

Temple Israel Archives

Researcher Information Packet



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Temple Israel Archives Mission and Policies Overview

Mission statement

Temple Israel is the second oldest congregation in the Boston area, and the largest Reform congregation in New England. Founded in 1854, Temple Israel has a long history that details the evolution of Boston's Jewish community. The Temple Israel Archives serves as the repository for records, documents, publications, and images relating to the history and administration of Temple Adath Israel of Boston. These records document the congregation's history and provide primary source materials that assist the clergy, staff, and members of the synagogue. The Archives also serve as a resource for researchers interested in the history of Boston's Jewish community, or in family research.

Collecting policy

We actively collect institutional records from administrators and other staff, clergy, religious school, preschool, committees, synagogue members, lay leaders, the Riverway Project, the Frances Jacobson Early Childhood Center, and other auxiliaries. This includes the following: administrative records, manuscripts and papers, meeting minutes, bulletins, religious school yearbooks, photographs and digital images, audio and video recordings, scrapbooks, and memorabilia.

Donating material to the archives

The archives accepts any material that will make its collections useful for staff and researchers. We welcome material related to the temple's various committees and clubs, the clergy, the religious school, and various events over the years. We are also interested in material concerning the lives of congregational members. Please contact the archivist for more information if you are interested in donating materials to the archives.

Access to the collections

The Temple Israel Archives is open to all members of the temple community, as well as the general public, and we actively encourage the use of our collections as a cultural and historical resource. Office hours are Monday through Friday by appointment only. Researchers are required to register before using the materials and to observe established policies and procedures that ensure the security and preservation of the collections (see the *Collections Access and Handling Policy* below). The archivist may also request a preliminary conversation prior to your visit to discuss your research topic so that relevant materials can be located and taken out. Finding aids and inventories are available for a small number of the collections. Copies may be requested by contacting the temple archivist.

Researching your family history

The Archives holds various records that are useful for genealogists and others interested in their family history. While some membership and cemetery records survive from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, most life cycle records are spotty before the 1940s. As some life cycle records are filed under the name of the clergy member who performed the ceremony, please include as much information as possible to help expedite your search when making an inquiry.

Temple Israel Archives Collections Access and Handling Policy

- All archival materials must be used in the archives.
- Researchers must fill out a research request form (below) and have it approved by the archivist prior to their visit. This form helps to track materials consulted in the course of your research. The forms also serve as a record of use for the archives.
- No food or drink is allowed near the materials.
- Researchers must use pencils to take notes—no other writing instruments are allowed. The archivist can provide you with a pencil and note paper if necessary. Cell phones and laptops are permitted in the archives.
- Please inform the archivist prior to your visit if you would like to photograph any items. The archivist will examine the materials to determine whether images are permitted.
- Finding aids and inventories exist only for a very limited number of collections. If one is available, please review it in advance of your visit to help you locate specific items. More effort will be required to locate relevant materials for less processed collections.
- Only one folder of material is allowed on the table at a time.
- *Items should not be removed from folders.* If you see something you would like to have copied, mark its location with a slip of acid-free paper (provided), and make a note of the item, folder name, box name and/or number, and collection in your own notes. If the item is photocopied, mark the same info on the back of the copy to ensure easy retrieval of the item(s) in the future.
- *Many of the materials in the archives are very fragile.* The archivist will decide if a particular item may be photocopied. If it cannot be photocopied, the archivist may be able to make other arrangements.
- Please be aware that all copies and photographs are for *research purposes only*. If you decide that you would like to use an image in a publication, you must make a separate request to use that image.
- Gloves (provided) must be worn at all times when looking at photographs to protect them from fingerprints.
- *There are many unidentified photographs in the collection.* If you are able to identify people, places, events, and/or occasions in an unlabeled image, we would be very grateful for your help. Please inform the archivist, who will provide you with paper flags that you can use to note the appropriate information.

Temple Israel Archives Access Restrictions

The following items in the collections may have access restrictions:

- Material with sensitive personal and/or financial information (may be restricted or redacted at the archivist's discretion).
- Materials in poor physical condition (may be restricted for their protection if necessary).

