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Blanchard-Means Family Papers

1697-1970 (*Bulk:* 1835-1920)
48 boxes (67 linear feet)
Call no.: MS 830

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Read collection overview

The seat of seven generations of the Blanchard and Means families, Elm Hill Farm was established prior to 1797, when the joiner Amasa Blanchard began acquiring property in Brookfield, Mass., as he looked forward to his marriage. The success he enjoyed in farming was a spark for his family's prosperity. Amasa's son Albert Cheney Blanchard left Brookfield in the 1830s to pursue commercial opportunities out west as a partner in the Richmond Trading Co., in Richmond, Ind., and by the time he returned home to take over operations after his father's death in 1857, Albert had earned a fortune. In the years after the Civil War, Elm Hill grew to 1,300 acres crowned by a mansion built in 1870 that became the center of a compound of eight buildings. Each subsequent generation at Elm Hill has left its own distinctive mark. Albert's son Charles P. Blanchard, a minister and talented amateur photographer, developed a renowned herd of Morgan horses, and Charles' daughter Abby and her husband, the minister Oliver W. Means, added a herd of Jersey cattle that included a prize-winning bull, Xenia's Sultan, imported in 1923, and the cow, You'll Do Lobelia, better known as the original, real-life Elsie the Cow. Abby's daughter-in-law, Louise Rich Means, laid acres of spectacular gardens on the estate. Following Louise's death in 2009, Elm Hill left family ownership.

Consisting of nearly two centuries of papers that accumulated on the Elm Hill estate, the Blanchard-Means collection stretches from a handful of documents from the late eighteenth century relating to landholdings and Amasa's work as a joiner, to a blossoming of correspondence, photographs, ephemera, and realia dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Well-educated, well-traveled, and well-informed, the Blanchards and Means were prolific letter writers, and their papers provide wonderful insights into the lives of a religiously-devoted family from the New England elite. Among the highlights of the collection are the extensive records from the Richmond Trading

Company and from the farm's livestock and gardening operations (both Morgans and Jerseys) and a remarkable photographic record that document the evolving landscape of Elm Hill from the 1860s through 1970s and the town of Brookfield, as well as hundreds of images from C.P. Blanchard's world tours in the 1890s.

Background on Blanchard and Means families

Abby Blanchard (later Mrs. Oliver W. Means) at Jacquard punching machine, ca.1890

Elm Hill Farm in Brookfield, Mass., was the seat of seven generations of the Blanchard and Means families. From the time it was acquired by William Blanchard in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Elm Hill grew into an estate of nearly 1,300 acres of rolling hills and lush meadows. It was a model farm, home to prize herds of Morgan horses and Jersey cattle, and later it became a genteel country estate graced by extensive flower gardens and elaborate plantings.

In 1773, William and Prudence (Shumway) Blanchard family arrived in Brookfield from nearby Sturbridge bringing the first of five children with them, their infant son Amasa. As he grew into adulthood, Amasa became a skilled joiner and cabinetmaker, using the proceeds from his work to extend his property holdings even before he married in 1797, building his workshop there in about 1800.

From these origins as skilled farmers and artisans, the family rose to wealth, earning their family fortune in the 1830s, though never leaving their home base in Brookfield. Later generations of Blanchards and Means were inveterate travelers, devoted to religious affairs, serving as ministers in the Congregational Church and supporting mission work domestically and abroad

The collection is organized into nine series: Series 1: Blanchard family; Series 2: Means family; Series 3. Other families; Series 4: Richmond Trading Co.; Series 5: Land and property; Series 6: Elm Hill Farm and gardens; Series 7: Photographs; Series 8: Printed materials; Series 9. Realia.

Albert Cheney Blanchard (1808-1874) and Richmond, Indiana

The youngest of Amasa Blanchard's three sons, Albert Cheney Blanchard left Brookfield in 1832 to try his fortune in Indiana. Settling in the town of Richmond, he established a mercantile firm, the Richmond Trading Company, Indiana. With prime land on the Whitewater River, the mercantile company developed a diversified portfolio that included woolen, paper, and grist mills. Luring his brother William to join him in 1835, Albert eventually withdrew from the Trading Company in 1848 when he became president of the State Bank of Indiana, remaining in that position until its charter expired in 1855, and also with a private bank, the Citizens Bank of Richmond.

