



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Congregation Bene Israel/Rockdale Temple
(Cincinnati, Ohio) Records**

Manuscript Collection No. 24



Collection Summary

Title	Congregation Bene Israel (Cincinnati, Ohio) Records
Dates	1829-1960 (bulk 1920-1960)
Collection Number	MS-24
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Other/Variant Title	Rockdale Temple Records.
Creator	Congregation Bene Israel (Cincinnati, Ohio)
Extent	19 linear feet (25 Hollinger boxes and 9 oversize boxes)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

On January 18, 1824, a group of ten Orthodox Jews of English origin organized the Congregation Bene Israel (Children of Israel) the oldest congregation west of the Allegheny Mountains. Joseph Jonas, one of the founders, became the first president and six years later the congregation received its charter from the General Assembly of Ohio (January 8, 1830).

During the period from 1824 to 1835, the congregation worshiped in small rented rooms. When the decision was made to build a synagogue, appeals for funds were sent out to other cities in the east and even to England. Money was secured for a temple on Broadway between Fifth and Sixth and the new building, the first synagogue in Ohio, was dedicated on September 9, 1836. In 1852 the congregation moved into a new building constructed in the traditional Spanish style, which was located next to the old synagogue on Broadway.

Until 1855, the congregation had been served by Hazans and visiting rabbis. In that year Max Lilienthal, then head of the educational institute in New York, was elected rabbi. Under the influence of Rabbi Lilienthal and Dr. Isaac M. Wise, who had come to Cincinnati in 1854, Bene Israel became more liberal. Prior to this time the congregation had been strictly Orthodox, even to the extent of employing its own Shochet, and operating its own matzot ovens. The final break with Orthodoxy came on September 19, 1875 when a resolution was passed abolishing the second day Rosh Hashanah observance. Family pews, a mixed choir with organ accompaniment, prayers and sermons recited in English, and a new Americanized prayerbook had already been accepted by the Congregation.

In 1869 the congregation moved into a new building at 8th and Mound Street. The Mount St. Temple was used until the gradual movement of the Jewish population in Cincinnati to the hill top suburbs of Avondale and Walnut Hills led to the building of a new temple at Rockdale and Harvey Avenues (Rockdale Temple) in 1906. In 1970, again in response to the Jewish migration to the suburbs, the congregation dedicated a new temple in Amberley Village, a northern Cincinnati suburb.

After Dr. Lilienthal's death in 1882, Raphael Benjamin succeeded to the pulpit and served until 1888. In that year the congregation called David Philipson from Baltimore to serve as rabbi. He served until 1938, when he retired after 50 years of service. Rabbis who succeeded Philipson were Victor Emanuel Reichert (1938-1962), Murray Blackman (1956-1967), David S. Hachen (1968-1969) and Harold Hahn (1969-).

Bene Israel Congregation was active in Jewish religious education in Cincinnati. Beginning in 1842, it established the first Jewish school under the supervision of Mrs. Louis Symonds as well as a talmud torah. In 1855 the Noyoth School was established by the congregation. The school later merged with the Talmud Yelodim Institute which was in existence until 1866.

Scope and Content

The collection documents the activities of the oldest Jewish congregation (1825) west of the Allegheny Mountains. The collection consists of correspondence (primarily that of David Philipson), reports, vestry records, minute books of the Board of Trustees and the School Board, business and financial records, roll of members, burial records, pew deeds, records of the Hebrew Relief Association, numerous committees, and miscellaneous materials.

Arrangement

Organized into six (6) series: A. Correspondence, 1901-1949; B. Financial Records, 1830-1927; C. Minutes, 1835-1941; D. Committees; E. Pew Deeds, 1836-1919; F. Miscellaneous.

Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Terms of Reproduction and Use This collection has been placed in the permanent care, custody, and control of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) by the donors of the collection. Questions concerning rights to use or publish materials from the collection should be addressed to the Executive Director of the AJA. For more information, see the American Jewish Archives copyright information webpage.