The following items in the collections are closed:

- Administrative records from the last thirty-five years that contain confidential information, especially those from the Board of Trustees.
- Membership records are closed to researchers who are not family members unless they have the written permission of the specific member or their families. For more information, contact the temple archivist.

**Temple Israel Archives
Research Request Form**

All materials in the collection must be used in the Archives. No materials may leave the room without permission of the Archivist. No food, drink, or smoking are allowed. Patrons are asked to use pencil only. Please supply the information requested below.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Fax: _____

Institution: _____

Position: _____

Purpose of Research

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Investigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class project | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Interest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation/Thesis | <input type="checkbox"/> Publication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit/Media project | <input type="checkbox"/> Seminar/Term paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family history | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech/Presentation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Preservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Description of Topic (optional): _____

I have reviewed the *Collections Access and Handling Policy* and agree to abide by the rules listed above. I also assume full responsibility for conforming to the laws of libel and literary property rights which may be involved in the manner in which I use any document belonging to this collection.

Researcher's Signature

Date

Temple Israel Archives List of Archival Collections

Overview

The majority of the material in the archives documents the administrative history of Temple Israel, its affiliated clubs and committees, and congregational life of its members. Manuscripts, minutes, published and printed material, photographs, scrapbooks, audiovisual recordings, vertical files, memorabilia, and other material illustrate the ways the temple has changed and grown, as well as the traditions it has maintained. While the earliest records come from the 1850s, most date from 1900 to the present.

Administrative records

These records relate specifically to the administration of Temple Israel. They include but are not limited to correspondence, meeting minutes and reports, mailings and notices, brochures, finance reports, and supplemental photographic material. The collection includes:

- Minutes of the Board of Trustees, December 1861-present
- Annual and Special Congregational Meetings, 1942-present
- Membership Committee, 1861-present (with gaps)
- Temple Committee, 1944-1990
- Bylaws/Legal Committee, 1923-present
- Treasurer's Reports, 1921-present
- Fundraising/Development records, 1925-present (with gaps)
- President and Executive Director papers, 1918-1994 (with gaps)
- Membership files (for inactive members only)

Anniversaries collection

This collection contains material related to important temple anniversaries, including planning records, publicity, programs, photographs, and so forth.

Audio, Audio-visual, and Visual collection

This collection contains audio and video recordings of temple services, rabbinic sermons, special events, and other functions/activities related to the temple, as well as a large amount of physical and digital visual material. Formats include: photographs, lantern slides, glass slides, magnetic tape recordings (cassette, VHS, reel to reel, etc.), vinyl records, and CDs/DVDs.

Biographical and Subject Files

The archives maintains informational files about the temple, American Judaism, Jewish Boston, and select congregants, staff, and clergy. The files include some correspondence, pamphlets, brochures, clippings, and other secondary sources.

Book collection

This collection includes prayer books, books of sermons, books written by Temple Israel clergy and staff, and selected books written by temple members.

Buildings collection

This collection contains records regarding the various buildings Temple Israel has owned and occupied over its 150-year-plus history. Material includes fundraising records, architectural and construction plans, deeds of ownership, maintenance records, and a significant collection of photographs for the following buildings:

- Pleasant Street (1854-1885) (no plans or images)

- Columbus Ave. (1885-1902)
- Commonwealth Ave. (1907-1968)
- Longwood Ave. (1928-present)

Cemetery records

Temple Israel's cemetery in Wakefield, Massachusetts, was founded in 1859. The archives contains a variety of records pertaining to this historic cemetery, including burial records, maps and plans, legal deeds, maintenance records, and photographs. It also contains the records of the temple's cemetery committee and programs for the annual Memorial Day service.

Club and committee records

Temple Israel has always offered a variety of social and cultural activities and community service opportunities for its members, including, among others:

- Women of Reform Judaism (formerly Sisterhood), 1920s-present
- Brotherhood, 1949-1986
- Social Action Committee, 1959-present
- Israel Committee, 1959-1986
- Garden Club, 1940s-1990s
- Art Committee, 1900s-1980s
- Couples Club, 1958-1984
- College Club, 1959-1982
- Music Committee, 1920s-present
- Archives/Oral History/Museum committees

Educational programs

Temple Israel's educational programs for both children and adults have been a central focus throughout the synagogue's history. Documentation is incomplete, but includes material concerning the religious school curriculum; consecration, bar/bat mitzvah, confirmation, and graduation services; youth programs and activities; the PTA; the education committee; and the nursery school. A large amount of material is also available regarding the temple's continuing/lifelong education programs, lecture series, and library.

