

# From The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

*Kevin Proffitt*

The year 2003 was good for collection development at the American Jewish Archives. The AJA received nearly two hundred new accessions, covering a wide range of topics and formats. Some of these accessions, we believe, have the potential to open exciting new areas of research in the American Jewish experience. They represent the AJA's ongoing efforts to document the diversity of American Jewish life and thought.

Noteworthy among these new accessions are the papers of a number of prominent twentieth-century American Reform rabbis. These rabbis represent what might be considered the closing of an era – immediate post-World War II rabbis who not only were spiritual leaders and ministers, but who went beyond the pulpit and their congregations to advocate vigorous social justice and change.

From the papers of rabbis who led congregations in large metropolitan areas, such as Roland Gittelsohn, Edward Klein, and Jerome Malino, to Rabbi David Ben-Ami, who led a small congregation in Hattiesburg, Mississippi but was active in the front lines of the civil rights movement during the 1960s, this era of rabbis might be called “the greatest generation” of the American rabbinate. These men put their principles and sometimes their lives on the line for causes they felt were right and just. They didn't just preach about justice, they worked for it. And they left as their legacy an enduring example of leadership and commitment to standing in opposition to bigotry, oppression, and injustice. The papers of Ben-Ami, Gittelsohn, Klein, and Malino, now housed at the American Jewish Archives, will provide students and scholars even more data on these men, their lives, and times, as well as on the issues and concerns facing American Judaism and American society in the second half of the twentieth century.

Going beyond rabbinic papers, the AJA continues to receive collections that document the spiritual, educational, and organizational life of American Judaism. The records of Congregation B'nai Jehudah of Kansas City show the operations and activities of a major Midwestern Reform synagogue, as well as its rabbi, Samuel Mayeberg. The papers of Melvyn H. Bloom, an associate executive vice chairman and director of the Campaign Department of the United Jewish Appeal, reveal the organizational work of American Jewish philanthropy, another important but underrepresented area in the American Jewish community's documentary heritage.

Two accessions that we hope will open new research into important but underdocumented areas of American Jewish life deal with the American cantorate and Jewish education. The collected oral histories of American cantors, conducted by Mark Slobin in his project to compile a history of the American cantorate, reflect a seminal project in an area of American Jewish religious history that has, to date, received scant historical attention.

Jewish education is a major focus of attention at the American Jewish Archives these days. The AJA is working in collaboration with schools and educators to encourage the use of primary source documents inside and outside of the classroom for all levels of learning. The AJA also is working to collect records that document the history of American Jewish education. The records of the New York office of the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE) represent prime source matter in this potentially groundbreaking area of study. Dating back to the BJE's formation in 1917, these records have tremendous potential for research into American Jewish education in the twentieth century. This is a rich and extensive collection and its opening for use will represent a significant moment in the study of Jewish education in America.

For the study of contemporary educational initiatives, the AJA has obtained through Rabbi Sam Joseph, professor of Jewish religious education at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, a donation of materials on the second annual meeting of the UAHC-CCAR Commission on Lifelong Learning, which was held in 2003.

Even while gathering these new materials the AJA continues to collect what has always been the core of its collection: family histories, genealogies, community studies, and personal papers. This is the AJA's goal – not just to obtain what is obvious or easy, but to gather a representative sample of Jewish life in America. The American Jewish Archives understands that documenting the diversity and range of American Jewish life is an active process requiring creativity, initiative, and energy. The AJA invites you to join in locating new material and in adding to the legacy of the American Jew.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Here now is a selected listing of materials added to the collection of the American Jewish Archives in 2003:

***Ben-Ami, David Z.***

Collection consisting of addresses, letters, newspaper clippings, articles from periodicals and miscellaneous, with particular focus on Rabbi Ben-Ami's efforts in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Together with materials related to the American Forum for Jewish-Christian Cooperation, which was founded by Rabbi Ben-Ami.

*Received from David Z. Ben-Ami, Harrisburg, PA*

***Bloom, Melvyn H.***

Papers pertaining to Bloom's involvement with the United Jewish Appeal, including audiocassettes of a speech and conference calls made by Bloom. 1976-1987.

