Guide to the Leonard Bloomfield and Clarence L. Barnhart Collection 1930-2010
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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.BLOOMBARN

Title  Bloomfield, Leonard, and Clarence L. Barnhart. Collection

Date  1930-2010

Size  2.75 linear feet (6 boxes)

Repository  Special Collections Research Center
            University of Chicago Library
            1100 East 57th Street
            Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  This collection includes documents relating to the research and publication
          of Leonard Bloomfield and Clarence L. Barnhart’s linguistic approach to
          teaching children to read titled Let’s Read – a Linguistic Approach. Further,
          it also includes documents related to the publication of the revised edition.
          The collection contains materials dating from the 1930s to 2010, with the
          majority of materials originating from the 1950s -1960s.

Information on Use

Access  The collection is open for research.

Citation  When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Bloomfield, Leonard,
           and Clarence L. Barnhart. Collection, [Box#, Folder#], Special Collections Research Center,
           University of Chicago Library

Historical Note  This collection includes materials relating to Leonard Bloomfield and Clarence L. Barnhart’s
                  linguistic program to teach children to read. Leonard Bloomfield was an accomplished American
                  linguist who taught at the University of Chicago for many years. Clarence L. Barnhart was
                  a lexicographer who studied at the University of Chicago under Bloomfield’s direction. In a
                  meeting between the two men, Barnhart remarked that he was going to begin teaching his son to
                  read. Bloomfield responded with an outline of a program detailing the way he thought children
                  should be taught to read. While the program was unsuccessful for Barnhart’s son, the two men
                  began working together and further developing the reading program, Let’s Read – a Linguistic
                  Approach.
Bloomfield and Barnhart’s program attempts to develop the “alphabetic habit”. By placing similar sounding words together throughout the books, the reader is introduced to patterns within vocabulary. Let’s Read was published in 1961, after the death of Bloomfield in 1949. The work is composed of Bloomfield’s original ideas and illustrations. After Bloomfield’s death, Barnhart continued to work on the program along with the help of his sons. Following its original publication, other members of the Barnhart family continued to work on the program, resulting in a revised edition in 1993 and a second edition in 2010.

**Scope Note**

This collection includes materials relating to the original publication of Let’s Read, as well as its revised edition. The collection is divided into two series: Let’s Read Manuscript and Related Documents, and Let’s Read Revised Edition Documents. The materials date from 1933-2010, with the majority of materials dating from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. The collection provides insight into the research behind the program, the individuals involved in the process, as well as the challenges of publication and research.

Series I, Let’s Read Manuscript and Related Documents, contains Bloomfield’s original primer with illustrations establishing the program, manuscript pages of all six books, a folder of illustrations used within the program, copies of other introductory readers, research materials, marketing brochures and newsletters, program responses from various individuals, as well as correspondence both to and from Barnhart.


**Subject Headings**

- Bloomfield, Leonard, 1887-1949
- Barnhart, Clarence L. (Clarence Lewis), 1900-1993
- Reading -- Phonetic method
- Readers (Primary)

**INVENTORY**

**Series I: Let’s Read Manuscript and Related Documents**

This series contains all documents relating to the original publication and research of Bloomfield and Barnhart’s Let’s Read – a Linguistic Approach. It contains some of Bloomfield’s original materials, such as articles describing his research, as well as his original primer of Let’s Read with
illustrations. In addition the series includes documents detailing Barnhart’s continued struggle with the research and publication of the program. These documents include correspondence with various individuals who became involved in the program, as well as other academics, educators, teachers, tutors, and parents who provided responses concerning the program. Further, the series includes documents relating to research concerning the program, both from Barnhart and other academics, particularly those from Wayne State University and Syracuse. In addition the collection include materials relating to the marketing and promotion of the program, in the form of brochures and newsletters.

Box 1
Folder 1
   Bloomfield articles, 1933-1949
Box 1
Folder 2
   Bloomfield’s Primer with pictures, undated.
Box 1
Folder 3
   Children’s Reader by Bloomfield Intro and Book 1 Manuscript, 1939
Box 1
Folder 4
   Children’s Reader by Bloomfield Book 2 and 3 Manuscript, 1939
Box 1
Folder 5
   Children’s Reader by Bloomfield Book 4 Manuscript, 1939
Box 1
Folder 6
   Children’s Reader by Bloomfield Book 5 Manuscript, 1939
Box 1
Folder 7
   Children’s Reader by Bloomfield Book 6 Manuscript, 1939
Box 1
Folder 8
   Illustrations, undated.
Box 2
Folder 1
   Reading is Fun, 1947
Box 2
Folder 2
   Reading is Fun, 1949
Box 2
Folder 3
   Reading Mechanics Book 5 Part 1, 1952
Box 2
Folder 4
   Reading Mechanics Book 5 Part 2, 1952
Folder 5
  Reading Mechanics Book 6 Part 1, 1952
Box 2
Folder 6
  Elementary English, 1962
Box 2
Folder 7
  A Beginning Reader, 1964
  • We Can Read Books 1-6 Part 1, 1945
Box 3
Folder 1
  Program Responses from Educators and Administrators, 1960-1964
Box 3
Folder 2
  Program Responses from Teachers, 1962-1965
Box 3
Folder 3
  Program Responses from Tutors, Persons in Publishing, Parents, 1960-1964
Box 3
Folder 4
  Program Responses from Davis, 1956-1959
Box 3
Folder 5
  General Correspondence, 1958-1960
Box 3
Folder 6
  Velma McKay and Miquon School Correspondence, 1959-1960
Box 3
Folder 7
  Fowler and Newcomb Correspondence, 1958-1959
Box 3
Folder 8
  General Correspondence, 1965-1966
Box 4
Folder 1
  Let’s Read Reading Plans and Suggested Lessons, 1964-1966
Box 4
Folder 2
  Newsletters and Brochures, 1964-1975
Box 4
Folder 3
  Negotiations and Symposium 1959-1960
Box 4
Folder 4
  Early Research and Writing, 1963
Box 4
**Folder 5**
Writings, 1963-1965

**Box 4**
**Folder 6**
Research and Aims of Project, 1964-1966

**Box 4**
**Folder 7**
Syracuse Project, 1965-1966

**Series II: Let’s Read Revised Edition Documents**

This series contains documents related to the publication of the revised edition of Bloomfield and Barnhart’s Let’s Read – a Linguistic Approach. This includes notes and correspondence concerning editing and publication, a manuscript of the revised edition, and copies of the revised books.

**Box 1**
**Folder 1**
Notes, reading exercises, manuscript, undated

**Box 1**
**Folder 2**
Manuscript pages 30-117, undated

**Box 1**
**Folder 3**
Manuscript pages 118-174, undated

**Box 1**
**Folder 4**
Manuscript pages 175-215, undated

**Box 1**
**Folder 5**
Manuscript pages 216-285, undated

**Box 1**
**Folder 6**
Manuscript pages 287-360, undated

**Box 1**
**Folder 7**
Manuscript pages 361-425, undated

**Box 1**
**Folder 8**
Manuscript Notes and Index, undated

**Box 1**
**Folder 9**
Edits, 2009

**Box 2**
Let’s Read Books 1-9, 1993