- Education committee, 1948-1963
- Frances Jacobson Early Childhood Center, 1989-present
- Religious School, 1870s-present (bulk 1950s-1980s)
- Parent/Teacher Association, 1950s-1980s
- Confirmation, 1950s-present
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah, 1950s-present
- Continuing Education Committee, 1920s-present
- Youth programs (youth committee, RYFTI, NEFTY, FASTY), 1930s-present
- Library and Library Committee, 1940-present
- Adult Education Committee, 1940-present
- Temple Israel Lifelong Learning Initiative (TILLI), 2009-present
- Samuel Nemzoff Papers, 1942-1974

Holidays and Festivals collection

This collection contains material related to various holidays and festivals, including but not limited to Passover, Purim, and High Holidays. Material includes programs; prayer books; pamphlets, brochures, and other printed material; and photographs.

Life cycle records

These include records of births, baby naming, bar/bat mitzvah, marriages, and deaths, all generated by the rabbinic staff.

Oral History collection

This collection includes audio recordings and some transcripts of oral history interviews with various temple clergy, staff, lay leaders, and congregants from the 1970s through the present day. It also includes material from the “Women Whose Lives Spanned the Century” oral history project.

Print collection

The Archives contains a large collection of prints documenting congregational life at Temple Israel from the 1870s. Included are portraits of significant clergy, administrators, and congregants; photographs of special events and holidays in the temple and religious school; and prints of the temple’s various buildings.

Publications collection

The Archives holds numerous publications produced by Temple Israel administrators, clubs and committees, the religious school, and congregants, including:

- Histories of Temple Israel and affiliated groups
- Temple Israel Bulletin, 1907-present
- “Friday Night Handouts,” 1981-present
- Religious service programs
- Torchbearer (religious school yearbook), 1947-1972
- Confirmation, Post-Confirmation, Hebrew School, and Graduation service programs, 1900-present
- Annual reports, catalogs, and promotional literature (pamphlets, brochures, programs)

Rabbinical collections

The Archives contains records from many members of the clergy generated during their time at Temple Israel. The collection includes biographical sketches in the vertical files, miscellaneous documents, or published books. There are also photographs of rabbis in the portrait files. In certain cases, we hold more extensive material that documents some rabbis’ personal lives and professional careers outside of the temple. Here are some highlights for the senior rabbis:

Joseph Sachs (1854-1856): portraits; biographical file

Joseph Shoninger (1856-1874): portraits; biographical file

Solomon Schindler (1874-1894): portraits; photographs (including family album); some correspondence, sermons, and other documents; *Messianic Expectations* (1886); biographical file; (also see manuscript collection at American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati)

Charles Fleischer (1894-1911): portraits; correspondence; installation materials; biographical file

Harry Levi (1911-1939): portraits; audio recordings; correspondence; reports to board; sermons and speeches; life cycle records (marriages 1911-1913, deaths 1911-1913, confirmations 1912-1953); clippings, history of TI under his rabbinate, anniversary booklet, *A Great Adventure* and *A Rabbi Speaks* (books of sermons); obituary; prayer books; biographical file

Joshua Loth Liebman (1939-1948): portraits; audio recordings; correspondence; sermons; materials related to the book *Peace of Mind* (1946); memorial tributes; life cycle records (weddings and funerals); 1988 museum exhibit materials; biographical file; (larger manuscript collection at Boston University Archives)

Abraham J. Klausner (1949-1953): portraits; audio recordings; sermons; clippings; correspondence; reports to board; life cycle records; installation materials; biographical file

Roland B. Gittelsohn (1953-1977): portraits; photographs; audio recordings; sermons; memos and reports; life cycle records; biographical file; (also see manuscript collection at American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati)

Bernard H. Mehlman (1977-1999): portraits; photographs; audio and audio-visual recordings; correspondence; sermons; reports; life cycle records; biographical files; (also see manuscript collection at American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati)

