

IRENA BLOCH PAPERS, approximately 1880-1969
2001.300.1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington, DC 20024-2126
Tel. (202) 479-9717
e-mail: reference@ushmm.org

Descriptive summary

Title: Irena Bloch papers

Dates: approximately 1880-1969

Accession number: 2001.300.1

Creator: Bloch, Irena, 1913-?

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (1 box, 1 oversize folder)

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW,
Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Irena Bloch papers primarily consists of photographs documenting the Hecht and Bloch families before the war in Żółkiew, Delatyn, Orlow, Sopot, and Gdynia, Poland as well as Rachela Hecht's marriage to Dziunek Dawid Zimand in Warsaw, Poland. The papers also include a marriage permit, ketubah, false work papers, school certificates, a diploma, and a letter Irena's best friend Ruth Zeimer Czaczkes wrote on February 27, 1943 while in hiding with her son Rysio in Tarnow, Poland prior to their denunciation and subsequent murder.

Languages: Polish, German, Hebrew, Aramaic

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Irena Bloch papers (2001.300.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Irena Bloch donated her papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives in 2001. Most of the papers survived with her in hiding.

Separated materials: Irena Bloch also donated a 1946 book about the destruction of the Jewish community of Zolkiew, *Zagłada Żydów Zolkiewskich* by Gerzon Taffet, to the Museum (2001.300.2).

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at collections.ushmm.org for further information.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, December 2018.

Biographical note

Irena Bloch (1913-?) was born Rachela Hecht in Żółkiew, Poland (now Zhovkva, Ukraine) on June, 1, 1913 to civil servant Josef Hecht and Anna Sara Hibner Adelsberg Hecht. She had one brother, Izidor (Dorek, b. March 8, 1912). The Hecht family spoke Polish at home and attended synagogue on high holidays, and Anna was active with Jewish charities. Rachela graduated from the St. Felicja Teachers Seminary for girls in Żółkiew, and her diploma allowed her to teach in elementary schools. She began teaching in 1933 and maintained her activities with the local Jewish theater and Jewish cultural club. In 1935 she met Dziunek David Zimand (1908-1943) from Lwów (now Lviv) and they fell in love. Dziunek's parents, Bernard and Klara Zimand, owned sawmills and a wood export business, and the family was affluent. He had three siblings, Zygmunt, Lusja, and Roman, and he studied medicine in Nancy, France, but never finished. His parents were disappointed in their son's choice for a wife and the young couple decided to elope. On March 14, 1937 they married in Warsaw and immediately moved to Gdynia, where Dziunek was a majority partner in a wood-floor factory. They lived a good life, had extensive social contacts, and did not pay much attention to the political situation during this time.

On September 1, 1939 Rachela and Dziunek packed one suitcase and took a train to Lwów. They initially stayed with his parents at 27 Kochanowskiego Street, but the Soviets soon arrested and subsequently executed Bernard Zimand. In 1940 Rachela moved back to Żółkiew to be closer to her family. She returned to teaching at a Jewish school and Dziunek found employment in a brick factory. On June 22, 1941 Germany invaded the USSR. On June 28, 1941 the German army entered Żółkiew, where more than 5,000 Jews were living in at the time, and immediately burned down the "Di Sobieski schul" synagogue and ordered all Jews to wear an armband with a Star of David. In January 1942 the German confiscated all fur coats, gloves and even fur collars from Jews. Rachela, Dziunek, and Rachela's parents lived together on Chopin Street in one room in a house that belonged to Mrs. Kaszubska. Dorek, Rachela's older brother, was involved with a Polish woman named Staszka Traglowska, a widow who lived on Turyniecka Street. Staszka lived in a rented hut, which was located very close to the ghetto fence, and Dorek and Staszka prepared a hiding place for five people dug out in a barn with pigs and rabbits in cages on top. Dorek tried to convince his brother-in-law to come hide, but he refused. On November 22, 1942, during the so-called "Second Aktion" Josef and Anna Hecht were put on a train to Belzec. Anna Hecht wrote a note to her children in which she urged them to be together. According to eyewitness Josef and Anna escaped by jumping from the slow moving train and tried to walk back to Zolkiew. In spite of their "good Aryan looks" they were murdered during their journey by the local population. Rachela survived the "November Aktion" by hiding in a barn, and Dziunek survived because he was in a hospital undergoing surgery. The Germans established a ghetto, and Dziunek worked for the Judenrat. On March 15, 1943 Dorek forced his sister, Rachela, to join him in the hiding place, which was 6 feet by 6 feet with a very low ceiling. Dziunek refused to join them because he trusted a friendly Ukrainian mayor Zubyk, who assured him that there would be no executions. The same day most of the

