



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**

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**A Finding Aid to the  
Isidor Goldberg Papers**

**Manuscript Collection No. 599**



## Collection Summary

<b>Title</b>	Isidor Goldberg Papers
<b>Dates</b>	1908-1992 (bulk 1928-1951)
<b>Collection Number</b>	MS-599
<b>Repository</b>	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Goldberg, Isidor, 1893-1961 Pilot Radio Corporation
<b>Extent</b>	3.6 linear feet (4 Hollinger boxes, 2 oversize boxes)
<b>Language of the Material</b>	English

## Administrative Information

### Biographical Sketch

Isidor Goldberg was born in Manhattan, New York, in 1893. His parents immigrated from Vienna in 1878. When he was about four years old, Isidor's mother died leaving his impoverished father to support the boy and his two infant sisters in the East Side of New York. Isidor was taken in and raised at the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Orphan Asylum in New York. He graduated from Hebrew Technical Institute in Mechanical Arts in 1908.

From 1910-1914, Goldberg was a test pilot for Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corporation or Curtiss Airways. Afterwards he sold aeronautical supplies and model airplanes. In 1915 Goldberg was granted a U.S. patent for his invention of an emergency lamp.

In 1919, Goldberg founded Pilot Electric Manufacturing Co. in Brooklyn, New York, to manufacture parts and kits for home radios. In 1930 a second plant was established in Lawrence, Massachusetts. The name of the company was later changed to Pilot Radio and Tube Corp. and, as of 1932, to Pilot Radio Corp. By 1936 Pilot products were being sold in more than 90 countries. In the late 1940s and early 1950s plants were built in Britain (prior to World War II), South Africa (by 1953), and Israel (in 1947). All three plants were sold in 1959. Goldberg was president of the company from its inception until his death in 1961.

Goldberg, as president of Pilot Radio Corp., was a leader in developing and introducing new products and new uses for communications equipment. The company was the first to introduce a civilian short wave radio (WASP, 1925) and a battery-powered, portable radio (1937). In 1930 Goldberg pioneered in the development of long distance ground-to-air communications with his "flying laboratory". In 1937 Pilot introduced the first "popular-priced" FM tuner (Pilotuner). The first real breakthrough in television technology was made by Pilot engineers in 1928. The next year, Pilot sponsored the first scheduled TV broadcasting and offered TV receiver kits for sale. By 1937 the company was producing ready-made TVs. Ten years later Pilot marketed the first miniature (portable) TV receiver (Candid TV).

During World War II, Pilot Radio Corp. produced communications equipment for the war effort and in 1945 won the prestigious Army Navy "E" Award for excellence in production of war equipment. The Signal Corps stationed an inspection team at the plant from 1942-1945 to help the firm convert from civilian to war-time production. Even as late as 1949, 80% of the company's output was sent to the U.S. Government.

The New York factory also supplied communications equipment to the Soviet and Chinese governments during the war. Representatives of those two countries visited the Pilot factory between 1941 and 1945. The British plant, Pilot Radio, Ltd., headed by Goldberg's partner, Harry Levy, produced war equipment for the British government during the war.

The U.S. Office of War Information required Goldberg to begin a record manufacturing plant to produce sound recordings designed to build the morale of the armed forces. After the war, Goldberg experimented with manufacturing civilian recordings, but found the record industry too demanding and discontinued production in 1949.

By 1947 Goldberg began to replace war production with the manufacture of televisions. In 1950 he joined other television manufacturers in protesting a proposal of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to assign the color television system developed by Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) as the system standard. Goldberg argued that the CBS color system was still experimental and the FCC was trying to impose impossible deadlines on the rest of the industry. By 1953 Pilot had added production of high fidelity (Hi-Fi) radio/phonograph/television sets and components.

In addition to his activities as an inventor and innovative businessman, Goldberg was an ardent Zionist and philanthropist. He was a co-founder of the United Jewish Appeal in the United States and a member of the Zionist Organization of America. He established a subsidiary of his company in Tel Aviv in 1947. And he supplied communications equipment to the new Israeli army in 1949.

