Guide to the Rena Krasno Collection

**Language of Material:** Multiple languages

**Contributing Institution:** Special Collections & Archives

**Title:** Rena Krasno Collection

**Creator:** Krasno, Rena, 1923-2009

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

**Extent:** 9.04 linear feet

**Date (inclusive):** 1922-2009

**Abstract:** Rena Krasno was born in Shanghai in 1923. Her parents, two stateless Russian Jews, fled Russia two years before her birth. Krasno grew up in a Jewish community in Shanghai, but fled to Israel in 1949 just before communist forces took control of Shanghai. She held a prestigious position as translator for the United Nations, and was a published author. Krasno wrote several books about World War II in Shanghai, her life in Japan, and her Jewish heritage, as well as essays regarding Jewish and Chinese history. The collection consists of documents, correspondence, presentation notes, and research papers regarding Rena’s life in Shanghai, Japan, and in the United States, and documents her research, involvement with various Jewish organizations, and experiences living in wartime Shanghai.

**Language of Material:** German, English, Hebrew, Japanese, Polish, Russian

**Biographical Information:**

Rena Krasno was born in Shanghai, China in 1923. Her parents, two stateless Russian Jews, fled Russia two years before her birth. Krasno grew up in a Jewish community in Shanghai and attended the French Municipal College where she earned her Brevet Superieur and Baccalaureate (Philosophy Section). She later entered the Faculty of Medicine at the Jesuit Aurora University (now called Shanghai School of Medicine #2), where she studied for two years during World War II. She left Shanghai for Israel in April of 1949, just one month before communist forces took over the city.

Due to Krasno’s language skills in English, French, Russian, Hebrew, Spanish, and German, she was able to obtain a prestigious position as translator for the United Nations. She also worked as a freelance interpreter for international organizations (Unesco, ILO, FAO, the Olympic Committee at the Winter Games in Sapporo, etc.) in Europe and Asia. In Japan, Krasno was a frequent interpreter for the National Institute of Educational Research (Tokyo) and worked for Simul International and I.S.S., and also served as Honorary Chancellor of Austria in Seoul, Korea.

Krasno was also a published author. She wrote several books about wartime in Shanghai, her life in Japan, and her Jewish heritage as well as essays regarding Jewish and Chinese history. One book in particular entitled, *That Last Glorious Summer, 1939: Shanghai-Japan*, is based on Krasno’s diary as a young teenager on a summer vacation in Japan on the eve of war. Additionally, Krasno shared her life experience and historical knowledge as a guest speaker for numerous organizations such as the Jewish Working Women’s Network of the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region. Krasno died in 2009.

**Scope and Contents**

The *Rena Krasno Collection* is divided into three series: **Personal Materials** (1928-2009), **Professional Works and Presentations** (1948-2009), and **Research Materials** (1922-2009).

Series I, **Personal Materials**, includes correspondence, photographs, biographical information on Krasno, documents related to her family, including her father D.B. Rabinovich, and articles about Krasno.

Series II, **Professional Works and Presentations**, is divided into two subseries: **Presentations** (1995-2007) and **Authored Works** (1948-2009). The **Presentations** subseries consists of correspondence, articles, transcripts, advertisements, and other documents related to multiple presentations and speeches given by Krasno. The **Authored Works** subseries contains drafts, corrections, reviews, press, and other documents related to articles and books written by Krasno, most notably *Strangers Always - A Jewish Family in Wartime Shanghai*, *Struggle in Shanghai: Historic Journals of Fred Marcus*, and *Once Upon a Time in Shanghai: A Jewish Woman’s Journey Through the 20th Century China*.

Series III, **Research Materials**, is divided into two subseries: **Articles and Publications** (1927-2009) and **General Research** (1922-2005). The **Articles and Publications** subseries consists of publications, including both newspaper and scholarly articles, related to Krasno’s research. The **General Research** subseries consists of articles, correspondence, programs, narratives, and other documents collected by Krasno on Shanghai, Jewish refugees, and other Old China Hands.

**Arrangement of Materials:**

Series I: Personal Materials, 1928-2009

Series II: Professional Works and Presentations, 1948-2009


Subseries B: Authored Works, 1948-2009

Series III: Research Materials, 1922-2005

Subseries A: Articles and Publications, 1927-2009

Subseries B: General Research, 1922-2005
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Series III: Research Materials, 1922-2009
   Subseries A: Articles and Publications, 1927-2009
   Subseries B: General Research, 1922-2005

Related Material

Rena Krasno papers at the Hoover Institution Archives

Conditions Governing Access:
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Preferred Citation:
For information about citing items in this collection consult the appropriate style manual, or see the Citing Archival Materials guide.

Processing Information:
Tim Kauffier, 2012
Jessica Geiser, 2013

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Maps
Documents
Photographs
Audiovisual materials

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