A Finding Aid to the
Theodore S. and Ina Rae Levy Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 736
Collection Summary

Title
Theodore S. and Ina Rae Levy Papers

Dates
1937-2005

Collection Number
MS-736

Repository
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

Creator
Levy, Theodore S., 1926-2004
Levy, Ina Rae, 1928-

Extent
11.6 linear feet (29 Hollinger boxes)

Language of the Material
English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch
Theodore S. Levy

Theodore S. Levy was born April 16, 1926 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Jacob and Sara Levy, who were Russian immigrants. Levy received a B.A. from the University of Pittsburgh and went on to receive many other degrees, including a Master of Sacred Theology from Temple University, a Master of Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College, and an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from Hebrew Union College in 1976. He was ordained a rabbi in 1951 at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Immediately after ordination, Levy served at Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia, until 1952 when he left for Ohev Sholom in Huntington, West Virginia where he stayed until 1959. After three years at Temple Israel in Waterbury, Connecticut, Levy was appointed associate rabbi at the Temple Society of Concord in Syracuse, New York, where he became senior rabbi in 1969. Levy was the 3rd rabbi in 110 years at Temple Society of Concord which is the 11th oldest Jewish congregation in the U.S. He remained in Syracuse until his retirement in August 1989.

After retirement in 1989, Levy was called to help Congregation Beth Yam, a newly formed congregation on Hilton Head, South Carolina. The Levys relocated there in 1991, and under his leadership, the congregation’s membership tripled. Levy is considered to be Hilton Head’s first official rabbi.

Levy was a dedicated educator. He guest lectured at Marshall University in West Virginia. In a groundbreaking move in 1967, Levy became the first rabbi to be appointed to teach at Le Moyne College, a Jesuit institution. For over 20 years he taught Introduction to Judaism and The Development of Jewish Thought, and eventually became the senior professor in the department. He also taught in Canada.

In addition to teaching, Levy devoted much of his time to community work and was active in many organizations. One of his early experiences of service came during the time he spent in work camps in Belgium and France through the American Friends Service Committee in 1950. Levy also served as Vice President of the Syracuse Jewish Federation and was active in the Rotary Clubs, where he became a Paul Harris Fellow.

Levy became a 32nd Degree Mason. This was achieved at the request of Temple Israel in Waterbury, Connecticut, to open the way for other Jewish men to have the opportunity to also achieve this position in Masonry which, until this time, had been closed to Jews.

Of particular importance to Levy were interfaith relations and bridging the gap between those from different backgrounds where he lived. He served on the board of the Syracuse Interfaith Committee on Religion and race. In the mid 1970s, he was named the founding president of the Syracuse Interreligious Council. As member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis for over 50 years, Levy participated in its Interreligious Activities Committee. Levy also brought his interfaith message to the public through his monthly column “From the Rabbi’s Study” which appeared in the Catholic Sun starting in 1973.

Controversial topics did not cause Levy to avoid what he saw as his duty. He served on the Citizen’s Council on Urban Renewal in Syracuse. In 1984 at the invitation of Senator Orrin Hatch, Rabbi Levy gave the invocation at the opening of the United States Senate.

Throughout his life, Levy was committed to the preservation of Jewish history. He accompanied Jacob Rader Marcus on his 1952 and 1962 archival expeditions to retrace the steps of Jews who were expelled from Spain after 1492. The 1952 expedition was to the Caribbean, and the 1962 trip was to the Jerusalem as well as the European cities of London, Copenhagen, Lisbon, Amsterdam, Paris, Madrid, and Rome. On these trips, Levy served as Marcus’ assistant and helped him find and secure materials for transport to the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio. Levy was also a founding
Rabbi Levy was a fine musician who played the organ for services at the Hebrew Union College while a student there. He also played viola in the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra after relocating to South Carolina in 1991.

Theodore Levy married Ina Rae Burdman in Youngstown, Ohio on November 30, 1957. They had three children, Seth, Cynthia, and Jonathan Levy.

Levy died on November 11, 2004 at age 78.

