

**The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**David Blakely
Papers, 1880-1931**

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Summary

Main Entry:	Blakely, David, 1834-1896
Title:	Papers, 1880-1931 (bulk 1892-1896)
Size:	8 linear ft. (20 boxes)
Restrictions:	Collection is open for research.
Source:	Gift of Margaret Brown, 1955
Bio/Hist. Statement:	David Blakely was a journalist/businessman whose amateur interest in music launched him into a highly successful career as manager of the great P.S. Gilmore and John Philip Sousa bands of the 1880s and 90s.
Description:	The bulk of the collection spans the years 1892-1896 and is comprised largely of correspondence relating to Blakely's management of the Theodore Thomas and Eduard Strauss orchestras and the P.S. Gilmore and John Philip Sousa Bands.
Special formats:	scrapbooks, business cards

Biographical Sketch

Little has been written concerning the early life and career of David Blakely.

One time secretary of state of Minnesota, president of the Minneapolis Philharmonic, editor/owner of a Minneapolis newspaper and founder of the Blakely Printing Company, David Blakely combined all these skills to head one of the most successful concert artist management firms in history. His clients included P.S. Gilmore, Theodore Thomas, Eduard Strauss and John Philip Sousa.

Blakely had managed Gilmore and Thomas in the 1880's with much success. In 1890, Blakely was chosen by the U.S. Navy Dept. to manage a nationwide tour by the U.S. Marine Band and its director John Philip Sousa. This tour of 1891 was so successful that Blakely decided to try forming a major U.S. band with a prominent band leader exclusively under his management. It would be modeled after the great bands of Europe.

His reasons for wanting a popular attraction were many: the "ladies orchestra" project had failed because they could not assemble a sufficient woodwind section, and the Eduard Strauss tour of 1891 was almost cancelled because of a Congressional bill preventing foreign musical "competition" on American soil. In addition, the U.S. Marine Band was under governmental jurisdiction and therefore outside of Blakely's exclusive managerial control.

He traveled to Europe looking for an established military man to lead a U.S. band. He tried to sign up Wettge from France and Komzak from Austria, but neither could obtain sufficient leave to come to the U.S.

Finally Blakely saw that his desire for a great American Band of his own could be realized in J.P. Sousa. After Blakely had arranged the second tour of the U.S. Marine Band, its enormous success prompted Blakely to ask Sousa if he would consider leaving Washington to form the "New Marine Band" to be based in Chicago. With Sousa's consent, preparations began.

During the summer and fall of 1892 the band was formed by contracting and auditioning well-known musicians. The band was called the "New Marine Band," changed to "Sousa's Peerless Concert Band," and finally just "Sousa's Band."

The first tour of the group culminated in the dedication of the new buildings of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The nine-week tour of the Midwest and New England was enough of a success to establish Sousa and Blakely as the premiere team in the popular music field.

About the time that Blakely and Sousa were forming the new band, P.S. Gilmore, the prominent bandleader who Blakely had once managed, died suddenly. A new director for the Gilmore band was chosen, one Dan Reeves. Under Reeves' direction the Gilmore band experienced increasing dissension and desertion from its ranks until 1893 when Reeves apparently sought to take the matter to what he felt to be its logical source of irritation.

An open letter appeared in the Musical Courier of March 15, 1893 accusing a certain manager of forming a new band for the sole purpose of eliminating the Gilmore outfit from the scene. In the end the former members of Gilmore's Band (now Sousa members) spoke up against the letter and the matter was summarily ended.

From 1893-96 Blakely managed the Sousa Band with its yearly tours and concert schedules and summers at the Manhattan Beach Resort. Blakely was at the height of his career when he died of a heart attack on November 7, 1896 in his New York office.

After Blakely's death Sousa began to break with the concert contract until a suit was brought against him by Mrs. Blakely. Through this "Blakely vs. Sousa" case it was found that the relationship between Blakely and Sousa was such that much of their contract was of a verbal rather than of a written nature; nevertheless Sousa was forced to finish out the contract. When the State of Pennsylvania rendered its final decision in 1900, all Sousa's compositions written under the Blakely contracts became the common property of both himself and the Blakely Estate.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of David Blakely encompass the years 1880-1931. The bulk of the David Blakely Papers fall within the years 1892-1896, the height of Blakely's career as manager of Sousa's Band. The collection is arranged by the inherent corporate structure of the syndicate so as to reflect the syndicate's mode of operation. It begins with the general correspondence of the Blakely Syndicate followed by the specialized subject correspondence and letterbooks concerning the Gilmore, Strauss and Thomas orchestras as well as that of the Austro-Hungarian Juvenile Band tours. The Financial Papers and account books of the Blakely Syndicate express the internal office financial operations as well as the concert and touring expenses of the groups managed by Blakely.

In addition, the collection contains series concerning the workings of the Blakely Printing Company and the personal papers, letters and bills of David Blakely himself. Finally there are the John Philip Sousa printed ephemera as well as a collection of calling cards, concert programs and opera and theatre house seating diagrams from the period.

