

A Guide to the Records of
Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations
(n.d., 1912-1986)
(*I-208)

American Jewish Historical Society
Waltham, MA
New York, NY

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Note to Researchers

Special Note:

This finding aid was completed in the summer of 1996 as part of a general search of the collections of the American Jewish Historical Society for archival holdings relating to American Jewish women. As such, this finding aid may only reflect those parts of the collection which pertain to women. *This finding aid is not intended to be an exhaustive guide to this collection.* Researchers should consult the collection directly for information not pertaining to American Jewish women and gender issues.

Title of the Collection:

Federation of Jewish Women's Organization Records (n.d., 1912-1986) (*I-208)

Provenance:

Gift of the Federation, 1983

Statistics:

Number of containers:
6 boxes (3 linear feet) +1 oversized folder

Languages:

English, Yiddish

Date Completed:

August 1996

Access and Citation:

These papers are open to all researchers deemed to be qualified by the Executive Director of the American Jewish Historical Society.

The original collection is available at the American Jewish Historical Society, 15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011).

A suggested form for citation is "[Item]. American Jewish Historical Society, [Collection name] [Box #]/[Folder #]."

Property and Literary Rights:

Information concerning the literary rights may be obtained from the Executive Director of the American Jewish Historical Society.

Related Material:

The history of the Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations of Maryland (1916-1961) (in the Society's library) may prove to be of interest to researchers, as may the papers of Alice Davis Menken (*P-23), the long-time president of the Sisterhood of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue and one of the original members of the FJWO.

Scope and Content Note

The collection of the Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations (originally the Federation of Sisterhoods) contains material pertaining to the founding, history and activities of this organization. The collection includes the organization's constitution, newsletters, awards and citations (plaques and certificates), photographs, program conventions, newspapers clippings, correspondence, and minutes of meetings.

The collection is valuable to researchers studying Jewish women's organizations in the twentieth century, especially Jewish women's benevolent activities, including the Sisterhoods of Personal Service.

Historical Sketch

The Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations was founded as the Federation of Sisterhoods in 1896, bringing together 14 New York City Sisterhoods of Personal Service which had been organizing relief activities among the city's Jewish poor. The organization changed its name in 1920, when social and welfare groups were admitted to the Federation.

In 1982, the Federation included groups of women who "serve actively in the fields of education, health, religion, social welfare and general philanthropy."

Box 1

| <u>Contents</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Early History | |
| Constitution & By-Laws | |
| Affiliate Organizations | |
| Hospitals | |
| Newsletters | 1967-1981 |
| Citation | 1944 |
| Photographs | |
| Miscellaneous | 1919-1945 |

Miscellaneous

1970-1982

Boxes 2 & 4

Contents

Date

Meeting Minutes and Miscellaneous
(clippings, etc.)

Box 3

Contents

Date

Meeting Minutes

Box 5

Memorial Volume for Jane Fischel

JWB Medal, 1958

Awards & Certificates

JWB Commendation (plaque), 1945

JWB Award (plaque), 1966

Box 6

Contents

Date

Convention Programs

Oversize Folder (OSF 1)

Contents

Awards

Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations

I-208

Box 1

Early History

- began as the Federation of Sisterhoods (org. 1896), which was the umbrella organization for the Sisterhoods of Personal Service
- typed copy of the certificate of incorporation for the Federation of Sisterhoods, April 19, 1909; changed name in 1920 to Federation of Sisterhoods and Jewish Women's Organizations; then changed name in 1921 to Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations

Constitution

1925: Constitution and By-Laws, Compendium of Affiliated Organizations

- Object: "To bring into relation of mutual helpfulness the various Jewish women's organizations in the City of New York.

"To encourage interest in philanthropic work, education, social service, religion, civic improvements, and City, State and National Welfare Legislation.