In 1861, Albert transferred his interest in the bank to his son Albert H., and returned to Brookfield.

Charles P. Blanchard (1843-1895)

The son of A.C. Blanchard and brother of Albert Henry Blanchard, Charles P. Blanchard succeeded his father as resident of the Elm Hill estate, living there with his brother Albert H. Blanchard. A Congregational minister, Charles developed the herd of Morgan horses, passing his love for horses to his daughter Abby Frances. A world traveler and talented photographer

Charles married Annie E. Brown.

Albert H. Blanchard

Thaddeus Rich (1885-1969)

A child prodigy on the violin, Thaddeus Rich was born in Indianapolis on March 21, 1885, and was playing as a soloist with orchestras by the time he was ten. To nurture this rare talent, Rich's parents sent him to Europe, where he earned wide acclaim. At twelve, he entered the Leipzig Conservatory, and after graduating at 15, he performed with the prestigious Gewandhaus Orchestra during the season 1901-1902. Moving to Berlin in 1902, he studied under the great Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim, a collaborator of Brahms, while also becoming Concertmaster of the famed Opera des Westens.

After a final tour of Germany and Austria, Rich returned home to the United States in 1905 to become Concertmaster for the relatively new Philadelphia Orchestra, then under its founding conductor Fritz Scheel. Earning attention for both youth and virtuosity, Rich also toured with the Rich Quartette, which he founded in 1908 with Harry Aleinikoff (second violin), Romain Verney (viola), and Hans Kindler (cello). His career in Philadelphia soared, and in time he became assistant conductor, conductor of the Philadelphia Festival Orchestra (1915-1926), and associate of Leopold Stokowski at Curtis Institute of Music (1925-1926).

A falling out with Stokowski, however, caused Rich to leave the Orchestra in 1926 and he never again enjoyed the same level of attention. Still relatively young man, he served briefly as curator of Rodman Wanamaker's renowned collection of stringed instruments, as a member of the faculty at Temple University, and as conductor of a WPA Orchestra in Philadelphia as part of the New Deal program.

Rich married Almyra Chandler Williams in 1910. Their lone child, Louise Chandler Rich (1912-2009), married

Blanchard William Means, and the couple eventually became the last principal residents of Elm Hill. Thaddeus died in Hartford, Connecticut, in April 1969.

Oliver W. Means (1860-1939) and Abby Frances Blanchard (b. 1874)

A Congregational clergyman, Oliver W. Means married C.P. Blanchard's daughter Abby on Sept. 5, 1899. An graduate of Bowdoin College (1884) and the Hartford Seminary (1887), Means spent most of his clerical career in Enfield and Hartford, Conn., although he and Abby maintained a close affection for Elm Hill.

Abby was born in Brookfield on August 10, 1874, the daughter of Charles P. and Annie Blanchard. Their children included Frances Blanchard (1902-1946), Blanchard William (1905-1973), Beatrice Elizabeth (1912-1913), and Oliver William (1915-1946).

During a trip abroad, the Means became interested in the Jersey cattle breed and began raising them seriously at Elm Hill. In 1923, they imported a prize bull, Xenia's Sultan, from the Isle of Jersey. Most famous of all, during an exhibition at the New York World's Fair in 1939, an Elm Hill Jersey heifer named You'll Do Lobelia (1932-1941) was selected by the Borden Dairy Co. as the real-life face of their corporate mascot, Elsie the Cow.

After Oliver's death in 1973, Louise remained at Elm Hill until 2009. The property was added to the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a National Historic District in 1991, and five years later, about 1,000 acres of the estate was donated to the Massachusetts Audubon Society as a wildlife sanctuary.

Louise (Rich) Means

The daughter of Thaddeus Rich, Louise married Blanchard William Means in 1932 and settled in Hartford, where Blanchard served as a member of the faculty in philosophy at Trinity College.

