



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**

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**A Finding Aid to the  
Isaac Mayer Wise Papers**

**Manuscript Collection No. 436**



## Collection Summary

<b>Title</b>	Isaac Mayer Wise Papers
<b>Dates</b>	1847-1928
<b>Collection Number</b>	MS-436
<b>Repository</b>	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Wise, Isaac Mayer, 1819-1900
<b>Extent</b>	0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)
<b>Language of the Material</b>	English

## Administrative Information

### Biographical Sketch

Isaac Mayer Wise was born in Steingrub, Bohemia in 1819. After studying in various yeshivot in Prague, Czechoslovakia and Vienna, Austria he became a rabbi in Radnitz, Bohemia. Because of the poor prospects in Europe at the time, Wise immigrated in 1846 to New York. He shortly thereafter became the rabbi at Congregation Beth El in Albany. There he became an advocate for reforms such as confirmation, choral singing and mixed pews.

Wise's reforms were not popular with his Albany congregation. He broke off in the early 1850s to form Anshe Emeth Congregation in Albany. Wise considered taking a pulpit in Charleston, South Carolina but in 1854 moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. He remained at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in that city for the remainder of his life.

Wise remained actively involved in the creation of an "American Judaism." Shortly after his arrival in Cincinnati, he created the weekly paper known as The Israelite and a German supplement titled Die Deborah . He also started the Zion College- a school for Hebrew and secular studies. It folded a short time later.

In 1855, Wise was a leader at a conference in Cleveland, Ohio that drew fire from both Orthodox communities and the reform radicals. They were discussing a possible union of American Jewish congregations.

Isaac Mayer Wise is known as the founder of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1875. This was one part of his larger goal of establishing a union of congregations. Wise was president of HUC until his death- ordaining more than 60 rabbis and outgrowing their first campus. He was involved in the formation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Wise died in 1900. He was married to Therese Bloch by whom he had 10 children. She died in 1874. He then married Selma Bondi, by whom he had four children, among them Rabbi Jonah B. Wise.

### Scope and Content

The Isaac Mayer Wise Papers (1840-1933) describe the rabbinic and professional activities of Isaac Mayer Wise, organizer of Reform Judaism and founder of the Hebrew Union College. He also served as a rabbi in both Albany, New York and Cincinnati, Ohio.

### Arrangement

The papers are divided into three (3) series: A. Correspondence; B. Sermons and Writings; C. Nearprint.

### Copies

The Isaac Mayer Wise Papers are on microfilm (MF-2827 to MF-2841) and are available through interlibrary loan.

### Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

### Preferred Citation

Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Isaac Mayer Wise Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-436. Isaac Mayer Wise Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

### Provenance

Received from various donors.

### Processing Information

Processed by Melinda K. McMartin, December 2000.

## Index Terms

<b>Subjects</b>	Jews -- Ohio -- Cincinnati / Rabbis / Reform Judaism
<b>Personal Names</b>	Wise, Isaac Mayer, 1819-1900
<b>Corporate Names</b>	Central Conference of American Rabbis / Hebrew Union College / Union of American Hebrew Congregations
<b>Media</b>	Rare Documents / Sermons

### Series A. Correspondence, 1847-1900

**Extent** 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Most of the correspondence is with family members, although three folders concern pulpits in Albany, New York.

**Arrangement** The series is arranged alphabetically by name.

#### Box and Folder Listing

- Box 1. Folder 1. A-K, General.
- Box 1. Folder 2. Congregation Anshe Emeth (Albany, N.Y.), 1850
- Box 1. Folder 3. Congregation Beth El (Albany, N.Y.), 1850-1851
- Box 1. Folder 4. Congregation Beth Jacob (Albany, N.Y.), 1847, 1853
- Box 1. Folder 5. Allegemeine Zeitung des Judentums, 1847-1877
- Box 1. Folder 6. Bondi, Selma, 1876-1878
- Box 1. Folder 7. Heller, Maximilian, 1879-1896
- Box 1. Folder 8. Huebsch, Adolph, 1866-1873
- Box 1. Folder 9. L-W, General.
- Box 1. Folder 10. Philipson, David, 1886-1888
- Box 1. Folder 11. Wise, Pauline, 1888-1894
- Box 1. Folder 12. Zirndorf, Heinrich, 1876-1890
- Box 1. Folder 13. Wise Family miscellaneous correspondence [foreign language], 1848-1900

### Series B. Sermons and Addresses, 1854-1928

**Extent** 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of sermons and articles. This series also contains Wise's last will and testament.

**Arrangement** Writings are arranged alphabetically by topic.

#### Box and Folder Listing

- Box 2. Folder 1. Bible commentaries, undated
- Box 2. Folder 2. The Catastrophe at Eger, 1854
- Box 2. Folder 3. Congregation B'nai Jeshurun (Cincinnati, Ohio), undated

Box 2. Folder 4. Defense of Judaism and essence of Judaism, 1889, 1868

Box 2. Folder 5. Judaism: its doctrines and duties, 1872

Box 2. Folder 6. Shall Jesus of Nazareth be taught in the Sabbath school?, undated

Box 2. Folder 7. Miscellaneous speeches and addresses, 1848-1876

Box 2. Folder 8. Miscellaneous books.

Box 2. Folder 9. Writings [regarding arts, messianism, sin, theology].

Box 2. Folder 10. Writings [regarding Jewish theology, Christianity, Jewish values].

Box 2. Folder 11. Last will and testament, 1894-1928

### **Series C. Nearprint, 1855-1925**

**Extent** 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

**Scope and Content Note** Contains Wise's naturalization certificate, a folder of unidentified items and a book with notices about his death pasted in.

#### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 2. Folder 12. Naturalization certificate, 1851

Box 2. Folder 13. Unidentified and miscellaneous, 1855-1900, undated

Box 2. Folder 14. Death notices, memorials, 1900-1910