Zimmermann dropped out of school began an apprenticeship in a bakery in Shanghai. From 1942 to 1945, the family was interned by the Japanese at the Ward Road Camp. After their release, in 1946, Zimmermann found a job as a baker working on the USS LCI 220, which was tasked with delivering medical supplies in China. The collection consists of unpublished memoirs, letters written by Zimmermann to friends regarding his time in China and life on the USS LCI 220, a translation done by Zimmermann of a letter written by a family friend regarding the Siberian Express railway in 1940, and drawings, cards, and news articles collected or made by Zimmermann related to China.

**Language of Material:** English, German

**Biographical Information:**

Bodo Zimmermann was born in Berlin, Germany, on March 20 th, 1928. His parents owned a successful department store, but in 1939 the store and their home were confiscated by Nazi officials. The family planned to open a new store in China, but after relocating to Shanghai in June of 1940 learned that the merchandise purchased with the last of their money had also been confiscated.

Zimmermann dropped out of school at 13 to become an apprentice at a pastry shop. He and his family were interned by the Japanese at Ward Road Camp in Shanghai from 1942 to 1945. At age 17, Zimmermann got a job as a baker on the American ship USS LCI 220 from February to April 1946 shipping hospital supplies up the Yangtze River from Shanghai to Chungking. He then worked as a baker on multiple ships and at bakeries before permanently settling down in the United States in 1949.

Zimmermann served in the US military in Germany during the 1950s, and then as a government employee of the military operating all of the commissary bakeries in Japan and Korea. In 1968 he began work as a salesman for a low-moisture food company, Vacu-Dry, where he retired as vice president of sales in 1990. Zimmermann married his wife Helen Gohstand in the early 1950s, and they had two children, Allen and Audrey.

**Scope and Contents**

The *Bodo Zimmermann Papers* consist of letters and original drawings by Zimmermann as well as items he collected related to his experiences in China during the 1940s and afterwards. The collection is arranged in three series: **Memoirs** (1998), **Correspondence and Drawings** (1996-2003), and **China Materials**.

Series I, **Memoirs**, consists of two unpublished memoirs written by Zimmermann about his journey to China by train as a young boy, and his subsequent life in China as a teenager.

Series II, **Correspondence and Drawings**, contains letters and drawings composed by Zimmermann to friends remembering life in China during the 1940s and after, as well as a translation done by Zimmermann of a family friend's letter about taking the Shanghai Express to China from Germany in 1940. The series is arranged chronologically.

Series III, **China Materials**, consists of a card and newspaper article collected by Zimmermann that relate to China.

**Arrangement of Materials:**

Series I: Memoirs, 1998

Series II: Correspondence and Drawings, 1996-2003

Series III: China Materials, 2009

**Related Material**

[Old China Hands Archives](#)

**Conditions Governing Access:**

The collection is open for research use.

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**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Bodo Zimmermann, 07/1998

**Preferred Citation:**

For information about citing items in this collection consult the appropriate style manual, or see the [Citing Archival Materials](#) guide.

**Processing Information:**

Jessica Geiser, 2013

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Documents

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**Series I: Memoirs, 1998**

Box 1, Folder 1                    **"The Siberian Express: Recollections of a 12 Year Old Boy's Train Ride From Germany Through Russia, Mongolia, Manchuria to China," 1998 May 29**  
Box 1, Folder 2                    **"East of the Soochow Creek," 1998 July 10**

**Series II: Correspondence and Drawings, 1996-2003**

Box 1, Folder 3                    **Letters to Peter O'Flaherty about Zimmermann's Life and the USS LCI 220, 1996**  
Box 1, Folder 4                    **Drawing of the Living Quarters at Ward Road Internment Camp, August 1996**  
Box 1, Folder 5                    **The Siberian Express Letter - Translated by Zimmermann, 1998**  
Box 1, Folder 6                    **Drawing of Toilets in Hongkew Ghetto, 2001 August 10**  
Box 1, Folder 7                    **Letter to Robert Gohstand with Chinese Currency, 2003 August 3**

**Series III: China Materials, 2009**

Box 1, Folder 8                    **Christmas Card from the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation**  
Box 1, Folder 9                    **"Shanghai's Jewish Transplants" - Article from Jewish Bulletin of Northern California, 2000 June 9**