A Finding Aid to the
Jacob H. Schiff Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 456
Collection Summary

Title: Jacob H. Schiff Papers
Dates: 1865-1920 (bulk 1914-1920)
Collection Number: MS-456
Repository: The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator: Schiff, Jacob H., 1847-1920
Extent: 12.4 linear feet (31 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material: English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Jacob H. Schiff, a financier and noted communal activist and philanthropist, was born in Frankfort Am-Main, Germany in 1847 to Moses and Clara Schiff, members of a distinguished rabbinical family. Schiff completed his schooling and business training in Frankfurt before moving to America in 1865. Schiff became a naturalized citizen in 1870, although he returned to Germany for business and personal reasons from 1872 through 1875, when he became a member of the New York banking firm Kuhn, Loeb & Co. In 1885, at the age of 38, Schiff became the head of Kuhn, Loeb & Co., which was in the business of investment securities, financing government and corporate needs through the sale of bonds and shares of stock to the public. Shiff brought important European banking connections to the Kuhn, Loeb & Co. firm, such as Sir Ernest Cassel of London, Robert Fleming of Dundee (later of London), and Edouard Noetzlin of the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas.

From his position on Wall Street, Schiff was the foremost Jewish leader in what became known as the "Schiff era," grappling with all major issues and problems of the day, including the plight of Russian Jews under the tsar, American and international anti-Semitism, care of needy Jewish immigrants, and the rise of Zionism. He also became the director of many important corporations, including the National City Bank of New York, Equitable Life Assurance Society, Wells Fargo & Company, and the Union Pacific Railroad. He is especially known for his financing and involvement with Union Pacific Railroad, as well as his extension, through Kuhn, Loeb & Co., of a critical series of loans to Japan, during the Russo-Japanese War, in 1904 and 1905. This action allowed Japan to purchase the necessary munitions to win the war against Russia. Schiff continually refused to loan money to Russia until the fall of the Tsarist regime in 1917.

Schiff grew to be one of American Jewry's top philanthropists and leaders, donating to nearly every major Jewish cause, as well as many secular American causes. He helped establish and develop Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Division in the New York Public Library, and the American Jewish Committee.

In 1875, Schiff married Theresa Loeb. They had two children: Frieda and Mortimer. Jacob H. Schiff died in New York City on September 25, 1920.

Scope and Content

The Jacob H. Schiff Papers consist mainly of Schiff's role as one of the primary bankers and philanthropists of New York City in the early twentieth century. Materials include correspondence and reports concerning Schiff's philanthropic, political, educational, and immigration-related activities, relief problems, the outbreak of World War I, the inhuman treatment of the Jews in Poland, relief for Antwerp Jews and for Jewish sufferers from the war, the struggle between Zionists and non-Zionists in Germany, the language question in Jerusalem, the founding of a Jewish Institute of Technology in Haifa, American-German relations during World War I, Jewish agricultural and industrial problems, literary, scientific, and religious questions, business matters, financial transactions with the United States Treasury Department, and the restoration of Palestine.

Arrangement

The collection has been arranged into three (3) series: A. Correspondence Files, 1892-1920; B. Cyrus Adler Biography of Jacob Schiff, undated; C. Miscellaneous Correspondence Files, 1865-1920.

Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Preferred Citation

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

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-456. Jacob H. Schiff Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance

Received from Edward M. M. Warburg, New York, N.Y., 1958.
Index Terms

Subjects  
Jewish bankers / Philanthropists

Personal Names  
Schiff, Jacob H. (Jacob Henry), 1847-1920

Corporate Names  
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Series A. Correspondence Files, 1892-1920

