A Finding Aid to the
Judea B. Miller Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 686
Collection Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Judea B. Miller Papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>1947-1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Number</td>
<td>MS-686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repository</td>
<td>The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Miller, Judea B., 1930-1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>4.4 linear feet (11 Hollinger boxes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of the Material</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Judea B. Miller was born in New York City in 1930 to Polish immigrants. He did undergraduate work at New York University, graduating with a B.A. in three years and the first annual Bible Award in 1952. While raised as an Orthodox Jew, Miller turned to Reform Judaism in college as a more fitting expression of his personal religious tenets. In 1954, he earned a Bachelor of Hebrew Literature from the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City. He went on to receive his M.A., M.H.L. and ordination from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio by 1957.

Miller's first rabbinic assignment from 1957-1959 was as an Assistant Post Chaplain at the army post in Ft. Riley, Kansas. While at the post he specialized in marital and draft counseling. In 1959, Miller assumed a post at Temple Emanu-El, in Wichita, Kansas. Miller was not only a popular rabbi who increased his congregation in Kansas and built a new temple building; he was an also active supporter of black rights. Miller served on a Fair Housing Commission and was active in local politics.

Miller was next named the rabbi at Temple Tifereth Israel in Malden, Massachusetts in 1965. He was active in the local Jewish Community Council, interfaith community activities, and the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis. Miller was also a chaplain at the local Veterans Administration neuropsychiatric hospital. During this time, Miller served in the Delta Ministry in Mississippi and was active in the integration of the first Mississippi restaurant- a Woolworth's counter in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Miller said that one of his reasons for going to Mississippi to aid the desegregation movement was the haunting sense of guilt over the Holocaust and the loss of his two half-brothers in a workers camp outside Maidenek, Poland.

From 1973 until his retirement, Miller was the senior rabbi at Temple B'rith Kodesh in Rochester, New York. He became active there with the local Jewish Federation, interfaith councils and the New York Board of Rabbis. His involvement in national Jewish organizations included the American Zionist Federation, the Board of Overseers for Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the Rabbinic Cabinet of the United Jewish Appeal and the World Zionist Congress. Miller was also active in support of an orphanage in Israel.

Miller died in 1995. Miller married his wife Anita in 1952 in New York City. They had two children: Jonathan (also a rabbinic graduate of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion) and Rebecca Gottesman.

Scope and Content

The collection details the career and political activities of Judea Miller, rabbi and social activist. Miller was a Reform rabbi who retained his ties with colleagues in the Orthodox and Conservative movements as well as interfaith councils that played an active role in the social and political issues of the times. Whether it was the housing crisis of the 1950s, civil rights and desegregation in the 1960s, Soviet refuseniks in the 1970s and 1980s, or Bosnian refugees in the 1990s, Miller was active in voicing his views and urging his congregants to take a stand.

Miller hoped to move to the Negev desert in Israel, following his graduation from New York University in 1952. While that was not possible, Miller and his wife Anita did go on a tour of Israel in 1961, sponsored by the Jewish Agency. He chronicled this trip in a series of letters found in the correspondence series. Miller was a strong Zionist as seen by his participation in the World Zionist Congress and in a series of articles written throughout the years on Israelis and Palestinians such as Ariel Sharon and Yasser Arafat.

In the mid-1970s, Miller's aunt was robbed and brutally killed in her apartment in New York City. At this point, Miller began a lifelong crusade against the death penalty, following his aunt's own beliefs. He formulated groups of rabbis with similar beliefs from the Central Conference of American Rabbis and also the local interfaith clergy councils. Miller wrote numerous articles and letters to the editors espousing his beliefs. He wrote hundreds of letters to politicians urging them to oppose the death penalty and fought bitterly against its reinstatement in New York in 1989. Letters on this subject are found in nearly every folder of the correspondence series and also in the subject files. Of particular
interest is a series of letters from physicians who wrote to Miller responding to his inquiry about the role of physicians in lethal injection cases.

