

Galya Tannenbaum Collection

Mss.02647

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Summary Information

Repository	History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center
Title	Galya Tannenbaum Collection
Date	1931-2011
Extent	2.5 Linear feet
Location Note	Three photos were found with the collection. The photos are housed in file 9 and file 15.
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Galya Tannenbaum was born Gloria Forest in 1931 in Chicago, Illinois. Tannenbaum struggled with mental health issues throughout her life and was arrested on several occasions on charges related to forgery and embezzlement. Tannenbaum claimed that she moved to the Denver area in the 1960s because of her involvement with Thomas Riha, a Prague native and Associate Professor of Russian at the University of Colorado, Boulder. In 1969, Riha attended a dinner party with colleagues in Boulder and was never seen again. Since Riha was a native of Prague and had associations with Russia, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency became involved in the investigation of Riha's disappearance. The investigation caused serious breaches in the two organizations' working relationship and security. Riha's disappearance and presumed death brought Tannenbaum's criminal activities to national attention. After Riha's disappearance, Tannenbaum began to donate several of Riha's personal items to local organizations. Boulder police arrested Tannenbaum for forging Riha's name on a check and on the sale of Riha's house in 1969. She was charged with forgery and embezzlement in Boulder, Denver, and Jefferson Counties. During trial, she pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity on all counts. Tannenbaum was found</p>

not guilty by reason of insanity in Boulder and Jefferson County. In Denver, Tannenbaum was found sane but did not go to court to face judgment. While in the Pueblo State Mental Hospital awaiting trial, Tannenbaum wrote several personal histories, which she gave to her attorney, John Kokish. Tannenbaum committed suicide in the Pueblo State Mental Hospital in 1971. In this collection are diaries and correspondence written by Galya Tannenbaum during her time in the Pueblo State Mental Hospital. Included in the items related to Tannenbaum are documents relating to her life and her children's well-being. Also included are court documents and newspaper clippings pertaining to her trial, files maintained by her attorney John Kokish and by mental health workers, and research conducted by author Rachel Mann after the trial.

Preferred Citation note

Cite as: Galya Tannenbaum Collection, Mss.02647 (accession 2015.21) History Colorado

Biographical Note

Galya Tannenbaum had several aliases throughout her life. Her known aliases are: Gloria Forest, Gloria McPherson, Gloria Storm, Gloria Zakharovna, Colonel Zakharovna, Gloria Tannenbaum, and Galya Tannenbaum. For the purposes of this finding aid, she will be referred to as Galya Tannenbaum.

Galya Tannenbaum was born Gloria Forest on March 30, 1931 in Chicago, Illinois to parents Margaret Dahlgren (1903-?) and Joseph Forest (1899-1958). Soon after Tannenbaum's birth, her family moved to St. Louis, Missouri to live with her father's family. While living in St. Louis, Tannenbaum's parents had three more children, Peter Thomas, Paul, and Charles. Paul was ill at birth and died soon after. As a child and teenager, Galya attended St. Elizabeth's Academy on scholarship, took art classes on the weekend, and worked nights at the local hospital.

In high school, Tannenbaum met her first husband Robert McPherson (-1981). McPherson was the band leader for a circus traveling through St. Louis. At the age of 16, Tannenbaum left home to marry McPherson. Tannenbaum and McPherson moved to Washington, D.C. and then to Texas, where Tannenbaum gave birth to her first child, Margaret "Margie" Ann McPherson (1949-?). After divorcing McPherson, Tannenbaum moved to the Chicago area with Margie. In 1959, charges were brought upon Tannenbaum by Robert McPherson on counts of forgery and embezzlement. Tannenbaum pleaded guilty to both charges and spent time in the Illinois state penitentiary. After being released in 1960, Tannenbaum continued to live in Chicago with her daughter. While living in Chicago, Tannenbaum had her second child, Deborah, by then-boyfriend James Quirk. Deborah was adopted by Tannenbaum's brother Peter's in-laws, the Theiles. After ending her relationship with Quirk, Tannenbaum married Charles Russ Scimo (1909-1989), with whom she had her third child, James "Jimmy" David (1959-). After divorcing Scimo, Tannenbaum entered into a common law marriage with Leo Tannenbaum, with whom she had her last child, Rebecca Eva (1966-).

