A Finding Aid to the
Bernhard Felsenthal Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 153
Collection Summary

Title Bernhard Felsenthal Papers
Dates 1847-1964
Collection Number MS-153
Repository The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator Felsenthal, Bernhard, 1822-1908
Extent 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material English and German

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch Rabbi and author, Bernhard Felsenthal was born in Muenchweiler, near Kaiserslautern, Germany on January 2, 1822. He was educated in Kaiserslautern and Munich, then taught for a decade in a small Jewish congregational school. In 1854 he emigrated to the United States. He was rabbi and teacher in Madison, Indiana for three years. In 1858 he moved to Chicago, Illinois and was employed by a bank. He participated in the founding and early development of Chicago's Sinai Congregation and became its first rabbi in 1861. In 1864 Felsenthal declined reelection and became rabbi of newly founded Zion Congregation in West Chicago, where he remained for 23 years. In 1887 he was elected rabbi emeritus and retired to the life of a scholar. Felsenthal was an early champion of reform Judaism and also an early advocate of Zionism. He advocated the foundation of the American Jewish Historical Society; and as a corresponding member of the Chicago Historical Society he read a paper concerning the Israelites of Chicago in 1863. Felsenthal died in Chicago on January 12, 1908.

Scope and Content Collection containing correspondence, writings, sermons, lectures, family history, memorials, and travel notes.

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

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Provenance Received from various donors.

Processing Information Processed by American Jewish Archives staff.

Index Terms

Subjects Jews -- Illinois -- Chicago / Rabbis / Reform Judaism
Personal Names Einhorn, David, 1809-1879 / Felsenthal, Bernhard, 1822-1908
Corporate Names Zion Congregation (Chicago, Ill.)
Media Sermons

Series A. General, 1847-1964

Box and Folder Listing
Box 1. Folder 1. General correspondence, A-B.
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Box 1. Folder 3. Adler, Felix, 1874-1902
Box 1. Folder 4. Bien, Julius, 1872-1906
Box 1. Folder 5. Bush, Isidor, 1884-1897
Box 1. Folder 6. General correspondence, C-E.
Box 1. Folder 7. Zion Congregation (Chicago, Ill.), 1864-1874
Box 1. Folder 8. Collections for the Jews of Palestine, 1847-1878
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Box 1. Folder 14. Ensel, Gustavus S., 1879-1882
Box 2. Folder 1. General correspondence, F-G.
Box 2. Folder 2. Eelsenthal, Henrietta B., recollections, 1901
Box 2. Folder 3. Geiger, Ludwig, 1862-1874
Box 2. Folder 4. Gersoni, Henry, 1878-1885, 1892-1896
Box 2. Folder 5. Gottheil, Gustav, 1878-1897
Box 2. Folder 7. General correspondence, H-K.
Box 2. Folder 8. Jastrow, Morris, 1890-1902, undated
Box 2. Folder 9. Kohler, Kaufman, 1869-1910
Box 2. Folder 10. Kohler, Max J., 1893-1909
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Box 2. Folder 13. General correspondence, L-M.
Box 2. Folder 14. Landsberg, Max, 1882-1892, 1905
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Box 3. Folder 9. Wise, Isaac M., 1879, 1881, 1885
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Box 3. Folder 13. Family history compiled by Alex J. Goldman, 1964
Box 3. Folder 14. Memorials, 1902, 1922
Box 3. Folder 15. Travel notes, 1854-1857
Box 3. Folder 16. Writings, C-W and untitled.