A Finding Aid to the
Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute
(Oconomowoc, Wis.) Records

Manuscript Collection No. 648
Collection Summary

Title Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (Oconomowoc, Wis.) Records
Dates 1941-2001
Collection Number MS-648
Repository The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (Oconomowoc, Wis.)
Extent 8.8 linear feet (22 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material English and Hebrew

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

The Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI) was founded in 1952 at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. It was the first permanent Reform camp in North America. Jewish camps had, up to that time, been mainly concerned with the Americanization of immigrant children.

By the 1940s, however, there were so few recent immigrants requiring this Americanization that a change was needed in the format of the camps. Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman, the director of the Chicago Federation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) in 1949 set out to construct a Jewish camp much in the style of the Jewish Boy Scouts in Germany and also like many of the Christian summer camps in the United States. With the assistance of several rabbis and members of the UAHC board Schaalman was able to realize his goals. Rabbi Ernst M. Lorge assisted Schaalman using the Labor Day Weekend Institutes by the Chicago Federation of Temple Youth as an example.

With the aid of Johann S. Ackerman, Sidney I. Cole, Rabbi Joseph Strauss, Rabbi Karl Weiner, Bernard Sang, and Sidney Robinson, among many others, they were able to purchase land for this camp. The land around the Briar Lodge in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin was chosen for its close proximity to Chicago and affordable price. (The Briar Lodge had been a private Jewish camp beforehand.) After the camp opened Schaalman gave the UAHC the deed to the camp.

In 1952 the camp opened with 39 high school students. The founders of the camp wanted a place where Jewish children could live and learn about Judaism in a relaxed atmosphere that would cultivate a love for Jewish knowledge. Schaalman’s motto for the camp was, “study, pray, work, play”. Dan Kerman became the new director of the camp after Schaalman stepped down. The emphasis on education did not change however. With an initial staff almost entirely comprised of rabbis, a mood was set in which Judaism enveloped all aspects of the camp whether with songs, study, games, or food preparation. As the years progressed the camp offered many different sessions ranging from Torah study to Kibbutz HaTzofim where the children were taught to apply Judaism to all aspects of life. There were also many retreats for adults, families, congregations, parents, and teachers. OSRUI continues to offer many sessions for each new generation that attends.

Scope and Content

The Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute collection contains camp materials such as promotional information sent to Reform congregations and other administrative papers. The majority of the collection consists of material from the various sessions held at the camp over the years as well as some photographs of the campers and the camp grounds.

Arrangement

Organized into two (2) series: A. Administrative; B. Camp Sessions Material.

Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Preferred Citation

Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (Oconomowoc, Wis.) Records and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #, MS-648. Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (Oconomowoc, Wis.) Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance

Received from the Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute, Oconomowoc, Wis., March 2000.

Processing Information

Processed by Christine Crandall, June 2001.

Index Terms
Series A. Administrative, 1941-2001

Extent
1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note
Contains promotion and publicity for the camp as well as general guidelines pertaining to the use of the camp, the sessions that are offered, and staff information.

