



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
John J. Tepfer Papers**

Manuscript Collection No. 586



Collection Summary

Title	John J. Tepfer Papers
Dates	1898-1986
Collection Number	MS-586
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Tepfer, John J., 1898-1988
Extent	2.4 linear feet (6 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch John J. (Jay) Tepfer (1896-1988) was a rabbi, author and faculty member at the New York campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Tepfer was born in London to a prosperous Orthodox Jewish family. After World War I, he studied economics and then came to the United States to attend Wharton. He abandoned his business studies after hearing Rabbi Stephen S. Wise preach and instead attended the Jewish Institute of Religion. He graduated from JIR in 1927, and after briefly working as a pulpit rabbi, returned to JIR to teach Talmud and remained on the faculty of HUC-JIR until his death.

HUC-JIR honored Tepfer on the occasion of his 90th birthday during the 1986 Founders Day celebration. In a recorded speech, Tepfer spoke of the three men who influenced him most: Rabbi Abraham Abba Werner (died 1912), a famous rabbi in London, his first Talmud teacher; Claude Montefiore (1888-1938), who taught him it was possible to balance being a Jew and an Englishman; Pinchas Rokeah, his uncle, an observant Orthodox Jew who was also a pacifist, who chose prison during World War I rather than serve in His Majesty's Army.

Tepfer was married to Naomi Flax (1903-2005); they had two daughters, Ruth and Nina.

Scope and Content The John J. Tepfer Papers consists of correspondence, writings, sermons, class and lecture notes, and miscellaneous items. A portion of the material consists of pamphlets and articles written by others on topics that were relevant to Tepfer's research. Topics of interest include Hasidism, Talmud, and Mishna. The collection also contains a folder of material on Naomi Flax Tepfer.

Arrangement The collection has been maintained in original order.

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

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

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-586. John J. Tepfer Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance Received from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, N.Y.

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Index Terms

Subjects	College teachers / Jews -- New York (State) -- New York / Rabbis / Reform Judaism
Personal Names	Tepfer, John J. (John Jay), 1898-1988
Corporate Names	Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Media	Sermons

Series A. General, 1898-1986

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence, A-Z, 1940-1986, undated
- Box 1. Folder 2. Spiro, Dr. A (Cambridge, England). Correspondence, 1954, undated
- Box 1. Folder 3. Writings and lectures, 1921-1975, undated
- Box 1. Folder 4. Article, "Palestinian Personalities," in Avukah Annual, 1930
- Box 1. Folder 5. Pamphlet, "Martin Burber and Neo-Mysticism," with preparatory notes, 1934
- Box 1. Folder 6. Plainfield sermons, undated
- Box 1. Folder 7. Review of Balzac's Wild Ass's Skin, undated
- Box 1. Folder 8. The Parables, Eight Chapters, undated
- Box 1. Folder 9. Speech and program from HUC-JIR (New York) 50th anniversary dinner, 1972 May 31
- Box 1. Folder 10. Founder's Day (HUC-JIR, NY). Tribute to Dr. Tepfer, 1986 March 12
- Box 1. Folder 11. Hasidism. Notes and articles, 1928-1930, undated
- Box 1. Folder 12. Hasidism and Polish-Jewish History. Notes, articles, speeches, 1931-1942, undated
- Box 1. Folder 13. Hasidism. Lectures, undated
- Box 1. Folder 14. Hasidism and Polish Synagogue. Original notes, undated
- Box 1. Folder 15. Hasidism. Helman's notes and sermons by Louis I. Newman, 1932, undated
- Box 2. Folder 1. Early notes on readings, grammar, etc., undated
- Box 2. Folder 2. Memos, addresses, 1950s-1981, undated
- Box 2. Folder 3. Notes regarding lectures, scholarship, readings, ideas, 1958-1960
- Box 2. Folder 4. Notes regarding lectures, scholarship, readings, ideas, 1961-1964
- Box 2. Folder 5. Notes regarding reading, Hasidism, Schechter, ideas, 1970-1973
- Box 2. Folder 6. Notes. Personal, regarding readings and ideas, 1978-1986
- Box 2. Folder 7. Notes on Reading, Lord's Prayer, 1979
- Box 2. Folder 8. Notes regarding personal, activities and books, 1981-1986
- Box 2. Folder 9. Personal diary, 1987-1988
- Box 2. Folder 10. Tepfer's view of himself and poetry, 1983, 1986, undated
- Box 2. Folder 11. Notes regarding Bernard Shaw and Judaism, with an article and play by Shaw, 1907, 1912, undated
- Box 2. Folder 12. Criticism of Baron's work, 1943
- Box 2. Folder 13. Notes, possibly from Gottheil's course on Jews in Egypt during Talmudic period, undated
- Box 2. Folder 14. Summer Institute (JIR), 1938-1940
- Box 2. Folder 15. Memo to Dr. Nelson Glueck reporting Tepfer's daily activities at HUC-JIR, 1951
- Box 2. Folder 16. Examinations, 1936-1967, undated
- Box 2. Folder 17. Class outlines and notes, 1936, undated
- Box 2. Folder 18. Teaching pages and outlines, undated
- Box 3. Folder 1. Teaching papers and class notes, 1950s, undated
- Box 3. Folder 2. Class notes, 1950-1952
- Box 3. Folder 3. Class notes, 1957
- Box 3. Folder 4. Class notes, 1959