Preferred Citation Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Congregation Bene Israel (Cincinnati, Ohio) Records and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-24. Congregation Bene Israel (Cincinnati, Ohio) Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance Received on permanent loan from Congregation Bene Israel, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1949-1977.

Processing Information Processed by James W. Clasper, July 1978.

Index Terms

Subjects Congregation Bene Israel (Amberley, Ohio) / Jews -- Ohio -- Cincinnati / Reform Judaism / Synagogues -- Ohio -- Cincinnati

Personal Names Philipson, David, 1862-1949

Corporate Names Congregation Bene Israel (Cincinnati, Ohio) / Hebrew Relief Association (Cincinnati, Ohio)

Media Death registers / Deeds / Minutes

Series A. Correspondence, 1901-1949

Extent 3.4 linear feet (8.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of letterbooks, telegrams, and general correspondence concerning the business of the congregation. Rabbi David Philipson conducts most of the communication within this series.

Arrangement The series is arranged chronologically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Lilienthal, Max, 1868

Box 1. Folder 2. Letterpress book, 1901 December-1906 August

Box 1. Folder 3. Letterpress book, 1906 September-1908 December

Box 1. Folder 4. Letterpress book, 1908 December-1912 March

Box 2. Folder 1. Organ, 1905-1907

Box 2. Folder 2. Dedication of Rockdale Temple [congratulatory letters and telegrams], 1906

Box 2. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1907-1909

Box 2. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1916 February-December

Box 2. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1917 February-December

Box 2. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1918 January-October

Box 2. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1918 November-December

Box 2. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1919 January-February

Box 2. Folder 9. Correspondence, 1919 March-May

Box 2. Folder 10. Correspondence, 1919 June-August

Box 2. Folder 11. Correspondence, 1919 September-December, undated

Box 3. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1920 January-June

Box 3. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1920 July-December, undated

Box 3. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1921 January-December

Box 3. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1922 January-March

Box 3. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1922 April-August

Box 3. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1922 September-December

Box 3. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1923 January-October

Box 3. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1923 November-December

Box 3. Folder 9. Correspondence, 1924 January-April

Box 4. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1924 May-December

Box 4. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1925 January-December

Box 4. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1926 January-December

Box 4. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1927 January-October

Box 4. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1927 November-December

Box 4. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1928 January-September

Box 4. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1928 October

Box 4. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1928 November-December

Box 4. Folder 9. Correspondence, 1929 January

Box 5. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1929 February-March

Box 5. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1929 April-May

Box 5. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1929 June

Box 5. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1929 July-August

Box 5. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1929 September

Box 5. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1929 October

Box 5. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1929 November

Box 5. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1929 December

Box 5. Folder 9. Miscellaneous correspondence, 1929, undated

Box 5. Folder 10. Correspondence, 1930 January

Box 5. Folder 11. Correspondence, 1930 February

Box 5. Folder 12. Correspondence, 1930 March

Box 6. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1930 April-May

Box 6. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1930 June

Box 6. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1930 July-August

Box 6. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1930 September-October

Box 6. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1930 November-December

Box 6. Folder 6. Miscellaneous correspondence, 1930, undated

Box 6. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1931 January-June

Box 6. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1931 July-December
Box 6. Folder 9. Correspondence, 1932 January-June
Box 6. Folder 10. Correspondence, 1932 July-December
Box 7. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1933 January-May
Box 7. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1933 June-December
Box 7. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1934 January-April
Box 7. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1934 May-August
Box 7. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1934 September-December
Box 7. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1935 January-May
Box 7. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1935 June-December
Box 7. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1936 January-April
Box 7. Folder 9. Correspondence, 1936 May-December
Box 8. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1937 January-May
Box 8. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1937 June-December
Box 8. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1938 January-June
Box 8. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1938 July-December
Box 8. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1939 January-February
Box 8. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1940 February-December
Box 8. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1941 January-December
Box 8. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1942 January-December
Box 9. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1943 January-December
Box 9. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1944 February-December
Box 9. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1945 March-December
Box 9. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1946-1949
Box 9. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1955 August-September

Series B. Financial Records, 1830-1927

Extent 7.5 linear feet (5.5 Hollinger boxes and 5 1/3 oversize boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of cashbooks, ledgers, bills, notes, receipt books, treasurer's records, and other accounts. Financial records of the Sabbath/Religious school and the Committee on Sinking Fund are included in this series. The Committee on Sinking Fund was concerned with the mortgages held on the Rockdale Avenue Temple. Because the majority of the material in this series is bound in volumes the chronology is often broken or overlapped.

