A Finding Aid to the
Graenum Berger Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 352
Collection Summary

Title: Graenum Berger Papers
Collection Number: MS-352
Repository: The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator: Berger, Graenum
Extent: 5.6 linear feet (14 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material: English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch: Graenum Berger was born in Gloversville, New York, in 1908. In 1927, Berger and Emma Finestein of Albany eloped to Missouri where Berger was studying. Berger completed his bachelor's degree in 1930 from the University of Missouri. Two years later, he earned a masters degree from the Graduate School of Jewish Social Work in New York, New York. He then took a job with the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, and worked with Jewish community centers in New York, Israel, and other countries. Beginning in 1938, he taught social work at the New York School of Social Work.

In 1965, Berger visited Ethiopia where he saw the plight of the Falashas and vowed to help them. He began by trying to enlist American Jewish leaders to help relocate the Ethiopians to Israel but met with little success. Berger formed the American Association for Ethiopian Jews in 1965, and he began giving lectures to educate others about their plight. The Association began raising money for educational and medical programs to benefit the Ethiopians. After his retirement in 1973, Berger devoted himself wholeheartedly to the cause.

Berger died March 31, 1999, at his home in New Rochelle, New York. He was 90 years old. His survivors included his wife of 71 years, a son, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.


Scope and Content: Consists of correspondence, writings, diaries, journals, and other materials relating to the Association of Jewish Center Workers (earlier name: National Association of Jewish Center Workers) and his work with the American Association for Ethiopian Jews to help relocate the Falashas (Ethiopian Jews). Also included are notes and correspondence relating to his autobiography Graenum, along with extensive correspondence with family and friends relating both to his professional life and his personal life.

Terms of Access: The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Preferred Citation: Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Graenum Berger Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-352. Graenum Berger Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.


Processing Information: Processed by American Jewish Archives staff. Additional processing by Michelle Wirth Detroit, November 2011.

Index Terms

Subjects: Jewish community centers / Jews, Ethiopian
Personal Names: Berger, Graenum
Corporate Names: American Association for Ethiopian Jews / Association of Jewish Center Workers (U.S.) / National Association of Jewish Center Workers (U.S.)
Media: Diaries
Series A. General, 1940-1996

Box Listing

Box 3. Correspondence. Keren Yaldenu-S.
Box 5. Writings. "Groupwork with the Aged"-Y, General.
Box 7. Diaries and journals, 1949-1971
Box 8. Diaries and journals, 1972-1981
Box 9. Diaries and Journals, 1982-1986
Box 11. Correspondence. Personal, 1988-1990
Box 12. Correspondence. Personal, 1990-1992
Box 14. Writings and topical files, 1973-1986