A Finding Aid to the
Sheldon H. and Amy K. Blank Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 730
Collection Summary

Title: Sheldon H. and Amy K. Blank Papers, 1885-2009
Collection Number: MS-730
Repository: The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator: Blank, Sheldon H. (Sheldon Haas), 1896-1989
Blank, Amy K.
Extent: 10.8 linear feet (27 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material: German, Hebrew, and English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch
Sheldon Blank (1896-1989) was born in Mt. Carmel, Illinois on September 17, 1896. Blank attended Hebrew Union College (HUC) and the University of Cincinnati (UC) and earned a Ph.D. from UC in 1920. He was ordained as a rabbi in 1923 by HUC. He then earned another Ph.D. at the University of Jena, Germany in 1925. He joined the faculty of Hebrew Union College in 1926 and was active there until his death over sixty years later. Blank was a professor of Bible and was involved in a multitude of committees such as academics, curriculum, and graduate study. He was also the editor of the HUC Annual for many years.

Blank was involved with both academic and professional organizations. He was on the Executive Board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) 1968-1970, president of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1952, and president of the American Oriental Society in 1947.

Blank was the author of Prophetic Faith in Isaiah (1958), Jeremiah, Man and Prophet (1961), Understanding the Prophets (1969), Prophetic Thought, Essays and Addresses (1977). He also wrote numerous articles and book reviews for scholarly journals.

Amy Blank (1898-1990) was born Amy Kirchberger in London, England on December 16, 1898. Amy was the youngest of three children born to Karl and Emma Kirchberger. In 1915, Amy became involved with the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, where she met Lily Montagu, Claude Montefiore, and Israel Mattuck. She became lifelong friends with Israel and Edna Mattuck.

Amy was a poet, playwright, author, and musician. She wrote four books: “I Know Four” and Other Things, And Jacob Blessed Pharaoh, Spoken Choice, and The Struggle and Other Poems. Her poetry and short stories were also published in various magazines and journals throughout her career.


Scope and Content
Correspondence, manuscripts of writings, speeches and other material relating to Sheldon and Amy Blank’s careers, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and personal matters. The collection also includes Sheldon and Amy’s autobiographies as well as Amy’s poetry and short stories. Some folders contain photographs or newspaper clippings.

Arrangement
This collection is arranged in five (5) series:
Series A. Correspondence
Series B. Writings
Series C. Amy Blank
Series D. Personal
Series E. Accrual

Access Restrictions
Box 5, folder 4, is restricted until 2037. Box 21, folder 3 is restricted; Permission of AJA’s director required.

Preferred Citation
Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Sheldon H. and Amy K. Blank Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:
[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-730. Sheldon H. and Amy K. Blank Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Provenance The Sheldon H. and Amy K. Blank Papers were received from Sheldon H. Blank and the Blank family in multiple donations.


Index Terms

Subjects Bible -- Study and teaching / Immigrants / Jewish college teachers / Jewish women / Jews -- Ohio -- Cincinnati / Poets / Rabbis


Corporate Names Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion -- Faculty / Liberal Jewish Synagogue (London, England) / World Union for Progressive Judaism

Media Autobiographies / Photographs / Scrapbooks

Series A. Correspondence, 1885-1989, undated

Extent 2.4 linear feet (6 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement

The series is arranged in four (4) subseries: 1. General; 2. Family; 3. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; 4. Refugee Files.

Subseries 1. General, 1917-1987, undated

Extent 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains general correspondence belonging to Sheldon H. Blank and Amy Blank.

