



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Robert L. and Jessie S. Bloom Papers
Manuscript Collection No. 93**



Collection Summary

Title	Robert L. and Jessie S. Bloom Papers
Dates	1897-1980 (bulk 1960-1980)
Collection Number	MS-93
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Bloom, Robert L., 1878-1974 Bloom, Jessie S., 1887-1980
Extent	5.2 linear feet (13 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Robert L.(1878-1974) and Jessie S. (1887-1980) Bloom were married for over sixty years. For most of those years, they lived and worked together in Alaska as twentieth century pioneers on the final frontier of the United States.

Robert L. Bloom was born in Siaulie, Lithuania on October 15, 1878. At the age of eight his family moved to Dublin, Ireland and in 1897, he came to Alaska in search of gold. Robert had little success as a prospector, so he moved to Seattle, Washington to earn enough money to be able to return to Alaska. In 1904 he did return and settled in Fairbanks. He used the supplies he had brought with him from Seattle to open a hardware and general merchandise store.

Jessie S. Bloom was born in Dublin, Ireland to Leon and Olga (Kopelansky) Spiro on December 17, 1887. She spent her childhood in Dublin but left there when she was 21 to go to London, England to work as a secretary. While in London Jessie became involved in the growing women's suffrage movement, joining the Women's Freedom League in 1909, and working for passage of a suffrage law by selling pro-suffrage newspapers and attending rallies.

Robert and Jessie met in 1910, in Dublin, when both, coincidentally, were vacationing there. In 1912, Robert and Jessie, who were also second cousins, were married in London. Shortly afterward they moved to Alaska.

The transition from England to Alaska was not unpleasant for Jessie and they soon began their pioneer life together, working on the development and settling of Alaska.

Robert was involved in many activities. He was a charter member of Igloo No. 4, Pioneers of Alaska, a fraternal organization. He was a member of an advisory group that helped establish an Air Force base in Alaska and was a founder of what was later to become the University of Alaska, serving a member of the Board of Trustees of the U.A.'s forerunner, the Alaska Agriculture College and School of Mines from 1921 to 1925.

Jessie, too, became involved in a number of activities. Two of her major accomplishments were the establishment in 1918 of the first kindergarten in the city of Fairbanks and, the formation in 1926 of the first Girl Scout Troup in Alaska. Today, the Girl Scout training center in Fairbanks is named in her honor.

Together, the Blooms were co-founders of the Fairbanks Airplane Company and in 1925 Jessie became one of the first women in Alaska ever to ride in an airplane. Robert and Jessie were also very active in conservation efforts in Alaska, supporting efforts to set aside lands for wilderness preserves and opposing efforts such as the Alaskan oil pipeline, which, they felt, posed a serious threat to Alaska's natural environment. Finally, the Blooms were very active in establishing and promoting the Jewish community in Alaska. Robert served as chairman of Alaska's Jewish Welfare Board and together, they served as unofficial chaplains for Jewish servicemen stationed in Alaska during World War II.

The Blooms also raised a family in Alaska. They had four daughters: Meta Buttnick, Dr. Olga Bloom Backer, Dr. Deborah Kaplan and Ruth Ibbetson.

Robert and Jessie moved to Seattle to retire. Robert died there in April 1974 at the age of 95. Jessie remained in Seattle, in continual close contact with the friends, activities, and causes she had left behind in Alaska, until her death in December, 1980 at the age of 92.

Scope and Content	The papers describe the lives of Robert and Jessie Bloom, pioneers in the settling and development of Alaska. The collection consists primarily of correspondence but also includes diaries, photographs, reminiscences, clippings, and personal items.
Arrangement	Organized into two (2) series: A. Correspondence; B. Personal.
Terms of Access	The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.
Terms of Reproduction and Use	This collection has been placed in the permanent care, custody, and control of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) by the donors of the collection. Questions concerning rights to use or publish materials from the collection should be addressed to the Executive Director of the AJA. For more information, see the American Jewish Archives copyright information webpage.
Preferred Citation	Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Robert L. and Jessie S. Bloom Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows: [Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-93. Robert L. and Jessie S. Bloom Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Provenance	Received from Jessie S. Bloom, Seattle, Wash., 1979-1980.
Processing Information	Processed by Kevin Proffitt, December 1981.

Index Terms

Subjects	Alaska / Jewish women / Jews -- Alaska / Women authors
Personal Names	Bernstein, Philip S. (Philip Sydney), 1901-1985 / Bloom, Jessie S., 1887-1980 / Bloom, Robert L., 1878-1974
Corporate Names	University of Alaska
Media	Autobiographies / Diaries / Photographs

Series A. Correspondence, 1897-1980, undated

Extent 3.8 linear feet (9.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement

The series is divided into two (2) subseries: 1. General; 2. Family.