Box 3. Folder 5. Class notes, 1967, 1971

Box 3. Folder 6. Class notes, 1967-1968

Box 3. Folder 7. Class notes, 1968

Box 3. Folder 8. Class notes, 1977-1978

Box 3. Folder 9. Class notes, 1981-1982

Box 3. Folder 10. Class notes, 1982

Box 3. Folder 11. Class notes, 1984-1985

Box 3. Folder 12. Class notes, undated

Box 3. Folder 13. Class notes, undated

Box 4. Folder 1. Talmud correspondence, undated

Box 4. Folder 2. Talmud pages for lessons, undated

Box 4. Folder 3. Talmud pages for lessons. Mishna translation, undated

Box 4. Folder 4. Mishna: class notes and teaching papers, undated

Box 4. Folder 5. Class notes: Talmud (Hamafrid), 1955-1956

Box 4. Folder 6. Class notes: Mishna introductory material, 1970

Box 4. Folder 7. Class notes: Lamentations, 1971

Box 4. Folder 8. Class notes: Introductory Mishna, 1974

Box 4. Folder 9. Class notes: Mishna, 1979-1980

Box 4. Folder 10. Class notes: Mishna, 1984-1985

Box 4. Folder 11. Class notes: Legal concepts, 1951

Box 4. Folder 12. Class notes: Legal concepts, 1970-1972

Box 5. Folder 1. Jewish history: Bibliographies, outlines, miscellaneous, 1938-1967

Box 5. Folder 2. Class notes: History, 1943

Box 5. Folder 3. Class notes and sources for Jewish History, 1946

Box 5. Folder 4. Class notes: History, 1961-1962

Box 5. Folder 5. Class notes regarding Poland, 1939-1940

Box 5. Folder 6. Class Notes: Polish Jewish history, Hasidism, 1959

Box 6. Folder 1. Script for play, "Jan Thornton: A drama in Four Acts, undated

Box 6. Folder 2. Articles by Jean-Paul Sartre, 1946

Box 6. Folder 3. Herbert Baumgard Papers, 1949

Box 6. Folder 4. Pamphlets and offprints, 1937-1975, undated

Box 6. Folder 5. Herbert Chanan Brichto, 1967, 1975

Box 6. Folder 6. Memorandum book: German words and translation, undated

Box 6. Folder 7. Vocabulary cards, undated

Box 6. Folder 8. Newspaper articles regarding Tepfer, Scranton, Pa. and Selma, Ala., 1928-1932

Box 6. Folder 9. Naomi (Flax) Tepfer: family correspondence, newspaper articles, memorabilia, 1898-1983

Box 6. Folder 10. Miscellaneous, 1937-1986