Ina Rae Levy

Ina Rae Burdman was born on July 22, 1929 to Harry and Doris Burdman, in Youngstown, Ohio. Each of her parents immigrated to the United States from Russia in the 1920s.

Levy pursued coursework at several universities, but ultimately earned her B.S. in Education in 1967 and an M.S. in Family Therapy in 1972, from Syracuse University. Her relationship with Syracuse University continued throughout the 1970s while she worked as an assistant professor and assistant to the dean in the College of Human Development. Her courses examined marriage, family and also the mass media.

Ina Rae accompanied Theodore Levy on his 1962 archival trip with Jacob Rader Marcus. Ina Rae’s parents helped fund the expeditions. Ina Rae was named Woman of Achievement for Career Development for 1972 and again in 1985 in for All Time Achievement. She also received the prestigious Hannah G. Solomon Award from the National Council of Jewish Women.

Levy devoted herself to the equality and advancement of women and issues affecting them. She worked with the pregnancy drug DES (Diethylstilbestrol) Action group through her position as president of the Upstate Medical Center and through service on the board and committees of Planned Parenthood. She also worked to educate people about consumerism and drug use. She was featured in several newspaper articles that examined women who balanced a career, family and community activism.

Ina Rae Levy was vice president of the New York State Federation of Women’s Clubs and the first president of the Women’s Assembly of Syracuse Jewish Federation. Levy was also active in the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods and was the president of her district. As a vice-chair for the World Union For Progressive Judaism, she traveled with her husband throughout the world.

Ina Rae Levy continues to live in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

Scope and Content

The collection contains sermons, subject files, and teaching materials as well as correspondence, newscloppings, photographs and biographical materials. Some material pertaining to Ina Rae Levy also appears in Series A-D. Some duplicates may exist in order to keep the original order of the records intact, and because Theodore S. Levy often used the same material for different purposes.

Arrangement

The papers are arranged into five (5) series: A. Sermons; B. Subject Files; C. Education; D. Personal; E. Ina Rae Levy; F. Journals.

Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Preferred Citation

Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Theodore S. and Ina Rae Levy Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-736. Theodore S. and Ina Rae Levy Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance

Received from Ina Rae Levy, Hilton Head, N.C., August 2006.

Processing Information

Processed by Susan Kline, November 2006.

Index Terms

Subjects

Jewish women / Jews -- New York (State) -- Syracuse / Jews -- North Carolina -- Hilton Head

Corporate Names

Congregation Beth Yam (Hilton Head, N.C.) / Temple Society of Concord (Syracuse, N.Y.)

Media

Photographs / Sermons
Series A. Sermons, 1950-2004

Extent 4.8 linear feet (12 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains Theodore S. Levy's writings, sermons and notes. Featured are sermons about specific books of the Bible as well as sermons for particular holidays and sermons topical in nature. Many of the sermons were revised over the years and all available revisions have been included.

Arrangement The series is arranged sequentially by book and then alphabetically by the sermon's subject.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 2. Folder 4. Pikuday. Exodus 38.21-40.38, 1957
Box 2. Folder 7. Shemini. Leviticus 9.1-11.47, undated
Box 6. Folder 9. Memorial Day, undated
Box 6. Folder 10. Mothers' Day, undated
Box 7. Folder 1. New Year (secular), 1955-1997
Box 7. Folder 4. Passover, 1974-1996
Box 7. Folder 5. Passover, 1984-2003
Box 7. Folder 6. Passover, 1997-2002
Box 10. Folder 5. Select sermons, undated
Series B. Subject Files, 1947-2003

