A Finding Aid to the
Eugene Mihaly Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 739
Collection Summary

Title
Eugene Mihaly Papers

Dates
1954-1998

Collection Number
MS-739

Repository
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

Creator
Mihaly, Eugene, 1918-2002

Extent
3.2 linear feet (8 Hollinger boxes)

Language of the Material
English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch
Eugene Mihaly was born the son of Hillel and Ida Judith Kahn Mihaly in Hungary in 1918. Hillel Mihaly served as an Orthodox rabbi in Baltimore, where Eugene attended the New Israel Yeshivah. Later, he matriculated at Yeshiva University in New York, and was awarded his B.A. magna cum laude in 1940. Like his father, he was ordained as an Orthodox rabbi. After serving two Orthodox congregations, Mihaly made the decision to switch to Reform Judaism. His ordination in that denomination took place at Hebrew Union College in 1949, where he additionally earned a Ph.D. in 1952.

In 1945, he married Cecile Bramer, with whom he had two sons, Eugene and Marc.

Mihaly's training as an Orthodox rabbi led to his familiarity with Talmud. A reputation for expertise in halakha (Jewish law) resulted in his opinions in such matters being eagerly sought, sometimes in the form of Responsa. These position papers were intended to draw responses from others. The almost-musical "call and response," or give-and-take, of these papers, some of which are contained in this collection, makes for a very interesting written "conversation."

Mihaly was likewise highly regarded for his command of the English language, and for his facility in the use of the written word. Congratulatory notes from colleagues and friends help the researcher understand the admiration felt for this man. In fact, whether in his role as a lecturer, sermonizer, author, or rabbi, Mihaly could be confident that his audience/readers wanted to know what he thought.

He taught at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati for many years, either as Deutsch professor of Jewish jurisprudence and social justice, or as professor of Jewish rabbinic literature and homiletics. Beginning in 1976, he served as executive dean and vice president for academic affairs. After retirement, a former student of his, Peretz Wolf-Prusan, visited often in the hope of learning more from him. Wolf-Prusan is quoted as saying "EL He was thoroughly involved in modern philosophy and thought, and completely conversant in classic Jewish texts, so that when you learn with someone like this, he was your tour guide to the complexity of Western thought and the incredible depths of Jewish philosophy."

Eugene Mihaly died on June 7, 2002, at the age of 83.

Scope and Content
Papers consist of sermons, articles, speeches, lectures, responsa, and class material.

Arrangement
The collection is arranged in seven (7) series: A. Class Materials; B. Holidays/Rituals; C. Miscellaneous Writings by Others; D. Personal File: Writings by Israel Bettan; E. Responsa; F. Sermons; and G. Subject Writings.

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

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

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-739. Eugene Mihaly Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance
Received from Hebrew Union College-Jewish institute of Religion, Los Angeles, Calif., 6 February 2004.

Processing Information
Processed by Vicki Lipski, April 2007.

Index Terms

Extent 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Mihaly taught Jewish jurisprudence, Jewish rabbinic literature (Midrash), and homiletics. His meticulous, thorough approach and the extent of his knowledge are revealed in these materials.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Midrash 9 — Ethical Literature. Early Talmudic writings, 1994
Box 1. Folder 2. Midrash 9 (formerly 7) — Ethical Literature — Session 2, 1993
Box 1. Folder 3. Midrash 7 — Ethical Literature. Moses Chaim Luzzatto, 1993
Box 1. Folder 5. Midrash 7 — Ethical Literature. Israel Meir Hacohen, aka Chofetz Chaim.
Box 1. Folder 7. Midrash 7 — Ethical Literature. Israel Salanter.
Box 2. Folder 1. Midrash 7 — Ethical Literature, 1988
Box 2. Folder 4. Hebrew Scripture through Jewish Eyes, 1993
Box 2. Folder 5. Hebrew Scripture through Christian Eyes.
Box 2. Folder 9. Midrash — Ethical Literature. 32 principles of Rabbi Ishmael.
Box 3. Folder 3. Midrash E-14, 1966
Box 3. Folder 4. Teachings of the Ancient Rabbis [incomplete].
Box 3. Folder 5. Shared Values Project. Stanford University, 1998

Series B. Holidays/Rituals, undated

Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Includes services for brit milah, conversion, Passover, the High Holidays, Selichot, and weddings.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.
Series C. Miscellaneous Writings by Others, undated

Extent 0.1 linear feet (0.25 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Writings by Joseph Heineman, Christopher Hitchens, Michael Meyer, and Richard Sarason.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing


Box 4. Folder 12. "On Not Knowing the Half of It: My Jewish Self" by Christopher Hitchens.


Box 4. Folder 14. "Ismar Schorsch, the Historian" by Michael Meyer.

Box 4. Folder 15. "Liberal Judaism in Nazi Germany" by Michael Meyer.

Box 4. Folder 16. "Rabbi Dr. Baeck's Legacy to Progressive Judaism" by Michael Meyer.