Arrangement The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. A-F. General. [Contains some of Amy's correspondence], 1921-1983, undated
Box 1. Folder 2. Albright, William F., 1933-1937, undated
Box 1. Folder 3. American School of Oriental Research. [Newsletters], 1960-1963
Box 1. Folder 8. Encyclopedia Judaica, 1929-1931
Box 1. Folder 10. G-I. General, 1921-1987, undated
Box 1. Folder 12. Goldberg, Eric. [Contains some of Amy's correspondence],
1936-1958


Box 1. Folder 14. Grand Rapids seminar at Temple Emanuel, 1977

Box 1. Folder 15. Harper & Brothers, 1956-1966

Box 1. Folder 16. Hebrew Union College centennial volume, 1972-1975


Box 1. Folder 18. J-L. General. [Contains some of Amy’s correspondence], 1921-1977, undated

Box 2. Folder 1. Jeremiah, Man and Prophet. [Contains newspaper clippings], 1958-1969, undated

Box 2. Folder 2. Jewish Publication Society. Bernard L. Frankel, 1941


Box 2. Folder 4. Marcus, Jacob Rader, 1922-1969

Box 2. Folder 5. Mattuck, Israel. [Contains photographs and some of Amy’s correspondence], 1917-1955

Box 2. Folder 6. Miscellaneous, 1926-1976, undated


Box 2. Folder 8. Montefiore, Claude G., 1918-1958, undated


Box 2. Folder 12. Prophetic Thought and Understanding the Prophets, 1968-1977, undated

Box 2. Folder 13. Reactions to essays and addresses. [Contains some of Amy’s correspondence], 1950-1979, undated

Box 2. Folder 14. Reactions to "Of a Truth the Lord Hath Sent Me" and "The Relevance of Prophetic Thought for the American Rabbi", 1955-1956, undated

Box 3. Folder 1. Reactions to Prophetic Faith in Isaiah, 1957-1966, undated

Box 3. Folder 2. S-Z. General. [Contains some of Amy’s correspondence], 1918-1987


Box 3. Folder 5. Standard Bible Committee, 1952


Box 3. Folder 7. UAHC Teachers Week Institute, 1964-1966, undated

Box 3. Folder 8. Unknown, 1918-1985, undated


Subseries 2. Family, 1885-1978, undated

Extent  0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)
**Scope and Content Note**
Contains Blank and Kirchberger family letters.

**Arrangement**
The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box 3. Folder 11. Blank family, 1925-1978, undated

Box 4. Folder 1. Kirchberger, Clare. [Contains Amy's correspondence], 1935-1960, undated

Box 4. Folder 2. Kirchberger family. [Contains Amy's correspondence], 1892-1940, undated

Box 4. Folder 3. Kirchberger family. [Contains Amy's correspondence], 1945-1948, undated

Box 4. Folder 4. Kirchberger family history, 1885

Box 4. Folder 5. Kirchberger, Oscar. [Contains Amy's correspondence], 1912-1947, undated

Box 4. Folder 6. Marriage and Amy's citizenship. [Contains some of Amy's correspondence], 1925-1926, undated

**Subseries 3. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1939-1989, undated**

**Extent** 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note**
The subseries delves into the work that Blank accomplished during his tenure at HUC-JIR.

**Arrangement**
The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

**Box and Folder Listing**


Box 5. Folder 1. Curriculum Committee, 1941-1960, undated


Box 5. Folder 3. Executive Committee, 1955-1959

Box 5. Folder 4. Faculty reviews. [Restricted until 2037], 1962, undated

Box 5. Folder 5. Graduate Study Committee, 1966-1973, undated

Box 5. Folder 6. Personal file. [Contains newspaper clippings and photographs], 1978-1989, undated


Subseries 4. Refugee Files, 1936-1948, undated

Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Contains correspondence related to Blank’s attempts to get family, friends, and scholars out of Germany prior to and during World War II. These letters are to and from the people he was trying to rescue as well as officials from both the United States and Great Britain. He was often successful in his attempts but not always. Those who were lucky enough to come to the United States were often sponsored by friends of Blank's since one person could not financially vouch for as many people as he helped escape.