Extent 2.4 linear feet (6 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains a variety of material ranging from correspondence to writings to organizational material. Of special interest to researchers may be the file on intermarriage and Theodore S. Levy’s writings about Rabbi Benjamin Friedman. Some material is duplicated in the education series.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 13. Folder 1. Abortion. Pro-choice writings, 1982, undated
Box 13. Folder 2. Anti-Semitism, 2000, undated
Box 13. Folder 3. Baby naming, 1999
Box 13. Folder 4. Baccalaureate address, undated
Box 13. Folder 5. Bible, undated
Box 13. Folder 11. Christianity and Judaism, undated
Box 13. Folder 12. Christmas, undated
Box 13. Folder 15. Civil War, 1961
Box 16. Folder 1. Kashrut, Book of. (Dietary Laws), 1948
Box 16. Folder 3. Life Cycle, Jewish, undated
Box 16. Folder 4. Medicine (and Jews), undated
Box 16. Folder 5. Messiah, undated
Box 16. Folder 6. Missionaries, Cults, Jesus Freaks, undated
Box 16. Folder 7. Music, Jewish, undated
Box 16. Folder 10. Patients, Jewish. Ministering to, undated
Box 16. Folder 11. Patrilineal descent, 1983
Box 16. Folder 15. Prophets, undated
Box 17. Folder 1. Rabbi's functions, undated
Box 17. Folder 2. Rabbi's messages, 1958-1985
Box 17. Folder 5. Russian Jewry, undated
Box 17. Folder 6. Sabbath, undated
Box 17. Folder 7. Salvation, undated
Box 17. Folder 8. Sanctuary, 1985
Box 17. Folder 10. Sephardic Hebrew, 1972
Box 17. Folder 11. Sex in religion, 1958, undated
Box 17. Folder 12. Sexuality and Judaism, undated
Box 17. Folder 13. Social justice, undated
Box 17. Folder 15. Superstition, 1952
Box 18. Folder 1. Talmud, 1950
Box 18. Folder 2. Teachers, 1962-1975
Box 18. Folder 3. Temple attendance, 1954-1960
Box 18. Folder 4. Terrorism, 2001-2002
Box 18. Folder 5. Theology, Jewish, 1960-1969
Box 18. Folder 8. Workcamps, 1949-1950

Extent 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains course materials such as lectures and lecture notes from courses taught by Levy at Le Moyne College. Of particular interest is his course material from the classes, Introduction to Judaism and the Development of Jewish Thought. There is some overlap in materials used for both courses. The series also includes resource and reference material Levy may have used in class sessions and also information about other topics such as the Passion of the Christ film. Many of these other files contain similar information in Series B Subject Files that have corresponding file names.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically and course materials are arranged in the order of Levy’s syllabus.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 19. Folder 1. Anti-Semitism, undated
Box 19. Folder 2. Bible, 1958, undated
Box 20. Folder 1. Development of Jewish Thought. Customs and Ceremony, undated
Box 20. Folder 4. Development of Jewish Thought. Israel, undated
Box 20. Folder 5. Development of Jewish Thought. Anti-Semitism, undated
Box 20. Folder 8. Ethics vs Law, undated
Box 20. Folder 9. Interfaith Relations, undated
Box 20. Folder 10. Intermarriage, 1979, undated
Box 20. Folder 11. Introduction to Judaism. Syllabus, undated
Box 20. Folder 12. Introduction to Judaism, undated
Box 20. Folder 13. Introduction to Judaism, undated
Box 21. Folder 1. Introduction to Judaism. Missionary Response, undated
Box 21. Folder 2. Introduction to Judaism. What a Jew Should Know about Christianity, undated
Box 21. Folder 3. Introduction to Judaism. Israel. How to Answer, undated
Box 21. Folder 4. Introduction to Judaism, undated
Box 21. Folder 5. Jews By Choice, undated
Box 21. Folder 6. Judaism, undated
Box 21. Folder 7. Judaism and Christianity, undated
Box 21. Folder 8. Marriage. ABC-TV. The Understanding Heart, 1957
Box 21. Folder 15. Urban Affairs, undated