*Received from Melvyn H. Bloom, New York, NY*

***Bureau of Jewish Education (New York, NY)***

Files of the BJE, going back to its origins as the Jewish Education Committee in 1917. Includes minutes of the board of directors and various committees, together with files of officers and directors, including Alexander Dushkin, Azriel Eisenberg, and Israel Chipkin. Also includes publications, posters, publicity brochures, and educational materials of the BJE. 1917-1980.

*Received from the Bureau of Jewish Education, New York, NY*

***Congregation B'nai Jehudah (Kansas City, MO)***

Records of the congregation, including board minutes, financial records, administrative files, and correspondence. Also includes some papers of the congregation's long-serving rabbi, Samuel Mayerberg (1892-1964).

*Received from Congregation B'nai Jehudah, Kansas City, MO*

***Eden, Sham Gootman***

“Taking our past into the future (Abba Eden)” — a memoir and history of the Cincinnati chapter of the Labor Zionist Organization of America (Poale Zion).

*Received from Sham Gootman Eden, Cincinnati, OH*

***Ettlinger, Julia***

Records and life cycle data on Julia Ettlinger and her family, 1863-1890, compiled by Robert E. Miller. Julia Ettlinger was a Cincinnati resident who, as a teenager, was a member of the first class of students at Hebrew Union College in 1875.

*Received from Robert E. Miller, Cincinnati, OH*

***Friedenreich, Fradle***

“Yiddish secular education in the U.S. and Canada between the two world wars.” An unpublished paper on Yiddish secular education, including appendices containing a breakdown of research presented in the paper.

*Received from Fradle Friedenreich, Israel*

***Gittelsohn, Roland B.***

Correspondence, subject files, and sermons, primarily during his tenure as rabbi at Temple Israel in Boston. Among the many interesting files in this collection are those on pacifism and conscientious objection to war. These contain articles, Gittelsohn’s notes, and other thoughts on laws and ethics regarding conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War. 1934-1996.

*Received from Judith Fales, Waitsfield, VT, and David Gittelsohn, Framingham, MA*

***Gordon, Theodore***

Assortment of materials including sermons, publications off-prints, and writings of numerous Reform rabbis; a National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods art calendar for 5690 (1929/1930) featuring artwork of Boris Schatz; and a letter from Henrietta Szold (1860-1945) to Rabbi Gordon regarding the Zionist movement and life in Palestine, 1937.

*Received from Theodore Gordon, Bloomington, IL*

***Greene, Barry Hewitt***

Materials gathered and compiled by Hewitt concerning the Jewish chaplaincy and Rabbi Julie Schwartz, the first woman to be endorsed as a Navy chaplain for active duty. 1985-1986.

*Received from Barry H. Greene, Short Hills, NJ*

***Hecht, Sigmund***

Sermons, both handwritten and typed, of Rabbi Sigmund S. Hecht covering the years 1877-1919. Sigmund Hecht finished his career as rabbi at Wilshire Boulevard Temple (Los Angeles) and was succeeded by Edgar F. Magnin. Prior to then Hecht served congregations in Montgomery, Alabama, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Ordained in Hungary, Hecht received a D.D. degree from the University of Alabama.

In English and German.

*Received from the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Los Angeles, CA*

***Hirsh, Allan***

Genealogical information on the Heyn family. 1776-2003.

*Received from Allan Hirsh, Baltimore, MD.*

***Kaufman, Gus Bernd***

“The great migration and the founding of Congregation Sherah Israel\* in Macon, Georgia, 1881-1910 (\*retranslated to Sha’arey Israel in 1999),” a history of Congregation Sha’arey Israel (Macon, Ga.), authored by Gus. B. Kaufman.

*Received from Gus B. Kaufman, Macon, GA*

***Kaufmann, Edgar Jonas***

Letters from Edgar Jonas Kaufmann, a Pittsburgh merchant and communal leader, to his wife, Liliane Sarah, and his son, Edgar, Jr., primarily during his service in World War I. Together with letters of Kaufmann’s parents, Morris and Betty (Wolf) Kaufmann, upon their arrival in the U.S. in 1871 and two letters from Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., to his mother. Also includes a photo of the Kaufmanns and biographical information.