Subseries 1. General, 1919-1980, undated

Extent 3.2 linear feet (8 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of correspondence and some newsletters and clippings. Of particular interest is the correspondence between Jessie Bloom, Philip S. Bernstein, and Jacob R. Marcus. In these letters she recounts many of her and her husband's experiences as pioneers in Alaska.

Arrangement The correspondence in this series is arranged alphabetically by the name of the person or organization. Letters are arranged chronologically within each folder.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. A, General.

Box 1. Folder 2. Abrams, Emmie, 1940-1946, 1967-1979

Box 1. Folder 3. Adams, Brock, 1966-1976, undated

Box 1. Folder 4. Alaska [University of], 1946, 1961-1969

Box 1. Folder 5. Alaska [University of], 1970-1973

Box 1. Folder 6. Alaska [University of], 1974-1979, undated

Box 1. Folder 7. Alaskan-Jewish Chronicle, 1963-1968, undated

Box 1. Folder 8. American Israel Public Affairs Committee, 1968-1978

Box 1. Folder 9. American Jewish Archives, 1962-1975

Box 1. Folder 10. Amsky, Albert and Laura, 1944-1952

Box 1. Folder 11. August, Michael, 1953-1980

Box 1. Folder 12. Avnet, Barbara, 1967-1977, undated

Box 1. Folder 13. Avnet, Libby, 1970-1979, undated

Box 2. Folder 1. B, General.

Box 2. Folder 2. Benditt, Marcella, 1965, 1973-1977, undated

Box 2. Folder 3. Bernstein, Philip S., 1949-1963

Box 2. Folder 4. Bernstein, Philip S., 1964-1969

Box 2. Folder 5. Bernstein, Philip S., 1970-1973

Box 2. Folder 6. Bernstein, Philip S., 1974-1976

Box 2. Folder 7. Bernstein, Philip S., 1977-1980, undated

Box 2. Folder 8. Blakeney, Lily, 1937-1957

Box 2. Folder 9. Blakeney, Lily, 1960-1980, undated

Box 2. Folder 10. Bloom, Kathryn, 1976-1977, undated

Box 2. Folder 11. Bloomfield, Bernice, 1970-1975

Box 2. Folder 12. Bloomfield, Bernice, 1976-1980

Box 2. Folder 13. Bonker, Don, 1977-1978

Box 3. Folder 1. C, General.

Box 3. Folder 2. Carter, Bill, 1960, undated

Box 3. Folder 3. Carter, Jimmy, 1977-1979, undated

Box 3. Folder 4. CBS, Inc. ["Invitation to Learning"].

Box 3. Folder 5. Charney, Charles and Gertrude, 1933-1979, undated

Box 3. Folder 6. Clarke, Irving, 1968-1969

Box 3. Folder 7. Cohen, Samuel I., 1984

Box 3. Folder 8. Commentary, 1950-1977, undated

Box 3. Folder 9. Cunningham, John E., 1977-1978

Box 3. Folder 10. D, General.

Box 3. Folder 11. Delaney, Caroline, 1974-1980

Box 3. Folder 12. Dover, Barbara (Cohn), 1977-1979, undated

Box 3. Folder 13. E-F, General.

Box 3. Folder 14. Egan, William A., 1963-1974

Box 3. Folder 15. Ervin, Sam J., 1972-1973

Box 3. Folder 16. Eschwege, Henry, 1945-1979

Box 3. Folder 17. Evans, Daniel J., 1969-1970

Box 3. Folder 18. Farthest North Girl Scout Council, 1965, 1974-1979, undated

Box 3. Folder 19-20. Farthest North Girl Scout Council [newsletter], 1976-1979, undated

Box 4. Folder 1. Fenton, Celia and Jack, 1953, 1964-1975, undated

Box 4. Folder 2. Fox, Beatrice, 1943-1944

Box 4. Folder 3. Fraser, Helen A., 1972-1978

Box 4. Folder 4. Fulbright, J. William, 1966-1971, undated

Box 4. Folder 5. G, General.

Box 4. Folder 6. Gravel, Mike, 1969-1978

Box 4. Folder 7. Gruening, Ernest, 1965-1969

Box 4. Folder 8. H, General.

Box 4. Folder 9. Haffner, Rae, 1977-1979, undated

Box 4. Folder 10. Hamer, Joseph, 1944-1945

Box 4. Folder 11. Harman, Avraham and Zena, 1960, 1975-1980, undated

Box 4. Folder 12. Hickie, Walter J., 1967-1972

Box 4. Folder 13. Hotykay, Charles and Edith, 1974-1978

Box 4. Folder 14. Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1952-1953

Box 4. Folder 15. Hyman, Louis, 1933-1971

Box 4. Folder 16. I-K, General.