Arrangement The subseries is arranged alphabetically

Box and Folder Listing

Box 6. Folder 1. Affidavits and visas, 1939-1948, undated
Box 6. Folder 2. Refugee files. [Contains some of Amy's correspondence], 1936-1938
Box 6. Folder 3. Refugee files, 1939
Box 6. Folder 4. Refugee files. [Contains some of Amy's correspondence], 1940
Box 6. Folder 5. Refugee files. [Contains some of Amy's correspondence], 1941-1947, undated
Box 6. Folder 6. Refugee files, undated

Series B. Writings, 1916-1987, undated

Extent 2.8 linear feet (7 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Of interest are Blank's notes for his classes at HUC-JIR. Contains works such as Blank's dissertations for his two Ph.D. degrees.

Arrangement The series is arranged in three (3) subseries: 1. General; 2. Class Notes; 3. Sermons.


Extent 1.8 linear feet (4.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note This subseries contains Blank's general writings including two college dissertations, speeches, and Purim spiels.

Arrangement This subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 7. Folder 1. B-J, general, 1926-1975, undated
Subseries 2. Class Notes, 1937-1977, undated

Extent 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains the notes Blank prepared to teach courses while at HUC-JIR.

Arrangement The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 11. Folder 5. C survey, 1937, undated
Box 11. Folder 6. Exodus, 1940-1942, undated
Box 11. Folder 8. Golden Calf, 1945, undated
Box 11. Folder 10. Isaiah anonymous material, undated

Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Contains sermons written and presented by Blank.

Arrangement The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 13. Folder 1. I-P, general, 1921-1976, undated
Box 13. Folder 2. R-Z, general, 1921-1976, undated
Box 13. Folder 4. Sermons, untitled, undated

Series C. Amy Blank, 1921-1987, undated

Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Contains Amy Blank’s many stories, poems and plays. Of special interest is Amy’s family biography.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 14. Folder 5. Notes, 1941, undated
Box 14. Folder 6. Plays, undated
Box 14. Folder 8. Services, 1946-1960, undated
Box 14. Folder 11. Stories, undated

Series D. Personal, 1902-1978, undated
Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Contains awards and personal items owned by Blank. The photographs are an interesting look into the Blank and Kirchberger families while the many passports weave the story of the exciting life of travel the Blanks led.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 15. Folder 1. Army. [Contains newspaper clippings], 1918-1919, undated
Box 15. Folder 2. Awards, 1951-1978, undated
Box 15. Folder 3. Passports. [Contains Amy's passports as well], 1925-1966
Box 15. Folder 4. Scrapbook. [Contains correspondence and photographs], 1902-1961, undated
Box 15. Folder 5. University of Cincinnati yearbook and scrapbook, 1917-1919, undated
Box 15. Folder 6. University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College grades, 1915-1918, undated

Series E. Accrual, 1896-2009, undated
Extent 4.8 linear feet (12 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains correspondence, writings, speeches, and personal papers belonging to both Sheldon H. and Amy K. Blank from childhood through their adult lives. The series is divided into 2 subseries separating Sheldon's papers from Amy's. Of special interest are the letters written by Sheldon and Amy to each other before and during their marriage.

Arrangement The series is arranged in two (2) subseries: 1. Sheldon H. Blank; 2. Amy K. Blank.

Extent 2.2 linear feet (5.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains correspondence, writings, and personal papers documenting Sheldon H. Blank's studies, career with HUC-JIR, and personal life. The general correspondence folder contains emails by Sheldon and Amy's daughter, Miriam
Arrangement