After leaving Leo Tannenbaum, Galya Tannenbaum met Thomas Riha, who lived nearby in Chicago. Riha, a native of Prague, moved to the United States in 1947. Riha and Tannenbaum become involved and moved to Colorado in 1967. Tannenbaum brought her two youngest children, Jimmy and Rebecca, with her, and they moved into a house on Logan Street in Denver, Colorado. Thomas Riha moved to Boulder, Colorado to take a teaching position as an Associate Professor of Russian at the University of Colorado.

Soon after moving to Colorado, Riha married a language specialist from Prague, Hana Hruska. The marriage between Riha and Hruska did not last long. Within months of being married, Hruska began traveling to Brooklyn to stay with family and divorce papers were filed. Hruska returned to Boulder during this time and stayed at the house she shared with Riha.

In 1969, Riha attended a dinner party with colleagues in Boulder and was never seen again. Tannenbaum began to donate several of Riha's personal items to local organizations. One notable donation was his art collection of sculptures to the Denver Art Museum. Boulder police arrested Tannenbaum for forging Riha's name on a check and on the sale of Riha's house in 1969. Riha's body was never discovered. The

investigation by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation caused a serious breach in the two organizations' working relationship and security.

At the time of Tannenbaum's arrest, Gus Ingwerson and Barbara Egbert were found dead in their homes. Ingwerson and Egbert were believed to have committed suicide by ingesting cyanide. However, some suspected that Tannenbaum was involved in their deaths. Riha's wedding ring was discovered at Ingwerson's house, and forged documents created by Tannenbaum were discovered at both homes. Tannenbaum was charged with forgery in the case for Ingwerson and Egbert's deaths.

Tannenbaum hired recently licensed lawyer John Kokish to represent her for five different charges, all related to forgery and embezzlement. Kokish persuaded Tannenbaum to plead not guilty by reason of insanity for two charges in Boulder, two charges in Denver, and one charge in Jefferson County. Tannenbaum was found not guilty by reason of insanity in Boulder and Jefferson County. In Denver, Tannenbaum was found sane but did not go to court to face judgment. While in the Pueblo State Mental Hospital awaiting trial, Tannenbaum wrote several personal histories, which she gave to her lawyer. In 1971, Tannenbaum committed suicide by swallowing a cyanide pill in the Pueblo State Mental Hospital in front of one of her caretakers, Henry Madrid.

After Tannenbaum's suicide, her two children, Jimmy and Rebecca, were adopted by their caretakers, Jo Ann and Gayle Norton.

Scope and Contents note

In this collection are diaries and correspondence written by Galya Tannenbaum while she was in the Mental Health Institute of Pueblo prior to her suicide in 1971. Included in the items pertaining to Tannenbaum are documents relating to her life and her children's well-being. Also included are three photos, court documents and newspaper clippings from the time of her trial, and research conducted by Rachel Mann after the trial. Rachel Mann was a close friend of Tannenbaum's attorney, John Kokish, who had the intent of writing a book on Tannenbaum's life and trial.

The personal histories written by Tannenbaum provide information about Tannenbaum's life prior to her involvement with Thomas Riha. The collection contains biographical information about the person some believe was involved in Riha's disappearance. The collection also offers insight into the breach in the working relationship between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation during the late 1960s.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center

Provenance

Donated by John Kokish and Rachel Mann in February 2015. John Kokish was Galya Tannenbaum's lawyer during her trial from 1970-1971. Some of the material was given by Tannenbaum to Kokish. Upon closing the case, Kokish gave his work on the case to friend and writer Rachel Mann, who added her own research to the collection.

Processing Information note

Processed by Haley Suby, July 2015.

Related Materials

Related Materials note

The Galya Tannenbaum Collection is part of a larger donation of material that includes artifacts. Please contact the Research Center staff for more information.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- University of Colorado Boulder.

Genre(s)

- Audiotapes.
- Autobiographies.
- Checks.
- Correspondence.