Box 4. Folder 17. Interior Department, 1919-1978

Box 4. Folder 18. Jackson, Henry M., 1967-1970

Box 4. Folder 19. Jackson, Henry M., 1971-1979, undated

Box 4. Folder 20. Jerusalem Mental Health Center - Esrath Nashim, 1969-1979, undated

Box 4. Folder 21. Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society, 1933-1957

Box 4. Folder 22. The Jewish Transcript, 1974-1979

Box 5. Folder 1. L, General.

Box 5. Folder 2. League of Women Voters, 1954, 1969-1979

Box 5. Folder 3. Lebeson, Anita, 1971-1977, undated

Box 5. Folder 4. Levi, Brenda M., 1940-1945, 1971-1980, undated

Box 5. Folder 5. Lowell, Ted and Babe, 1960-1973

Box 5. Folder 6. Lowell, Ted and Babe, 1974-1976

Box 5. Folder 7. Lowell, Ted and Babe, 1977-1979, undated

Box 5. Folder 8. M, General.

Box 5. Folder 9. Magnuson, Warren G., 1957-1978

Box 5. Folder 10. Marcus, Jacob R., 1975-1976

Box 5. Folder 11. Marcus, Jacob R., 1977-1978

Box 5. Folder 12. Marcus, Jacob R., 1979-1980, undated

Box 6. Folder 1. McCall's, 1965-1974

Box 6. Folder 2. McGovern, George, 1971-1973, undated

Box 6. Folder 3. Miller, Sarah, 1965-1980

Box 6. Folder 4. Moore, Jim, 1969-1972

Box 6. Folder 5. N-O, General.

Box 6. Folder 6. National Jewish Welfare Board, 1944-1967

Box 6. Folder 7. Nordale, Katherine, 1968-1975

Box 6. Folder 8. Nordale, Katherine, 1976-1977

Box 6. Folder 9. Nordale, Katherine, 1978-1979, undated

Box 6. Folder 10. Offman, Shelley, 1971-1979, undated

Box 6. Folder 11. P, General.

Box 6. Folder 12. Percy, Charles H., 1969-1970, undated

Box 6. Folder 13. Pollock, Howard W., 1969-1970, undated

Box 6. Folder 14. Pratt, Dorothy, 1970-1978, undated

Box 7. Folder 1. R, General.

Box 7. Folder 2. Rabinowitz, Jay and Anne, 1965-1980

Box 7. Folder 3. Richman, Jessica, 1971-1980

Box 7. Folder 4. Rogge, Pat, 1973-1979

Box 7. Folder 5. Rose, Eugene and Vivian, 1971-1977, undated

Box 7. Folder 6. Rubin, Bill, 1967-1968

Box 7. Folder 7. Rubin, Cyrus and Grace, 1971-1977, undated

Box 7. Folder 8. Sa-Se, General.

Box 7. Folder 9. Sandrow, Edward T., 1963-1971

Box 7. Folder 10. Schechter, Meta J., 1970-1978, undated

Box 7. Folder 11. Schein, Ruth and Samuel, 1974-1977

Box 7. Folder 12. Schlentner, Carol, 1976-1979, undated

Box 7. Folder 13. Seattle City Council, 1963-1969

Box 7. Folder 14. Seattle Times, 1961-1978

Box 7. Folder 15. Sh-Sw, General.

Box 7. Folder 16. Silk, Leonard, 1944-1979, undated

Box 7. Folder 17. Simon, Ida, 1944-1945, undated

Box 7. Folder 18. Simon, Robert A., 1945-1954, undated

Box 7. Folder 19. Smith, Norma, 1973-1977, undated

Box 8. Folder 1. Stevens, Ted, 1969-1973

Box 8. Folder 2. Stevens, Ted, 1974-1979, undated

Box 8. Folder 3. Stewart, Florence, 1972-1980

Box 8. Folder 4. T-Z, General.

Box 8. Folder 5. Time Magazine, 1967-1978, undated

Box 8. Folder 6. Trevor, Bob, 1972-1976

Box 8. Folder 7. Udall, Morris K., 1973-1978, undated

Box 8. Folder 8. United Jewish Appeal, 1944-1976

Box 8. Folder 9. United Nations Association, 1969-1974, undated

Box 8. Folder 10. Waage, Peg, 1973-1979, undated

Box 8. Folder 11. Weinberger, Morris and Martha, 1944-1945, undated

Box 8. Folder 12. Weizmann Institute of Science, 1974, 1978

Box 8. Folder 13. Wilson, Rosalind, 1952, undated

Box 8. Folder 14. Winfree, Betty, 1972-1980

Box 8. Folder 15. Yiddish letters.