Also scattered throughout the correspondence series are letters to politicians and colleagues such as David Saperstein of the Religious Action Center concerning important social issues including: civil rights, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, Soviet Jewry, sanctuary congregations and mental health care. The Temple B'rith Kodesh folders in the Subject Files contain programs, scripts and memorabilia from events that often relate to the social conscience of Rabbi Miller. His sermons, found in the writings series, also parallel the social issues of the times. Of some interest is material relating to Miller's observation of a grape worker's strike in Delano, California in 1968.

**Arrangement**
The papers are organized into three (3) series: A. Correspondence; B. Writings; C. Subject Files.

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

**Preferred Citation**
Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Judea B. Miller Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-676. Judea B. Miller Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Provenance**

**Processing Information**
Processed by Melinda K. McMartin, August 2002.

**Index Terms**

**Subjects**  
Agricultural laborers / Capital punishment / Civil rights / Rabbis

**Corporate Names**  
Temple B'rith Kodesh (Rochester, N.Y.) / Temple Emanu-El (Wichita, Kan.) / Temple Tifereth Israel (Malden, Mass.)

**Media**  
Sermons

**Series A. Correspondence, 1955-1994**

**Extent**  
2.2 linear feet (5.5 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note**
Consists of correspondence that detail Miller's rabbinical career and political activities. Topics include civil rights, the death penalty, sanctuary congregations, and Soviet Jewry. When a correspondent has five or more items, it has been given a separate folder.

**Arrangement**
The series is arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically within folders

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box 1. Folder 1. A, General.
Box 1. Folder 5. Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, 1972-1974, 1980
Box 1. Folder 6. American Jewish Archives (Marcus, Jacob R.), 1978-1990
Box 1. Folder 7. Anonymous student. Pro-Arab and anti-Israel remarks, 1963
Box 1. Folder 12. Bogage, Lewis, 1979
Box 1. Folder 15. Brickner, Balfour, 1971-1979
Box 1. Folder 19. California grape workers strike [Delano, Calif.], 1968-1969
Box 1. Folder 20. Carey, Hugh L., 1974-1982
Box 2. Folder 1. Clark, Matthew H., 1980-1986
Box 2. Folder 2. Clergyman Consultation Services, 1969-1973
Box 2. Folder 5. Cuomo, Mario, 1982-1991
Box 2. Folder 10. E, General.
Box 2. Folder 12. Fair Housing Committee (Wichita, Kan.), 1964
Box 2. Folder 15. Freehof, Solomon B. regarding suicide responsa, 1983
Box 2. Folder 17. Ga-Gn, General.
Box 2. Folder 20. Go-Gz, General.
Box 3. Folder 2. Goldrich, Stephen S., 1974-1980
Box 3. Folder 9. Israel trip, 1971
Box 3. Folder 10. Jacob, Walter, 1983
Box 3. Folder 11. Javits, Jacob K., 1974-1979
Box 4. Folder 1. L, General.
Box 4. Folder 2. LaFalce, John J., 1984-1991
Box 4. Folder 5. Liebert, Arthur E. Rochester General Hospital, 1980
Box 4. Folder 7. Louis, Elmer, 1975
Box 4. Folder 13. Massachusetts Board of Rabbis, 1972
Box 4. Folder 19. Nan Freeman Memorial Fund (regarding farm workers' strike), 1972
Series B. Writings, 1960-1995

Extent  1.4 linear feet (3.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note  Consists of writings including sermons given in the pulpit and articles about Miller's political beliefs, including farm worker's rights, the death penalty and Israel.