Arrangement The series is arranged chronologically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 9. Folder 6. Broadway Temple (cashbook), 1830-1845
Box 9. Folder 7. Broadway Temple (ledger), 1841-1847
Box 10. Folder 1. Broadway Temple (bills and notes), 1849-1860

Box 10. Folder 2. Reports, 1846-1973

Box 10. Folder 3. Bonds, 1852

Box 10. Folder 4. Broadway Temple (accounts), 1854-1855

Box 10. Folder 5. Broadway Temple (ledger), 1855

Box 10. Folder 6. Broadway Temple (sale of matzos) 2 vols., 1856-1858

Box 10. Folder 7. Bills and receipts, 1856-1881

Box 11. Folder 1. Broadway Temple (ledger), 1856-1869

Box 11. Folder 2. Broadway Temple (dues book), 1865-1868

Box 11. Folder 3. Broadway Temple, Mound St. Temple (treasurer's book), 1851-1883

Box 11. Folder 4. Mound St. Temple (cashbook), 1869-1880

Box 12. Folder 1. Mound St. Temple (cashbook), 1860-1887

Box 12. Folder 2. Mound St. Temple (treasurer's book), 1883-1907

Box 12. Folder 3. Mound St. Temple (bond book), 1885

Box 12. Folder 4. Mound St. Temple, Rockdale Temple (treasurer's receipts), 1890-1916

Box 13. Folder 1. Mound St. Temple (bond ledger), 1903-1907

Box 13. Folder 2. Mound St. Temple (cashbook), 1903-1907

Box 13. Folder 3. Mound St. Temple (ledger), 1906

Box 13. Folder 4. Mound St. Temple (donation book), 1906

Box 13. Folder 5. Mound St. Temple (cashbook), 1906-1907

Box 13. Folder 6. Mound St. Temple--Sabbath School (checkbook), 1867-1879

Box 13. Folder 7. Mound St. Temple--Religious School (accounts), 1869-1879

Box 13. Folder 8. Mound St. Temple--Religious School (payments), 1871-1897

Box 14. Folder 1. Mound St. Temple--Sabbath School (treasurer's receipts), 1869-1897

Box 14. Folder 2. Rockdale Temple (cashbook), 1916-1917

Box 14. Folder 3. Rockdale Temple (receipt book), 1933-1934

Box 14. Folder 4. Committee on Sinking Fund (proceedings), 1908-1917

Box 14. Folder 5. Committee on Sinking Fund (proceedings), 1918-1926

Box 14. Folder 6. Committee on Sinking Fund (proceedings), 1915-1926

Box 14. Folder 7. Committee on Sinking Fund (proceedings), 1915-1923

Box 14. Folder 8. Bequests [numerous funds], 1882-1953

Box 14. Folder 9. School Memorial funds, 1945-1952

Box X-10. Folder Treasurer's book (1 volume), 1907-1919

Box X-108. Folder Cashbooks (3 volumes), 1887-1915

Box X-109. Folder Ledgers (2 volumes), 1850-1869

Box X-110. Folder Ledgers (1 volume), 1869-1885

Box X-120. Folder Ledger containing list of members and their dues payments and a pew register, 1889-1903

Box X-119. Folder Record of dues payments, 1949

Series C. Minutes, 1835-1941

Extent 2.8 linear feet (4.5 Hollinger boxes and 1 oversize box)

Scope and Content Note Consists of the Board of Trustees minutes, the School Board records, congregational minutes, and Vestry records.

