



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
David A. Brown Papers**

Manuscript Collection No. 18



Collection Summary

Title	David A. Brown Papers
Dates	1894-1959 (bulk 1930-1936)
Collection Number	MS-18
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Brown, David Abraham, 1875-1958
Extent	1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

David Abraham Brown was one of eleven children born to Charlotte and Morris Brown. His parents immigrated to the United States shortly after the Civil War, but returned to Edinburgh, Scotland where David was born on November 3, 1875. At age five, his family returned to the United States, settling in Detroit, Michigan.

Without job skills, Morris Brown was pressed to keep his family clothed and fed. He died at a relatively young age, leaving to his wife and older children the task of raising the large family. In 1896, David and his brothers, Julius and Israel, began business as coal distributors. By 1914, the General Necessities Corporation, not only distributed coal and ice, but had twenty subsidiaries.

In April 1898, David Brown enlisted in the Detroit Volunteer Light Infantry which became a part of Company L, 32nd Michigan Regiment of the United States Army. He was mustered out of the Army in September 1898, without having seen any action in the Spanish-American War.

The year 1914 marked the beginning of his active participation in affairs outside of the General Necessities Corporation. He founded the Old Newsboys Goodfellow Fund with Jim L. Brady; traveled to Europe where he met Herbert C. Hoover; and headed the first relief fund drive in Detroit which collected \$150,000 (which broke local records).

In 1918, accompanied by wife Paula, he traveled to Japan, Korea, and China. The trip had a lasting effect on Brown and his interest and involvement with China and its people was to continue for the remainder of his life.

Despite his varied interests, David Brown was best known as a fund raiser. Brown, along with Jacob Billikopf, were considered to be pioneers in professional fund raising. Following the Detroit Relief Fund Campaign of 1914, Brown was invited to direct the New York section of the 1917 Campaign for the Relief of Jewish Victims of the War (in Europe and Palestine.) The goal of \$5,000,000 was surpassed. In 1921, he was invited to serve as the National Chairman of a campaign to raise \$14,000,000 for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The goal was achieved. He continued throughout the 1920s to direct and assist in the direction of the fund raising activities of the Committee.

Brown served on numerous committees. In 1922, he served as the member of the Committee to Investigate the Economic Status of European Jewry. In 1924, he toured the United States on behalf of the Palestine Foundation fund and assumed the chairman of the Finance Committee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Following a 1925 Russian trip, Brown began to raise funds for settling Jews on Biro-Bidjan. In 1928, he became chairman of the United States Division of China Famine Relief, a position Brown held until 1933.

The year 1929 was eventful for David A. Brown. He moved to New York City, where he established the Broadway National Bank and Trust Company and the Broadway National Company with himself as chairman of the board of directors. He successfully sued General Motors, Frigidaire and Delco companies. And he was honored at a testimonial dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria.

In 1931, Brown left the banking business to become a private business consultant; president and publisher of the American Hebrew and Jewish Tribune (weekly newspapers); and, as chairman of China Flood Relief. As a publisher, Brown had a vehicle from which he could launch his ideas and voice his opinions.

In 1932, he visited China a second time, at the request of the Chinese government. Upon his return to the United States, he actively campaigned for funds for the China Flood Relief and

was on several radio programs. In 1933, he founded the American Friends of China, Incorporated and was president. Although the organization was not successful, Brown remained strongly interested in China.

By 1937, David Brown had resigned most of his positions including: the JDC, the UAHC, The American Hebrew, China Famine Relief, the O.R.T. and the American Society for Jewish Farm Settlements in Russia..

In 1904, Brown married Paula Kahn and to them two daughters were born; Carolyn or Caroline (Mrs. Harold Shapiro) and Rosalie (Mrs. Jessie Sherman). His wife Paula died in 1924. In 1940, he married Pearl Kroll who survived him. He died December 23, 1958 in New York City at the age of 83.

Scope and Content

The David A. Brown Papers contain correspondence, newsclippings, editorials, and miscellaneous items which pertain to the activities and interests of a Detroit and New York City businessman and philanthropist. Of special significance is the information on China, Russia, The American Hebrew, and Jewish philanthropy.

The most prolific topic in this collection is China. Besides the obvious folders, others of interest include: "Bloch, Morris (Company)"; "Institute of Scrap Iron and Steel, 1940" and "Newsclippings, 1929." There is also much material relating to Russia in the 1920's and 1930's.