Arrangement  The series is arranged alphabetically by title.
Box and Folder Listing

Box 6. Folder 20. About martyrdom, 1980
Box 6. Folder 22. Alzheimer's memorial service, 1995
Box 6. Folder 23. And Moses stuttered, 1993
Box 6. Folder 26. Armageddon - final battle of the world, 1984
Box 6. Folder 27. Arms and the man: A Jewish view of Gandhi, 1983
Box 6. Folder 28. Because of being sheep, 1966
Box 7. Folder 2. Bucknell University baccalaureate address, 1991
Box 7. Folder 3. By the mouth of two witnesses: a retrospect. California grape worker's strike, undated
Box 7. Folder 4. Can God really save us?, undated
Box 7. Folder 5. [A] Closet: another religious view of gay liberation, undated
Box 7. Folder 8. Death and dying in Jewish religious thinking, undated
Box 7. Folder 11. Deputy, undated
Box 7. Folder 12. Doing an ungrudging kindness: notes on martyrdom, 1979
Box 7. Folder 13. Eternal life: Eric Roth scholarship award, 1975
Box 7. Folder 15. Further notes from the Zionist Congress, 1978
Box 7. Folder 16. Ghost of the struma and the Haitians, undated
Box 7. Folder 19. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion ordination sermon, 1992
Box 7. Folder 20. Hitler diaries, 1983
Box 7. Folder 22. How a Jew reads scripture, undated
Box 7. Folder 23. How normal should a Jewish state be?, 1988
Box 7. Folder 24. How precious is a good deed done in time, undated
Box 7. Folder 25. How shall we remember Martin Luther King?, 1992
Box 7. Folder 26. I met Andrei Sakharov, 1960
Box 7. Folder 27. Installation services, 1962
Box 7. Folder 28. Intermarriage lecture, 1974
Box 7. Folder 29. Jewish community at the bicentennial, 1975
Box 8. Folder 1. Jewish concept of the Messiah, undated
Box 8. Folder 2. Jewish interests in supporting civil rights issues, undated
Box 8. Folder 3. Jewish response to Arafat, undated
Box 8. Folder 4. Jewish tribute to Columbus, 1985
Box 8. Folder 5. Jewish victims and German indifference, 1988
Box 8. Folder 7. Judaism and the death penalty, 1992
Box 8. Folder 8. Judaism since the Bible, 1976
Box 8. Folder 9. Kol Nidre services, undated
Box 8. Folder 10. Levantine religion, 1978
Box 8. Folder 11. Little house on the West Bank, 1988
Box 8. Folder 12. Martin Luther King and the Jews, undated
Box 8. Folder 13. Martin Luther King day and the McCuller case, 1984
Box 8. Folder 15. Mississippi winter, 1989
Box 8. Folder 16. More on martyrdom, undated
Box 8. Folder 17. Murder of a social conscience, 1973
Box 8. Folder 20. Not for thee to complete: Mississippi,, undated
Box 8. Folder 21. Operation Solomon: the rescue is complete, undated
Box 8. Folder 22. Panorama of Judaism, 1985
Box 8. Folder 23. Parliament of the Jewish people or who needs a minyan?, 1978
Box 8. Folder 24. Passover services, undated
Box 8. Folder 25. Poland revisited, undated
Box 8. Folder 26. Racism lecture, 1969
Box 8. Folder 27. Remarks about the separation of powers, 1991
Box 9. Folder 1. Rosh Hashanah sermons, undated
Box 9. Folder 2. Sacred code of slum landlords, 1988
Box 9. Folder 7. Sharon verdict, 1985
Series C. Subject Files, 1947-1990

Extent 0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of material primarily relating to the death penalty and events at Temple B'rith Kodesh in Rochester, N.Y. It includes reports, programs, correspondence and research files.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically by topic.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 11. Folder 1. Death penalty survey, 1987
Box 11. Folder 5. FIGHT newsclippings, 1975
Box 11. Folder 7. Massachusetts Board of Rabbis civil disobedience rally, 1972
Box 11. Folder 8. Miscellaneous, undated
Box 11. Folder 9. S.S. Exodus histories and photographs, undated
Box 11. Folder 10. Soviet Jewry, undated