



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

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**A Finding Aid to the  
Phineas Smoller Papers**

**Manuscript Collection No. 108**



## Collection Summary

<b>Title</b>	Phineas Smoller Papers
<b>Dates</b>	1886-1953
<b>Collection Number</b>	MS-108
<b>Repository</b>	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Smoller, Phineas, 1903-1952
<b>Extent</b>	7.8 linear feet (17 Hollinger boxes and 1 oversize box)
<b>Language of the Material</b>	English

## Administrative Information

### Biographical Sketch

Phineas Smoller was born on October 16, 1903, in Jatamir, Russia, the son of Louis Smoller. The Smoller family emigrated to the United States in 1905. Phineas, known as "Pete" to his family and friends, earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1925. In 1930 he was ordained as a rabbi at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

From 1930-1936, Smoller served as rabbi of South Fountain Avenue Temple/Oheb Zedukah Congregation, in Springfield, Ohio. From 1936 to approximately 1944 he ministered to United Hebrew Congregation in Joplin, Missouri. During World War II Smoller also served as acting chaplain at Camp Crowder in Missouri.

After World War II Smoller became the first director of the Chicago Federation of Reform Synagogues of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) and the director of the Midwestern Regional office for the UAHC. In 1949 he moved to Los Angeles to become director of the Western Regional office of the UAHC, serving there until his death in 1952.

Smoller was an active participant and leader in communal activities. He served as treasurer for the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and was a member of the National Council of the Jewish Distribution Committee and United Jewish Appeal. In Springfield, Ohio, he joined both the B'nai B'rith lodge and the Lions Club. In Joplin, Missouri, he was president of the Council of Social Agencies in 1944.

Several of Smoller's activities were aimed at promoting Jewish education. He was a lecturer for the Jewish Chatauqua Society. He was the founder and vice president of Avukah (American Student Zionist Federation), founded in 1925. Smoller was a member of the Board of Governors of Hebrew Union College. And he was a founder of the College of Jewish Studies in Los Angeles.

Smoller authored two books: *What Reform Judaism Means to Me* (1942) and *High Holy Days' Sermon* (1952).

Smoller married Bonita Smoller. Phineas Smoller died on December 13, 1952, in Los Angeles, California.

### Scope and Content

Papers consist of correspondence, scrapbooks, awards, photographs, and materials pertaining to synagogue activities and personal matters. Also included is a collection of pamphlets relating to antisemitism, chaplains, Zionism, and other issues of Jewish interest.

### Arrangement

Organized into three (3) series: A. Correspondence and Miscellaneous; B. Pamphlets; C. Scrapbooks and Memorials.

### Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

### Terms of Reproduction and Use

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### Preferred Citation

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

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-108. Phineas Smoller Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Provenance** Received from Bonita Smoller, Joplin, Mo., 1979 and 1990.

**Processing Information** Processed by Joseph Greer, July 1998.

## Index Terms

**Subjects** Antisemitism / Jews -- California -- Los Angeles / Military chaplains / Rabbis / Zionism  
**Personal Names** Smoller, Phineas, 1903-1952  
**Corporate Names** American Jewish Committee / Union of American Hebrew Congregations / Zionist Organization of America  
**Media** Photographs / Scrapbooks

## Series A. Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1919-1953

**Extent** 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of correspondence to and from Smoller concerning: Zionism, the chaplaincy, anti-Semitism, synagogue activities and personal affairs.

**Arrangement** The series is arranged alphabetically.

### Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. A-F, General, 1925-1946  
Box 1. Folder 2. American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, 1942-1943, undated  
Box 1. Folder 3. American Jewish Committee, 1932-1944  
Box 1. Folder 4. American Jewish Conference, 1943-1947  
Box 1. Folder 5. American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1940-1942  
Box 1. Folder 6. American Palestine Campaign, 1932-1934  
Box 1. Folder 7. American Red Cross, 1940-1941  
Box 1. Folder 8. American Zionist Emergency Council, 1943-1944, undated  
Box 1. Folder 9. Anti-Defamation League, 1933-1939  
Box 1. Folder 10. Anti-Defamation League, 1940-1943  
Box 1. Folder 11. B'nai B'rith, 1933-1946  
Box 1. Folder 12. Carver, George W. [Memorial], 1943-1944  
Box 1. Folder 13. Cedar Rapids, Iowa - Congregation Judah, 1926-1927  
Box 1. Folder 14. Chaplaincy, 1941-1943  
Box 1. Folder 15. Chaplaincy [correspondence with soldiers], 1941-1944, undated  
Box 1. Folder 16. Chicago Rabbinical Association, 1945-1947, undated  
Box 1. Folder 17. Defense Savings Committee, 1941-1943, undated  
Box 1. Folder 18. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1940-1941  
Box 1. Folder 19. Grand Rapids, Michigan- Congregation Emanuel, 1936  
Box 1. Folder 20. H-M, General, undated  
Box 1. Folder 21. Information and Service Associates, 1934-1935, undated  
Box 1. Folder 22. Joplin (Tri-State) Ministerial Alliance, 1942-1944, undated