Genealogy

Genealogical information and authorities:

- Blanchard, Amasa (1771-1854) m. Blanchard, Fatima Patience Cheney (1777-1815)
 - Blanchard, Dexter (1798-1878) m. Blanchard, Charlotte Keppel
 - Blanchard, William (1800-1881) m. Blanchard, Isabella Field Foster
 - Blanchard, Albert Cheney (1808-1874) m. Blanchard, Abigail Wood Hitchcock (1811-1880)
 - Blanchard, Abby Francis (1837-1908)
 - Blanchard, Albert Henry (1840-1922) m. Blanchard, Lydia Rachael Cook
 - Blanchard, Charles Pinkney (1843-1895) m. Blanchard, Annie Elizabeth Brown (1851-1913)
 - Means, Abby Francis Blanchard (b. 1874) m. Means, Oliver W. (1860-1939)
 - Means, Frances B. (1902-1946)
 - Means, Blanchard William (1905-1973) m. Means, Louise Chandler Rich (1912-2009)
 - Means, Oliver W., Jr. (1915-1946)
 - Means, Beatrice Elizabeth (1912-1913)
 - Blanchard, Albert Cheney (1876-1881)

Note: Annie Elizabeth Brown Blanchard is daughter of Hammond Brown (1810-1891) and Mary Ann L. Brown.

Note: Louise Chandler Rich Means (1912-2009) is the daughter of musician Thaddeus Rich.

Scope of collection

A extraordinary record of one family's evolution over more than a century, the Blanchard-Means

The farm at Elm Hill earned considerable note in the twentieth century, both for its prize herd of Jersey cattle, including the original Elsie the Cow, and its Morgan and Percheron horse herds, but also for the extensive gardens maintained by Louise Means. The collection contains rich documentation of the development of the Jersey and horse herds, their marketing, breeding, and publicity, along with Means' meticulous documentation of her orders and plantings from the 1930s through 1960s.

Series descriptions

[Series 1. Blanchard family](#)

1815-1922

23 boxes

Papers of three generations of the Blanchard family of Brookfield, Mass., and Richmond, Indiana, including an account book of the joiner Amasa Blanchard; Albert Cheney Blanchard, his wife Annie and sons Albert Henry Blanchard and Charles P. Blanchard. C.P.'s correspondence and business records are particularly extensive and offer strong documentation of the property at Elm Hill in the latter years of the nineteenth century.

[Series 2. Means family](#)

various dates

25 boxes

The Means family materials include extensive correspondence with Abby F. B. Means (daughter of C.P. and Annie Blanchard), her husband Rev. Oliver W. Means, and their children Frances, Oliver Jr., and Blanchard; along with material from Blanchard's wife, Louise Chandler Rich Blanchard.

Also included in this series are three boxes of materials relating to Louise Mean's father, the violinist Thaddeus Rich, a performer with the Philadelphia Orchestra and soloist.

[Series 3. Other families](#)

various dates
23 boxes

Of special note in this series is a Memoir of the evangelical church in South Brookfield, written by Micah Stone, describing the strife within the local parish resulting from evangelical agitation during the Second Great Awakening.

[Series 4. Richmond Trading Co. Records](#)

various dates
3 boxes

In 1832, Albert C. Blanchard left Brookfield to establish the Richmond Trading Company, a mercantile firm in Richmond, Indiana, luring his brother William to join him in 1835. Albert withdrew from the concern in 1848 when he became president of the State Bank of Indiana, remaining in that position until its charter expired in 1855, and also with a private bank, the Citizens Bank of Richmond. In 1861, Albert transferred his interest in the bank to his son Albert H., and returned to Brookfield.

[Series 5. Land and property](#)

various dates
3 boxes

Materials relating to ownership of Elm Hill Farm and associated properties in Brookfield.

[Series 6. Elm Hill Farm and gardens](#)

various dates
11 boxes

Extensive records of operations of Elm Hill Farm, including significant content on its herds of Jersey cattle and Morgan and Percherson horses, and detailed information on the elaborate gardens maintained by Louise Means.

[Series 7. Photographs](#)

various dates
1 box

C.P. Blanchard was an avid amateur photographer and early adopter of new technologies. He acquired a Kodak 2 camera by 1890, just the year after it first appeared, and took hundreds of images of his family, farm, and travels. The collection includes both prints and negatives taken with the Kodak 2 and later cameras, as well as some studio portraits and other mounted images.

[Series 8. Printed works](#)

various dates
3 boxes

Among the printed materials associated with the collection are a number of missionary and religious tracts, some local histories, and works relating to cattle, horses, farming, and gardening.