In 1923 and 1934 Goldberg helped Technion - Israel Institute of Technology to acquire land in Haifa. He supported Technion with funds for research scholarships because he realized the value of a technological education. Five years after Goldberg's death his widow established the Isidor Goldberg Electronics Centre at Technion in his memory. A Chair was named in Mrs. Joan Goldberg Arbuse's honor in 1973 and she received an honorary doctorate from the university in 1987.

For many years, Goldberg maintained ties with the orphanage in which he was raised. He served on the Board of Trustees for 33 years, until his death in 1961. In 1928 he was elected to the Board of Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society (HSGS). In 1940 he was a founding trustee of the Jewish Child Care Association, formed by the merger of the HSGS with two other New York child care organizations.

In 1914 Goldberg bought a chicken farm on Staten Island and sold eggs as a sideline to selling wireless parts. When his electronics business expanded he sold the farm, but in 1925 he purchased a 325-acre dairy farm in Westchester County. By day he ran his electronics factory and evenings he worked on his farm.

Isidor Goldberg had 3 children by his first wife, Rose Goldberg Lenitz. In 1936, Goldberg married his second wife, Joan, the daughter of a Jewish father and Quaker mother. Isidor Goldberg died in 1961 at the age of 68.

## **Scope and Content**

The Isidor Goldberg Papers describe the career of Isidor Goldberg as a businessman and inventor in the formative years of the electronics/radio/television industry; the history of Pilot Radio Corp., the multinational company he founded in 1919; and the philosophical interests of Goldberg and his wife, Joan Goldberg Arbuse. The collection includes news articles, advertisements, photographs, correspondence, speeches, sound recordings, awards and personal items. Much of the material was collected in chronologically arranged scrapbooks. Most of the scrapbooks were dismantled to isolate the photographs from the papers, to protect the materials from deteriorating scrapbook pages, and to remove loose items from the scrapbooks. Most of the latter were placed in the books out of chronological sequence. The items removed from scrapbooks for the most part remain in the order (chronological) they were placed in the scrapbooks. Four of the original fourteen scrapbooks remain intact.

## **Arrangement**

Organized into four (4) series: A. History of Pilot Radio Corporation, 1908-1960; B. Personal and Miscellaneous Materials, 1929-1992; C. Photographs, 1908-1960; D. Oversize Materials and Sound Recordings, 1908-1959.

## **Copies**

Also available on microfilm.

## **Terms of Access**

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

## **Preferred Citation**

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

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-599. Isidor Goldberg Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

## **Provenance**

Received from Joan Goldberg Arbuse, New York, N.Y., 1993.

**Processing Information** Processed by Kathleen L. Spray, November 1994.

## **Index Terms**

- Subjects** Jewish businesspeople / Jews -- New York (State) -- New York / Radio supplies industry / Sound recording industry / Telecommunication equipment industry / Television supplies industry
- Personal Names** Goldberg, Isidor, 1893-1961
- Media** Photographs / Scrapbooks / Sound recordings

## **Series A. History of Pilot Radio Corporation, 1908-1960 (bulk 1925-1950)**

**Extent** 0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of newspaper and magazine articles and advertisements, radio parts catalogs, operator's instructions for radio and television products, correspondence, license agreement for a patent, and miscellaneous.

**Arrangement** The series is arranged chronologically in keeping with the scrapbook arrangement.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 1. Folder 1. Reprint of Modern Electrics (Issue No. 1, 1908), with memo, 1958

Box 1. Folder 2. Description of Pilot trademark, 1919

Box 1. Folder 3. Radio parts advertisements, 1925

Box 1. Folder 4. Radio parts catalogs, 1928-1930

Box 1. Folder 5. Radiocultura magazine cover photo, Rio de Janeiro [see Box No. X-385 for technical drawings of 1928 TV and for scrapbook of articles regarding Pilot products, 1928-1931], 1929 July 15

Box 1. Folder 6. License agreement for English patent, 1930; with memo, 1931, 1930-1931

