

Guide to

Bloch Family
Papers, 1897-1989

14 Cubic feet

Accession Number 1038

Prepared by John Hanks
June, 2001

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Introduction

Bloch Family
Papers, 1897-1989
14 Cubic Feet (21 Document Boxes, 8 F-20 Flat Boxes)
Accession Number 1038

The Bloch Family Papers were given to the American Heritage Center by Alan Bloch, Alexander Briggs, Carol Briggs, Meredith Briggs Skeath, Richard Hanau, and Janet Bloch Briggs. The scrapbooks were received in 1989, while the rest of the collection was received in 1990, 1991, and 1999

The collection should be cited as Bloch Family Papers, 1897-1989, Accession Number 1038, Box Number, Folder Number, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming.

RECEIVED AND ACKNOWLEDGED

Rick Ewig
Acting Director

Date: _____

Biographies

Alexander Bloch (1889-1983) was born in Selma, Alabama. He grew up in New York City, where he briefly attended Columbia University. He spent eight “miserable” years as a salesman in a silk importing business with his uncle although he was able to begin advanced study of the violin with Eduard Herrman. In order to get “European school” he studied briefly with Ottaker Sevcik in Vienna, Austria. After some bureaucratic difficulties, he studied with the distinguished violin teacher Leopold Auer, court violinist to the Czar, in St. Petersburg, Russia. Auer helped him to find a position as concertmaster and soloist in Tiflis, Caucasus.

Alexander Bloch made his New York musical debut in Town Hall in 1913. He was accompanied on the piano by his cousin and fiancee Blanche Bloch. The next Summer he spent with Auer in Dresden, while Blanche studied in Berlin. They were both able to escape from Europe at the beginning of World War I on one of the last passenger steamers that was allowed to sail. They were married soon after in 1914. From 1913 to 1931, the Blochs gave many concerts featuring violin and piano sonatas. They also had many students. In 1918, Leopold Auer arrived from Vienna, and Bloch served as his assistant for ten years.

Bloch became interested in conducting in 1926, and he studied with Chalmers Clifton of the American Orchestral Association. For several years he and his students gave free concerts at the Educational Alliance on New York’s Lower East Side. During the depression, the Blochs moved to their farm called “Springhill Farm”. In a classic melancholia Alexander Bloch didn’t touch his violin for about four years. His family used the farm to sponsor a boys’ camp, then a music camp, and then a drama school. Their efforts revived Bloch’s interest in music which helped to awaken him from his long depression. The Blochs organized the Chatham (NY) Choral Society which produced Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Then they wrote an operetta called *Roeloff’s Dream* for the dedication of the consolidated Roeliff-Janssen School, where Blanche taught music, near Hillsdale. They also gave weekly chamber music concerts in their barn.

In 1934 Blanche Bloch taught at the Out-of-Door School in Sarasota, Florida, while Alexander wrote the music for *The Lone Tree*, which was produced by the Sarasota Players in 1935. In 1936 Mr. and Mrs. Bloch joined the faculty of Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, where he composed songs, a string quartet and an opera. Alexander Bloch became conductor of the Central Florida Symphony Orchestra in Winter Park from 1934 to 1943. He was also a guest conductor appearing with the NBC Symphony in New York City and the National Symphony in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, the Central Florida Symphony Orchestra had to fold after losing 27 men to the armed forces.

In 1950, at age 75, Alexander Bloch became nationally known as the popular conductor of the new Florida West Coast Symphony in Sarasota, Florida, until his

retirement in 1963. Blanche and he settled at “the Farm” near Hillsdale, New York surrounded by children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Blanche died in 1980 at the age of 89, and Alexander died in 1983 at the age of 101.

Blanche Bloch was the first cousin and wife of Alexander Bloch, so her maiden name and her married name were identical. She was a pianist, lecturer, and author. She was born in New York City in 1890. Her father died when she was 14 so her mother took her to Vienna where she studied piano for four years. After returning to Starkville, Mississippi, Blanche organized a segregated night school for black children of cotton mill workers. When her family returned to New York City, she renewed her acquaintance with her cousin and future husband Alexander Bloch. They became a well-known musical team and were married in 1914.