Series D. Personal File: Writings by Israel Bettan, undated

Extent 0.3 linear feet (0.75 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Bettan was Mihaly's teacher, and these are Bettan's own copies of some of his own writings, given to Mihaly. Plainly, Mihaly held him in high esteem.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing


Box 4. Folder 18. Dedication of Sefer Torah.
Box 4. Folder 18. Dedication sermon.
Box 4. Folder 18. Early Reform in Contemporaneous Responses.
Box 4. Folder 18. Has God Been Forsaken?
Box 4. Folder 18. The Hebrew Union College and Liberal Thought.
Box 4. Folder 18. Israel and the Synagog.
Box 4. Folder 18. The Jewish Interpreter.
Box 4. Folder 18. II. Its Spiritual Note.
Box 4. Folder 18. IV. Its Conception of Israel's Place in the World.
Box 4. Folder 18. The Rabbi as Scholar.
Box 4. Folder 18. The Rabbi of Richmond.
Box 4. Folder 18. The Response to Tragedy.
Box 4. Folder 18. Review of "Al-Hidaja 'Ila Faraid Al-Qulub des BachjaEL".
Box 4. Folder 18. The Right to Differ and be Different.
Box 5. Folder 1. S-W Includes Bettan's index.
Box 5. Folder 1. Salvation by Organization.
Box 5. Folder 1. The Sanctuary of Life.
Box 5. Folder 1. Scriptural Texts as Used by the Older Jewish Preachers.
Box 5. Folder 1. The Solitary Soul.
Box 5. Folder 1. Soul and Body.
Box 5. Folder 1. Soul-Progress.
Box 5. Folder 1. The Spirit of the Founder (incomplete).
Box 5. Folder 1. The Theological School — A Contrast.
Box 5. Folder 1. This Thirsting World.
Box 5. Folder 1. Thirty-Second Conference of American Rabbis.
Series E. Responsa, undated

Extent  0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note  Responsa written about a cross-section of religious issues, with an emphasis on marriage. The most complete collection of documents bears on a humanistic congregation’s consideration of application for membership in the UAHC (URJ).

Arrangement  The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 5. Folder 7. Responsum on Homosexuality.
Box 5. Folder 8. Responsum on Qualifications for UAHC Membership/Beth Adam.
Box 5. Folder 9. Responsum on Qualifications for UAHC Membership/Beth Adam.
Box 5. Folder 10. Responsum on Jewish marriage.
Box 5. Folder 11. Responsum on Marriage on the Sabbath.

Series F. Sermons, undated

Extent  0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note  Includes what could be called "generic" sermons, e.g., an anniversary sermon, a children’s sermon, a consecration sermon, a dedication sermon, etc.

Arrangement  The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 6. Folder 1. The American Jew in Post-War Days.
Box 6. Folder 2. Anniversary sermon.
Box 6. Folder 3. The Basic Virtues of the Fathers.
Series G. Subject Writings, 1954-1993

Extent 1 linear foot (2.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note While much of this series has to do with religious matters, the most interesting title in the series must surely be "Sexual Harassment, Deconstruction, and Quantum Physics." A number of papers presented to the Literary Club of Cincinnati are included in this series.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 6. Folder 7. Centennial sermon.
Box 6. Folder 8. The Challenge of Change.
Box 6. Folder 11. Greetings from CCAR.
Box 6. Folder 12. Installation sermon.
Box 6. Folder 15. The Synagogue and Jewish Worship.
Box 6. Folder 17. The Uniqueness of Religion.
Box 6. Folder 18. Where Do We Stand?

Box 6. Folder 19. The Architect as Liturgist, 1974 April
Box 6. Folder 22. The Authentic Vocation of the Jew, 1990 March 14
Box 6. Folder 23. Bread as a Symbol, 1970
Box 6. Folder 24. College Colloquium [Hebrew and English], 1991 October 25
Box 7. Folder 1. The Edge of a Remark, 1988 November 7
Box 7. Folder 3. Halacha — Discipline and Reform Judaism, 1975 June 18
Box 7. Folder 4. Halakha is Absolute and Passe, 1980
Box 7. Folder 5. Hebrew Union College. An anniversary address.
Box 7. Folder 6. Home for the Jewish Aged, 1961 November 12
Box 7. Folder 7. The Horns of the Altar.
Box 7. Folder 8. In the Cleft of the Rock, 1965
Box 7. Folder 10. It's All in the Name. Article in Keeping Posted, 1972 October
Box 7. Folder 13. Let Us Make Man: Building Mounds Upon Mounds on Every Jot, 1991 April 22
Box 7. Folder 15. Love is a Many-Splendored Vexation.
Box 7. Folder 18. Moses Maimonides, Author and Teacher for the Ages, 1955 October
Box 7. Folder 20. One Who Commits Suicide Has No Share in the World to Come [English and Hebrew].
Box 7. Folder 21. Our Moorings and Our Reach, 1965 March 13
Box 7. Folder 22. The Palm Tree.
Box 7. Folder 23. Petrie, Beverly and Bruce. Fortieth wedding anniversary poem.
Box 7. Folder 24. Prayer at the Annual Dinner of the Literary Club, 1992 October 26
Box 8. Folder 1. Sayings of the Fathers.
Box 8. Folder 3. The Schlemiel as American Literary Hero, 1973 June 5
Box 8. Folder 4. Seasons Greetings to an American Jew, 1961 December 29
Box 8. Folder 5. Sexual Harassment, Deconstruction, and Quantum Physics, 1991 November 25
Box 8. Folder 7. Speeches.
Box 8. Folder 8. Squaring the Circle, 1980 May 12
Box 8. Folder 9. To Be and Not to Be, 1986 March 10
Box 8. Folder 10. The Union and its Platform.
Box 8. Folder 11. Unity Beyond Diversity: The Emerging American Identity, 1993 October 18
Box 8. Folder 12. What's Happening to Reform Judaism?
Box 8. Folder 13. Who is a Jew? Matrilineal/Patrilineal Status.