Most of the documents concerning fund raising campaigns are located in the Billikopf folders. These folders contain material on the JDC campaigns to aid European Jewry and are some of the most substantive materials in the collection reflecting on Brown's feelings and opinions of people and events.

There is very little material on David Brown's early career and life in Detroit. There is no personal or family correspondence and very little biographical material. The bulk of the material is for years 1930-1936.

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 David A. Brown Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], David A. Brown Papers, MS-18, Box [#], Folder [#]. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance

Received from Pearl Kroll Brown, Detroit, Mich., 1960 and 1964.

Processing Information

Processed by Nancy V. Menan, August 1976.

Index Terms

Subjects Fund raising / Jews -- Michigan -- Detroit / Mizrahim

Personal Names Brown, David Abraham, 1875-1958

Series A. Papers, 1894-1959

Scope and Content Note The papers consist of three Hollinger boxes of correspondence, printed and nearprint materials, articles, speeches and numerous clippings. Topics include Russia, China and fund raising.

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 1. Folder 1. Adcraft Club of Detroit, 1949, 1957
- Box 1. Folder 2. American Friends of China, Inc., 1934-1941
- Box 1. Folder 3. American Hebrew and Jewish Tribune, 1931-1935
- Box 1. Folder 4. American Jewish Committee, 1936-1950
- Box 1. Folder 5. American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1922, 1929-1937
- Box 1. Folder 6. Antisemitism (Coughlin, Charles), 1938
- Box 1. Folder 7. Billikopf, Jacob, 1917-1927
- Box 1. Folder 8. Billikopf, Jacob, 1935-1945
- Box 1. Folder 9. Biro-Bidjan. The Jewish Autonomous Territory.
- Box 1. Folder 10. Bloch, Morris (Company), 1939-1940
- Box 1. Folder 11. Brown, David A. Articles in American Hebrew and Jewish Tribune, 1931-1935
- Box 1. Folder 12. Brown, David A. "Material for Life Story."
- Box 1. Folder 13. Brown, David A. Memoirs; notes for addresses.
- Box 1. Folder 14. Brown, David A. Russia.
- Box 1. Folder 15. Brown, David A. Testimonial dinner, 1929 May 23
- Box 1. Folder 16. Brown, David A. Unpublished manuscripts.
- Box 1. Folder 17. Brown, David A. World trip. Newsclippings, 1924
- Box 1. Folder 18. China Famine Relief U.S.A. Inc.
- Box 2. Folder 1. China. (DAB trip), 1932 October
- Box 2. Folder 2. China. Newsclippings, 1932-1933
- Box 2. Folder 3. China. Speeches and articles, 1932-1933
- Box 2. Folder 4. China. Radio addresses, 1932-1933
- Box 2. Folder 5. Detroit, Michigan, 1894-1923
- Box 2. Folder 6. Ford, Henry.
- Box 2. Folder 7. Fox, William.
- Box 2. Folder 8. Fox Securities Corporation, 1930
- Box 2. Folder 9. Fox Securities Corporation.
- Box 2. Folder 10. Fox Securities Corporation. Newsclippings, 1930-1934
- Box 3. Folder 1. Fund raising campaign, 1926
- Box 3. Folder 2. Fund raising campaigns.
- Box 3. Folder 3. Greater Detroit Board of Commerce. Resolution, 1959 January 5
- Box 3. Folder 4. Hoover, Herbert C., 1933
- Box 3. Folder 5. Institute of Scrap Iron and Steel, 1940
- Box 3. Folder 6. Jewish Army, 1942
- Box 3. Folder 7. Karpf, Maurice J.
- Box 3. Folder 8. Lamport, Samuel C., 1924, 1934

Box 3. Folder 9. Lehman, Herbert H., 1929, 1932-1936

Box 3. Folder 10. Leonard, Luke C.

Box 3. Folder 11. Letters. A-Z.

Box 3. Folder 12. Marshall, Louis, 1925-1928

Box 3. Folder 13. Newsclippings, 1929

Box 3. Folder 14. Non-sectarian anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights, 1934

Box 3. Folder 15. O.R.T., 1935

Box 3. Folder 16. Palestine Emergency Fund. Newsclippings, 1929

Box 3. Folder 17. Rosenwald, Julius.

Box 3. Folder 18. Waldman, Morris.