Blanche Bloch’s independent career included raising two children, Alan (b.1915) and Janet (b. 1917), and writing a one-act play which ran for a season on the Keith circuit. She was the originator and founder of the New York Women’s Orchestra in the early 1930s, and she wrote music articles for “The Nation” and “Harpers”. She also wrote murder mysteries like *The Bach Festival Murders* (1942) and *The Strange Case of Mr. Crawford* (1948). She delivered lectures on music before each one of her husband’s Sarasota concerts. She belonged to many service organizations including the Hillsdale Garden Club and the Friends of the Berkshire Music Center Committee.

Series Description

The Bloch Family Papers are arranged in ten series:

- Series I. Biographical, 1932-1989. 1 Folder. No Arrangement. I.D. cards, autobiographies, family tree, and nephew Robert Bloch
- Series II. Clippings, 1912-1983. .45 cubic feet (1 document box) Arranged alphabetically, including Bloch Careers, Obituaries, Arts & Music, General
- Series III. Correspondence, 1898-1983. 5 cubic feet (11 document boxes) Arranged chronologically, including professional and family letters.
Sub series 1. Alexander Bloch, 1898-1982
Sub series 2. Blanche Bloch, 1905-1980
Sub series 3 Mr. and Mrs. Bloch, Friends and Family, 1916-1977
Sub series 4 Mom and Dad from Family, Janet (Jamie) Briggs, Alan, and Briggs grandchildren Sandy, Meredith, Etc., 1913-1966
- Series IV. Manuscripts, 1919-1959. 2 cubic feet (4 document boxes) Arranged alphabetically by title or subject, including articles, novels, short stories, and music.
- Series V. Notes, 1903-1959 1.4 cubic feet (3 document boxes) Arranged chronologically, including calendars, diaries, notebooks, notes.
- Series VI. Periodicals, 1928-1947 4 folders. Arranged alphabetically by periodical name, including articles, stories and reviews.
- Series VII. Photographs, Ca. 1910-Ca. 1980 6 folders Arranged alphabetically by name or subject.
- Series VIII. Programs, Ca. 1900-1920 (1 document box and 2 folders) Arranged chronologically, including concerts, symphonies, recitals, etc.
- Series IX. Publications, Ca. 1913-1977. .9 cubic feet (2 document boxes) Arranged chronologically, including music books, mysteries, and publicity brochures.
- Series X. Scrapbooks and Large Manuscripts, 1897-1962. 4.40 cubic feet (8 F20 boxes) no arrangement, including scrapbooks, music manuscripts, and a poster.

Scope and Content

The Bloch Family Papers 1897-1989, focus on four generations of family correspondence. There are love letters between Blanche and Alexander Bloch when one or both were studying music in Europe. There are pre-W.W.I. letters from Alexander to his family. Letters are included from their two children Janet (Jamie) Briggs and Alan. The bulk of Alan's correspondence comes from when he was a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II. Janet's correspondence was prolific, including many details of family life and music. Her daughter, Meredith, was a part of the 1960s-1970s "counter-culture". The papers also contain Blanche Bloch's fiction and non-fiction manuscripts, along with violin texts and musical scores by Alexander. The diaries concern many personal observations related to musical performance, and they also catalogue day to day events. Many newspaper clippings related to Bloch family musical performances have been saved, along with others of a general nature.

Folder List

Series I. Biographical, 1932-1989

<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Box 1</u>		
1	Biographical File – I.D. Cards, Autobiographies, Family Tree, Robert Bloch	1932-1989

Series II. Clippings, 1912-1983

2-6	Clippings – Alexander Bloch	1912-1975
7	Clippings – Blanche Bloch, Writings, Music, Letters, Family	1947-1980
8-9	Clippings – General Subjects	1933-1970
10	Clippings – Music, Arts	1912-1981

Box 2

1	Clippings – Obituaries for Alexander and Blanche Bloch	1980-1983
2	Clippings – “Sarasota” File	1940-1981

Series III. Correspondence, 1898-1983

Sub-series 1. Alexander Bloch, 1898-1982

3	Alexander Bloch (Parents)	1898-1910
4	Alexander Bloch (Blanche Bloch, Parents)	1911-1912
5	Alexander Bloch, Books, <i>The Principles And Practice of Violin Bowing</i> , and <i>Scale Studies in Double Stops</i>	1911-1918
6	Alexander Bloch (Blanche Bloch, Children Thank You’s, Professional)	1913-1915
7	Alexander Bloch (Blanche Bloch, Family, Children Thank You’s, 1956-1959 Professional)	