Series D. Personal, 1937-2005

Extent 1.6 linear feet (4 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains biographical information, clippings, correspondence, college papers and photographs about Theodore S. Levy. His correspondence while in the International Civil Service (with the American Friends Service committee) may be of particular interest to researchers as well as the file on Prayer in Senate. Also contained in this series is information about Congregation Beth Yam in Hilton Head, South Carolina, where Theodore S. Levy last presided. Some of the contents contain information about Ina Rae Levy.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 22. Folder 1. 25th anniversary of ordination, 1976
Box 22. Folder 2. 40th anniversary party, 1997
Box 22. Folder 3. Biographical material, 1937-1976
Box 22. Folder 4. Biographical material, 1965-2004
Box 22. Folder 5. Clippings, 1947-1989
Box 22. Folder 7. College papers, undated
Box 22. Folder 9. College papers, 1967
Box 23. Folder 1. Congregation Beth Yam, 1989-2002
Box 23. Folder 2. Congregation Beth Yam, 1997
Box 23. Folder 8. Correspondence. Mostly Hebrew Union College, 1942-1973
Box 23. Folder 9. Death of, 2005
Box 24. Folder 1. Installation, 1952-1959
Box 24. Folder 2. Israel trip, 1992-1993
Box 24. Folder 3. Le Moyne College, 1966
Box 24. Folder 4. Levy, Jacob and Sara (grandchildren), undated
Box 24. Folder 7. Miscellaneous material, undated
Box 24. Folder 9. Paul Harris Fellow, undated
Box 25. Folder 2. South Carolina Jewish Historical Society, 1996-2003
Box 25. Folder 3. Syracuse Area Interreligious Council, 19781,987
Box 25. Folder 4. Temple ceremonies, 1959-1990
Box 25. Folder 5. Temple Society of Concord [with photos], 1962-1989
Box 25. Folder 6. Temple Society of Concord. 140 Years, 1979
Box 25. Folder 7. Theta Alpha Kappa. Certificate, undated
Box 25. Folder 8. United Jewish Communities, 1992-2001

Series E. Ina Rae Levy, 1950-1999
**Extent** 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** The series is devoted to the life of Rabbi Levy’s wife, Ina Rae. It features clippings of her numerous accomplishments and recognitions as well as course material from her work teaching at Syracuse University. Other Ina Rae Levy material is interspersed within the Series D Personal files. Another asset of this series is the wealth of photographs it contains, both of Ina Rae’s professional work as well as personal images of the Levy family. It also includes information about her family, particularly her mother Doris Burdman who was prominent in Youngstown as well as personal correspondence.

**Arrangement** The series is arranged alphabetically.

**Box and Folder Listing**

- Box 26. Folder 6. Clippings, undated
- Box 26. Folder 9. Correspondence. Including Vice President Appointment, 1980
- Box 26. Folder 11. Correspondence. Appreciation. Syracuse University, 1975, undated
- Box 26. Folder 15. Cruise [with photos], 1964
- Box 27. Folder 1. Judaism, undated
- Box 27. Folder 2. Lecture, Judaism, undated
- Box 27. Folder 3. Lectures, Cruise. Resume, 1993
- Box 27. Folder 4. Levy, Cynthia (daughter). Adoption, 1980
- Box 27. Folder 5. Maine Photo Institute, 1980
- Box 27. Folder 6. Marriage. Announcement and certificate, 1957
- Box 27. Folder 7. Miscellaneous, undated
- Box 27. Folder 9. New York State Federation of Women's Clubs, 1969, 1972
Box 27. Folder 10. Notary public, 2002
Box 27. Folder 11. Photographs. AID program, 1975
Box 27. Folder 12. Photographs. Family, 1927-1984
Box 27. Folder 14. Photographs. Florida apartment, 1984
Box 27. Folder 16. Photographs. Latin America, 1966
Box 27. Folder 17. Photographs. Miscellaneous, 1963-1983
Box 28. Folder 1. Surprise party for Ina Rae Levy, undated
Box 28. Folder 2. Syracuse Jewish Federation, 1977
Box 28. Folder 3. Syracuse University. Commencement, 1975
Box 28. Folder 7. Syracuse University. Teaching and CV, 1971-1976
Box 28. Folder 10. Teaching, Substitute, 1967
Box 28. Folder 11. Upstate Medical Center, Auxiliary to, 1981, 1985
Box 28. Folder 12. Woman of Achievement, 1969
Box 28. Folder 13. Woman of Achievement, 1972
Series F. Journals, 1952-2004

Extent  0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note  Consists of two journals in which Rabbi Levy keeps some financial records as well as a record of funerals and obituaries of individuals in communities he served.

Arrangement  The series is arranged chronologically.

Box and Folder Listing