A Finding Aid to the
Morton C. Fierman Papers
Manuscript Collection No. 170
Collection Summary

Title: Morton C. Fierman Papers
Dates: 1903-1989
Collection Number: MS-170
Repository: The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator: Fierman, Morton C.
Extent: 6.2 linear feet (13 Hollinger boxes, 1 oversize box.)
Language of the Material: English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Morton Charles Fierman was born January 26, 1914 in Ohio. He received his B.A. from Western Reserve University (now Case-Western Reserve University). He received his B.H.L. and M.H.L. from Hebrew Union College, his M.A. from Tulsa University and his Ed. D. from Arizona State University. He also received a D.D. (honoris causa) from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, where he was ordained a Rabbi in 1941.

Fierman served as a chaplain during World War II. He entered the service as a captain and was assigned to the 8th Fighter Command Headquarters, 8th Air Force in England from 1943-1945. It was during this time that he met James Parkes, Christian minister and leading authority on Christian-Jewish relations in Britain. This friendship led Fierman to study Parkes's writings and teach classes about his theology.

Fierman was honorably discharged on February 10, 1946 in San Antonio, Texas. After the war he served as a rabbi for congregations in Washington, D.C., Kansas City, Mo., Tulsa, Okla., Phoenix, Ariz., and Westminster, Calif. From 1957-1963 he was rabbi of Temple Beth Sholom of Orange County, Santa Ana, Calif.

In 1963, he became Professor of Religious Studies at California State University-Fullerton. He taught seminars on the theology of James Parkes, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Leo Baeck, and Martin Buber, as well as classes on the Hebrew Prophets and Psalms. His study of Heschel led him to create a Seminar Paper Series concerning Heschel's theology. This series was turned into a book, Leap of Action: Ideas on the Theology of Abraham Joshua Heschel, in 1990.

In 1985 he received the "Lifetime Contributions to Jewish Education" Award. He retired from teaching in 1981.

He married Isabel Dorothy Block on July 12, 1942. They had one son, Nathan who was born in 1947. Fierman's brother, Floyd Fierman, was also a rabbi. Fierman died on November 7, 1995.

Scope and Content

The Morton C. Fierman papers relate to the professional career of Rabbi Fierman, who was a professor at California State University-Fullerton and a rabbi at several Reform congregations. Included are course syllabi and resource materials from classes he taught, scrapbooks and correspondence relating to his chaplaincy in World War II, as well as his sermons and other writings.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into five (5) series: A. Educational Material; B. Military Chaplaincy; C. Rabbinical Material; D. Published Writings; E. Correspondence.

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 Morton C. Fierman Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-170. Morton C. Fierman Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Provenance

Processing Information
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Index Terms
Subjects
Jewish college teachers / Jewish learning and scholarship / Military chaplains / Rabbis / World War, 1939-1945

Personal Names
Fierman, Morton C. (Morton Charles), 1914-1995

Corporate Names
California State University, Fullerton. Department of Religious Studies

Media
Scrapbooks / Sermons

Series A. Educational Material, 1965-1979

Extent
1.6 linear feet (4 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note
This series consists of course syllabi, lectures and notes, resources used, and some student papers. The syllabi include courses pertaining to Abraham Joshua Heschel, Martin Buber, James Parkes and Leo Baeck.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. RelSt 485. Heschel Seminar transcriptions, part 1, 1973 Fall
Box 1. Folder 2. RelSt 485. Heschel Seminar transcriptions, part 2, 1973 Fall
Box 1. Folder 3. Syllabi. RelSt 485. Heschel Seminar, part 1, 1979 Fall
Box 1. Folder 4. Syllabi. RelSt 485. Heschel Seminar, part 2, 1979 Fall
Box 1. Folder 5. Syllabi. Several Worlds of Abraham Joshua Heschel, undated
Box 1. Folder 8. Syllabi. Prophets of Israel, 1968 October
Box 1. Folder 9. Syllabi. Worlds of Martin Buber, 1975 February
Box 1. Folder 10. Syllabi. Philosophy and Theology of Martin Buber, undated
Box 1. Folder 11. Syllabi. RelSt 434B. The Psalms, part 1, 1977 January
Box 2. Folder 2. Syllabi. RelSt 495. Internship Program, 1979 April
Box 2. Folder 5. Syllabi. Theology of Leo Baeck, 1974 Fall
Box 2. Folder 7. Syllabi. Ed 301, 1965 Spring
Box 2. Folder 8. Syllabi. Heschel, Buber, Baeck: Great Twentieth Century Thinkers of Judaism, 1974 February
Box 2. Folder 10. Syllabi. Philosophical Foundations of Religious Education, undated
Box 2. Folder 11. Syllabi. Basic Judaism (proposed course), 1969
Box 2. Folder 13. Syllabi. Various Education classes taught by Fierman, 1963 Fall
Box 2. Folder 14. Syllabi. Department of Religious Studies courses (not including Fierman classes), 1979 Fall
Box 3. Folder 1. Lectures. Youth and Adolescence, 1967 April
Box 3. Folder 2. Lectures. Creativity-A Consideration, 1967 October
Box 3. Folder 3. Lecture notes, 1969 July
Box 3. Folder 4. Lecture notes. RelSt 485, 1974 November
Box 3. Folder 6. Lecture notes. Teaching the Prophets, undated
Box 3. Folder 7. Resource material. Theology of Leo Baeck, 1974 July
Box 3. Folder 10. Resource material. RelSt 333. Hebrew Prophets, part 1, undated
Box 3. Folder 11. Resource material. RelSt 333. Hebrew Prophets, part 2, undated
Box 4. Folder 7. Student papers. Hebrew Prophets Term Projects, 1973 December
Box 4. Folder 10. Student papers. RelSt 333. Hebrew Prophets final exam study questions, 1972-1977
Box 4. Folder 13. Student papers. RelSt 485. Study questions, 1976 Fall
Box 4. Folder 14. Student papers. RelSt 486, undated
Box 4. Folder 15. Student papers. RelSt 486. Final Exam questions, 1979 Spring
Series B. Military Chaplaincy, 1943-1945

