

To Our Readers...

The essential purpose or mission of an archive is easy enough to explain. An archive strives to collect, organize, and preserve historical records and, simultaneously, to make these same records readily available to all those who are interested in studying the past. Actualizing this mission, however, is much easier said than done. To accomplish its mandate an archive must develop a strategic plan or, more precisely, an institutional program that will enable it to fulfill, ever more completely, its fundamental ambitions. Yet institutional programs can never be fully realized without the proper resources—both human and material—that are needed to transform a concept into a reality.

In passing the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) is energetically fulfilling the vision of its founder and namesake. Our institutional program continues to expand because we have been able to procure the resources that our mandate necessitates. It is proper to remind our readers that without the generous annual support that comes from the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, the continuing growth and expansion of the American Jewish Archives would not be possible. We are deeply indebted to the College-Institute's president and Board of Governors for their loyal and dedicated commitment to the AJA's unique mission.

With the encouragement of the College-Institute and the support of our patrons and friends, the AJA has begun a program of physical expansion and refurbishment of our current home. We are presently completing the construction of the Jacob Rader Marcus Archival Repository, which is attached to the north side of our current building. The entirety of our collection will ultimately be housed in this new facility that will provide the AJA with approximately twelve thousand square feet of secure and environmentally safe archival space. With its four floors of storage and movable shelving units, the new Marcus Archival Repository will likely constitute the world's largest on-site collection of documentation on the history of North American Jewry. This new facility will provide the AJA with the room it needs to house the growth of its collection well into the twenty-first century.

Once the Marcus Archival Repository is ready for occupancy, the AJA's present facility will be renovated to meet the needs of scholars and researchers who use the facility in ever increasing numbers. This refurbishment will include restoration and expansion of the study area so that, when completed, the AJA will be able to accommodate a seating capacity of more than two dozen visiting scholars.

Along with the aforementioned renovation, we will also begin construction on a new educational facility to be called the Edwin A. Malloy Education Building. The late Edwin A. Malloy was a real estate developer and a dedicated philanthropist who was keenly interested in American Jewish history. During his lifetime he served the Jewish community in many capacities. He was the president of Congregation Emanu-El of New York City and for many years was a devoted member of the HUC-JIR Board of Governors. Mr. Malloy always took a special interest in the work of the American Jewish Archives. He admired the AJA's founder, Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, and appreciated the scholar's remarkable academic attainments. Upon Mr. Malloy's death in 1998, his wife Susan and their two children, Timon and Jennifer—trustees of the family's Sun Hill Foundation—voted to memorialize their beloved husband and father by enabling the establishment of a major new educational facility linked to The Marcus Center.

The Malloy Education Building will serve as The Marcus Center's educational center, and it will contain an archival exhibition gallery, new office space, and an electronic seminar room from which our long-distance learning initiatives will emanate. Together with the new Marcus Archival Repository and a renovated academic research center, the Edwin A. Malloy Education Building will provide The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives with a physical home that will literally have no peer in the world of American Jewish studies.

What does all of this have to do with this journal? In reflecting on the institutional significance of the American Jewish Archives, Dr. Marcus once observed that "no history of American Jewry can be written without recourse to its materials." Our readers, then, will note that many of the scholarly contributions published in our journal are shaped, to one extent or another, by the AJA's archival resources. Many of the authors have had extensive contact with the AJA, having received Marcus Center fellowship awards that funded four weeks of their research in Cincinnati. Their scholarly contributions to the academic world constitute a meaningful historical harvest that has

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grown from the myriads of documentary seeds that are housed in The Marcus Center's phenomenal archival repository.

The American Jewish Archives began as a concept. Originally a vision, the institution's mission has become a reality because, over the past fifty-three years, the AJA has been the beneficiary of the resources it has needed to actualize its mandate. With the addition of the wonderful new facilities that are presently being constructed, the future of this institution—and of this journal, which contains the veritable fruit of the archival tree—seems as bright as ever.

Of the many compliments Dr. Marcus received concerning the AJA, his favorite was the oft-repeated exclamation: "There's no place in the world like this!" As we begin a new millennium and the AJA's second fifty years of existence with a remarkable enhancement of its physical home, the exclamation is ever more apt: *There is* no place in the world like this!

G.P.Z.

Cincinnati, Ohio