Extent  
10.8 linear feet (27 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement  
Organized chronologically by year, then alphabetically by subject or correspondent within each year.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 437. Folder 1. Biography, undated
Box 437. Folder 2. Fleming, Robert, 1892
Box 437. Folder 3. Fleming, Robert, 1893
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Box 437. Folder 7-8. Fleming, Robert, 1901
Box 437. Folder 9. Marowitz, Victor, 1902
Box 437. Folder 10. Fleming, Robert, 1903
Box 437. Folder 11. Fleming, Robert, 1904
Box 437. Folder 12. Warburg, Max M., 1906
Box 437. Folder 13. Printed diary, Our Journey to Japan by Jacob Schiff, 1907
Box 437. Folder 14. Fleming, Robert; Warburg, Max M., 1908
Box 437. Folder 15. Fleming, Robert, 1909
Box 437. Folder 16. General correspondence, 1910
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Box 438. Folder 1-4. General correspondence, 1913-1915
Box 438. Folder 5. Education, 1914
Box 438. Folder 6-7. Foreign Affairs, 1914-1915
Box 438. Folder 8. Frank, Leo M. - Case, 1914-1915
Box 438. Folder 10. Krauskopf, Joseph, 1914
Box 438. Folder 11. Levinson, Salmon O., 1915
Box 438. Folder 12. Mack, Julian W., 1914
Box 439. Folder 4. Mendes, H. Pereira, 1914
Box 439. Folder 5. Minsterberg, Hugo, 1914
Box 439. Folder 6-8. Montefiore Home, 1914
Box 439. Folder 13. Politics, 1914
Box 439. Folder 14. Schiff, Mortimer L., 1914
Box 440. Folder 4. Sulzberger, Cyrus L., 1914
Box 440. Folder 5. Tinsley, R. P., 1914
Box 440. Folder 6. Uptown Talmud Torah, 1914
Box 440. Folder 7-9. Warburg, Max M., 1914-1915
Box 440. Folder 10. Washington, Booker T., 1914
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Box 440. Folder 12. Willenkin, Gregory, 1914
Box 440. Folder 15-18. General correspondence, 1915
Box 441. Folder 1-6. General correspondence, 1915
Box 441. Folder 7. Adler, Cyrus, 1915
Box 441. Folder 8. American Jewish Committee, 1915
Box 441. Folder 9. American Jewish Relief Committee, 1915
Box 441. Folder 10. Barnard College, 1915-1918
Box 442. Folder 1. Barnard College, 1915-1918
Box 442. Folder 2. Bernheimer, Charles L., 1915
Box 442. Folder 3. Billikopf, Jacob, 1915
Box 442. Folder 4. Cassel, Ernest, 1915
Box 442. Folder 5. Chadwick, F. E., 1915
Box 442. Folder 6. Church Peace Union, 1915
Box 442. Folder 7. Cohen, Henry, 1915
Box 442. Folder 7a. Cravath, Paul D., 1915
Box 442. Folder 8. Deutsch, Gotthard, 1915
Box 442. Folder 9-10. Education, 1915
Box 442. Folder 11. Educational Alliance, 1915
Box 442. Folder 12. Eliot, Charles W., 1915
Box 442. Folder 13-15. Foreign Affairs, 1915
Box 442. Folder 16. Friedlander, Israel, 1915
Box 442. Folder 17. Goldman, Julius, 1915
Box 442. Folder 18. Henry Street Settlement, 1915
Box 442. Folder 19. Herrick, Myron T., 1915
Box 442. Folder 20. Hirsch, Baron de - Fund, 1915
Box 443. Folder 1. Landman, Isaac, 1915
Box 443. Folder 2. Lewisohn, Adolph, 1915
Box 443. Folder 3. Magnes, Judah L., 1915
Box 443. Folder 5. McAdoo, William G., 1915
Box 443. Folder 6. Mitchel, John P., 1915
Box 443. Folder 7-9. Montefiore Home, 1915
Box 443. Folder 11. National Liberal Immigration League, 1915
Box 443. Folder 15. New Yorker Staats-Zeitung, 1915
Box 444. Folder 1. Publications, 1915
Box 444. Folder 2. Rabinowitz, Solomon, 1915
Box 444. Folder 3. Robinson, Leonard G., 1915
Box 444. Folder 4. Rosenwald, Julius, 1915
Box 444. Folder 4a. Schiff, Mortimer L., 1915
Box 444. Folder 5. Schulman, Samuel, 1915
Box 444. Folder 6. Schurman, Jacob G., 1915
Box 444. Folder 7. Slaton, John M., 1915
Box 444. Folder 8-12. Social Welfare Agencies, 1915
Box 444. Folder 13. Takahashi, Baron K., 1915
Box 444. Folder 15. Wald Lillian D., 1915
Box 444. Folder 16-17. Warburg, Max M., 1915
Box 445. Folder 1. Wolf, Simon, 1915
Box 445. Folder 2-8. General correspondence, 1916
Box 445. Folder 11. American Jewish Committee, 1916
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Box 446. Folder 1. Arts, 1916
Box 446. Folder 2. Asch, Sholom, 1916
Box 446. Folder 3. Ash, David, 1916
Box 446. Folder 4. Barondess, Joseph, 1916
Box 446. Folder 5. Bernheimer, Charles L., 1916
Box 446. Folder 6. Bernstein, Herman, 1916
Box 446. Folder 7. Billikopf, Jacob, 1916
Box 446. Folder 8. Brandeis, Louis D., 1916
Box 446. Folder 9. Central Jewish Intstitute, 1916
Box 446. Folder 10. Chadwick, F. E., 1916
Box 446. Folder 11. Cloak Manufacturers Association, 1916
Box 446. Folder 12. Council of Jewish Women, 1915-1916