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Series III. Correspondence (Continued)		
Sub-series 1. Alexander Bloch (Continued)		
<u>Box 3</u>		
1	Alexander Bloch, (Professional, Retired)	1960-1982 Undated
3	Alexander Bloch's 100 th Birthday	1981
4	Alexander Bloch's Bereavement	1983
Series III. Correspondence		
Sub series 2. Blanche Bloch, 1905-1980		
5	Blanche Bloch (Alexander Bloch, Friends, Sanitarium)	1905-1912
<u>Box 4</u>		
1	Blanche Bloch (Simon)	1907-1910
2	Blanche Bloch (German Letters – Dated)	1908-1911?
3	Blanche Bloch (German Letters – Undated)	1908-1911?
4	Blanche Bloch (On ship <i>President Lincoln</i>)	1911-1912
5	Blanche Bloch (Alexander Bloch in Europe)	1913
<u>Box 5</u>		
1	Blanche Bloch (Alexander Bloch, Family, Professional)	1914-1935
2	Blanche Bloch (Family, Friends, Damaged)	1936-1939
3	Blanche Bloch (Family, Friends, Professional)	1940-1946
4	Blanche Bloch (Commercial, Charitable, Political)	1940-1981
5	Blanche Bloch (Family, Friends, Professional)	1947-1952

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Series III. Correspondence (Continued)		
Sub-series 2. Blanche Bloch (Continued)		
<u>Box 6</u>		
1	Blanche Bloch (Family, Friends, Professional)	1953-1967
2	Blanche Bloch (Family, Friends, Professional)	1968-1977
3	Blanche Bloch (Alexander Bloch, Family, Friends, Professional)	No Date
4	Blanche Bloch's Bereavement	1980
<u>Box 7</u>		
Series III. Correspondence		
 Sub-series 3. Mr. and Mrs. Bloch, Friends and Family, 1916-1977		
1	Correspondence	1916-1969
2	Correspondence	1970-1976
3	Correspondence	1977
Series III. Correspondence		
 Sub-series 4. Mom and Dad from Family, Jamie, Alan, Etc., 1913-1966		
4	Correspondence	1913-1935
<u>Box 8</u>		
1	Correspondence	1936
2	Correspondence	1937
3	Correspondence	1938
4	Correspondence	1939
5	Correspondence	1940
6	Correspondence	1941

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
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Series III. Correspondence, (Continued)

Sub series 4. Mom and Dad from Family, Jamie, Alan, Etc. (Continued)

Box 9

1	Correspondence	1942
2	Correspondence	1943
3	Correspondence	1944

Box 10

1	Correspondence	1945
2	Correspondence	1946-1949
3	Correspondence	1950-1951

Box 11

1	Correspondence	1952-1955
2	Correspondence	1956-1958
3	Correspondence	1959-1962

Box 12

1	Correspondence	1963-1965
2	Correspondence	1966
3	Correspondence	Undated

Series IV. Manuscripts, 1919-1959

Box 13

1	Blanche Bloch, <i>All Her Years</i>	1959
2	Blanche Bloch, <i>Atmosphere</i>	No Date

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Series IV. Manuscripts (Continued)		
<u>Box 13</u> (Continued)		
3	Blanche Bloch & Albert Kassel, <i>Awkay Boris</i>	No Date
4	Blanche Bloch, <i>Awkay Boris</i>	No Date
5	Blanche Bloch, <i>Awkay Boris</i>	No Date
6	Blanche Bloch, <i>The Bach Festival Murders</i>	Ca. 1940
7	Blanche Bloch, <i>The Bach Festival Murders</i> , Synopsis #144	Ca. 1940
<u>Box 14</u>		
1	Blanche Bloch, <i>The Bach Festival Murders</i> , #145-#284	Ca. 1940
2	Blanche Bloch, <i>The Bach Festival Murders</i> , #285-#404 & 88-119	Ca. 1940
3	Blanche Bloch, <i>The Beautiful Succubus</i>	No Date
4	Blanche Bloch, <i>The Buttonhole Man</i>	No Date
5	Blanche Bloch, <i>Exploring Life</i>	No Date
6	Blanche Bloch and Lucienne Glorieux, <i>First Class to Heaven</i> – Scripts	No Date
7	Blanche Bloch, <i>Folk Dance Memoranda</i>	No Date
8	Blanche Bloch, <i>A Great Man</i> – Script	1921
9	Blanche Bloch, <i>The Guarnerius</i>	No Date
10	Blanche Bloch, <i>Kat</i> – Script	1919
11	Blanche Bloch, <i>A Little Something for Their Trouble</i>	No Date
12	Blanche Bloch, <i>Look to Your License!</i>	No Date
13	Blanche Bloch, <i>Midsummer Madness</i>	No Date
14	Blanche Bloch, <i>Moira</i>	No Date