Box 1. Folder 7. Articles and advertising materials, 1930-1931

Box 1. Folder 8. Articles regarding purchase of Everett Mills in Lawrence, Mass. [Also see scrapbook of 1929-1930 articles regarding Everett Mills purchase in Box No. X-385] [See Box No. X-386 for scrapbook containing ads for competitors products, 1932-1933], 1930-1931

Box 1. Folder 9. Ad series (New York Times), 1936-1937

Box 1. Folder 10. Radio advertisements, 1937, 1939

Box 1. Folder 11. Pilot Radio in India, 1937, 1953

Box 1. Folder 12. Article and ad from FM magazine, 1941

Box 1. Folder 13. Articles regarding Soviet Embassy, 1941; and letter from Semenov, 1959 [see also photographs of Russian delegation, 1944-1945, in Folder 4/8 and speech by Isidor Goldberg in Folder 1/14], 1941, 1959

Box 1. Folder 14. Russian language instruction booklet for portable field radio, 1942

Box 1. Folder 15. Correspondence, maps, and miscellaneous, regarding lease of warehouse/factory in Brooklyn, N.Y., 1943-1950

Box 1. Folder 16. Chinese Supply Mission [see also photographs of Chinese delegation at field radio test, Ja, 1944, in Folder 4/7 and speech by Isidor Goldberg in Folder 1/14], 1944

Box 1. Folder 17. Army-Navy "E" Award [see also photographs in Folders 4/10 and 4/11, and Sound Recording Disc Collection], 1945 May

Box 1. Folder 18. Pilotuner FM receiver operating instruction booklet, circa 1947

Box 1. Folder 19. Letters endorsing Pilot FM tuners, 1947

Box 1. Folder 20. Articles and ads for Pilotuner FM receivers, Pilotone records, and the American Forum of the Air, 1947

Box 2. Folder 1. Operating instructions for "Candid T-V, 1948

Box 2. Folder 2. Advertising materials for Pilot television sets, 1949-1950

Box 2. Folder 3. Articles regarding Pilot television sets, 1949

Box 2. Folder 4. Articles regarding Pilot television sets, 1950 January-March

Box 2. Folder 5. Articles regarding Pilot television sets [See also photograph in Folder 4/1 of Robert Hertzberg on 1950 TV show], 1950 April-November

Box 2. Folder 6. Color TV controversy, 1950 September

- Box 2. Folder 7. Color TV controversy, 1950 October
- Box 2. Folder 8. Color TV controversy, 1950 November-December, 1951 May
- Box 2. Folder 9. Historic (1928) TV demonstration, 1950 November 8
- Box 2. Folder 10. Pilot Radio Ltd., London - advertising materials, 1950-1952
- Box 2. Folder 11. British Industries Fair at Earls Court, London [see also photographs in Folder 4/16], 1951
- Box 2. Folder 12. Articles regarding Hi-Fi components, 1953, 1957-1958
- Box 2. Folder 13. Ad brochure for Pilot Radio Ltd., Israel, undated
- Box 2. Folder 14. Isidore Abramson (Johannesburg, South Africa) - correspondence, 1957-1960

## **Series B. Personal and Miscellaneous Materials, 1929-1992**

**Extent** 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of biographical articles, obituaries, correspondence, and programs concerning the life histories of Goldberg and his wife, Joan Goldberg Arbuse. Also contains correspondence, bills, receipts, programs and a hunting license pertaining to trips to London and Africa; and miscellaneous materials.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

- Box 3. Folder 1. Isidor Goldberg - biographical materials [see also diploma, 1908, in Box X-385], 1929-1989, undated
- Box 3. Folder 2. Isidor Goldberg Electronics Center at Technion Israel Institute of Technology - correspondence and biographical materials regarding Isidor Goldberg and Joan Goldberg Arbuse, 1966-1992
- Box 3. Folder 3. Safari in Kenya and business trip to Johannesburg, 1953
- Box 3. Folder 4. Trips to London (royal wedding and royalty), 1947-1952
- Box 3. Folder 5. Miscellaneous, 1979, undated