[Series 9. Realia and Audiorecordings](#)

ca.1890-1910
3 boxes

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Inventory

Series 1. Blanchard family
various dates
23 boxes
Blanchard, Amasa. Daybook

Box 48

(18:H7)
Blanchard, Albert Cheney

Box 42

(28:B1)
Blanchard, Albert Cheney

Box 43

(28:B1)
Blanchard, Albert Cheney

Box 44

(28:B1)
Blanchard, Albert Cheney

Box 44

(28:B1)
Blanchard, Albert Henry

Box 23

(20:F5)
Blanchard, Albert Henry

Box 23

(20:F5)
Blanchard, Albert Henry travel

Box 43

(28:B1)
Blanchard, Annie Elizabeth Brown

Box 23

(20:F5)
Blanchard, Annie Elizabeth Brown

Box 18

(20:F5)
Blanchard, Charles P.

Box 17

(20:F5)
Blanchard, Charles P.

Box 18

(20:F5)
Blanchard, Charles P.

Box 19

(20:F5)
Blanchard, Charles P.

Box 20

(20:F5)

Blanchard, Charles P.

Box 24

(20:F5)

Blanchard, Charles P.

Box 24

(20:F5)

Blanchard, Charles P.

Box 25

(20:F5)

Blanchard, Charles P.

Box 25

(20:F5)

Blanchard, Charles P.

Box 25

(20:F5)

Blanchard, Charles P. 4

Box 30

(28:B1)

Blanchard, Charles P. with Blanchard, Albert Henry

Box 17

(20:F5)

Blanchard, Charles P., AWB, OHB

Box 18

(20:F5)

Blanchard, Charles P.: business

Box 20

(20:F5)

Series 2. Means family
various dates

25 boxes

Means, Abby F. B.

Box 36

(28:B1)

Means, Abby F. B.

Box 37

(28:B1)

Means, Abby F. B.: herbarium

Box 29

(28:B1)
Means, Abby F. B.: Wellesley scrapbook

Box 28

(28:B1)
Means, Abby F.B.: travel

Box 46

(28:B1)
Means, Blanchard 1

Box 4

(21:F1)
Means, Blanchard 2

Box 13

(21:F1)
Means, Blanchard 3

Box 14

(21:F1)
Means, Frances B.

Box 31

(28:B1)
Means, George

Box 43

(28:B1)
Means, Louise Rich

Box 42

(28:B1)
Means, Louise Rich 2

Box 8

(21:F1)
Means, Louise Rich 1

Box 2

(21:F1)
Means, Oliver W.

Box 19

(20:F5)
Means, Oliver W.

Box 20

(20:F5)
Means, Oliver W.

Box 32

(28:B1)
Means, Oliver W.

Box 33

(28:B1)
Means, Oliver W.

Box 34

(28:B1)
Means, Oliver W.

Box 35

(28:B1)
Means, Oliver W.

Box 43

(28:B1)
Means, Oliver W. Jr

Box 42

(28:B1)
Rich, Thaddeus 1

Box 12

(21:F1)
Rich, Thaddeus 2

Box 5

(21:F1)
Rich, Thaddeus 3

Box 6

(21:F1)
Series 3. Other families
various dates
23 boxes
Blair and Brown families

Box 17

(20:F5)
Blair, Brown, Means, Taft families

Box 19

(20:F5)
Brown, Annie

Box 42

(28:B1)
Brown, Hammond

Box 42

(28:B1)
Tufts and Blair families

Box 44

(28:B1)
Stone, Micah. Memoir of the evangelical church in South Brookfield
1844 Feb.
Box 48

(18:H7)
Series 4. Richmond Trading Co. Records
0000
3 boxes

Includes materials for both the Richmond Trading Company and the firm Blanchard and Merrick
Blanchard and Merrick

Box 21

(20:F5)
Blanchard and Merrick

Box 21

(20:F5)
Blanchard and Merrick

Box 22

(20:F5)
Blanchard and Merrick

Box 22

(20:F5)
Blanchard and Merrick

Box 22

(20:F5)
Blanchard and Merrick

Box 22

(20:F5)
Richmond Trading Co.

Box 25

(20:F5)
Richmond Trading Co. and Blanchard and Merrick

Box 21

(20:F5)

Series 5. Land and property
various dates
3 boxes
Deeds

Box 43

(28:B1)
Deeds

Box 44

(28:B1)
Elm Hill deeds etc.

