Alan W. Mather was born in Glasgow, Scotland on February 11, 1907. He was raised and educated in Scotland, England, Canada and the United States. Mr. Mather was employed as an architectural draftsman in New York City during the 1920s and 1930s, and from 1935 to 1938 was on Isadore Rosenfield's staff with the New York City Department of Hospitals. He moved to Detroit in 1941, and since then has been employed by various architectural firms in the Detroit area and Chicago, including Albert Kahn, Inc., Saarinen & Swanson, Ralph R. Calder, Pilafian & Montana, and Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, Inc. He has been a prolific freelance writer, with article's and book reviews published in a variety of magazines, newspapers and architectural journals. Throughout his career, Mr. Mather has been interested and actively involved in the unionization of architectural employees, and he supported the efforts of the Organization of Architectural and Engineering Employees in the 1970s.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

Unionization of architectural employees in Detroit, 1969-1973
City planning and housing, 1930s-1940s
Construction and architecture in the Detroit area

Among the important correspondents are:

Raya Dunayevskaya       Joe Raimist
Ernest Mazey           Isadore Rosenfield

An index to correspondents will be found on p. 8
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5 1/2 manuscript boxes & 2 clamshell boxes

Series I, Architectural History, 1930-1950, Box 1:
Notes and other reference material compiled by Mr. Mather on architecture, construction, city planning, housing and related topics.

Series II, Detroit Area Architecture and Architectural Organizations, 1943-1976, Box 2: Notes, correspondence, memos and other material dealing primarily with architecture and architectural firms in the Detroit area, including information regarding specific firms, the construction of the Wayne County Youth Home, hospital construction and the Organization of Architectural and Engineering Employees.

Series III, Published Materials, 1933-1976, Box 3:
Articles and other publications by Alan Mather.

Series IV, Diaries, Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1933-1982, Boxes 3-8: Family history, diaries and correspondence.

Non-manuscript Material:

Approximately 31 blueprints drawn by Mr. Mather for the firms of Austin, Barry & Kay, H. E. Beyster, Ralph R. Calder, Albert Kahn Associates, Inc., Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, Inc., and Pilafian & Montana as well as for the Detroit City Engineer have been placed in the Archives Audiovisual Collection.
Notes, abstracts, photographs, drawings and some correspondence on architecture, city planning, housing, hospital construction and exhibits. Some topics indicated in the indexes were removed by Mr. Mather and do not appear in the files. The files are arranged by subject, and cover the approximate period of 1930 to 1950.

Box 1

1. ARCHITECTURE and RELATED SUBJECTS NOTES (ARS): handwritten notes, references and bibliographical material collected by Mr. Mather, arranged alphabetically by subject and indexed. Index, Architects, Architecture.
2. ARS: Index, Construction
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10. ARS: Index, Laboratory Buildings & Equipment
11-12. Demolition, Doors
14. ACH: Cities. History of cities, medieval town planning, the development of cities, public health and architecture 1940's
15. ACH: Cities, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia. History of industry and transportation and development of cities, suburbs and towns.
16. ACH: Cities, New York City: History of its development. Index and essay,
17. ACH: Cities, City Development Notes, 1945. Comments and criticism on contemporary approaches to city planning and Federal assistance to cities.
19. ACH: Cities, A Teaching Unit on Housing by Alan W. Mather
21. ACH: Housing, before and after World War I, comparison of plans in England and America.
22-23. ACH: Housing, notes on P.W.A. housing and government assistance for housing in the 1930's, and developments to 1945 (defense housing, housing shortages).
24. ACH: Housing, New York City 1941- : renovation of tenements and old housing, urban redevelopment, housing standards violations.
27-28. BUILDINGS in AMERICAN HISTORY: Exhibit. Notes, correspondence and plans for a travelling exhibit of photos illustrating the history of architecture in America, oreoared by Mr. Mather in 1938.
29-30. BUILDINGS in AMERICAN HISTORY: Notes. Notes on the history of American architecture as part of the preparation for the 1938 exhibit described above.
31. DETROIT and MICHIGAN NOTEBOOK No. 1.: notes on Michigan history and geology. Descriptions of housing, 1940's. Index on back page.
32. DETROIT and MICHIGAN NOTE BOOK No. 2: notes on defense planning, state building standards, demography and industry, U.A.W. - C.I.O. proposals on Postwar Urban Housing.

Series II
Box 2
Architectural Organizations
Detroit Area Architecture and

Notes, letters and memos concerning architectural firms and construction in the Detroit area. Information on the organization of unions of architectural employees in Detroit in the 1970's. The files are arranged by subject, and cover the period from 1943 to 1976, predominantly 1950 to 1970.

Box 2


4-8. ARCHITECT-ENGINEER OFFICES in Detroit: Smith, Hinchman & Grylls. Inter-Office Communications, personnel rosters, specifications and notes, 1951 to 1953.


27. THE PLANNING OF THE WAYNE COUNTY YOUTH HOME: Diary. Excerpts from Mr. Mather's diary concerning his work on the Wayne County Youth Home 1957-1958.


31-33. Unionization of Architectural Employees 1973: A Recent Exposure of Detroit Area Architectural and Engineering Employees to the Professional Unionization Process. This is a summary of unionization activity by the Architectural-Engineering Employees Organizing Committee in the Detroit area. 1973.

34. Unionization of Architectural Employees: A.S.D.A., AFL-CIO. Letter from the Association of Structural Draftsmen of America (A.S.D.A.), and two copies of Engineers' Outlook, a publication of the AFL-CIO, 1962 and 1963.

35. Unionization of Architectural Employees: The Gnomon, 1970-1972. An incomplete series of The Gnomon, a Detroit publication providing "an open forum for the current issues directly concerned with the non-managerial secretaries, architects, draftsmen and engineers of the architectural offices in the Detroit area."
36. Unionization of architectural employees; OAE Newsletter, 1972-74
37. Unionization of architectural employees; OAE organizing material, 1969-72
38. Unionization of architectural employees; "Unionism Hurt by Hard Times," Jul 1976

Series III
Box 3
Published Material

Articles, book reviews and letters to the editor written by Mr. Mather and published between 1935 and 1976. The publications represented include Pencil Points, The Nation, AIA Journal and Progressive Architecture.

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1-6. Magazine articles, book reviews, etc., 1935-41
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Diaries and Correspondence

The family history and excerpts from the diaries of Alan W. Mather. Subjects covered include housing in Detroit during World War II, demountable housing, city planning, construction notes, and references to the different firms that employed Mr. Mather. Most of the volumes are indexed. The correspondence concerns the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians (FAECT), the Workers' Federation for Housing, organized by the FAECT in 1934, housing, city planning, union activities, exhibits, racial equality in housing, and activities of the Socialist Party of Michigan. The material covers the period 1930 to 1970.

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6. Central Industrial Park -- Detroit/Hamtramck, 1982
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8. Mental health notes, 1940s

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