## **Series C. Photographs, 1908-1960 (bulk 1928-1951)**

**Extent** 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of photographic prints (mostly 8x10" black and white photos) of employees, equipment, plant interiors, products, and innovations of Pilot Radio Corporation (and its progenitor, Pilot Electric Company). Included are photographs documenting visits by foreign officials (from China and the Soviet Union during World War II), and special company dinners and award ceremonies. Isidor Goldberg is depicted in many of the photos, including the snapshots documenting two of his visits to Israel and color prints showing the quarry from his 1953 Safari hunt.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

- Box 4. Folder 1. 1928 television broadcasting and reception equipment [see also letter, Hertzberg to Goldberg, in Folder 2/5], 1928, 1950
- Box 4. Folder 2. Pilot Electric Company staff, 1929
- Box 4. Folder 3. Views of plant departments (Brooklyn and Lawrence), 1929-1930
- Box 4. Folder 4. Pilot Radio products, 1930-1931

- Box 4. Folder 5. Pilot dealer in India, with Shirley Temple, undated
- Box 4. Folder 6. Pilot Radio sales exhibit, 1939 December 15
- Box 4. Folder 7. Field radio test in bitter cold with Chinese delegation at Goldberg farm, 1944 January
- Box 4. Folder 8. Russian delegation [see also letter, Semenov to Goldberg, 1959, in Folder 1/10], 1944 or 1945
- Box 4. Folder 9. Isidor Goldberg with servicemen [see also speech by Isidore Goldberg in Folder 1/14], undated
- Box 4. Folder 10. Army Navy "E" Award (Part 1) [see also Folder 1/14], 1945 May 23
- Box 4. Folder 11. Army Navy "E" Award (Part 2) [see also Folder 1/14], 1945 May 23
- Box 4. Folder 12. Pilotone records - production departments and staff [at a reception?], 1947
- Box 4. Folder 13. Pilot radio sets in political news/publicity photos, 1948
- Box 4. Folder 14. Television sets and TV advertisement, 1948-1951
- Box 4. Folder 15. "Lady Pilot T.V. Plane," first in-flight TV [see also Folder 2/4 and scrapbook, 1947-1951, in Box No. X-386], 1950 March
- Box 4. Folder 16. Pilot Radio Ltd. (London) booth at British Industries Fair,, 1951 September
- Box 4. Folder 17. Isidor Goldberg, circa 1908-1950
- Box 4. Folder 18. Goldberg on Safari in Kenya/Tanganyika [see also Folder 3/3], 1953
- Box 4. Folder 19. Goldberg in Israel, 1951, 1960
- Box 4. Folder 20. Miscellaneous photos regarding "Pilot" [see also oversize photographs in Box No. X-386], 1947, undated

## **Series D. Oversize Materials and Sound Recordings, 1908-1959 (bulk 1928-1951)**

**Extent** 2 linear feet (2 oversize boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of scrapbooks containing articles and advertising materials, technical drawings, a diploma, a certificate, and 2 large photographs. The four sound recording discs described in the Box List are located in the AJA Sound Recording Disc Collection.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

- Box X-385. Folder Diploma from Hebrew Technical Institute, 1908 May
- Box X-385. Folder Technical drawings for 1928 television transmitter, by Robert Hertzberg, undated
- Box X-385. Folder Scrapbook containing articles regarding Pilot products, 1928-1931
- Box X-385. Folder Scrapbook containing articles regarding syndicate of electric and radio companies (including Pilot) purchase of old Everett Cotton Mills in Lawrence, Mass., 1929-1930
- Box X-386. Folder Scrapbook containing competitors ads for radios, 1932-1933
- Box X-386. Folder Scrapbook containing Pilot Radio articles and advertising materials, 1947-1951
- Box X-386. Folder Photograph (12"x20") of Pilot Radio staff dinner, 1942 June 4
- Box X-386. Folder Jewish National Fund Certificate, 1954
- Box X-386. Folder Photograph (12"x15") of unidentified dinner group, undated; found with

card from Cabinet Industries Ltd., 1959 March 24

Folder 4 sound recording discs containing a recording of the proceedings of the Pilot "E"  
Award ceremony, 1945 May 23