"To provide a forum for present day problems whenever possible."

several Constitutions through 1944

Affiliate Organizations

- lists of organizations
- correspondence from various organizations listing their current projects , history, etc.
- in 1957, the Federation asked for information about Jewish women's organizations which had been serving their community for over 25 years; there is a good deal of correspondence from various organizations attesting to their age and giving a history of their founding and a summary of their work
 - statement of history from Ladies Auxiliary, Congregation Mt. Sinai, Brooklyn
 - founded 1891 to take care of the social and charitable requirements of the group
 - goals then and in 1957: "To assist the Congregation in its important work; to help maintain a very large Talmud Torah and Sunday School, to do charity for local and national groups; and to promote sociability."
 - Sisterhood of B'nai Jeshurun, activities in 1957
 - Sisterhood of Temple Beth El, Rockaway Park, founded 1920
 - Sisterhood of Temple Beth El, Great Neck, founded 1927
 - their big project is Braille work
 - Sinai Sisterhood of the Bronx, 1909
 - Sisterhood of Nathan Straus Jewish Center, organized 1927
 - "Our aim has always been to help build and support our Synagogue and Center Hebrew Schools which is one of the finest in the Community. We have about 160 children in our School."

Hospitals

- FJWO seems was responsible for raising funds to create synagogues at various hospitals and prisons
- newsletters
- newspaper clippings
- documents pertaining to the building of synagogues
 - receipts, contracts, etc.

Newsletters 1967-1981

Citation

- Jan. 26, 1944: in appreciation for the sale of Fourth War Loan and E Bonds amounting to \$707,125.00 to equal the price of two 1000 bed general hospitals in the U.S.

Photographs

- 15 total: of convention luncheons, members, Grandma Moses (to whom they gave an award), sanctuaries

Miscellaneous 1919-1945

- flyers
- minutes - on backs of pages
- notes on events
- announcements of coming events
- reports of various committees
- statistics on Jews in New York
- notes on the 5-Day Week
 - for and against
- correspondence
- speeches
- annual reports
- eulogies
- information about funding of FJWO
 - 1940: they wanted to put together a history
- Report of Annual Convention, Jan. 16, 1946
 - Emilie Jacoby, Chair
 - among things they must do in the future:
 - be aware of subversive elements in the U.S.
 - work for world peace; try to bring soldiers home quicker
 - participate in public affairs
 - "We must feel and assume responsibility for the precious remnant of our people, spared after unspeakable horrors and atrocities. We must open our eyes and our ears, our hearts and our hands and answer with words and

with deeds not until it hurts, but until we feel good. We must support every plan presented by those authorized agencies which know the questions and can furnish the answers only with our help."

- see also the *American Hebrew* January 17, 1895; November 22, 1895; May 15, 1896; May 7, 1897; May 21, 1897; July 2, 1897

- financial records
- newspaper clippings
 - including one in Yiddish on the FJWO

Miscellaneous 1970 1982

- including correspondence

Box 2

Minutes

- 1912-1958 (and Misc. terms)

Box 3

Minutes

- 1938
- 1945-1949
- 1951-1953
- 1950-1953

Box 4

Minutes

- 1964-1965
- 1945-1953
- 1951-1953
- 1947-1953
- 1967-1973

Clippings (and Misc. terms)

Box 5

Memorial Volume for Jane Fischel
JWB Medal, 1958
Awards & Certificates
JWB Commendation (plaque), 1945
JWB Award (plaque), 1966

Box 6

Convention Programs

- 1983: "The Jewish Woman: Her Achievements Over the Past 90 Years"
- speakers: Sara Lee Kessler (news commentator), Honorable Carol Berman (former State Senator), Rebbetzin Esther Jungries (founder of Hineni and Heritage Foundation)
- 1982: "World Tensions and Tranquilizers"
- 1981: "Jewry in the Diaspora Today"
- 1980: "A Glimpse into the Eighties"
- 1979: "Crisis and Opportunities of the Jew Today"
- 1978: "Our Cherished Roots"
- 1977: "Today's Hopes - Tomorrow's Realities"
- includes Bella Abzug on "Hopes and Realities of Jewish Women"
- 1976: "A Rich Past - A Promising Future"
- 1975: "Women with a Cause"
- panelists: Hadassah Levin, Wife of Dr. Shlomo Levin; Rabbi Sally Priesand; Marlene Saunders, ABC-TV; Marjorie Margolies, NBC-TV; Dr. Ida F. Davidoff, Einstein Medical College, Mollie Strum, Asst. District Attorney, Carol Greitzer, Council Woman; Irene Roth
- 1974: "Brighter Horizons: A Prophecy"
- 1973: "The Miracle of Israel"
- 1972: "Spirit of '76: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness"
- 1971: "Dialogue with Youth"
- 1970: "Our Jewish Heritage - What of the Future"
- panelists include Howard Fast
- 1969: "Woman Power: The Dynamic Force"
- 1968: "New York: Its Urgent Future"
- 1967: "Salute to Jews in the Arts"