Arrangement
This series is arranged in chronological order.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Lorge, Ernst M., 1941-1960, undated
Box 1. Folder 2. General correspondence, 1948-1952
Box 1. Folder 3. General correspondence, 1954-1960
Box 1. Folder 4. Reports, 1951-1956
Box 1. Folder 5. Reports, undated
Box 1. Folder 6. List of directors and officers, 1952
Box 1. Folder 7. Dedication of the Union Institute, 1952
Box 1. Folder 8. Map of camp, undated
Box 1. Folder 10. Other camp brochures, undated
Box 2. Folder 1. Camper promotion and publicity, 1952
Box 2. Folder 2. Camper promotion and publicity, 1954
Box 2. Folder 3. Camper promotion and publicity, 1955
Box 2. Folder 4. Camper promotion and publicity, 1957
Box 2. Folder 5. Camper promotion and publicity, 1958
Box 2. Folder 6. Camper promotion and publicity, 1959
Box 2. Folder 7. Camper promotion and publicity, 1960
Box 2. Folder 8. Camper and summer staff promotion, 1961
Box 2. Folder 9. Staff recruitment and procedure book, 1961
Box 2. Folder 10. Camper recruitment material, 1962
Box 2. Folder 11. Program planning, 1962
Box 2. Folder 12. Staff recruitment material, 1962
Box 2. Folder 13. Planning manual, Teachers Institute, 1962
Box 3. Folder 1. Annual statistics, 1963
Box 3. Folder 2. Promotion, 1963-1964
Box 3. Folder 3. Camper information, 1963-1964
Box 3. Folder 4. Staff information, 1963-1964
Box 3. Folder 5. Teacher's Institute, 1963-1964
Box 3. Folder 6. Rabbinic committee and staff, 1963-1964
Box 3. Folder 7. Board of Governors, 1963-1964
Box 3. Folder 8. Sisterhood, 1963-1964
Box 3. Folder 11. Staff information, 1964-1965
Box 3. Folder 12. Teacher's Institute, 1964-1965
Box 3. Folder 13. Rabbinic committee and faculty, 1964-1965
Box 3. Folder 16. Board of Governors, 1965
Box 3. Folder 17. Finance and administration, 1964-1965
Box 3. Folder 18. Camper recruitment, 1967
Box 3. Folder 19. Staff information, 1967
Box 3. Folder 20. Rabbinic faculty, 1967
Box 3. Folder 21. Staff retreat, 1967
Box 3. Folder 22. Teacher's Institute, 1967
Box 3. Folder 23. Pioneer Camp, 1967
Box 3. Folder 24. Winter Kallah, 1967
Box 3. Folder 25. Tzofim, 1967
Box 3. Folder 26. Board of Governors, 1967
Box 3. Folder 27. Sisterhood, 1967
Box 3. Folder 28. Contributions, 1967
Box 3. Folder 29. Miscellaneous, 1967
Box 3. Folder 30. Staff information, 1963-1964
Box 3. Folder 31. Staff information, 1970
Box 3. Folder 32. Jubilee dinner dance commemorative booklet, 2001

Series B. Camp Sessions Material, 1959-1999

Extent 7.6 linear feet (19 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains material from the many different sessions offered at the camp. Some of the sessions included are Kallah, Junior, Intermediate I and II, High School, Torah, Tzofim, Pioneer program, Machon, Avodah, Moshavah, Teacher's Institute, and others. Box 22 contains magazines used by the Chalutzim session from 1977-1983, as well as photographs of the camp and campers from the 1960s-1970s.

Arrangement This series is arranged chronologically and grouped by session title.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 4. Folder 1. Junior session, 1959
Box 12. Folder 20. Tzofim Bet. Sichot, 1973
Box 12. Folder 22. Tzofim Bet. Services, 1973
Box 12. Folder 27. Tzofim Daled. Sichot, 1973
Box 12. Folder 31. Mosh. Special programs, 1973
Box 12. Folder 32. Mosh. Services, 1973
Box 12. Folder 34. Machon, 1973
Box 12. Folder 35. Torah session, 1973
Box 13. Folder 2. Chalutzim. Schedules, rosters, and cabin listings, 1973
Box 13. Folder 7. Chavurah. Schedules, rosters, and cabin listings, 1973
Box 13. Folder 20. Tzofim Aleph. Schedules and lists, 1974
Box 22. Folder 1. Chalutzim magazines, 1977
Box 22. Folder 2. Chalutzim magazines, 1978
Box 22. Folder 3. Chalutzim magazines, 1979
Box 22. Folder 4. Chalutzim magazines, 1980
Box 22. Folder 5. Chalutzim magazines, 1981
Box 22. Folder 6. Chalutzim magazines, 1982-1983
Box 22. Folder 7. Photographs, 1962
Box 22. Folder 8. Photographs. Camp scenes, undated
Box 22. Folder 10. Photographs, 1970s
Box 22. Folder 11. Photographs, 1980s
Box 22. Folder 12. Photographs, 1990s