Arrangement The series is arranged chronologically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 14. Folder 10. Vestry records, 1835-1857

Box 15. Folder 1. Vestry records, 1858-1888

Box 15. Folder 2. School Board minute book, 1854-1866

Box 15. Folder 3. School Board minute book, 1869-1888

Box 15. Folder 4. Mound St. Temple congregational minutes, 1864-1890

Box 16. Folder 1. Board of Trustees (minute book), 1845-1869

Box 16. Folder 2. Board of Trustees (minute book), 1869-1889

Box 17. Folder 1. Board of Trustees (minute book), 1889-1904

Box 18. Folder 1. Board of Trustees (minute book), 1913-1918

Box 18. Folder 2. Board of Trustees (minute book), 1918-1924

Box 18. Folder 3. Board of Trustees (minute book), 1925-1931

Box 18. Folder 4. Board of Trustees (minute book), 1931-1936

Box 19. Folder 1. Board of Trustees (minute book), 1936-1941

Box X-2. Folder Congregational minutes (1 volume), 1893-1927

Series D. Committees, 1842-1957, undated

Extent 1.3 linear feet (2.5 Hollinger boxes and 1/3 of oversize box)

Scope and Content Note The Hebrew Relief Association and miscellaneous committees are at the end of this series. Additional reports of the presidents and vice presidents may be found in the Yearbook (1903-1960) in the Miscellaneous series.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically by type of committee.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 19. Folder 2. Building Committee, 1849-1907

Box 19. Folder 3. Building Committee, 1846-1907

Box 19. Folder 4. Building Committee, 1903-1913

Box 20. Folder 1. Building Committee, 1915-1922

Box 20. Folder 2. Building Committee, 1923, 1957, undated

Box 20. Folder 3. Burial reports, 1853-1896

Box 20. Folder 4. Centenary Committee, 1923

Box 20. Folder 5. Charter and by-laws, 1842-1843
Box 20. Folder 6. Charter and by-laws, 1852-1965
Box 20. Folder 7. Financial Committee reports, 1851-1860, 1916-1919
Box 20. Folder 8. Membership, 1850-1859
Box 21. Folder 1. Membership, 1860-1869
Box 21. Folder 2. Membership, 1870-1879
Box 21. Folder 3. Membership, 1880-1889
Box 21. Folder 4. Membership, 1917-1919
Box 21. Folder 5. Membership (ledger), undated
Box 21. Folder 6. President's reports, 1852-1877
Box 21. Folder 7. Religious School reports, 1855-1890
Box 21. Folder 8. Secretary's reports, 1855-1872, 1918
Box 21. Folder 9. Sites and construction records, 1903-1907
Box 21. Folder 10. Treasurer's reports, 1852-1881
Box 21. Folder 11. Vice-President's reports, 1867-1886
Box 21. Folder 12. Hebrew Relief Association, 1870-1876
Box 21. Folder 13. Miscellaneous committee records, 1852-1867
Box X-10. Folder Roll of members (1 volume), 1867-1881

Series E. Pew Deeds, 1836-1919

Extent 0.7 linear feet (1 Hollinger box and 1/3 of oversize box)

Scope and Content Note Consists of records of seat holders at the Temple.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 22. Folder 1. Pew records, 1836-1855
Box 22. Folder 2. Pew deeds, 1852-1860
Box 22. Folder 3. Pew deeds, 1869-1895
Box 22. Folder 4. Miscellaneous pew records, 1853-1855, 1873, 1894, 1911, 1917, 1949, undated
Box 22. Folder 5. Miscellaneous pew records, 1853-1855, 1873, 1894, 1911, 1917, 1949, undated
Box X-10. Folder Pew deeds (1 volume), 1907-1919

Series F. Miscellaneous, 1829-1960, undated

Extent 3.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes and 2 oversize boxes)

Scope and Content Note The series is composed of an assortment of records, manuscripts, letters, printed material, and other items such as deeds, bonds, insurance policies, and lawsuits. Also, in this series are some of David Philipson's addresses and information on his estate which may be of interest. Among the printed items is the Yearbook for the congregation (1903-1960) and copies of the congregational Bulletin (1923-1931).

