A Finding Aid to the
Women of Reform Judaism, Central District Records

Manuscript Collection No. 63
Collection Summary

Title
Women of Reform Judaism, Central District Records

Dates
1962-2002

Collection Number
MS-63

Repository
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

Creator
Women of Reform Judaism (U.S.). Central District
National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. District 9, Ohio Valley Federation
National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. District 11, Michigan Federation
National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. District 10, Ohio Valley-Michigan Federation

Extent
14.8 linear feet (37 Hollinger boxes)

Language of the Material
English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch
Founded in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1913 as the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS), Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) is a national organization representing 100,000 women in 600 local Sisterhoods throughout the United States, Canada, and thirteen other countries. It is affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the central body of Reform Judaism in North America. The Ohio Valley Federation chapters were a part of the NFTS from the opening conference in Cincinnati in March, 1913.

An early report of the recently created Special Committee on State and District Federations at the 1922 Biennial Convention notes that Ohio was a model state federation whose example could be followed by others. Both Ohio and Indiana had state federations before such organizations were formally recognized by the Executive branch. In fact, the Special Committee of the NFTS used the Ohio constitution as its model for other states wishing to create federations. The goals of state organizations were to strengthen the work of the national organization, promote publicity, and bring together Jewish women for the exchange of ideas.

There has been several changes in the geographic region covered by the district now known as the Central District because of changes in Sisterhood memberships. State federations evolved into interstate regions. Federations are first mentioned in 1915 in relation to subscriptions for the Hebrew Union College scholarship fund. Federations were primarily organized by state. In 1960, the former District 6 (Ohio Federation) and District 12 (Kentucky and Tennessee Federation) combined to form the District 9 Ohio Valley Federation. Two years later the District 7 (West Virginia Federation) became part of District 9. In 1970, the District 10 (Indiana Federation) joined with District 9 because of diminishing membership. In 1997, a further reorganization brought in the former District 11 (Michigan Federation) to become District 10- the Ohio Valley-Michigan Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.

In 2006, WRJ began merging some districts and renaming them by their geographical location. The Ohio Valley-Michigan Federation became known as the Central District. Currently the Central District consists of 36 sisterhoods in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia. The Central District is one of eight districts of Women of Reform Judaism in North America, Israel and around the world.

The regional Sisterhood organization has held biennial conventions. It elects a board which meets yearly and liaisons with the national organization. Activities of the Ohio Valley-Michigan Federation have included sponsoring speakers, programs, care packages for college students away from home and the sale of uniongrams. They have also had a series of newsletters which help to foster communications between the sisterhoods separated by large distances.

Scope and Content

The Women of Reform Judaism, Central District Records detail the activities and goals of a regional Sisterhood organization. Regional organizations encourage communication both between individual chapters and with the national organization in part through common events. Biennial conventions showcase speakers from both the regional chapters and representatives of the national organization and are an important part of the records. There are some convention files which explicate the planning and program of a typical convention together with a complete series of Highlights reports which summarize the meetings of the membership as a part of the records. The Interim Board file from 1987 contains information about the debate over the value and structure of future biennial meetings.

Within the District are numerous committees and offices. The records contain committee files
from 1978-1996, from such mundane departments as Administration to the Judaica Shop and the Critical Issues committee. The Critical Issues committee contains material about the Federation's platform on issues such as abortion, intermarriage and Soviet Jewry. Other committee files typically contain the reports of the committee chairs and correspondence with membership. Membership lists and local president lists are included among the committee files.

The Ohio Valley Federation (District 9) and Michigan Federation (District 11), both formed in the early years of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (now called the Women of Reform Judaism) were merged into the new District 10 in 1997. The majority of the records are from the District 9 years of the regional organization from 1962-1997. Minutes and reports show typical and atypical activities and projects for the regional organization. Records relating to the merger are found in the 1995-1996 presidential records of District 9. Records have been donated to the American Jewish Archives by presidents of the organization.

There are limited records relating to the Michigan District 11 from those same years. There are no early records in the collection documenting the state federations prior to 1962. The early records of the Indiana state federation are located at the Indiana Jewish Historical Society. A history of the organization from 1913-1979 provides a useful chronology for District 9.

Arrangement

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

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Preferred Citation
Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Women of Reform Judaism, Central District Records and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-63. Women of Reform Judaism, Central District Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance
Received from the organization in separate shipments, August 1978, September 2000, and December 2001. Additional material received after.

Processing Information
Processed by Melinda McMartin, March 2002.

Index Terms
Subjects
Jewish women -- Kentucky / Jewish women -- Michigan / Jewish women -- Ohio / Jewish women -- Tennessee / Jewish women -- West Virginia / Reform Judaism

Corporate Names
Women of Reform Judaism (U.S.)

Media
Minutes / Newsletters / Video recordings

Extent
3 linear feet (7.5 Hollinger boxes)