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Series IV. Manuscripts (Continued)		
<u>Box 14</u> (Continued)		
15	Blanche Bloch, <i>Mossback</i>	No Date
16	Blanche Bloch, (Prohibition Story)	No Date
<u>Box 15</u>		
1	Blanche Bloch, <i>A Public Benefactor</i>	No Date
2	Blanche Bloch, <i>Seeing Life</i> – Script	1919
3	Blanche Bloch, <i>Service Flag</i>	No Date
4	Blanche Bloch, <i>Small Town Symphony</i>	No Date
4	Blanche Bloch, <i>So Why Not Say It/A Few Heartfelt Comments</i>	No Date
6	Blanche Bloch, <i>The Strange Case of Mr. Crawford</i>	Ca. 1947
7	Blanche Bloch, <i>Summer Idyll</i> (1 of 2 different)	No Date
8	Blanche Bloch, <i>Summer Idyll</i> (2 of 2 different)	No Date
9	Blanche Bloch, <i>Teach Him Yourself</i>	No Date
10	Blanche Bloch, (Town Politics)	No Date
11	Blanche Bloch, <i>Unfair Exchange</i> (Script)	1938
12-16	Blanche Bloch, (Untitled)	No Date
17	Blanche Bloch, <i>Whiskers</i>	No Date
<u>Box 16</u>		
1	Blanche Bloch, (W.W. II Cargo Flying)	No Date
2	Blanche Bloch, (Writing)	No Date
3	Blanche Bloch, <i>You Meet Such Interesting People</i>	No Date

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Series IV. Manuscripts (Continued)		
<u>Box 16</u> (Continued)		
4	Miscellaneous, (Fiction, Poetry, Articles)	1897-1959
5	Music by Alexander Bloch, <i>The Grey River</i> <i>Gone Gone Is Summer the Lovely</i>	No Date
6	Music by Arthur Davison Ficke, (Operetta, Libretto) and Alexander Bloch, <i>The Lone Tree</i>	No Date
7	School Papers	1931-1935
8	School Papers	1933-1935
Series V. Notes, 1903-1959		
<u>Box 17</u>		
1	Small Diaries, Etc. by Blanche Bloch (Diary 1903-1904, Reading List)	1903-1921
2	Notebooks, Scrapbooks by Blanche Bloch (Sketches, Costumes, W. K. Kellogg Sanitarium Book)	1906
3	Notebooks by Blanche Bloch (Children, Thoughts)	1916-1921
4	Notebooks by Blanche Bloch (Children, Thoughts, Fiction)	1923-1929
5	Alan Bloch Notebooks (World War II Cargo Aircrew, Memories)	1925-1935
6	Blanche Bloch (5 Year Diary, 1939 and Notebook 1937 plus Two small notebooks)	1937-1939
<u>Box 18</u>		
1	Small Diaries, Etc. by Blanche Bloch (Diary 1946, Thoughts)	1946
2	Alexander Bloch (Calendar)	1951