*Received from the estate of May K. Michaely through Sheldon Goldstein, executor, Pittsburgh, PA, 2003.*

***Klein, Edward E.***

Collection of papers consisting of sermons, writings, lectures, correspondence, clippings, booklets, and pamphlets relating to Klein's rabbinic career (primarily at the Stephen S. Wise Free Synagogue in New York) and to his social activism. Includes correspondence with Stephen S. Wise and contains material on Klein's involvement in Jewish-Christian relations, the civil rights movement, the peace movement, and numerous social issues. 1937-1985.

*Received from Ruth Klein, New York, NY*

***Levine, Aaron***

Memoirs, consisting mostly of World War II letters between Aaron Levine and his wife, Estelle. Together with autobiographical material dated before and after the war.

*Received from Aaron Levine, Cincinnati, OH*

***Malino, Jerome R.***

Papers of Rabbi Malino, rabbi of the United Jewish Center in Danbury, CT. The papers relate to Rabbi Malino's activities at the UJC and as a leader in the Danbury community. The collection includes correspondence, lectures, and an extensive sermon collection. There are also materials concerning Rabbi Malino's activities in the Jewish community and beyond, including his tenure as president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (1979-1981).

*Received from Frances Malino, Wellesley, MA, and Jonathan Malino, Greensboro, NC*

***Marks, Anita S.***

Hamilton County, Ohio Burial Records Volume 15: Walnut Hills United Jewish Cemetery, 1850-2002, being a compilation of burial records of the Walnut Hills, United Jewish Cemetery (Cincinnati, OH). 1850-2002.

*Received from Anita S. Marks, Cincinnati, OH*

***Marx, Werner J. B.***

*Circumstances, a family history 1800-2003*, being a family history of the Marx and Freiberg families of Germany and the U.S.

*Received from Werner J. B. Marx, Cocoa Beach, FL*

***Ransoboff, Regine***

Family history of Alexander Hauer of Gehaus, Thuringia, Germany. Includes the Marks, Simmonds, and Wachtel families of Gehaus, Thuringia, Germany, Sweden, Colombia, and the West Indies. 1777-1941.

*Received from Regine Ransoboff, Cincinnati, OH*

***Reform Leadership Council***

“Report of the Joint Task Force on the Shortage of Jewish Professionals,” submitted by Robert M. Heller as task force chair, outlining their assessment and proposals for dealing with a shortage of Jewish professionals in the Reform movement. 2003.

*Received from Gary P. Zola, Cincinnati, OH*

***Slobin, Mark***

“History of the American Cantorate,” a study conducted by Mark Slobin of Wesleyan University consisting of oral history interviews conducted by Slobin with cantors and others that detail the history of the American cantorate. Interviewees include members of the Cantors Assembly, the American Conference of Cantors, the Women Cantor’s Network, and part-time cantors of the greater Boston area.

*Received from Mark Slobin, Middletown, CT*

***Sparks, Jeanette Wertheim***

“History of Temple Beth-El (Carlsbad, NM), 1916-2002.”

*Received from Jeanette W. Sparks, Carlsbad, NM*

***Tuckman, Vicki Seren***

“An Evaluation of Primary Source Documents as related to the Ordination of Rabbi Sally Priesand,” a history research paper submitted to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH. The paper examines primary source documents relating to the ordination of the first woman rabbi, Sally Priesand. 2003.

*Received from Gary P. Zola, Cincinnati, OH*



***UAHC-CCAR Commission on Lifelong Learning***

Opening remarks and meeting summary of the second annual meeting of the UAHC-CCAR Commission on Lifelong Learning, including a focus on education in Israel. March 2-4, 2003.

*Received from Sam Joseph, Cincinnati, OH*

***UAHC-CCAR***

Minutes and other records of the UAHC-CCAR Commission of Synagogue Affiliation. 1997-1998.

*Received from Deborah Kirschner, New York, NY*

***Velvill Fin Zion Family Association***

Genealogical information on the Abramovicci, Abramowitz, Bienstock, Fingerroth, Flur, Goldstein, Hangin, Maxwell, Mierowitz, Sprei, Trauben, and Wasserman families. 1924-1994.

*Received from Myron Maxwell, Cincinnati, OH*

***Winowich, Natalie***

Genealogical information on the Weil and Simon families of Montgomery, AL

*Received from Natalie Winowich, Charleston, WV*