Series Descriptions

I. THE BLAKELY SYNDICATE:

GENERAL BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE AND LETTERBOOKS 1880-1897

These papers are primarily incoming and internal correspondence. They portray David Blakely as concert artist manager, booking agent and businessman. The correspondence reflects Blakely's primary concern of acquiring, organizing and managing concert artists and performing groups of high caliber.

In the early years the correspondence shows Blakely managing Theodore Thomas and his Orchestra as well as managing and booking engagements for numerous singers and instrumentalists. During these years Blakely received many requests from performing artists seeking concert management. In addition there is considerable correspondence from managers in other U.S. cities looking to book one of Blakely's groups.

By early 1891 the correspondence reflects Blakely's interest in John Philip Sousa. Blakely's plans to free Sousa from his responsibilities with the Marine Band in Washington in order to form the New Marine Band based in Chicago begin to take shape. By June of 1892 there is a flood of incoming letters from musicians nation-wide seeking entry into the new band. Some letters are written directly to Sousa, others to Business Manager Frank Christianer or to Blakely himself. In addition letters to the Blakely management come from prominent musicians seeking work or to recommend other musicians for positions with the new Sousa Band. This type of correspondence is soon followed by letters of acceptance from those musicians who have been signed by Sousa along with copies of some of the contracts that Blakely had kept for his own files. By December of 1892 there appears a handwritten list of band members and their salaries.

Beginning in 1893 copies of outgoing Blakely correspondence appear sporadically. The remainder of the correspondence concerns bookings and tour preparations for the Sousa Band. These include the semi-annual tours, the Mid-Winter Exposition of 1894 and the Trans-continental tour of May-December of 1896. After Blakely's death on November 7, 1896, the correspondence is taken over by Frank Christianer. The volume of papers slowly diminishes and finally ceases in January of 1897.

The sub-series of this correspondence reflect other interests of the Blakely Syndicate. These include management of Eduard Strauss, the Austro-Hungarian Juvenile band and other European groups as well as Blakely's ill-fated "Ladies Orchestra" Project of 1891-92. Regarding Blakely's management of Eduard Strauss there are the two sub-series titled Strauss/Blakely Correspondence 1889-90, and the Eduard Strauss Tours 1890-92. This contains Blakely's correspondence with Senator Washburn concerning violation of the Musicians League agreements prohibiting foreign musicians from performing on U.S. soil and "competing" with American musicians. (See also; Blakely, Personal Papers, Letterbook 1890-92). In addition Blakely is in continuous negotiations with Eduard Strauss to satisfy Strauss' artistic requirements regarding his orchestra tours in the U.S. Finally there is contained here a letter to Blakely from officials of the Madison Square Garden Company asking Blakely to postpone the first Strauss U.S. concert which was to open the new Garden until construction on the site can be completed.

The letterbooks within this series of Blakely Syndicate correspondence contain Blakely's own correspondence regarding each of his concert group operations. These include Theodore Thomas, Eduard Strauss and Sousa.

II. THE BLAKELY SYNDICATE; FINANCIAL PAPERS AND ACCOUNT BOOKS 1884-1897 :

These papers describe the day to day workings of syndicate operations. This includes legal financial statements and expense reports for printing costs, telegrams, moving of musical equipment (including band trunks), press and photo advertising and office supplies. From the largest tax receipt to the smallest cancelled check, these records show exactly how Blakely financed and operated his concert management offices.

In 1889 Blakely managed the Gilmore Band Anniversary Jubilee. The financial papers of this sub-series show the expense accounts as prepared by Blakely's agent J.H. Laine through bills, invoices and brief financial correspondence.

Also contained in the syndicates financial papers are daily cash books and ledger books of all orchestra accounts and band receipts. Included here are the Thomas Tour of 1889, general office cash books as well as daily expense account books from some of the Sousa tours.

Miscellaneous Business and Financial Papers of the Syndicate show other aspects of Blakely's operations as entrepreneur and business manager that were important in forming both his concert artist activities as well as the business itself. Among these are his early festival concert activities in Minnesota and the minutes of the first meeting of the Blakely Syndicate in 1892.

III. THE BLAKELY PRINTING COMPANY PAPERS 1892-1896 :

The Blakely Printing Company came under the umbrella of the Blakely Syndicate. This company handled most of Blakely's office printing needs. This included the printing of flyers and concert programs promoting his own clientele. In addition Blakely sold advertising space in his concert brochures and programs to publishers, dealers of music as well as instrument makers such as C.G. Conn, founder of the Conn Instrument Corp. of Elkhart, Indiana.

Blakely also contracted with other printers as well as with lithographers and engravers to do large scale work to suit his band and concert promotional needs. This fact is reflected in the sub-series of papers titled Printers, Engravers, Lithographers; General Business Correspondence 1889-1896. Here is a wealth of correspondence that combines evidential and artistic value in a rich archival sampling of commercial artwork of the last quarter of the nineteenth century by way of the general business letterheads from the major printers and engravers of the period.