- 1966: "Values in Great Society"
- includes panelists Fannie Hurst, Jackie Robinson
- address by Governor Nelson Rockefeller
- 1965: "Tomorrow - Potential and Promise"
- includes panelist Mrs. Count Basie
- 1964: "New Designs for Living"
- 1963: "Leisure: Inspiration or Frustration"
- 1962: "Crisis and Challenge"
- 1960: "Energy Unlimited"
- 1959: "Tensions and Tranquilizers"
- 1958: "Women, 45 and Older"
- Women of Achievement Award to Justine Wise Polier (and others)
- 1957: "Youth, Today and Tomorrow"
- 1956: "Broader Horizons: The Next 60 Years. What is Our Task?"
- 1955: "History in the Making"
- 1954: "The Past: A Prologue to the Future"
- Women of Achievement awards given to Lillian Gish, Grandma Moses, Eleanor Roosevelt
- 1953: "Freedom and Security"
- Women of Achievement award to Helen Keller
- speakers include Jackie Robinson, National Conference, Christians and Jews
- 1952: "Can Youth Meet the Challenge to Democracy"
- Women of Achievement award to Marian Anderson, Golda Meyerson (Golda Meir)
- 1951: "Women - the Vital Majority"
- speakers include Margaret Mead
- 1948: "The Price of Freedom"
- panel: "Are Our Civil Liberties in Danger?"
- 1947: "Today is Ours"
- 1946: "The Next Fifty Years"

1945: "Builders of Tomorrow"

- panel: "Cornerstones for a Better World"

- speakers include Eleanor Roosevelt, Mayor LaGuardia, Mary Pickford, David de Sola Pool

1944: "Prepare for Tomorrow"

1943: "Challenges to Women Today"

1942: speeches:

- William Rosenblum, "The Task Before Us: 'Religion's Role'"

- Fannie Hurst: "Woman Power Present and Future"

1941: "Speak up for Democracy"

1940: "Ten Modern Principles of Democracy"

- by Mrs. Herbert H. Lehman:

"1. Tell the truth. This procedure is only possible in a democracy where there is a free and unregimented press.

2. Treat all men as you would wish to be treated. Observance of this principle would mean a repudiation of all false ideas of race superiority or race and class hatred, and of group warfare.

3. Respect the sincere religious beliefs of every man, even when you do not happen to share them. This is basic for all those who hold to the ideas on which America is founded.

4. Help those who suffer and who are persecuted because of their beliefs or their racial heritage.

5. Try to preserve the democratic heritage of equal opportunity for all men to learn and to earn.

6. Remember that freedom of opinion is at the very basis of democracy and human liberty.

7. Distrust all those who sow hatred of other men.

8. Respect the law, for it is the guarantee of your own freedom.

9. Remember that America is not merely a country - it is an ideal for the whole world.

10. Remember that the hope of the world lies in peace and justice to mankind."

1939: "Today's Challenge"

1938: "Looking Forward"

- speech: "Woman's Viewpoint" by Hon. Ruth Bryan Owen, former America Minister to Denmark

1937: "Constructive Forces for Better Living"

- speech: "Woman and the Future" by Margaret Sanger

1936: "Women's Responsibility in World Affairs"
- speech: "Youth Faces the World" by Fannie Hurst

1935: "How Can Women Contribute Toward the Development of Security?"

1934: "Problems in This Era of Readjustment. How is the Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations Helping to Meet Them."

1932: address by Stephen Wise, "What Hope of Peace"

1931 - 1922: no speakers, no themes; guests of honor, and reports of committees

[1927: includes lunch ticket and luncheon reservation card]

Oversize Folder (OSF 1)

- awards, framed and unframed
- certificates