Box 8. Folder 16-19. Unidentified, 1933-1980, undated

Subseries 2. Family, 1897-1980, undated

Extent 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement The letters are arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically within each folder.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 9. Folder 1. Backer, Olga B. [daughter], 1940-1980

Box 9. Folder 2. Bloom, Percy [nephew], 1945, 1964-1980, undated

Box 9. Folder 3. Bloom, Robert, 1933, 1940-1941, 1951

Box 9. Folder 4. Bloom, Robert, 1960-1966, undated

Box 9. Folder 5. Bloom, Solomon [brother of Robert Bloom], 1936-1967

Box 9. Folder 6. Buttnick, Meta [daughter], 1939, 1980, undated

Box 9. Folder 7. Burrnick, Morris A. [grandson], 1967-1977, undated

Box 9. Folder 8. Ibbetson, Peter [grandson], 1948, 1957-1975, undated

Box 9. Folder 9. Ibbetson, Ruth [daughter], 1930-1949

Box 9. Folder 10. Ibbetson, Ruth [daughter], 1956-1965

Box 9. Folder 11. Ibbetson, Ruth [daughter], 1966-1974, undated

Box 10. Folder 1. Kaplan, David [grandson], 1971-1977, undated

Box 10. Folder 2. Kaplan, Deborah [daughter], 1933-1968

Box 10. Folder 3. Kaplan, Deborah [daughter], 1971-1977

Box 10. Folder 4. Kaplan, Deborah [daughter], 1978-1980, undated

Box 10. Folder 5. Kaplan, Israel [son-in-law], 1940-1944, 1976-1979, undated

Box 10. Folder 6. Kaplan, Michael [grandson], 1976-1978

Box 10. Folder 7. Paul, David [son-in-law], 1974-1976, undated

Box 10. Folder 8. Paul, Rachel [granddaughter], 1949, 1960-1979 undated

Box 10. Folder 9. Psaty, Gwen [granddaughter], 1970-1976, undated

Box 10. Folder 10. Richardson, Bay [niece], 1973-1977

Box 10. Folder 11. Schein, Isabel B. [granddaughter], 1968-1970, undated

Box 10. Folder 12. Spiro, Leon [father of Jessie Bloom], 1897

Box 10. Folder 13. Family miscellaneous, 1912, 1966-1979, undated

Series B. Personal, 1897-1979

Extent 1.4 linear feet (3.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of personal items, diaries, financial papers, notes and photographs. Many of the photographs are dated and labeled and portray personal events and acquaintances of Robert and Jessie Bloom.

Arrangement The material in this series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 10. Folder 14. Adelaide Outdoor Club minute book, 1908-1909, undated

Box 10. Folder 15. Biographical material [Robert Bloom], 1952-1974, undated

Box 10. Folder 16. Clippings.

Box 11. Folder 1. Diary [Jessie Bloom], 1964-1966

Box 11. Folder 2. Diary [Jessie Bloom], 1973

Box 11. Folder 3. Diary [Jessie Bloom], 1973-1975

Box 11. Folder 4-5. Documents, 1905-1972

Box 11. Folder 6. Estate [Robert Bloom], 1972-1976, undated

Box 11. Folder 7. Financial papers, 1909-1920

Box 11. Folder 8. Financial papers, 1949-1979, undated

Box 11. Folder 9. Financial papers [Mt. McKinley Mutual Savings Bank], 1972-1974, undated

Box 11. Folder 10. Last will and testament [Robert Bloom], 1970

Box 11. Folder 11. Letters of condolence (written at the time of the death of Robert Bloom) [A-W, unidentified], 1974

Box 12. Folder 1. Notebook [Jessie Bloom], undated

Box 12. Folder 2. Notes [Jessie Bloom], 1937-1977, undated

Box 12. Folder 3. Passports, 1928-1952

Box 12. Folder 4-5. Photographs, 1902-1979, undated

Box 12. Folder 6-8. Reminiscences [Jessie Bloom], 1936, 1952, 1965-1972, undated

Box 13. Folder 1. Reminiscences [Jessie Bloom], undated

Box 13. Folder 2-3. Reminiscences [Jessie Bloom - Dublin, Ireland], undated

Box 13. Folder 4. Reminiscences [Jessie Bloom - "Watching Alaska Grow"], undated

Box 13. Folder 5. Personal miscellaneous, 1897-1978, undated