Box 1. Folder 23. Joplin, Missouri- United Hebrew Congregation, 1936-1946, undated

Box 1. Folder 24. Letters of condolence to Bonita Smoller on death of Phineas [ includes 1 photograph of a pulpit built in Smoller's honor by children at Camp Saratoga], 1953

Box 2. Folder 1. N-R, General, 1932-1948

Box 2. Folder 2. National Conference for Palestine, 1934-1944

Box 2. Folder 3. National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, 1930-1936

Box 2. Folder 4. National Refugee Service, Inc., 1940-1941

Box 2. Folder 5. Photographs of Smoller's activities in Los Angeles [including dinner honoring Nelson Glueck, 1948 December 19; Officers of Southern California UAHC Council, 1949 August; College of Jewish Studies planning meeting, 1949 September 10; Temple Sinai (Glendale) Founders Day dinner, 1952 March 23], 1948-1952

Box 2. Folder 6. Potlitzer, George and Jennie, 1936-1939, undated

Box 2. Folder 7. Rabinovitz, Maurice, 1919-1925

Box 2. Folder 8. Rose, Sam A., 1936-1939

Box 2. Folder 9. Rosenau, William, 1932-1939, undated

Box 2. Folder 10. Rosenblum, William F., 1926-1940, undated

Box 2. Folder 11. S, General, 1928-1947

Box 2. Folder 12. Salzer, Gus M., 1931-1939

Box 2. Folder 13. Santa Monica Temple Association, 1939

Box 2. Folder 14. Shankman, Jacob K., 1926-1944

Box 2. Folder 15. Shusterman, Abraham, 1937-1944

Box 2. Folder 16. Snyder, Herman E., 1946-1947

Box 2. Folder 17. Soloff, Mordecai I., 1924-1948

Box 2. Folder 18. Strauss, Max, 1931

Box 2. Folder 19. Sturm, Fred J., 1934-1943

Box 2. Folder 20. T-V, General, 1941-1947

Box 2. Folder 21. Tarshish, Allan, 1932-1934

Box 2. Folder 22. Teeters, Bert A., 1934-1936

Box 2. Folder 23. Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), 1930-1934

Box 2. Folder 24. Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), 1935-1947

Box 3. Folder 1. United Jewish Appeal, 1939-1945

Box 3. Folder 2. United Palestine Appeal, 1929-1944

Box 3. Folder 3. United Service Organizations, 1941-1944, undated

Box 3. Folder 4. Voorsanger, Elkan C., 1934-1943, undated

Box 3. Folder 5. W-Y, General, undated

Box 3. Folder 6. Wice, David H., 1931-1947, undated

Box 3. Folder 7. Zionist Organization of America, 1932-1947

Box 3. Folder 8. Unidentified correspondence, 1926-1930, undated

Box 3. Folder 9. Speeches/sermons. A-Z, undated

Box 3. Folder 10. Four lectures on the Principle of Liberal Judaism, January 1948

Box 3. Folder 11. Miscellaneous, 1948-1952, undated

## **Series B. Pamphlets, 1886-1948**

**Extent** 5.6 linear feet (14 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of pamphlets collected by Smoller concerning Jewish issues. Included in the pamphlets are essays, sermons and speeches; informational essays for Jews in the military (mostly but not exclusively from World War II); and topics including anti-Semitism, brotherhood, peace, Nazis on and other issues of Jewish interest during the 1920s-1940s. Many of the pamphlets in this series were published by Jewish organizations.