Ronne Friedman (1999-2016): Portraits; photographs; audio and audio-visual recordings; correspondence; day files; life cycle records; education director materials; biographical file

Elaine S. Zecher (2016-): portraits; photographs; audio recordings; correspondence; sermons; reports; day files; life cycle records; biographical file

In addition, we have many materials for the following Assistant Rabbis and Cantors:

Assistant Rabbis

Samuel Wolk (1923-1929)

Beryl D. Cohon (1930-1939)

Leo A. Bergman (1940-1942)

Albert A. Goldman (1946-1948)

Irving A. Mandel (1948-1950)

Earl A. Grollman (1950-1951)

Maurice L. Zigmund (1951-1954)

Leon A. Jick (1954-1957)

Robert W. Shapiro (1957-1960)

Charles A. Kroloff (1960-1963)

Harvey J. Fields (1963-1968)

Frank M. Waldorf (1968-1971)

Paul J. Menitoff (1970-1973)

Paul J. Citrin (1947-1978)

Jeffrey Perry-Marx (1983-1985)

William L. Berkowitz (1985-1990)

Ruth Alpers (1994-1999)

Jonah D. Pesner (1999-2006)

Jeremy Morrison (2001-2015)

Stephanie D. Kolin (2006-2010)

Cantors:

Herbert Fromm (1941-1972)

Murray Simon (1972-1983)

Roy Einhorn (1983-)

Researching Temple Israel's History Beyond the Archives

Interested in finding out more information about Temple Israel, its members, or other aspects of the Boston Jewish community? Here are a few resources to get you started:

Repositories and guides

Academic Guide to Jewish History

<https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/jewishstudies>

American Jewish Archives

Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45223

Tel: 513/221-1875, Fax: 513/221-7812

www.americanjewisharchives.org

American Jewish Historical Society

Center for Jewish History

15 W. 16th Street, New York, NY 10011

Tel: 212/294-6160, Fax: 212/294-6161

Hebrew College

160 Herrick Road, Newton Centre, MA 02459

Tel: 617/559-8880, Fax: 617/559-8881

www.ajhs.org

Brandeis University Libraries

Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Department

415 South Street

Mailstop 045, P.O. Box 549110

Waltham, MA 02454-9110

Tel: 781/736-4686, Fax: 781/736-4719

<http://lts.brandeis.edu/research/archives-speccoll/index.html>

Boston Public Library, Main Branch and Research Library

700 Boylston Street

Copley Square

Boston, MA 02116

Tel: 617-536-5400

<http://www.bpl.org>

Boston University Special Collections

771 Commonwealth Avenue

Boston, MA 02215

Tel: 617/353-3696, Fax: 617/353-2838

Email: Speccol@bu.edu

<http://www.bu.edu/speccol/>

Combined Jewish Philanthropies

126 High Street

Boston, MA 02110-2700

Tel: 617/457-8500, Fax: 617/ 988-6262

<http://www.cjp.org>

Harvard University Online Catalog

<https://hollis.harvard.edu>

Jewish Heritage Center

New England Historic and Genealogical Society

99-101 Newbury St.

Boston, MA 02116

Tel: 617/536-5740

<https://www.americanancestors.org/jhc>

Massachusetts State Archives

Secretary of the Commonwealth

Massachusetts Archives

220 Morrissey Blvd.

Boston, MA 02125

Tel: 617/727-2816, Fax: 617/ 288-8429

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/>

National Archives in Waltham

Frederick C. Murphy Federal Center

380 Trapelo Road

Waltham, MA 02452-6399

Tel: 866/406-2379

Email: waltham.archives@nara.gov

<https://www.archives.gov/boston>

Temple Ohabei Shalom

1187 Beacon Street, Brookline, MA 02446, Tel: 617/277-6610, Fax: 617/277-7881

www.ohabei.org

Newspapers [available on microfilm at BPL, check with other repositories as well]

- *The Boston Hebrew Observer*, 1883-1886
- *The Jewish Advocate* [from 1905]
- *The Jewish Herald*, 1893-1894
- *Boston Globe*
- *Boston Herald*
- *Boston Traveler*
- *Boston Post*