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**Inventory of the Rhetta A.
Mendelsohn Collection, 1850s-1986**

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Rhetta A. Mendelsohn collection
Date(s)	1850s-1986
Creator:	Mendelsohn, Rhetta A., collector
Abstract:	Photographs, assorted correspondence and papers of the Block, Rich, and Aronson families of Camden, South Carolina, Orangeburg, South Carolina, and Kingstree, South Carolina collected by Rhetta A. Mendelsohn.
Extent:	1.55 linear feet (1 document box, 1 flat box, 1 oversize folder)
Repository:	Jewish Heritage Collection, Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries 66 George Street Charleston, SC 29424 Phone: (843) 953-8016 Fax: (843) 953-6319 URL: http://archives.library.cofc.edu
Call Number:	Mss 1105
Language of Material:	Materials in English

Biographical Note

Louis Leopold Block (1868-1940), from the Black Forest of Bavaria, arrived in Camden, South Carolina, in the late 1880s where his cousins, the Geisenheimer family, lived. He went into business with Jake and Gus Hirsch, and married their sister Rosa Hirsch (1862-1902). Hirsch Brothers & Block grew into the biggest store in Camden. The Block's had three daughters: Bella Block (1896-1987), Henrietta Block (1897-1985), and Rosalie Carolyn Block (1900-1977). In March 1920, Bella married Keeve Marks of Richmond, Virginia, and a month later, Henrietta married Lipman Rich (1894-1968), son of Philip Rich (1862-1911) and Rosa Platchek Rich (1871-1935), of Orangeburg, South Carolina. Rosalie remained single, living with her father until he died in 1940, afterwards splitting her time between her sisters' homes in Richmond and Orangeburg. Lipman Rich, who in 1911 took Philip as his middle name in memory of his father, operated two stores in Orangeburg, South Carolina—an Army surplus store and a ladies' ready-to-wear shop. His businesses fell victim to the Great Depression and he took a job as an insurance agent for Metropolitan life. He later became a consultant to the company and retired five years before his death in 1968. Their one child, Rose Louise Rich (1922-2004), was instrumental in organizing Temple Sinai, Orangeburg's Jewish congregation.

Solomon Samuel Aronson, or Sam, emigrated from Kovno Gubernia, Russia, circa 1900, when he was about thirteen years old. He joined the family in Charleston, South Carolina, that sponsored his immigration, and worked for various merchants before opening a dry goods store in Lane, South Carolina. Henrietta Furshman (1897-1985), his wife, was the daughter of Russian immigrants. Born and raised in New York City, she met Sam through her sister, who married his older brother Aron. Sam and Henrietta's sons, Albert Aronson (1916-1990) and Harold Marion Aronson (1919-), were born in Lane before the family moved to Bayonne, New Jersey, where they had relatives. In New Jersey Doris Aronson (1924-), was born. In 1937 the family moved back, this time settling in Kingstree, South Carolina. During World War II Harold served as a B-17 pilot, conducting weather reconnaissance missions out of England. Reassigned to the States, Harold married Rose Louise Rich in 1944. After he was discharged, they settled in her hometown, Orangeburg, South Carolina, where they established a successful aluminum awning business. Rose and Harold had two daughters, Rhetta Aronson Mendelsohn (1946-) and Carol Aronson (1949-).

Collection Overview

Photographs, correspondence and assorted papers of the Block, Rich, and Aronson families of Camden, South Carolina, and Orangeburg, South Carolina. The collection primarily consists of black and white photographs of the Block, Rich, and Aronson families, relatives, and friends. Photographs include images of Louis Leopold and Rosa Hirsch Block; Philip and Rosa Platchek Rich; Lipman Philip and Henrietta Block Rich; daughter, Rose Louise Rich Aronson; Henrietta Furshman Aronson; and her children, Albert Aronson, Harold Marion Aronson, and Doris Aronson. Also included is a small amount of correspondence consisting of the wedding invitation of Bella Block and Keeve Marks and letters to Bella Block from Louise Rosefield concerning family genealogy. Assorted papers include the marriage certificate of Louis Leopold Block and Rosa Hirsch, the High school diploma of Harold Marion Aronson, a small journal of Gustav Kaplan Rich containing handwritten poetry and assorted clippings of poetry taken from newspapers, a small infant gown, and napkin.

