



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

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**A Finding Aid to the  
William G. Braude Papers**

**Manuscript Collection No. 509**



## Collection Summary

<b>Title</b>	William G. Braude Papers
<b>Dates</b>	1929-1974
<b>Collection Number</b>	MS-509
<b>Repository</b>	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Braude, William G., 1907-1988
<b>Extent</b>	3.2 linear feet (8 Hollinger boxes)
<b>Language of the Material</b>	English

## Administrative Information

**Biographical Sketch** William Braude was born on 25 April 1907 in Telsiai, Lithuania, to Rabbi Isaac and Rachel (Halperin) Braude. The family immigrated to New York City in 1920 where Braude briefly attended yeshiva. A few months later the family moved again and Braude was educated in the public schools in Denver, Colorado and Dayton, Ohio.

Braude was ordained at Hebrew Union College in 1931. He accepted a pulpit at Temple Beth El, in Providence, Rhode Island, where he was to remain until his retirement in 1974. He then became Rabbi Emeritus. Although Braude remained a Reform rabbi he challenged his congregation to increase their ties with their Conservative and Orthodox counterparts and Jewish tradition. On Yom Kippur services in 1965, Braude pulled out a yarmulke and announced he would wear it as part of his commitment to the Jewish people. He had a strong commitment to Jewish education and the study of Hebrew and Torah- and he would insist upon the time for his study over temple committee meetings. William Braude built the Beth El library to over 25,000 volumes and it has been renamed in his honor. He also developed the Hebrew school.

Braude wrote extensively on the Torah and commentaries. He received an M.A. from Brown University in 1934 and a Ph.D. in 1937. His dissertation was entitled Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era . He served on the Brown faculty from 1937-1942 and was a guest lecturer at Leo Baeck College, Hebrew University and Yale University. Among Braude's major works was the 2 volume The Midrash on the Psalms, a Translation from the Hebrew and Aramaic (1959) and Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts and Special Sabbaths translated from the Hebrew (1968) published for the Yale University Judaica series. But Braude also wrote on issues that would draw the general public into Torah study and Jewish traditions. Typical of such publications are articles like "Detective Cohen Turns to Midrash" (1945) or the sermon "What I Learned in Alabama about Yarmulkes" (1965).

Braude was keenly interested in issues of social justice. While a challenger of the ardent Zionists who viewed Israel as the panacea to the Jewish suffering, he also questioned the anti-Zionists. Braude ran in the early 1930s as a reform candidate for the school board. He championed black rights long before the sixties, and marched in Selma, Alabama with Martin Luther King. Yet, he was not a proponent of all civil rights legislation and many of his congregants disagreed with his conservative political stances.

William Braude died on 25 February 1988 following a long illness. He married Pearl Finkelstein on 19 June 1938 and had three children: Joel Isaac, Benjamin Meir and Daniel.

## Scope and Content

The William G. Braude Papers contain the records of Braude's rabbinical and scholarly career. Braude served as rabbi at Temple Beth El in Providence, Rhode Island from 1932-1974. He had a great interest in promoting higher standards in Judaism- introducing a cantor, the study of Hebrew and the development of the Beth El library. The writings series contains Braude's drafts, notes and editorial correspondence relating to his two major multi-volume publications for the Yale Judaica series: A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms and Pesikta Rabbi- An English Translation . There is also a file of other articles and sermons from Beth El arranged alphabetically by title and cover his career over several decades.

The correspondence series consists of Braude's correspondence with his fellow Hebrew Union College classmates and faculty. It gives a sense of a typical rabbi's schedule and conflicts between committee work and scholarly study. An extensive correspondence with Jacob Shankman, congregational rabbi at New Rochelle, New York details the typical life of a rabbi over several decades- from the pulpit to his personal life and involvement in the World Union for Progressive Judaism. The Norman Feldheim correspondence describes life as a chaplain in the Panama Canal in the 1930s and the I.M. Melamed file illustrates the experience of a fellow Lithuanian immigrant rabbi in Chicago, Illinois. The general correspondence file includes letters from Henry Englander, Julian Morgenstern, and Jacob Weinstein which are related to the activities of the college. Some correspondents are members of Braude's

congregation such as Sidney Ballon who followed Braude to Hebrew Union College. Most of the letters are written to Braude. The bulk of the correspondence is from 1932 to 1940 although the span dates of the series are 1932-1987. The span dates for the entire collection is 1930-1987.

- Arrangement** The collection is arranged in two (2) series: A. Articles, Sermons and Writings; B. Correspondence.
- Terms of Access** The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.
- Preferred Citation** Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the William G. Braude Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:  
[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-509. William G. Braude Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Provenance** Received from William G. Braude, Providence, R.I., 1970, 1980, and 1987.
- Processing Information** Processed by Dorothy Smith, February 1997. Additional processing by Melinda K. McMartin, March 2002.

