



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Wolfgang Kaelter Papers**

Manuscript Collection No. 165



Collection Summary

Title	Wolfgang Kaelter Papers
Dates	1936-1999
Collection Number	MS-165
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Kaelter, Wollie, 1914-2008
Extent	3.2 linear feet (8 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

The youngest of four children, Wolfgang Kaelter was born in 1914 in Danzig (now Gdansk) Poland to Rabbi Robert and Feodora (Cohn) Kaelter. After studying for one year at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin in the early 1930s, he and four other rabbinical students were invited by the president of the Hebrew Union College, Julian Morgenstern, to study in Cincinnati in order to escape Nazi Germany. Kaelter was ordained at HUC in 1940.

In 1953, he became the first director of Camp Saratoga, later Camp Swig, in Northern California. He had a deep commitment to the Jewish camping experience, believing camping was the best way to engage and inspire Jewish youth. A few years later, he became rabbi of Temple Israel in Long Beach where he served until his retirement from the active pulpit in 1979.

He was known as an innovator of worship, a creative programmer, a dynamic educator, a leader of interfaith activities, a gifted counselor, and an inspiring cantor. He believed that the rabbi should take the "p" out of preaching. For him, it was all about reaching, engaging and dialogue.

After retirement, he continued counseling, writing and officiating at life-cycle events. For 25 years, he taught practical rabbinics at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles.

Rabbi Kaelter shared his thoughts on life, the rabbinate, relationships and death in his autobiography, "From Danzig: An American Rabbi's Journey" (written with Gordon Cohn). At the core of his life was a continuous desire to find meaning — from the largest event, to the structure of a Hebrew word. Listening to classical music was his anchor, his source of inspiration. He shared more than six decades of his life with his wife, Sarah whom he married in 1938.

--Adapted from "Rabbi Wollie Kaelter, 'A Rabbi's Rabbi, a Mensch's Mensch,' Dies at 93", Obituaries, January 24, 2008, Jewish Journal.com (http://www.jewishjournal.com/obituaries/article/obituaries_20080125/) Accessed February 1, 2012.

Scope and Content

Consists primarily of sermons along with materials related to Kaelter's involvement with Holocaust Conferences in the late 1970s. Along with papers from the Holocaust Conferences are materials that have to do with incorporating teaching of the Holocaust in school curricula. Additionally, there are materials relating to Temple Israel (Long Beach, California) and Jewish summer camps. These include scrapbooks, memorials, and anniversary celebrations.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in a single series.

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

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-165. Wolfgang Kaelter Papers. American Jewish

Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance

Received from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles, Calif., 2008 and Judi Lentzer, Lakeland, Calif., September 2009.

Processing Information

Processed by Michelle Wirth Detroit, February 2012.

This collection was arranged and described according to minimal-processing standards. Funding, in part, for the arrangement and description of this collection was provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Index Terms

Subjects Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945) / Jewish camps / Jews -- California -- Long Beach / Rabbis
Personal Names Kaelter, Wolli, 1914-2008
Corporate Names Temple Israel (Long Beach, Calif.)
Media Scrapbooks / Sermons

Series A. General, 1936-1999

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 1-4. Folder Sermons, 1936-1989, undated
- Box 5-6. Folder Holocaust conferences, 1978-1979
- Box 7. Folder Temple Israel (Long Beach, Calif.), 1955-1999
- Box 8. Folder 1-2. Temple Israel (Long Beach, Calif.), 1955-1999
- Box 8. Folder 3-12. Camp materials and miscellaneous, 1964-1990