- Court rulings
- Diaries.
- Interviews.
- Journals.
- Legal documents
- Newspaper clippings.
- Photographs.
- Receipts.
- Wallet

Geographic Name(s)

- Boulder County (Colo.)
- Chicago (Ill.)
- Denver (Colo.)
- St. Louis (Mo.)

Personal Name(s)

- Forest, Gloria, 1931-1971
- Kokish, John
- Mann, Rachel
- Riha, Thomas
- Tannenbaum, Galya, 1931-1971

Subject(s)

- Cold War.
- Embezzlement.
- Espionage.
- Forgery.
- Mental health.
- Murder.
- United States. Central Intelligence Agency
- United States. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Accession number

2015.21

Collection Inventory

Galya Tannenbaum 1931-1971

Scope and Contents note

All files were retained by John Kokish, Tannenbaum's attorney.

FF1 Personal History [1931-1971]

FF2 Personal History 1931-1958

FF3 Personal History [1938-1943]

FF4 Personal History 1958-1961

FF5 Personal History 1968-1969

FF6 Birth Certificates 1931, 1959, 1965, 1966

FF7 Medical Reports and Hospital Records 1947, 1970

FF8 Leo and Doreen Tannenbaum Divorce Papers 1965

FF9 Income Tax 1968

FF10 Checks and Receipts Nov. 29, 1968, May 20, 1969, May 8, 1970

FF11 Boulder Property 1969

FF12 Denver Art Museum Gift Receipt and Appraisal of Riha Collection March 1, July 7, Sept. 2, Oct. 27, 1969

FF13 Dress Patterns July 8, 1970

FF14 Mountain Bell Telephone Company Payment 1970

FF15 Personal Items [1970-1971]

Scope and Contents note

This file has personal items belonging to Gayla Tannenbaum at the end of her life prior to arrest. Included are her wallet, a letter including photos, credit cards and business cards, booklets on Soviet-American relations and nuclear terms, an airline ticket, a letter to the Air Veterans Association, and her divorce papers from Robert McPherson.

FF16 Correspondence 1970-1971

John Kokish 1969-1974

FF17 Power of Attorney 1969-1970

FF18 Gloria McPherson Forgery and Embezzlement Conviction July 21, 1964

FF19 Case Number 67 CH 208 Jan. 1967

FF20 Title Insurance Contract, Guy and Ruth Ingwerson June 1967

FF21 Various Charges for Gloria Tannenbaum 1969, 1970

FF22 Case Number 24597 Feb. 1970

FF23 Case Number 4682 March 1970

FF24 Case Number 5003 March, June 1970

FF25 Case Number C-16612 May 1970

FF26 Case Number 4971, Vol. I July 8-15, 1970

FF27 Case Number 4971, Vol. II July 8-15, 1970

FF28 Case Number 4971, Vol. III July 8-15, 1970

FF29 Case Number 4971, Vol. IV July 8-15, 1970

FF30 Case Number 4971, Galya Tannenbaum's Sanity Feb. 1971

FF31 Case Number 4971, Direct Examination 1971

FF32 Case Number 4971, Cross Examination [1971]

