



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
National Federation of Temple Youth Records**

Manuscript Collection No. 266



Collection Summary

Title	National Federation of Temple Youth Records
Dates	1939-1974
Collection Number	MS-266
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	National Federation of Temple Youth
Extent	2 linear feet (5 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch The National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) was formed in 1939 under the supervision of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC). NFTY was formed by the Reform movement with the goal of garnering the interest and loyalty of their own youth to Judaism and the Reform movement. The result was a collection of high school youths formed into a national organization that emphasized educational religious programming. In doing this, NFTY became a paradigm for similar organizations in the Conservative and Orthodox movements.

NFTY distinguished themselves with their innovative approach to religious education, mainly being that their classes did not resemble traditional classrooms. In the 1950s and 1960s NFTY was immersed in the camping movement and later pioneered trips to Israel as an experiential education tool. The general approach of NFTY was to stress the experiences and emotions of the youths to make the learning experience more personal. It was hoped that this would have a lasting effect on the youth, endearing them to Judaism and the Reform community throughout their lives. Examples of this are the creative liturgy movement, the informal Jewish education, activities that emphasize participation, a lack of structure and authority, a focus on Jewish commitment, and a focus on social contacts among Jewish youths.

Scope and Content The National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) records showcase an important transition in the history of the Reform movement. The records contain the creative liturgies and teaching styles used by the youths to make Judaism a living and vital aspect of their lives. By incorporating aspects of their own lives into traditional services with guitars, audience participation, and popular songs, they carved a space for themselves within the Reform movement. This is what the founders of NFTY were hoping for, though at its inception in 1939 they had no idea of the shape this would take.

Of special note are the proceedings of the first convention (1/1) and the programs notes from the first year (1/2). The Social Action material (4/1) is indicative of the times and shows how NFTY was on the forefront of social changes in America and the youth culture. Also important for researchers would be the file on Key Personnel which lists people that worked with NFTY through the years. (2/1).

Arrangement The papers are divided into one series and arranged alphabetically within chronological order.

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

Preferred Citation Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the National Federation of Temple Youth Records and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-266. National Federation of Temple Youth Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance Received from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio and Leonard Troupp, Commack, N.Y., 2002.

Processing Information Processed by Christine Crandall, April 2002.

Index Terms

Subjects	Jewish youth / Jews -- New York (State) -- New York / Jews -- Ohio -- Cincinnati / Reform Judaism
Corporate Names	Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion / National Federation of Temple Youth

Series A. General, 1939-1974

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 1. Folder 1. Proceedings. First Youth Convention. Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1939
- Box 1. Folder 2. Program notes, 1939
- Box 1. Folder 3. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1945-1947
- Box 1. Folder 4. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1948
- Box 1. Folder 5. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1948
- Box 1. Folder 6. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1948
- Box 1. Folder 7. Executive Board meeting minutes (Boston, Mass.), 1948 November 11
- Box 1. Folder 8. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1949
- Box 2. Folder 1. Key personnel, 1949-1966
- Box 2. Folder 2. Rosters, 1949-1966
- Box 2. Folder 3. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1950
- Box 2. Folder 4. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1951
- Box 2. Folder 5. Programs, 1952
- Box 3. Folder 1. Conclave rosters, 1954-1955
- Box 3. Folder 2. Programs, 1956
- Box 3. Folder 3. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1957-1957
- Box 3. Folder 4. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1960-1961
- Box 3. Folder 5. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1962-1963, 1966
- Box 3. Folder 6. Conclaves, 1962-1963, 1967
- Box 3. Folder 7. President's workshop, 1963
- Box 4. Folder 1. Social action material, 1964-1965
- Box 4. Folder 2. Yearbook, 1965
- Box 4. Folder 3. Western National Federation of Temple Youth Study Kallah, 1966
- Box 4. Folder 4. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1967-1969
- Box 4. Folder 5. NFTY Times, 1968-1971
- Box 4. Folder 6. Pilgrimages, 1968-1970
- Box 4. Folder 7. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1970
- Box 4. Folder 8. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1971
- Box 5. Folder 1. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1972-1973
- Box 5. Folder 2. How about This? Kibbutz Town Meeting, 1972 October
- Box 5. Folder 3. Correspondence, plans, programs, 1974
- Box 5. Folder 4. Correspondence, plans, programs, undated
- Box 5. Folder 5. Correspondence, plans, programs, undated
- Box 5. Folder 6. Cultural material, undated

Box 5. Folder 7. Pirke Noar, undated

Box 5. Folder 8. Provisional by-laws, undated