Box 446. Folder 13. Dittenhoefer, Abraham, 1916
Box 446. Folder 14. Dix, William C., 1916
Box 446. Folder 15. Education, 1916
Box 446. Folder 16. Elkus, Abram J., 1916
Box 446. Folder 17. Federation of Jewish Farmers of America, 1916
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Box 446. Folder 22. Glynn, Martin H., 1916
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Box 447. Folder 3-4. Jewish Encyclopedia, 1916
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Box 447. Folder 10. Kohler, Max J., 1916
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Box 448. Folder 2. Margolies, M. S., 1916
Box 448. Folder 4. Marx, Alexander, 1916
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Box 448. Folder 6. Ministers Pension Fund, 1916
Box 448. Folder 7. Mitchel, John P., 1916
Box 448. Folder 8-11. Montefiore Home, 1916
Box 448. Folder 12. Morgenthau, Henry, 1916
Box 448. Folder 14. Peabody, George F., 1916
Box 448. Folder 15. Peary, Robert E., 1916
Box 448. Folder 16. Politics, 1916
Box 449. Folder 1. Pool, David de Sola, 1916
Box 449. Folder 2. Publications, 1916
Box 449. Folder 4. Rosenwald, Julius, 1916
Box 449. Folder 4b. Schiff, Mortimer L., 1916
Box 449. Folder 5. Russian War Loan, 1916
Box 449. Folder 7. Slaton, John M, 1916
Box 449. Folder 8-10. Social Welfare Agencies, 1916
Box 449. Folder 11. Society for Ethical Culture, 1916
Box 449. Folder 12. Sodekson, Nathan S., 1916
Box 449. Folder 13. Soyeda, J., 1916
Box 449. Folder 15. Takahashi, Baron K., 1916
Box 449. Folder 16b. Warburg, Max M., 1916
Box 449. Folder 17. Wald Lillian D., 1916
Box 449. Folder 18. Wolf, Simon, 1916
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Box 451. Folder 1-3. General correspondence, 1917
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Box 454. Folder 6. Mendes, H. Pereira, 1917
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Box 454. Folder 8. Mitchel, John P., 1917
Box 454. Folder 12. Morgenthau, Henry, 1917
Box 454. Folder 16. Osborn, Henry F., 1917
Box 454. Folder 17. Publications, 1917
Box 454. Folder 18. Rosenwald, Julius, 1917-1918
Box 454. Folder 19. Russian Commission - Mayor's Committee, 1917
Box 455. Folder 1. Sand, Frederick N., 1917
Box 455. Folder 2. Sandler, Bernard H., 1917
Box 455. Folder 3. Schmidt, John W., 1917
Box 455. Folder 4. Schulman, Samuel, 1917
Box 455. Folder 5. Schurman, Jacob G., 1917
Box 455. Folder 7. Siegel, Isaac, 1917
Box 455. Folder 8. Silverman, Joseph, 1917
Box 455. Folder 15. Solomons, Aline E., 1915-1917
Box 455. Folder 16. Stolz, Joseph, 1917
Box 455. Folder 17. Takahashi, Baron K., 1917
Box 455. Folder 18. Toch, Henry M., 1917
Box 455. Folder 20. Wald, Lillian D., 1917
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Box 455. Folder 22. Wiley, Louis, 1917
Box 455. Folder 23. Wilson, James H., 1917
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Box 456. Folder 1-5. General correspondence, 1918
Box 456. Folder 6. Adler, Cyrus, 1918
Box 456. Folder 7. American Friends of German Democracy, 1918
Box 456. Folder 8. American Jewish Committee, 1918
Box 456. Folder 9. American Jewish Congress, 1918
Box 458. Folder 22. League for National Unity, 1918
Box 458. Folder 23. League to Enforce Peace, 1918
Box 458. Folder 24. Lubin, David, 1918
Box 458. Folder 25. Lyon, David G., 1918
Box 459. Folder 1. Mack, Julian W., 1918
Box 459. Folder 2. Magnes, Judah L., 1918
Box 459. Folder 3. Marshall, Louis, 1918
Box 459. Folder 4. Mason, Samuel, 1918
Box 459. Folder 5. McAdoo, William G., 1918
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Box 459. Folder 7-9. Montefiore Home, 1918
Box 459. Folder 10. Morgenthau, Henry, 1918
Box 459. Folder 11. National Farm School, 1918
Box 459. Folder 12. National Security League, 1918
Box 459. Folder 13. National War Savings Committee, 1918
Box 459. Folder 14. New York, N.Y. - Institutional Synagogue, 1918
Box 459. Folder 15. New York, N.Y. - Temple Emanu-El, 1918
Box 459. Folder 16. No Strike Association, 1918
Box 459. Folder 17. Ochs, Adolph S., 1918
Box 459. Folder 18. Palestine (before 1948), 1914-1915
Box 459. Folder 19. Plaut, Leopold, 1918
Box 460. Folder 1. Publications, 1918
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Box 460. Folder 15. United War Work Campaign, 1918
Box 460. Folder 16. Vigilantes, (The), 1918
Box 460. Folder 17. Villard, Oswald G., 1918
Box 460. Folder 18. Wiley, Louis, 1918
Box 460. Folder 17b. Schiff, Mortimer L., 1918
Series B. Cyrus Adler Biography of Jacob Schiff, undated

