Register of the Boleslaw Boreysza papers

Finding aid prepared by Maciej Siekerski and Michael Herrick
Hoover Institution Archives
434 Galvez Mall
Stanford University
Stanford, CA, 94305-6010
(650) 723-3563
hooverarchives@stanford.edu
©2008, 2017
Title: Boleslaw Boreysza papers
Date (inclusive): 1939-2008
Collection Number: 2008C23
Contributing Institution: Hoover Institution Archives
Language of Material: Polish and English
Physical Description: 6 manuscript boxes (2.5 linear feet)
Abstract: Personal and military documents, correspondence, and photographs relating to Polish military activities during World War II, and to Polish émigré affairs.
Physical Location: Hoover Institution Archives
Access
Collection is open for research.
The Hoover Institution Archives only allows access to copies of audiovisual items. To listen to sound recordings or to view videos or films during your visit, please contact the Archives at least two working days before your arrival. We will then advise you of the accessibility of the material you wish to see or hear. Please note that not all audiovisual material is immediately accessible.

Publication Rights
For copyright status, please contact the Hoover Institution Archives.

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Boleslaw Boreysza papers, [Box number], Hoover Institution Archives.

Acquisition Information
Acquired by the Hoover Institution Archives in 2008.

Accruals
Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. To determine if this has occurred, find the collection in Stanford University's online catalog at http://searchworks.stanford.edu/. Materials have been added to the collection if the number of boxes listed in the online catalog is larger than the number of boxes listed in this finding aid.

Biographical Note
Boleslaw "William" Boreysza (1921-2002), a librarian-cataloger, served in the Hoover Institution Library for more than thirty years until his retirement in 1990. Boreysza known as Bolek to his Polish friends and as Bill to his coworkers, was a well-known figure in the Polish émigré community of Northern California. He participated in and was a witness to the events in Poland, Soviet Russia, the Middle East, and Italy in World War II.

A native of Eastern Poland, Boreysza fought in the anti-Soviet underground during 1939 and 1940, was arrested by the NKVD, and spent time in Soviet prisons and camps. His release certificate from a prison near Arkhangelsk in the Russian North is among 13,000 such documents preserved in the Poland Ministerstwo Informacji i Dokumentacji Collection. As a cadet-officer in General Wladyslaw Anders' Polish II Corps, 3rd Carpathian Infantry Division, made up mostly of former Gulag prisoners and deportees, Boreysza fought with distinction on the Italian front, participating in the battles of Monte Cassino and Ancona, where he suffered a serious head wound, resulting in the loss of his left eye. The bullet that caused the injury, and miraculously did not kill him, would remain lodged in the back of his skull for the rest of his life, as shown on X-rays and doctors' reports in the collection.

After the war, Boreysza immigrated to England and later to Canada, where he received degrees in Slavic studies, political science, and library science. He was recruited for the Hoover Library by Witold Sworakowski, the chief builder of Hoover library and archival collections after the Second World War. In addition to cataloging, thanks to his excellent émigré contacts, Boreysza helped Sworakowski expand Hoover's Polish collections.

Scope and Content of Collection
Boreysza's papers consist of his military service documents, photographs, and correspondence. Also in the collection is a photocopy of his extensive NKVD arrest and interrogation file, sent from the former KGB archives in Vilnius.

The majority of the materials connected to his war-time activities are in the first half of the Biographical File and the beginning of the Photographs series. The second half of both of these series and the majority of the Correspondence series is largely personal in nature, capturing components of the life of a wounded war veteran and single émigré man building a new life in North America while also interacting with his European past and enduring Polish family connections.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Register of the Boleslaw Boreysza papers

Biographical File, 1939-2008

Box/Folder 1 : 1  Biographical essays, 1954-2008
Scope and Contents note
Two in English (one written by Boreysza in 1954 and one by Maciej Siekierski in 2008) and one in Polish (written by Frank Topór in 2002).

Box/Folder 1 : 2  Personal documents, 1941-1954
Scope and Contents note
Identification cards, passports, travel documents, military pension correspondence, and citizenship documents.