**Arrangement** The series is arranged alphabetically.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

- Box 4. Folder 1. American Civil Liberties Union, 1931-1948
- Box 4. Folder 2. American Citizenship/Democracy, 1920-1948
- Box 5. Folder 1. American Jewish Committee, 1939-1948
- Box 5. Folder 1. American Jewish Conference, 1946
- Box 5. Folder 1. American Jewish Congress, 1916-1946
- Box 5. Folder 2. American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1940-1948
- Box 5. Folder 3. American Unitarian Association, 1930-1936
- Box 5. Folder 4. Anti-semitism #1, 1886-1939
- Box 6. Folder 1. Anti-semitism #2, 1940-1948, undated
- Box 6. Folder 2. Art, 1942-1943
- Box 6. Folder 3. B'nai B'rith/Anti-Defamation League, 1933-1948, undated
- Box 6. Folder 4. Boy Scouts, 1937-1943
- Box 6. Folder 5. Brotherhood, 1918-1947
- Box 7. Folder 1. Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1911-1948
- Box 7. Folder 2. Christianity/Catholicism, 1929-1948, undated
- Box 7. Folder 3. The Church Federation, 1943-1945
- Box 7. Folder 4. Common Ground, 1940-1941
- Box 7. Folder 5. Committee for the Marshall Plan, 1947
- Box 7. Folder 6. Community Leadership, undated
- Box 7. Folder 7. Congregation Beth Israel (Houston, Tex.), 1944
- Box 7. Folder 8. Contemporary Jewish Record, 1939-1943
- Box 8. Folder 1. Communism/USSR, 1930-1939, undated
- Box 8. Folder 2. Darrow, Clarence, 1924, undated
- Box 8. Folder 3. Education, 1918-1948
- Box 8. Folder 4. Foreign Policy, 1943-1944
- Box 8. Folder 5. Freehof, Solomon- Sermons, 1939-1940
- Box 9. Folder 1. Germany/Nazis #1, 1922-1934
- Box 9. Folder 2. Germany/Nazis #2, 1935-1945
- Box 10. Folder 1. Germany/Nazis #3, undated

Box 10. Folder 2. Great Britain, 1941-1945

Box 10. Folder 3. Happiness, undated

Box 10. Folder 4. Health, 1943-1948

Box 10. Folder 5. Jewish Affairs, 1946-1948

Box 10. Folder 6. Jewish Calendars and Prayerbooks, 1935-1945

Box 11. Folder 1. Jewish History, 1935-1949, undated

Box 11. Folder 2. Jewish Music, 1924-1948, undated

Box 11. Folder 3. Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1945-1946

Box 11. Folder 4. Judaism Information #1, 1886-1933

Box 11. Folder 5. Judaism Information #2, 1934-1938

Box 12. Folder 1. Labor #1, 1920-1931

Box 12. Folder 2. Labor #2, 1932-1940

Box 13. Folder 1. Labor #3, 1941-1947

Box 13. Folder 2. Labor #4, undated

Box 13. Folder 3. League of Nations Non-Partisan Association, 1923

Box 13. Folder 4. Levi, Harry- Sermons, 1930-1931

Box 13. Folder 5. National Conference of Christians and Jews, 1938-1939

Box 14. Folder 1. National Council of Jewish Women, undated

Box 14. Folder 2. National Recreation Association, 1943, undated

Box 14. Folder 3. Palestine/Zionism #1, 1912-1933

Box 14. Folder 4. Palestine Zionism #2, 1934-1948

Box 15. Folder 1. Palestine/Zionism #3, undated

Box 15. Folder 2. Peace, 1924-1948, undated

Box 15. Folder 3. Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, 1945-1948, undated

Box 16. Folder 1. Presidential Candidate Cards, 1920's-1930's

Box 16. Folder 2. Racism/Civil Rights, 1934-1948, undated

Box 16. Folder 3. Refugees, 1934-1941, undated

Box 16. Folder 4. Rosenau, William. Sermons, 1895-1913

Box 16. Folder 5. Schocken Reader, 1947-1948

Box 17. Folder 1. Soldiers, Informational pamphlets for (re: how to behave during war), 1934-1943, undated

Box 17. Folder 2. South Shore Temple, undated

Box 17. Folder 3. The Synagogue Section, 1945-1946

Box 17. Folder 4. The World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1943-1948

Box 17. Folder 5. World Crisis, 1895-1948, undated

### **Series C. Scrapbooks and Memorials, 1947-1953**

**Extent** 1 linear foot (1 oversize box)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of of scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings. The clippings document Smoller's

activities in California including his work with the United American Hebrew Congregations. Also filed in this series are a tribute and a memorial resolution given by the UAHC to honor Smoller's death in 1953.

**Arrangement**

The series is arranged chronologically.

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box X-192. Folder 1. Scrapbook containing newspaper clippings, 1947-1950

Box X-192. Folder 2. Scrapbook containing newspaper clippings, 1947-1950

Box X-192. Folder 3. Scrapbook containing newspaper clippings, 1948

Box X-192. Folder 4. Scrapbook containing newspaper clippings, 1949-1950

Box X-192. Folder 5. Scrapbook containing newspaper clippings, 1951

Box X-192. Folder 6. Scrapbook containing newspaper clippings, 1951-1952

Box X-192. Folder 7. Tribute from Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1953

Box X-192. Folder 8. Memorial Resolution from Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1953