Extent  0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

Box and Folder Listing

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Box 1861. Folder 2. Early Years, undated
Box 1861. Folder 3. Railroads - General Problems, undated
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Box 1861. Folder 5. Railroads, undated
Box 1861. Folder 6. Japan, undated
Box 1861. Folder 7. Great Northern - Northern Pacific, undated
Box 1861. Folder 8. Illinois Central, Rock Island Systems, etc., undated
Box 1861. Folder 9. Harriman Roads, undated
Box 1861. Folder 10. Miscellaneous Topics, undated
Box 1861. Folder 11. Other Bankers and Railroads, undated
Box 1861. Folder 12. Atchison, South America, undated
Box 1861. Folder 13. China, undated
Box 1862. Folder 1. Economic and Social Problems, undated
Box 1862. Folder 2. Philanthropy, undated
Box 1862. Folder 3. Citizenship and Politics, undated
Box 1862. Folder 4. Private Life, undated
Box 1862. Folder 5. Education and Learning, undated
Box 1862. Folder 6. Judaism and Jewish Learning, undated
Box 1862. Folder 7. Jewish Institutes at home and Abroad, undated

Series C. Miscellaneous Correspondence Files, 1865-1920

Extent  0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

Box and Folder Listing

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Box 2541. Folder 17. Mielziner, Moses, 1900
Box 2541. Folder 18. Edward VII, King of England (House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha), 1904
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Box 2541. Folder 20. Japanese Order - Conferral Upon, 1904-1906
Box 2541. Folder 21. General correspondence, 1884-1917