remaining Żółkiew Jews were deported to the Janowska camp, and Dziunek was left with a group of prominent Jews who were shot in the nearby forest.

Staszka took three additional Jews into the bunker: Dr. Filip Mandel, Mundzio Blumenfeld, and Szancia (Szarlotta) Wolf. During the day the five in hiding would take turns sitting, sleeping, and keeping guard. At night Dorek would sleep with Staszka. From March 15, 1943 until the liberation on July 23, 1944 Staszka took care of Rachel and Dorek, shopping for and cooking their food, doing their laundry, and, pouring water on the roof of their bunker to prevent fire during bombing. She financed their food through sales of her own jewelry and on the black market. Dr. Filip Mande suffered from tuberculosis and died soon after liberation. Dr. Mandel and Mundzio Moses Blumenfeld paid Mrs. Sokolowska, owner of the house, for their own and Szancia Wolf's food. Mrs. Sokolowska was afraid Ukrainian nationalists would kill her for hiding Jews, but Staszka physically fought her to prevent her from harming the five hidden people.

On July 23, 1944 Rachela left the bunker wearing the same clothes as when she had entered it 17 months earlier. After liberation Rachela returned to teaching and her brother married Staszka. In December 1944 Kalar Zimand, Rachela's mother-in-law, and her small son, Roman (b. 1932) arrived in Żółkiew to live with Rachela, having survived in Kazakhstan. Dawid Bloch, an old acquaintance, who worked as bookkeeper, visited Żółkiew and got reacquainted with Rachela. Dawid (Dunio, d. 1990), who was originally from Delatyn, Poland (now Deliatyn, Ukraine), educated as a lawyer, and survived the Holocaust posing as a non-Jewish Pole under the name Władysław Kazimierczyk. He kept this name after liberation. Rachela and Dawid moved to Bytom and married in 1947. Rachela changed her name to Irena Kazimierczyk. Their daughter, Anna, was born in 1950. In November 1969, as a result of anti-Semitic campaign of the Polish government, the Kazimierczyk family left Poland and settled in Frankfurt, Germany, where Dawid practiced law, and the family changed their name back to his original name, Bloch.

Scope and content of collection

The Irena Bloch papers primarily consists of photographs documenting the Hecht and Bloch families before the war in Żółkiew, Delatyn, Orlow, Sopot, and Gdynia, Poland as well as Rachela Hecht's marriage to Dziunek Dawid Zimand in Warsaw, Poland. The papers also include a marriage permit, ketubah, false work papers, school certificates, a diploma, and a letter Irena's best friend Ruth Zeimer Czaczkes wrote on February 27, 1943 while in hiding with her son Rysio in Tarnow, Poland prior to their denunciation and subsequent murder.

Photographs document the Hecht, Zimand, and Bloch families' prewar lives in Żółkiew, Delatyn, Gdynia, Sopot, and Orlow, and they depict Rachela Hecht (Irena Bloch); Anna, Jozef, and Izidor Hecht; Dziunek, Rozia, Klara, and Zygmunt Zimand; Hela and Rozia Bloch; Lola Kiec; Filip and Lotte Kornreich; Basia Heidenkorn; Israel and Gabrys Kikien; Feiga Pokard; Szancia Segal; Berek Sobel; Izio and Herman Wolf; Ruth, Nina, and Muszka Zeimer.