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Series V. Notes (Continued)		
<u>Box 18</u> (Continued)		
3	Alexander Bloch (Personal Concert Diaries)	1953-1954
4	Blanche Bloch? (Calendar)	1955
5	Alexander Bloch (Personal Concert Diaries)	1955-1956
6	Alexander Bloch, <i>Violins Old and New</i>	1957
7	Alexander Bloch, (Personal Concert Diaries)	1957-1959
8	Alexander Bloch, <i>How to Practice, Some Problems of Violin Technic</i> , (Teaching Violin)	No Date
9	Alexander Bloch, <i>You Can't Kill a Talent, What Makes a Great Teacher?, What Next in Music?</i>	No Date
10	Blanche Bloch, <i>Ancient Instruments</i> , (Talk)	No Date
11	Blanche Bloch (Miscellaneous)	No Date
<u>Box 19</u>		
Series VI. Periodicals, 1928-1947		
1	<i>Harpers</i> , "I Didn't Have a Teacher's License," by Blanche Bloch, (Anonymous)	1938
2	<i>Todays Woman</i> , "The Strange Case of Mr. Crawford," by Blanche Bloch	Nov. 1947
3	<i>Writers Digest</i> , "Title Bites Musician," by Blanche Bloch	Feb. 1942
4	<i>The Nation</i> , (Four Music Reviews) by Blanche Bloch	1928-1929
Series VII. Photographs, Ca. 1910-Ca. 1980		
5	Negatives (7) – Family Photos (Poor Quality)	1920s-1940s?
6	Prints – Alexander and Blanche Bloch	1920s-1980s?
7	Prints – Bloch Performances	1900s-1970s?

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Series VI. Photographs (Continued)		
<u>Box 19</u> (Continued)		
8	Prints – Children and Grandchildren	1939-1961
9	Prints – Colleagues and Students	1910s-1940s?
10	Prints – “The Farm”	1920s-1980s?
Series VIII. Programs, Ca. 1900-1920		
11	Bloch Concerts	No Date
12	Bloch Concerts	1900-1920
<u>Box 20</u>		
1	Bloch Concerts	1920s
2	Bloch Concerts	1930s
3	Bloch Concerts	1940s
4	Bloch Concerts	1950s
5	Bloch Concerts	1960s-1980s
6	Non Bloch Concerts	1911-1978
Series IX. Publications, 1913-1977		
<u>Box 21</u>		
1	Publicity Handbills in Russian	1913
2	Gifts, <i>The Auer Mystique</i> (Article) <i>Florida West Coast Symphony Orchestra</i> , (History)	1918-1977
3	Textbooks by Alexander Bloch, <i>American Academic Series (Violin)</i> , #5, #13, #14, #21	Ca. 1920?
4	Book by Alexander Bloch, <i>Rare Violins, Violas Violoncellos</i>	1931

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Series VIII. Publications (Continued)		
<u>Box 21</u> (Continued)		
5	Book by Blanche Bloch, <i>The Bach Festival Murders</i>	1942
6	Publicity, Alexander and Blanche Bloch	1944-1977
Series X. Scrapbooks and Large Manuscripts, 1897-1962		
<u>Box 22</u> (F-20)		
	Sheet Music relating to Alexander Bloch's transcription, scoring, and orchestral use of <i>Chaconne</i> by <i>Tomaso Vitali</i> .	1954
<u>Box 23</u> (F-20)		
	Sheet Music relating to <i>Gone Gone Is Summer the Lovely</i> and <i>The Lone Tree</i> by Alexander Bloch	No Date
<u>Box 24</u> (F-20)		
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch at Columbia U.	1897
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch's Violin Career	1914-1917
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of Central Florida Symphony Orchestra, Winter Park	1938-1939
<u>Box 25</u> (F-20)		
	Poster of Alexander Bloch's String Quartet at Summer School of Music	1930s?
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch's Violin Career	1913-1929
	Scrapbook on Alexander and Blanche Bloch's Careers	1918-1920s
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch - Conductor of Central Florida Symphony Orchestra, Winter Park	1940-1941

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<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Series X. Scrapbooks, Etc. (Continued)		
<u>Box 26</u> (F-20)		
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1950-1952
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1952-1955
<u>Box 27</u> (F-20)		
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1953
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1954-1955
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1955
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1955-1956
<u>Box 28</u> (F-20)		
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1956-1957
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1957-1958
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1958-1959
<u>Box 29</u> (F-20)		
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i>	1960
	Scrapbook on Alexander Bloch – Conductor of the <i>Florida West Coast Symphony</i> (Includes photograph of Bloch Playing his violin in the orchestra)	1960-1962