Box and Folder Listing

Box 23. Folder 1. Business letters, 1857-1896

Box 23. Folder 2. Bonds, deeds, and lawsuits [warranty deeds for lands on the south side of 8th St. east of Mound St. deeded to the New Jerusalem Society of Cincinnati, Ohio 1859 and 1860], 1859-1911

Box 23. Folder 3. Deeds and insurance policies, 1850-1890, 1960

Box 23. Folder 4. Notes, circa 1917

Box 23. Folder 5. Petitions, 1856-1919

Box 23. Folder 6. Philipson, David [addresses], 1889, undated

Box 23. Folder 7. Philipson, David [estate], 1849

Box 23. Folder 8. Staff, 1855-1887

Box 23. Folder 9. Printed material.

Box 23. Folder 10. Printed material.

Box 23. Folder 11. The Jewish Youth [used in the Bene Israel religious school], 1894

Box 23. Folder 12. Photostat copy of a legal agreement between K.K. Bene Yeshurun allowing members of the latter congregation to bury their dead in a cemetery owned by the former, 1853

Box 23. Folder 13. Photostat of the first three pew deeds for Bene Israel's first building on Sixth and Broadway [Broadway Temple], 1836

Box 23. Folder 14. Photostat copy of deed for land at corner of Sixth and Broadway, purchased by John Wood and later deeded to Bene Israel Congregation, 1829

Box 24. Folder 1. Rockdale Avenue Temple Bulletin, 1923-1931

Box 24. Folder 2. Yearbook [scattered issues], 1903-1936

Box 25. Folder 1. Yearbook [scattered issues], 1937-1960

Box X-37. Mortuary records (1 volume) [see also MF-2594], 1895-1942

Box X-111. Journal (1 volume), 1915-1917



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

MS-24: Congregation Bene Israel (Cincinnati, Ohio) Records

Subject Tracings

Note: The following list of subjects is a selective index to many of the topics and individuals in the CORRESPONDENCE series of the CINCINNATI, OHIO--CONGREGATION BENE ISRAEL RECORDS. It is selective in that it only attempts to draw attention to the more significant items in the collection. It does not attempt to list every subject or individual nor does it try to indicate all places that a listed subject or individual appears in the collection. When used in conjunction with the Box and Folder List, the Subject Tracings should help the researcher locate topics. References are to boxes and folders: e.g., 7/2 means Box 7, Folder 2.

Adler, Cyrus	7/2
Anti-Semitism	4/5; 7/2, 3, 5, 7
Anti-Zionism	2/7
Calisch, Edward N.	3/5
Chestnut St. Cemetery	2/7
Ford, Henry	3/4
German Jewry	7/2
Gratz, Rebecca	5/1
Hebrew Union College	2/7; 3/4, 8; 8/4
Immigrants and Immigration [1924]	3/9; 4/2
Jewish Publication Society of America	6/1
Johnson, David I.	6/6
Kahn, Julius	3/5
Ku Klux Klan	3/7, 8
Levy, Clifton Harby	5/3
Marcuson, Isaac E.	4/2
Marshall, Louis	2/6
National Conference of Jews and Christians	7/1
Nazi Boycott	7/3



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

MS-24: Congregation Bene Israel (Cincinnati, Ohio) Records

Subject Tracings

Palestine	2/6, 7
Reichert, Victor E.	4/3
Religious Education	3/8, 9; 4/1, 5; 6/1; 7/1, 3, 4; 8/5
Rosenau, William	2/4, 6, 7; 4/2; 6/9
Schulman, Samuel	3/3
Senior, Max	2/6, 7, 10
Singer, Isadore	3/5; 6/10; 7/8, 9
Social Welfare Activities	4/2
Taft, William Howard	2/7, 10
Union Prayer Book	3/6; 5/12
Wise, Stephen S.	5/3
Wolf, Simon	3/4
Wolsey, Louis	4/2; 7/6
World Union for Progressive Judaism	7/7
Zionism	2/4, 6, 7, 8, 9; 3/2, 5; 6/4, 5; 7/4; 8/8