Box 23

(20:F5)
Series 6. Elm Hill Farm and gardens
various dates
11 boxes
Farm and Agriculture 1

Box 1

(21:F1)
Farm and agriculture 2

Box 3

(21:F1)
Farm and agriculture: business

Box 45

(28:B1)
Farm and agriculture 4: herd promotion

Box 10

(21:F1)
Farm and agriculture 5: business

Box 9

(21:F1)
Farm and agriculture 6: business

Box 15

(21:F1)
Farm and agriculture 7

Box 11

(21:F1)
Farm and agriculture 8

Box 7

(21:F1)
Farm and agriculture: horses

Box 40

(28:B1)

Gardens and landscape

Box 41

(28:B1)

Publications

Box 16

(21:F1)

Series 7. Photographs and audiovisual
various dates

23 boxes

Box 1. Cased images

Box 47

()

Box 2. Brown and Blanchard family portraits

Box 47

()

Box 3. Blanchard family portraits

Box 47

()

Means family

3 boxes

Box 4. Means family portraits

Box 47

()

Means family

OS 53

(17:E1)

Means and Rich families

OS 55

(17:E2)

Means family travel

Box 56

(17:E2)

Travel photography (C.P. Blanchard)

6 boxes

Box 5. Travel: Europe (C.P. Blanchard)

Mounted cards
Box 47

()
Box 6. Travel: Constantinople, Cairo (C.P. Blanchard)

Mounted cards
Box 47

()
Box 7. Travel: California (C.P. Blanchard)

Mounted cards
Box 47

()
Travel (C.P. Blanchard)

Box 50

(17:D6)
Travel (C.P. Blanchard)

Box 52

(17:D7)
Travel (C.P. Blanchard)

OS 54

(17:E1)
Travel and miscellaneous (C.P. Blanchard)

OS 56

(17:E2)
Box 8. Landscape

Box 47

()
Landscape (slides): Louise Rich Means

Box 58

(17:E3)
Box 9. House and interiors

Box 47

()
Loose negatives

Box 27

(28:B1)
Rich, Thaddeus (includes glass and fragile material)

Box 49

(17:D6)
Rich family: home movies

Box 59

(17:E3)
Series 8. Printed works
various dates
23 boxes
Missionary publications

Box 26

(20:F5)
Missionary publications

Box 38

(28:B1)
Religious publications

Box 39

(28:B1)
Mary Wight book

Box 43

(28:B1)
Miscellaneous

Box 42

(28:B1)
Series 9. Realia and Audiorecordings
various dates
23 boxes
Photographic developing equipment
ca.1904
Box 60

(17:E4)
Photographic printing equipment
ca.1904
Box 61

(17:E4)
Realia (including Japanese souvenirs
ca.1890-1910
Box 51

(17:D7)

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Ron Couture, 2014-2015.

Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Aug. 2015.

Language:

Copyright and Use ([More information](#))

Cite as: Blanchard-Means Family Papers (MS 830). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Brookfield (Mass.)--History
- Clergy--Connecticut
- Clergy--Massachusetts
- Farms--Massachusetts
- Gardens--Massachusetts
- Jersey Cattle
- Morgan horse--Massachusetts
- Percheron horse--Massachusetts

Contributors

- Blanchard family [main entry]
- Blanchard, Abby Francis, 1837-1908
- Blanchard, Abigail Wood Hitchcock, 1811-1880
- Blanchard, Albert Cheney, 1808-1874
- Blanchard, Albert Cheney, 1876-1881
- Blanchard, Albert Henry, 1840-1922
- Blanchard, Amasa, 1771-1854
- Blanchard, Annie Elizabeth Brown, 1851-1913
- Blanchard, Charles Pinkney, 1843-1895
- Blanchard, Charlotte Keppel
- Blanchard, Dexter, 1798-1878
- Blanchard, Fatima Patience Cheney, 1777-1815
- Blanchard, Isabella Field Foster
- Blanchard, Lydia Rachael Cook
- Blanchard, William, 1800-1881
- Brown, Hammond, 1810-1891
- Brown, Mary A. L.
- Means, Abby Francis Blanchard, 1874-
- Means, Blanchard William, 1905-1973
- Means, Frances B., 1902-1946
- Means, Louise Chandler Rich, 1912-2009
- Means, Oliver W., 1860-1939
- Means, Oliver W., Jr., 1915-1946
- Rich, Thaddeus
- Blanchard and Merrick
- Richmond Trading Company

Genres and formats

- Photographs

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