Collection Arrangement

1. Block and Rich family, 1850s-1977
2. Aronson family, 1907-1986

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research.

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Related Material

Related materials in Special Collections include oral history interviews with Harold M. Aronson (Mss 1035-053), Rose Louise Rich Aronson (Mss 1035-054), and genealogical materials located in the Jewish Heritage Collection vertical files.

Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person, family, or organization, by topical subject, by place, and by types of material.

Names

- Aronson family
- Block family
- Rich family

Subjects

- Jewish families--South Carolina

Places

- Camden (S.C.)
- Orangeburg (S.C.)
- Kingstree (S.C.)

Types of Material

- Black-and-white photographs
- Cabinet photographs
- Correspondence
- Clothing
- Diplomas
- Marriage certificates

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Rhett A. Mendelsohn collection, College of Charleston Libraries, Charleston, SC, USA.

Acquisitions Information

Materials were donated in 2005 by Rosalie Marks Nachman and in 2008 by Rhett Aronson Mendelsohn.

Processing Information

Processed by Joshua Minor, July 2012.

Encoded by Joshua Minor, August 2012.

Reviewed and uploaded by Martha McTear, February 2013.

Funding from the Council on Library and Information Resources supported the processing of this collection and encoding of the finding aid.

Inventory

1. Block and Rich families, 1850s-1977

Photographs, 1850s-circa 1960

Box 1 Folder 1-2	Louis Leopold Block, 1921-1940, undated	Includes images of Louis Leopold Block behind the counter of Hirsch Brothers & Block and photocopied images of Block with his daughter Rosalie Carolyn Block.
Box 1 Folder 3	Rosa Hirsch Block, 1865, 1915, undated	Includes photocopied images of her parents, Leopold and Judith Fried Hirsch.
Box 1 Folder 4	Philip Rich, 1850s-1880s	Includes a small image of his uncle, Lipman Philip.
Box 1 Folder 5	Rosa Platchek Rich, 1880s-1930s	
Box 1 Folder 6	Lipman Philip Rich, 1896-1950s	
Box 1 Folder 7	Henrietta Block Rich, early 1900s-circa 1960	
Oversize Paper Folder 1	Oversized portraits, 1850s-1890s	(Flat storage) Portraits of Louis Leopold Block and Philip Rich.
Box 1 Folder 8	Unidentified, 1860s-1920s	
Box 1 Folder 9	Correspondence, 1920, 1977, undated	Contains wedding invitation of Bella Block and Keeve Marks and letters to Bella from Louise Rosefield regarding family genealogy. Also includes photocopied birth certificates of Leopold Hirsch and Gustav Hirsch.
Oversize Paper Folder 1	Louis Leopold Block and Rosa Hirsch marriage certificate, 1895	(Flat storage)
Box 2	Infant gown and napkin, undated	
Box 1 Folder 10	Journal, 1920s	Small journal of Gustav Kaplan Rich containing handwritten poetry and assorted clippings of poetry taken from newspapers.
Box 1 Folder 11	Miscellaneous, 1940, 1955, undated	Contains obituary of Louis L. Block, photocopied certificate of incorporation for Temple Sinai, and photocopied Hirsch family tree.

2. Aronson family, 1907-1986

Photographs, 1907-1986

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|-------------------------|---|
| Box 1 Folder 12 | Henrietta Furshman Aronson, 1907-1942, undated |
| | Include images of Henrietta F. Aronson with husband, Solomon Samuel Aronson, and assorted family and friends. |
| Box 1 Folder 13 | Albert Aronson, 1919, 1945, undated |
| | Includes images of Albert Aronson with his wife Fay Aronson, and daughter, Sheila Aronson. |
| Box 1 Folder 14 | Harold Marion Aronson, 1937-1945, undated |
| | Includes images of Harold M. Aronson in flying school in Santa Anna, California, and Dalhart, Texas. |
| Box 1 Folder 15 | Rose Louise Rich Aronson, 1922-1986, undated |
| Box 1 Folder 16 | Doris Aronson, 1938-1948, undated |
| Box 1 Folder 17 | Assorted Aronson relatives and friends, 1940-1947, undated |
| Oversize Paper Folder 1 | High school diploma of Harold Marion Aronson, 1937 |
| | (Flat storage) |
| Box 1 Folder 18 | World War II ration books, 1942, undated |