FF33 Case Number 4971 June-July 1970

FF34 Case Number 4971 1970

FF35 Case Number 4971 March 1971

FF36 Case Number 62056 Aug. 13, 1970

FF37 Case Number 62056 1970

FF38 Case Number 62056 Feb. 1971

FF39 Case Number 62740 Sept.-Oct. 1970

FF40 Case Number 62740 Dec. 1970

FF41 Case Number 62740 March-April 1971

FF42 Case Number 24957 Oct. 1970

FF43 Case Number C-2663 Oct. 1970, March 1971

FF44 Subpoena for Zdenek Cerveny and Paul Morris Oct.-Nov. 1970

FF45 Case Number 54609 1970, 1973

FF46 Case Number 23227 April 9, 1971

FF47 Case Number C-28010 1972

FF48 Case Number 69341 1972-1973

FF49 Case Number 69341 Feb. 1, 1973

FF50 Case Number 69341 Feb. 14, 1973

FF51 Case Number 69341 July 31, 1973

FF52 Case Number 69341 Oct. 24, 1973

FF53 Case Number 69341 Oct. 30, 1973

FF54 Case Number 69341 Nov. 28, 1973

FF55 Case Number 69341 Jan. 8, 1974

FF56 Case Number 69341 Feb. 15, 1974

FF57 Case Number 69341 Feb. 15, 1974

FF58 Pueblo County Jan. 1973

FF59 Case Number 14160, Correspondence 1974

FF60 Appeals May 1971

Guardianship

Guardianship 1965-1974

FF61 Petition and Hearing 1965-1970

FF62 Withdrawal Slip Correspondence May 1970-March 1972

FF63 Birth Certificate and Adoption Correspondence March-June 1971

FF64 Paternal Guardianship Release June 1971

FF65 Correspondence of Guardianship of James Tannenbaum 1972-1974

FF66 Notes [1970-1974]

FF67 Subpoena Service June-July 1970

FF68 *Rules of District Court* 1972

FF69 Correspondence to Galya Tannenbaum and Margaret Forest July 1970, Jan. 1971

FF70 Court Correspondence Jan. 1970-Aug. 1971

FF71 Court Notes [1970-1974]

Rachel Mann 1976-2007

Publications

FF72 Thomas Riha Missing Persons Report 1976, 1989

FF73 Central Intelligence Agency Release #F88-0862 Aug. 26, 1988

FF74 Freedom of Information Act Federal Bureau of Investigation Release, Thomas Riha [1988]

FF75 Freedom of Information Act Federal Bureau of Investigation Release, Galya Tannenbaum [1988]

FF76 Freedom of Information Act Correspondence Dec. 1988, Jan. and July 1989

FF77 Rudolf Kozusnik Correspondence April 15, 1992

FF78 John Kokish Correspondence April-May 1992

FF79 McCormick Detective Agency Correspondence June 12, 1992

FF80 Gerald Caplan Interview Feb. 20, 2007

FF81 Personal Notes Undated

Publications 1965-2011

FF82 "Report of Governor Love's Committee to Study the Criminal Insanity Law" Jan. 13, 1965

FF83 Boulder County Bar Newsletter and The Education Forum Sept. 2011, Undated

FF84 *The Thomas Riha Affair* July 5, 1996

Audio Tapes

FF85 Newspaper Index Undated

FF86 Dec. 1969

FF87 Jan.-Dec. 1970

FF88 Jan.-March, July, Oct. 1971

FF89 1972-1974

FF90 1975-1976

FF91 1977-1978

FF92 1986, 1987, 1996

FF93 Undated

FF94 Audio Tapes

Existence and Location of Copies note

All tapes were transferred to digital files on 7.21.2015. Please contact Research Center staff to access use files; USE.1.2015.21.2, USE.1.2015.21.3, and USE.1.2015.21.4.

Scope and Contents note

All recordings are of Rachel Mann interviewing John Kokish.

Audio Tapes

FF94 Tape 1 March 14, 1992

Accession number

2015.21.2

Scope and Contents Note

Tape 1 opens with Rachel Mann, the interviewer, asking John Kokish, Galya Tannenbaum's lawyer, how long he had been practicing and how he became involved with the case. John discusses the charges filed against Tannenbaum, her family's reaction to her arrest, his first impression of meeting Tannenbaum, and his persuasion of her to plead not guilty by reason of insanity for all charges in Boulder, Denver, and Jefferson County. In addition to the charges and plea by Tannenbaum, Kokish and Mann discuss what the outcome would have been had Tannenbaum not committed suicide.

FF94 Tape 2 March 14, 1992

Accession number

2015.21.3

Scope and Contents Note

Tape 2 begins with Rachel Mann asking John Kokish what he believes Tannenbaum did and was capable of doing to the three individuals involved in her arrest: Gus Ingweson, Barbara Egbert, and Thomas Riha. Kokish continues to discuss Tannenbaum's physical appearance and mannerisms.

FF94 Tape 3 March 15, 1992

Accession number

2015.21.4

Scope and Contents note

Audio Tapes

Tape 3 includes Rachel Mann and John Kokish reading and discussing Tannenbaum's personal histories, correspondence, and personal documents.