Finding Aid to the James Mack and Elizabeth Lilienthal Gerstley family papers and photographs, 1867-2003, bulk 1910-1985

Finding Aid written by The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life staff
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Finding Aid to the James Mack and Elizabeth Lilienthal Gerstley family papers and photographs, 1867-2003, bulk 1910-1985

Collection Number: BANC MSS 2010/607

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University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

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Date Completed:
May 2011

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: James Mack and Elizabeth Lilienthal Gerstley family papers and photographs
Date (inclusive): 1867-2003,
Date (bulk): bulk 1910-1985
Collection Number: BANC MSS 2010/607
Creators: Gerstley, James M. Gerstley, Elizabeth Lilienthal
Extent: Number of containers: 11 cartons, 13 oversize boxes, and 4 oversize foldersLinear feet: 17.2
Repository: The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California, 94720-6000
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Abstract: The collection consists of the papers, scrapbooks, photographs, and photo albums of the family of James Mack and Elizabeth Lilienthal Gerstley. The family papers include some correspondence, a small amount of material from James Mack Gerstley's tenure at Borax, and historical biographical materials about the Gerstley and Mack families. There are a few autograph albums and scrapbooks in the collection as well. The bulk of the collection is made up of photographs and photo albums documenting the history of the Gerstley, Mack, Lilienthal, and Sloss families as well as the travels and milestones of James Mack and Elizabeth Gerstley and their children.

Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English

Physical Location: Many of the Bancroft Library collections are stored offsite and advance notice may be required for use. For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Access
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Preferred Citation

Alternate Forms Available
There are no alternate forms of this collection.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.
Gerstley, James Mack, 1907-2007--Archives
Gerstley, Elizabeth, 1913-2007
Gerstley family
Gerstle family
Mack family
Lilienthal family
Sloss family
Borax Consolidated, ltd
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Avery Brundage Collection
Gerstley, Elizabeth, 1913-2007
Judah L. Magnes Museum. 2009.5
Bancroft Library. Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life

Acquisition Information
The James Mack and Elizabeth Lilienthal Gerstley family papers were gifted to the Bancroft Library by the Judah L. Magnes Museum in 2010.

Accruals
No future additions are expected.

Processing Information
Processed by Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life staff in 2011.

Biographical Information
James Mack Gerstley (1907-2007) was born in London to James Gerstley and Adele Mack. The Gerstle(y) family can be traced to Ichenhausen, Germany, where the oldest identifiable ancestor appears to be Abraham Gerstle (1740-1796). Abraham's son, Isak Michael Gerstle (1787-1851) married Sara Sofie Weil and had seven children: Abraham, Karoline, Sophie, Handele, Lüb, Jette, and Moritz. Lüb Gerstle eventually moved to San Francisco, changed his name to Lewis, and became the patriarch of the Bay Area branch of the Gerstle family. Lewis married Hannah Greenebaum in 1858 and played key roles in several successful business enterprises, including the Alaska Commercial Company. Moritz, Lewis' brother, moved to London, where he changed his first name to Maurice and his last name to Gerstley. Maurice was a successful "fancy goods" wholesaler until his death in 1900. Maurice and his wife Paulina (Cohn) had four children: Sophia, Frederick Julius, James, and Louisa Paulina. James, born in 1867 (died 1955), was to be the last of the English Gerstleys. James Gerstley Sr. worked for Redwood and Sons, a chemical firm specializing in food preservatives. Borax or boron was an important ingredient in their enterprise. In 1895, Lewis Gerstle of San Francisco arranged a meeting with Redwood and Sons and a Bay Area company called Pacific Coast Borax. This meeting led to a merger between the companies. In 1904, James Gerstley Sr. married Adele Hannah Mack, a granddaughter of Lewis Gerstle. The company merger and the marriage cemented the links between the San Francisco and London branches of the family.

The Mack family originates in Reckendorf, Bavaria. Abraham Mack (1775-1857) and his wife Luala (1777-1831) had a son named Lawrence in 1819. Lawrence immigrated to New York in 1836. There he met and married Miriam Massenbacher in 1849 and together they had nine children. In 1888, Lawrence and Miriam and most of their children moved to San
Francisco. One of the Mack children, Adolph, married Clara Gerstle (born in Sacramento to Lewis and Hannah Gerstle in 1861). Adolph and Clara were the parents of Edith Miriam (1883-1963), Harold Lewis (b. 1884), and Adele Mack (b. 1886-1973).

James Mack Gerstley, son of James Gerstley Sr. and Adele Mack, grew up in London and attended Cambridge University. He came to San Francisco in 1929 and worked initially for the Great Western Electric Company. Shortly after arriving in the Bay Area, Gerstley met Elizabeth Lilienthal (1913-2007), daughter of Samuel Lilienthal and Alice Haas (both from prominent California Jewish families). Elizabeth was raised in San Francisco and spent her young life in the Haas-Lilienthal House on Franklin Street. She attended the Burke School, Stanford University and Smith College. James Mack Gerstley and Elizabeth Lilienthal married at the home of Madeleine Russell in Atherton in 1934. In the mid-1930s, James Mack Gerstley started working for the Pacific Borax Company in Los Angeles. By 1950, he had become president of the company, which later became known as U.S. Borax and Chemical Co. The company was cemented in the popular imagination by its 20-mule team, which became an icon of the American West. James Mack and Elizabeth had two children, Ann and Jimmy (James). Gerstley was also an active philanthropist in the Bay Area, working particularly on local arts and culture. He was one of the co-founders of the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and was instrumental in securing for the new museum the Avery Brundage collection. Elizabeth was also an active philanthropist. James and Elizabeth both died in 2007 at the respective ages of 99 and 94.