Extent 1.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box, 1 oversize box)

Scope and Content Note Consists primarily of correspondence from parents of military sons and general military correspondence. Of note in the Miscellaneous folder is a listing of all the funerals that Fierman officiated and his separation papers from the army. The correspondence from parents of soldiers is also quite interesting, showing how he took the time to get to know his fellow Jewish soldiers. Also included are two scrapbooks that contain photographs of Fierman’s time in the army as well as programs, newspapers, and postcards from the same time period.

Arrangement The correspondence is arranged alphabetically by last name.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 5. Folder 1. Correspondence, A-H, 1942-1945
Box 5. Folder 2. Correspondence, I-Z, 1943-1945
Box 5. Folder 3. Correspondence from parents, A-L, 1943-1945
Box 5. Folder 4. Correspondence from parents, M-Z, 1943-1945
Box 5. Folder 5. Speeches, 1943-1944
Box 5. Folder 6. Miscellaneous papers, 1943-1946
Box 5. Folder 7. Photographs, 1943-1944
Box X-487. Folder 1. Scrapbook, 1944
Box X-487. Folder 2. Scrapbook, 1943-1945

Series C. Rabbinical Material, 1938-1960

Extent 1 linear foot (2.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of sermons from High Holydays as well as Friday and Sabbath services. Of particular interest are radio broadcasts of sermons from 1946-1960. Also included in this series are marriage records from when he was a rabbi at Temple Beth Israel in Phoenix, Ariz.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 7. Folder 1. Radio broadcasts, 1946-1947
Box 7. Folder 2. Radio broadcasts. part 1, 1950-1951
Box 7. Folder 4. Radio broadcasts. part 1, 1959
Box 7. Folder 5. Radio broadcasts. part 2, 1960
Box 8. Folder 1. Sermons. Friday Evening services, part 1, 1956-1957
Series D. Published Writings, 1970-1989

Extent 1.4 linear feet (3.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists primarily of his published writings. His published book, Leap of Action: Ideas in the Theology of Abraham Joshua Heschel (1990) and various Resource Guides for 7th-9th grades that he authored are included in this series. Also contained in this series are some of his published articles.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 9. Folder 6. Copyright requests, 1970
Box 9. Folder 10. Draft No. 1. Leap of Action chapters 4-9, undated
Box 10. Folder 1. Draft No. 2. Leap of Action chapters 1-6, undated
Box 10. Folder 2. Draft No. 2. Leap of Action chapters 7-12, undated
Box 10. Folder 3. Draft No. 2. Leap of Action chapters 13-16, index, undated
Box 10. Folder 7. Draft. Resource Units for Holydays and Festivals, part 1, undated
Box 10. Folder 8. Draft. Resource Units for Holydays and Festivals, part 2, undated
Box 10. Folder 9. Resource Units for Holydays and Festivals, 1970
Box 11. Folder 1. Resource Unit on Chanuko, undated
Box 11. Folder 2. Resource Unit on the Sabbath part 1, undated
Box 11. Folder 3. Resource Unit on the Sabbath part 2, undated
Box 11. Folder 4. Resource Unit on the Sabbath part 3, undated
Box 11. Folder 5. Resource Unit on the Sabbath errata, undated
Box 11. Folder 8. Article. California State University-Fullerton, 1965-1975
Box 11. Folder 10. Article. In Record, 1968-1969
Box 11. Folder 12. "The Existentialist Counselor at Work", undated
Box 12. Folder 1. List of addresses, undated
Box 12. Folder 2. Miscellaneous binder. Articles, part 1, undated
Box 12. Folder 3. Miscellaneous binder. Course outlines, part 2, undated
Box 12. Folder 7. Draft. Various papers, part 1, undated
Box 12. Folder 11. Fierman poems, undated

**Series E. Correspondence, 1903-1989**

**Extent** 0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** This series consists of correspondence from James Parkes and Abraham Joshua Heschel discussing scholarly activities. Also included are various business related letters revolving around Fierman's knowledge of Parkes's theology and some personal letters (mainly greeting cards) exchanged with his wife, Isabel. Correspondence from Isabel's father, Ben Bock, are also included in this series. There is also a folder containing family photographs.

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box 13. Folder 4. James Parkes resolutions on his behalf, 1976
Box 13. Folder 13. Hebrew Union College, 1975
Box 13. Folder 15. Samuel Gross, 1976
Box 13. Folder 17. Bernard Martin, editor of CCAR Journal with article, 1976
Box 13. Folder 18. Correspondence, 1978 Summer
Box 13. Folder 19. Correspondence, 1978 Fall
Box 14. Folder 1. Isabel Fierman, 1957, undated
Box 14. Folder 2. To Isabel Fierman from Nathan and Susan Fierman, 1957,1970, undated
Box 14. Folder 3. To Isabel Fierman from Aunts Blanche Jacobs and Rose Block, 1963-1966
Box 14. Folder 5. To Isabel, Morton, and Nathan Fierman from family, 1966, undated
Box 14. Folder 6. To Isabel Fierman from John Muir School, 1970
Box 14. Folder 7. To Isabel and Morton Fierman from Dad (Ben Block) fragments, undated
Box 14. Folder 8. To Isabel and Morton Fierman from Dad (Ben Block), 1962-1966
Box 14. Folder 11. Fierman family photographs, 1903-1957