## Index Terms

- Subjects** Jews -- Rhode Island -- Providence / Midrash / Rabbinical literature / Rabbis
- Personal Names** Braude, William G. (William Gordon), 1907-1988
- Corporate Names** Hebrew Union College / Temple Beth-El (Providence, R.I.)

## Series A. Articles, Sermons and Writings, 1932-1981

**Extent** 2.6 linear feet (6.5 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of manuscript drafts and notes relating to Braude's writings. The majority of this series consists of drafts and notes for two major works: A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms and Pesitka Rabbi: An English Translation . Both works were completed for the Yale Judaica series. There is also a folder of miscellaneous sermons and articles and an autobiography written by Braude in the mid-seventies.

**Arrangement** A general writings file is followed by the notes on his two major works in chronological order.

## Box and Folder Listing

- Box 1. Folder 1. Articles, sermons, writings, 1932-1981
- Box 1. Folder 2. Autobiography, undated
- Box 1. Folder 3. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Introduction; dedication.
- Box 1. Folder 4. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Psalms 1-8.
- Box 1. Folder 5. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Psalms 9-18.
- Box 1. Folder 6. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Psalms 19-30.
- Box 2. Folder 1. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Pslams 31-63.
- Box 2. Folder 2. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Pslams. 64-90.
- Box 2. Folder 3. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Psalms 91-118.
- Box 2. Folder 4. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Psalms 119-150.
- Box 3. Folder 1. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Glossary and abbreviations.
- Box 4. Folder 2. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms.Indexes.

Box 4. Folder 3. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms. Editorial notes.

Box 4. Folder 4. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms. Editorial notes; corrections.

Box 4. Folder 5. A Translation of the Midrash on the Psalms. Editorial notes; correspondence with Nemoy, Leon.

Box 4. Folder 1. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Draft.

Box 4. Folder 2. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Introduction; Piska 1.

Box 4. Folder 3. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska. 3-5.

Box 4. Folder 4. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 6-8.

Box 5. Folder 1. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska. 6-9.

Box 5. Folder 2. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 10-11.

Box 5. Folder 3. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 12-13.

Box 5. Folder 4. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 14-15.

Box 5. Folder 5. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 16-17.

Box 6. Folder 1. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 18-20.

Box 6. Folder 2. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 21-23.

Box 6. Folder 3. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 24-27.

Box 6. Folder 4. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 27-31.

Box 6. Folder 5. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 29-32; 51.

Box 6. Folder 6. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 32-34.

Box 6. Folder 7. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 35-40.

Box 7. Folder 1. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 41-47.

Box 7. Folder 2. Pesitka Rabbi- An English Translation. Piska 48-53.

## **Series B. Correspondence, 1930-1987, undated**

**Extent** 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of Braude's correspondence with his rabbinical colleagues- especially those who were his classmates at Hebrew Union College. Of particular interest is the correspondence with Jacob Shankman, Director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and congregational rabbi in New Rochelle, New York. The Norman Feldheim correspondence describes life as a chaplain in the Panama Canal in the 1930s.

**Arrangement** Arranged with a general correspondence file followed by an alphabetical file of correspondence by name.

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 7. Folder 3. General correspondence. A-Z.

Box 7. Folder 4. Appelbaum, Saul B., 1934-1939

Box 7. Folder 5. Ballon, Sidney, 1936-1979, undated

Box 7. Folder 6. Feinberg, Abraham H., 1934-1938, undated

Box 8. Folder 1. Feldheim, Norman (also spelled Feldheym), 1933-1938, undated

Box 8. Folder 2. Lieberman, Morris, 1932-1938

Box 8. Folder 3. Liebman, Joshua Loth, 1936-1938, undated

Box 8. Folder 4. Melamed, I. M.

Box 8. Folder 5. Olan, Levi A., undated

Box 8. Folder 6. Pilchik, Ely E., 1952-1984, undated

Box 8. Folder 7. Rosenbloom, Jerome, 1936-1939, undated

Box 8. Folder 8. Shankman, Jacob, 1930-1967

Box 8. Folder 9. Shankman, Jacob, 1968-1986

Box 8. Folder 10. Shankman, Jacob, undated

Box 8. Folder 11. Shankman, Miriam, 1986-1987, undated

Box 8. Folder 12. Siskin, Edgar, 1972-1985, undated

Box 8. Folder 13. Soskin Samuel D., 1932-1939, undated

Box 8. Folder 14. Zigmond, Maurice, 1933-1935, undated