Scope and Content of Collection
The collection consists of family papers, scrapbooks, photographs, and photo albums. The family papers include some correspondence, a small amount of material from James Mack Gerstley's tenure at Borax, and historical/biographical materials about the Gerstley and Mack families. There are a few autograph albums and scrapbooks in the collection as well. The bulk of the collection is made up of photographs and photo albums documenting the history of the Gerstley, Mack, Lilienthal, and Sloss families as well as the travels and milestones of James Mack and Elizabeth Gerstley and their children.

Series 1 General family papers, 1890-2005
Physical Description: Cartons 1-2, Oversize Folders 2B and 3B

Carton 1, Folder 1-6
Family history and biography, 1940-1989

Oversize Folder 4B
Family trees (Mack family, Lilienthal family, Gerstle family), undated

Carton 1, Folder 7
Family documents, 1907-1942

Carton 1, Folder 8
Lilienthal family materials, 1957-1993

Carton 1, Folder 9
Sloss family materials, 1958-1996

Carton 1, Folder 10
Menu and guest register, 25th anniversary of Bella Sloss and E.R. Lilienthal, 1901

Carton 1, Folder 11
Letter to Alice Haas from "Harry", 1904

Carton 1, Folder 12
Invitations to wedding of Alice Haas and Samuel Lilienthal, 1909

Carton 1, Folder 13
Alice Haas' wedding memory book, 1909

Carton 1, Folder 14-15
J.M. Gerstley General Correspondence, 1940-2005

Carton 1, Folder 16-17
Elizabeth Lilienthal Gerstley Correspondence and personal papers, 1920-1996

Carton 1, Folder 18
J.M. Gerstley Birthday binder, undated

Carton 1, Folder 19-20
J.M. Gerstley and E.L. Gerstley 60th wedding anniversary, 1994

Carton 1, Folder 21
Family reunions, 1957-1992

Carton 1, Folder 22

Carton 2, Folder 1
Alice Haas' autograph book, circa 1890

Carton 2, Folder 2
E.L. Gerstley gifts and givers book, undated
Series 1 General family papers, 1890-2005

| Carton 2, Folder 3 | Adele Mack Gerstley memorial book, 1986 |
| Carton 2, Folder 4-6 | Poems, skits for family events, 1940-1990 |
| Carton 2, Folder 7-8 | Borax materials, 1940-1985 |
| Carton 2, Folder 11 | J.M. Gerstley, correspondence with Avery Brundage, 1958-1967 |
| Carton 2, Folder 12 | Asian Art Commission Handbook, 1987 |
| Carton 2, Folder 13 | J.M. Gerstley Asian Art Commission cards for 90th birthday, undated |
| Carton 2, Folder 14, Oversize | J.M. Gerstley resolutions and commendations, 1973-1997 |
| Carton 2, Folder 15 | Edgar Walter sketch, 1891 |
| Carton 2, Folder 16 | Clippings, 1930-1985 |
| Carton 2, Folder 17-18, Oversize | Gerstley family miscellaneous, undated |

Series 2 Loose Photographs, circa 1880-2005

Physical Description: Carton 3, Oversize Box 1, and Oversize Folder 1A

Scope and Content Note
Alice Haas and Samuel Lilienthal family; Mack and Gerstley family; early Gerstley family photos; Sloss-Lilienthal family; "Beaulieu Gerstley"-Jim and Adele; James Mack and Elizabeth Lilienthal Gerstley family; Ann and Jimmy Gerstley; Debbie Fulmer and family; James Mack Gerstley Borax photos; Miscellaneous.

| Carton 3 | Loose photographs, 1880-2005 |
| Oversize Box 1 | Oversize loose photographs, Circa 1910-1980 |
| Oversize Folder 1A | Oversize loose photographs: Elizabeth Lilienthal wedding photos, 1934 |

Series 3 Photo Albums and Scrapbooks, 1904-2000

Physical Description: Cartons 4-11 and Oversize Boxes 2-12

<p>| Oversize Box 11 | Adele Mack and James Gerstley, Sr. scrapbook of telegrams on occasion of engagement and wedding, 1904 |
| Oversize Box 2 | Alice Haas and Samuel Lilienthal honeymoon in Honolulu, 1909 |
| Oversize Box 4 | Tallac, Lake Tahoe, 1909 |
| Oversize Box 7 | Alice Haas Lilienthal's photo album with childhood pictures of Elizabeth and Ernest, 1910-1920 |
| Oversize Box 5 | Adele Mack's photo album from the Hospital of Officers, London, 1917 |
| Oversize Box 4 | Elizabeth Lilienthal's photo album, 1920s |
| Oversize Box 5 | Elizabeth Lilienthal's postcard album, 1920-1930 |
| Oversize Box 6 | Elizabeth Lilienthal's memory book, 1931-1934 |
| Oversize Box 3 | Gerstley family photo albums, 1930-1950 |
| Oversize Box 8 | Gerstley family photo album, 1930-1940 |
| Oversize Box 9 | Gerstley family photo album, Europe, 1939 |
| Oversize Box 13 | Gerstley family photo albums, 1964-1966 |
| Oversize Box 10 | Gerstley family photo album, 1972 |
| Oversize Box 12 | Gerstley family photo albums, 1957, 1980 |
| Carton 6 | Gerstley family photo albums, 1970-1979 |</p>
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