The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 16. Folder 1. Biographical and personal papers, 1919-1988, undated
Box 16. Folder 2. Correspondence. Blank, Amy K., 1925, undated
Box 16. Folder 3. Correspondence. Blank, Amy K., 1926, January-February
Box 16. Folder 5. Correspondence. Blank, Amy K., 1926, May-June
Box 17. Folder 1. Correspondence. Blank family, 1927-1929
Box 17. Folder 2. Correspondence. Blank, Amy K., 1932-1983
Box 17. Folder 3. Correspondence. Blank family, 1917
Box 17. Folder 4. Correspondence. Blank family, 1918, undated
Box 17. Folder 5. Correspondence. Blank family, 1919-1920, undated
Box 17. Folder 6. Correspondence. Blank family, 1921-1922, undated
Box 17. Folder 7. Correspondence. Blank family, 1923, undated
Box 17. Folder 8. Correspondence. Blank family, 1924
Box 17. Folder 9. Correspondence. Blank family, 1925, undated
Box 17. Folder 10. Correspondence. Blank family, 1926
Box 18. Folder 2. Correspondence. Blank family, undated
Box 18. Folder 5. Correspondence. Kirchberger family, 1926-1930
Box 19. Folder 2. Correspondence. Blank family, undated
Box 19. Folder 5. Correspondence. Kirchberger family, 1926-1930
Box 19. Folder 8. HUC-JIR events and addresses, 1916-1978, undated
Box 19. Folder 9. HUC-JIR events and addresses. [Contains photographs], 1980-1987, undated
Box 20. Folder 1. Miscellaneous, 1922-2005, undated
Box 20. Folder 2. Notes, 1939-1955, undated
Box 20. Folder 3. Photographs from British Mandate Palestine. [Contains a vial of sand], 1926, undated
Box 20. Folder 5. School documents, 1914-1925, undated
Box 20. Folder 7. Sermons. General, 1921-1986, undated
Box 21. Folder 2. Sermons. Weddings, undated
Box 21. Folder 5. Writings, 1919-1983, undated

Subseries 2. Amy K. Blank, 1911-1987, undated

Extent 2.6 linear feet (6.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains correspondence, writings, and personal papers documenting Amy Blank's personal life and writing career. The correspondence folders for Israel Mattuck and Claude G. Montefiore also contain a few writings from both figures.

Arrangement The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 22. Folder 1. Correspondence. Blank, Sheldon H., 1926, January-April, undated
Box 22. Folder 2. Correspondence. Blank, Sheldon H., 1926, April-June, undated
Box 22. Folder 3. Correspondence. Blank, Sheldon H., 1927-1934, undated
Box 23. Folder 1. Correspondence. Kirchberger, Clare, 1914-1919, undated
Box 23. Folder 2. Correspondence. Kirchberger, Clare, 1920-1924, undated
Box 23. Folder 3. Correspondence. Kirchberger, Clare, 1925, undated
Box 23. Folder 4. Correspondence. Kirchberger, Clare, 1926-1927, undated
Box 24. Folder 1. Correspondence. Kirchberger, Clare, 1928-1930, undated
Box 24. Folder 2. Correspondence. Kirchberger, Clare, 1931-1934, undated
Box 24. Folder 4. Correspondence. Kirchberger family, 1911-1932, undated
Box 25. Folder 1. Correspondence. Mattuck, Israel and Edna, 1916-1924, undated
Box 25. Folder 2. Correspondence. Mattuck, Israel and Edna, 1925-1929, undated
Box 25. Folder 3. Correspondence. Mattuck, Israel and Edna, 1930-1937, undated
Box 25. Folder 4. Correspondence. Mattuck, Israel and Edna, 1938-1940, undated
Box 25. Folder 5. Correspondence. Mattuck, Israel and Edna, 1941-1957, undated
Box 26. Folder 2. Correspondence. Writing career, 1926-1928
Box 26. Folder 3. Correspondence. Writing career, 1960-1979, undated
Box 26. Folder 5. General writings, 1913-1945, undated
Box 26. Folder 6. Hasidic notes, 1945, undated
Box 26. Folder 8. Kirchberger, Clare papers, 1913-1919, undated
Box 27. Folder 1. Plays, undated
Box 27. Folder 2. Poems, 1921-1987, undated
Box 27. Folder 3. Poems, undated
Box 27. Folder 4. Poetry reviews and events, 1919-1978, undated
Box 27. Folder 5. Stories, 1926-1928, undated
Box 27. Folder 6. Stories, 1940-1944, undated
Box 27. Folder 7. Student essays, 1924-1925, undated
Box 27. Folder 9. Visas, 1926-1954