Box/Folder 1 : 3-5  KGB files (photocopies), 1940-1958
Scope and Contents note
NKVD files on Boreysza and other Poles arrested in Vilnius in 1940.

Box/Folder 1 : 6  Army documents, 1939-1991
Box/Folder 1 : 7  Army documents, 1946-1947
Box/Folder 1 : 8  Head photographs, drawings, x-rays, 1942-1983
Box/Folder 1 : 9  Education, 1939-1956
Scope and Contents note
Diplomas, application materials, and other documentation from his studies in Great Britain, Vancouver, and Seattle.

Box/Folder 1 : 10  Personal address books and date books, 1948-1980s
Box/Folder 2 : 1  Personal documents, 1955-1997
Scope and Contents note
Passports and immigration documents; pilot and firearm training documentation; and Polish veterans abroad membership information.

Box/Folder 2 : 2  Dissertation, "The Introduction of the Soviet System into Poland," 1955
Box/Folder 2 : 3  Memorabilia and miscellaneous, 1950s-1990s
Scope and Contents note
Postcards and other images of war memorials and other structures in Europe, and a partial map of pre-war Vilnius in Polish and German.
Correspondence, 1952-2001

Scope and Contents note

Primarily personal letters and postcards. Boreysza had arranged the personal correspondence he received chronologically, and this order has been retained as much as possible. Postcards have been put in one progression while letters, which often contain clippings from Polish publications, are in another. When no date has been discernible on the item itself, it has been left with the year in which it was found. Many of the correspondents are army and other Polish émigré acquaintances, as well as personal friends from his student years. The greatest amount of material is from a relative, Henryk Boreysza, who was living in Sopot on the outskirts of Gdansk. These relatives are also represented prominently in the Photographs series. During the peak Solidarity activity years, Henryk Boreysza frequently sent Boreysza packets of newspaper clippings. When a dated note is included, the chronological filing is based on that, and the clippings included generally are dated within a week of the personal note. When no note is included, the filing arrangement follows the publication month of the clippings included in the packet. Postcards from this correspondent, for the Solidarity-intensive period, have generally been kept with the letters/clippings. This portion results in what is essentially a diary-like eyewitness account to the events unfolding in the Gdansk area in 1981 through selective press clippings.

Because the many postcards could not be interfiled with the regular correspondence, one needs to look within each time unit, foldered by year, to be sure to identify the complete correspondence.

| Box/Folder 2 : 4 | 1952-1979 |
| Box/Folder 2 : 5 | 1980-1981 March |
| Box/Folder 2 : 6 | 1981 May-June |
| Box/Folder 2 : 7 | 1981 July |
| Box/Folder 2 : 8 | 1981 August |
| Box/Folder 3 : 1 | 1981 September |
| Box/Folder 3 : 2 | 1981 October - 1982 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 3 | 1983-2001 |
| Box 3 | Postcards, 1957-1973 |
| Box 4 | Postcards, 1974-2000 |

Photographs, 1942-1998

Scope and Contents note

The photographs have been arranged roughly chronologically, with loose photos gathered in envelopes by theme. The earliest ones are all war-related, reflecting Boreysza's time in Palestine, Egypt and Italy. The bulk of the material is from after he immigrated to Canada and can be broadly classed as vacation photos. The North American vacations are of hunting, fishing, and camping trips he embarked on with other men, mostly to the Canadian Rockies. Most of the European photos are family-related in nature, with many summer photographs of men and boys swimming or engaging in other recreation activities. A theme running throughout the European envelopes includes reminiscing about his military and European past and memorializing the war. Of particular note is a 43-page album at the end of the photographs, which Boreysza created and annotated, reflecting his trips to Poland and Lithuania in the early 1990s, documenting the physical places of his life prior to and during the war, before he was deported to the Russian north.

| Box 5 | Photographs, 1942-1960s |
| Box 6 | Photographs, 1960s-1990s |
| Box/Folder 6 : 1 | Slides, Poland and Soviet Union, 1960s-1970s |
| Box/Folder 6 : 2 | Slides, Europe and Boreysza with airplane, 1960s |
| Box/Folder 6 : 3 | Negatives, Poland and Lithuania, 1992 |

Register of the Boleslaw Boreysza papers 2008C23