Box and Folder Listing
Box 1. Folder 1. Administration Department, 1985-1987
Box 1. Folder 2. Administration [manuals, procedures, reports], 1962-1996, undated
Box 1. Folder 3. Area's Directors reports, 1975-1988
Box 1. Folder 8. Biennial Convention. Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati, Ohio), 1962
Box 1. Folder 12. Biennial Convention. Columbus, Ohio, 1992
Box 2. Folder 2. Bulletins, 1962-1972
Box 2. Folder 7. Circle of Service Committee, 1987-1993
Box 3. Folder 1. Critical Issues Committee [correspondence, reports], 1988-1995
Box 3. Folder 2. Critical Issues Committee [nearprint], 1986-1995, undated
Box 4. Folder 1. Meeting minutes, 1962-1975
Box 4. Folder 8. Financial Secretary reports, 1982-1996
Box 5. Folder 2. History, 1979
Box 5. Folder 3. Human Relations Department, 1986-1994, undated
Box 5. Folder 4. History [includes typescript, manuscript and photographs], 1964-1978
Box 5. Folder 5. History [includes typescript, manuscript and photographs], 1964-1978
Box 5. Folder 4. Interim Board minutes. Lexington, Kentucky, 1987
Box 5. Folder 5. Judaica Shop Committee, undated
Box 5. Folder 6. Membership Committee, 1984-1992
Box 5. Folder 8. Outreach Committee (Intermarriage), 1987-1995
Box 5. Folder 9. President's records [correspondence, reports], 1962-1967
Box 6. Folder 1. President's records [correspondence, reports], 1967-1971
Box 6. Folder 2. President's records [correspondence, reports], 1982-1994
Box 6. Folder 3. President's records [correspondence, reports], 1995-1997
Box 6. Folder 8. World Union for Progressive Judaism [correspondence], 1986-1995


Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Box and Folder Listing

Box 6. Folder 10. President's records [correspondence, reports], 1974-1979


Extent 3.6 linear feet (9 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement

The series is arranged in three (3) subseries: 1. Administration; 2. Scrapbooks; 3. Audiovisual/Nearprint.

Subseries 1. Administration, 1963-2002

Extent 2.8 linear feet (7 Hollinger boxes)

Box and Folder Listing

Box 7. Folder 1. Aging Programs, undated
Box 7. Folder 3. Award applications, 2000
Box 7. Folder 4. Award applications. L'Dor V'Dor, 2001-2002
Box 7. Folder 5. Award applications. Ruchiani, 2001-2002
Box 7. Folder 6. Award applications. Temple Sisterhood of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, 2000
Box 7. Folder 7. Award application. Tikkun Hanefresh, 2001-2002
Box 7. Folder 10. Biennial Convention, 1966
Box 7. Folder 11. Biennial Convention, 1968 April
Box 7. Folder 13. Biennial Convention. Cleveland, Ohio, 1972 April
Box 7. Folder 15. Biennial Convention. Cincinnati, Ohio, 1979 April
Box 8. Folder 1. Biennial Convention, 1984
Box 8. Folder 3. Biennial Convention, 1990 April 20
Box 9. Folder 7. Contact Forms. Valley Temple, Cincinnati, Ohio, 2004
Box 10. Folder 2. District 10 Rosters, 2000-2004
Box 10. Folder 3. District 10 Vice President reports, 1997
Box 10. Folder 5. Executive Committee correspondence, 2000-2003
Box 10. Folder 6. Executive Committee meeting, 2000 April-2003 April
Box 10. Folder 7. Executive Committee meeting, 2002 November-2003 November
Box 10. Folder 11. ---
Box 10. Folder 12. Interfaith programs, undated
Box 10. Folder 13. Interim Board meetings. Charleston, West Virginia, 1963 April 22-23
Box 10. Folder 15. Interim Board meetings. Canton, Ohio, 1973 April
Box 10. Folder 16. Interim Board meetings, 1983
Box 10. Folder 17. Interim Board meetings. Lexington, Kentucky, 1987
Box 10. Folder 18. Interim Board meetings. Columbus, Ohio, 1989
Box 10. Folder 20. Interim Board meetings. Cincinnati, Ohio, 1993
Box 11. Folder 4. Leadership Conference, 1999
Box 11. Folder 5. Mission Statement and brief history, undated
Box 11. Folder 18. Nourishing our Souls. Fundraising program, undated
Box 11. Folder 19. Or Ami Award materials, 1997
Box 11. Folder 20. Outreach, undated
Box 11. Folder 22. Photographs, undated
Box 11. Folder 23. Photographs, undated
Box 12. Folder 1. Photographs, undated
Box 12. Folder 2. Photograph negatives, undated
Box 13. Folder 1. Programming update: For all your seasons, undated
Box 13. Folder 2. Quarterly phone call chart, undated
Box 13. Folder 3. Rosh Chodesh. Healing service, undated
Box 13. Folder 4. Sisterhood job descriptions, undated
Box 13. Folder 7. Sisterhood by size list, 1996-1998
Box 13. Folder 8. Special program skits, 1970s

Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Box and Folder Listing

Box 14. Folder 2. Scrapbook, 1986 April
Box 14. Folder 5. Scrapbook, 1988
Box 14. Folder 7. Scrapbook, 1994


Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Box and Folder Listing

Box 15. Folder Videocassette: "We Are the Women", by the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, undated
Box 15. Folder Booklet. "Catalog of Program and Administrative Materials for Sisterhoods", undated
Box 15. Folder Booklet. "The Executive Agenda: A Program for Leadership Development and Training For the Women of Reform Judaism, Basic Information for Sisterhood Leaders, undated
Box 15. Folder Booklet. "Reform Jewish Outreach: The Idea Book", undated

Series D. Central District, 1945-2010

Extent 8 linear feet (20 Hollinger boxes)

Box and Folder Listing

Box 28. Folder 3. Funds. Fenburr Estate.
Box 29. Folder 1-2. Sisterhood Connection phone calls, 2004-2005
Box 29. Folder 4. Service to Sisterhoods.
Box 29. Folder 5-6. Job descriptions, 2007
Box 29. Folder 7. Resignations, 2006-2008
Box 29. Folder 9. Membership CD, 2009
Box 32. Folder 5. Nearprint and miscellaneous.
Box 32. Folder 6. Floppy discs (7).
Box 33. Folder Scrapbook, 1994-1999
Box 33. Folder Scrapbook, 2000-2004
Box 35. Folder Scrapbooks, 1962-1966