Biographical materials include Rachela's and Dziunek's ketubah and marriage permit; Rachela's school certificates, diploma, Polish citizenship certificate, false work certificate, and postwar repatriation certificate; a registration certificate for David Bloch's parents.

Ruth Ziemer Czaczkes wrote her letter while in hiding in Tarnow with her son Rysio and sister Nina Zeimer. Rysio had been born in 1939 in Katowice where his father, Dr. Jakob Czaczkes, was the director

of a Jewish Gymnasium. Soon after she wrote this letter, Ruth, Rysio, and Nina were denounced and then murdered by Germans. The letter is translated here.

Saturday February 27, 1943; My Dearest, I received a postcard from Kuba [husband] with your short note, which touched me. I cannot describe the feeling that overwhelmed me while reading these few words. But it is unimportant now. I wanted to write but I wasn't sure where you were. I am glad that you are together; I can appreciate this. Dziunek, I hear that you do not like my flat. Oh, well, it is better to live in a bad flat than to die in a good one. I couldn't live there [Zolkiew], and I am happy that I was able to find another place for us. If I wasn't successful I would not be able to write to you. Now I have at least a chance like Kuba. The certainty of my survival as opposed to Kuba's was too much for me. I am not claiming that I live a happy life, but this is my fate and I have to accept it. I live with Nina in good conditions -- literally, but we do not know what tomorrow will bring, and I am afraid to think about it. I pray to God that he will let me, us, survive and reunited with Kuba, so we would bring up our beloved child together. Rysio is well, he had chicken pox, but he is better now. He is a big boy now. It is frightening how smart and brave he is. He is my only consolation and only the thought about his future keeps me going. He remembers you well and often recalls the nonsense that Dziunek taught him. He always says that Rozia Zimand loves him very much. He was very happy to hear that you wrote a note. The cruel fate arranged that I am so far away from you, and may God allows us to be together in the future. I do not harbor any hopes and I do not have a chance and it is very sad. If Dziunek, the eternal optimist, were here he would bring the hope back. You know very well that I didn't want things to go the way they did and to be far away from Kuba. The thought that I could be with you, the same way you are, kills me. What can I do? I remind myself all the time, but it is difficult to accept the fate. Maybe God will grant me to be with you. Please do not let me wait for an answer. Some other time I will write a "happy" letter, today I feel unhappy. I should not write in such a mood, but I have no one to share these feelings with. Where do you live? What's with Dorek? Please write. With love, Ruth." Note from Nina Zeimer: "Dears, I am so glad you wrote and let us know you are alive. We, Thank God, are healthy. Best regards, Nina."

System of arrangement

The Irena Bloch papers are arranged as three series:

Series 1: Photographs, approximately 1880-1953

Series 2: Biographical material, 1920-1969

Series 3: Letter, 1943

Indexing terms

Bloch, Irena, 1913-?

Zimand, Dziunek.

Jew--Ukraine--L'viv.

Jews--Ukraine--Deliatyn.

Jews--Ukraine--Żḣov̇kva.

Holocaust victims--Poland.

Deliatyn (Ukraine)

Gdynia (Poland)
Orlow (Poland)
Sopot (Poland)
Warsaw (Poland)
ŻHovkva (Ukraine)

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Photographs, approximately 1880-1953

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Bloch family, 1925, 1939
1.2	Bloch, Hela, 1934-1939
1.3	Hecht family, approximately 1880-1945
1.4	Teachers Seminary, 1931-1932
1.5	Kikien, Dr. Israel, Zierner sisters, Taffet, Gerson, approximately 1919-1946
1.6	Zimand, Dziunek, 1936-1938
1.7	Zimand, Dawid and Rachela, 1936-1939
1.8	Zimand, Klara, 1946, 1953
1.9	Zimand, Rachela Hecht, 1914-1939

Series 2: Biographical material, 1920-1969

Box/Folder	Title
1.10	Certificates, 1932-1945, 1969
OS 1	Ketubah, 1937
1.11	Student records, 1920-1932

Series 3: Letter, 1943

Box/Folder	Title
1.12	Letter from Ruth Zierner Czaczkes, February 27, 1943