IV. DAVID BLAKELY; PERSONAL PAPERS:

Letterbooks 1890-1896; These two letterbooks contain material ranging from the legal matters concerning the Eduard Strauss Orchestra (See Blakely Syndicate Correspondence; Eduard Strauss Tours) to internal office routines. Primarily though, these books contain letters of a more personal nature such as regarding the maintenance of the Blakely house in Bradford, Vermont and Personal letters to Mrs. Blakely.

His personal bills also concern the maintenance of the Bradford house and the purchase and repairing of such things as bicycles and his daughter's violin. The Ada Blakely Personal Papers and Bills 1903-1931 contain a small grouping of insurance and personal bills.

V. PRINTED EPHEMERA

Contained here are printed ephemera of J.P. Sousa. There is an inventory song list of repertoire belonging to the Sousa Band, program drafts, and news clippings. In addition, this series includes a scrapbook of clippings compiled by Mrs. Sousa, various certificates and a fragment from a palm reading.

The sub-series, Blakely vs. Sousa 1887-1898, contains clippings and legal documents pertaining to the case brought against Sousa by Ada Blakely.

Also in this series is a small collection of music and music catalogs as well as music business cards and biographical sketches of musicians collected by Blakely for his office reference.

Concert programs/Notes is a collection of programs by Sousa and other artists. Many of them were sent to Blakely by artists seeking either Blakely's management or employment with Sousa's band.

News releases/Advertisements contains mostly notices of Blakely-sponsored events. These include transparencies of flyers for Sousa concerts.

Opera/Theatre House Diagrams and Specifications are an alphabetical assortment (by city/town) of seating plans for some of the major theatre and opera houses in the country.

Container List

Box

I. THE BLAKELY SYNDICATE CORRESPONDENCE:

A. General Business Correspondence

- 1 1880 - 1892
- 2 1893 - 1895
- 3 1896 - 1897 (and no date)
- 4 General European Correspondence 1891 - 1893

B. Special Business Correspondence

- 5 Strauss / Blakely Correspondence 1889 - 1890
Eduard Strauss Tours 1890 - 1892
Ladies Orchestra Project 1891 - 1892

C. Letter Books (One volume each)

- 6 Gilmore Letter Book no. 2; Oct. 28, 1889-Oct.22, 1891
Theodore Thomas Orchestra; Oct.-Nov., 1889 /
Eduard Strauss Orchestra; Oct.19, 1889-Aug.28, 1890
Theodore Thomas Orchestra; March - Oct., 1891
- 7 Austro-Hungarian Juvenile Band; Aug., 1891-Mar.,1892
U.S. Marine Band; Jan. 29-Apr.28, 1891
Sousa Band; Sept.14,1891-Oct.4, 1893 Sousa Band; May 6-Sept.6, 1896

II. THE BLAKELY SYNDICATE FINANCIAL PAPERS:

A. General Financial Papers

- 8 (1884) 1889 - 1890
- 9 1891 - 1893
- 10 1893 - 1895
- 11 1895 - 1897
Miscellaneous Business and Financial Papers
Undated Business and Financial Papers Gilmore Band; Financial Papers, 1889

B. Account Books (1 volume each)

- 12 Band Receipts 1887 - 1891
 Thomas Tour 1887 - 1891
 All Orchestras / Office Accounts 1889 - 1892
 All Orchestras / Office Financial Records, Receipts and Bills 1889 - 1892
 General Office Cash Book 1891 - Feb., 1894
 Frank Christianer; Account Book for 2nd U.S. Marine Band Tour,
 March 21 - May 9, 1892
 Expense Account Book for first New Marine Band Tour Sept., 1892
- 13 General Financial Records July, 1892-Aug., 1895
 Sousa Band Tour Expenses Aug., 1895-Sept., 1896, and General Office
 Expenses
 General Band / Office Expenses 1896
 Tour Expense Account Book 1896
- 14 General Expense Accounts Nov. 7, 1896-Apr.4, 1897
 General Financial Records Nov. 7, 1896-Apr.17, 1897

III. THE BLAKELY PRINTING COMPANY

- 15 The Blakely Printing Co. Papers 1892 - 1896
 Printers, Engravers, Lithographers General Business Correspondence,
 1889 - 1896

IV. DAVID BLAKELY: PERSONAL PAPERS

A. Letter books;

- 16 David Blakely, Personal letters Apr.25, 1890-Sept.1, 1892.
 David Blakely, Personal letters May 26-Sept.6, 1896

B. Personal Papers

- 17 Personal Papers 1889 - 1895
 Personal Papers 1896
 Personal Bills 1887 - 1894
 Personal Bills 1895 - 1896
 Personal Ephemera (n.d.)
 Ada Blakely, Personal Papers and Bills 1903 - 1931

V. PRINTED EPHEMERA

- 18 John Philip Sousa, Miscellaneous papers
 John Philip Sousa, Scrap Book

Blakely vs. Sousa 1897 - 1898
Music and Music Catalogs,
Musical Ephemera
Music Business Cards / Biographical sketches of Musicians

19 Concert Programs / Notes News Releases / Advertisements

20 Opera / Theatre House Diagrams and Specifications
Opera house/manager listings (one book)