A Finding Aid to the
Mordecai Soloff Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 740
**Collection Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Mordecai Soloff Papers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>1927-1990, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Number</td>
<td>MS-740</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repository</td>
<td>The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Soloff, Mordecai, 1901-1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>16.4 linear feet (41 Hollinger boxes)</td>
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<td>Language of the Material</td>
<td>English</td>
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**Administrative Information**

**Biographical Sketch**

Mordecai Soloff was born in Russia July 2, 1901. In 1910 his parents and family moved to the United States. In 1920 he received a diploma from the Jewish Theological Seminary's Teacher's Institute. He taught Hebrew for three years before becoming principal of Chazuk Amuno in 1923-1937. In 1923 he received his BS from City College in New York and then received his MA from Teacher's College of Columbia in 1927. He was active with the Jewish Board of Education in various countries from the mid 1920s through the late 1930s. In 1940 he was ordained as a rabbi at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and also received his MHL. Soloff served in several congregations in New York and California and late in life was a guest rabbi in Australia in 1983-1984. He spent much of his rabbinic career at Temple Israel of Westchester in Los Angeles, California.

During his many years of service and study he prepared a series of textbooks in the field of Jewish history published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and widely used throughout the country in Reform, Conservative and Orthodox religious schools. He is also the author of Jewish Life and Our Prayerbook for the teaching of Hebrew combined with customs and ceremonies. He has written many articles published in journals and the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia. Soloff also wrote How the Jewish People Live and How the Jewish People Grew Up.


**Scope and Content**

This collection contains the letters, notes, writings and sermons of Mordecai Soloff.

**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into four (4) series: A. Correspondence; B. Writings and Notes; C. Sermons; D. Personal and Miscellaneous.

**Terms of Access**

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

**Preferred Citation**

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

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-740. Mordecai Soloff Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Provenance**

Received from HUC-JIR, Los Angeles, Calif., 1994.

**Processing Information**


**Index Terms**

**Subjects**

Jewish education / Rabbis

**Personal Names**

Soloff, Mordecai, 1901-1992

**Media**

Photographs / Sermons

**Series A. Correspondence, 1927-1986**

**Extent**

3 linear feet (7.5 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note**

The bulk of the series consists of family correspondence, especially with Soloff’s son, Rav.
These letters cover the years of 1945-1985, including Rav’s transition into a rabbi. Rav was also very involved with educational initiatives so the father and son conversed on various educational projects often. There are also letters from Soloff’s father, Louis that are rather interesting in helping to understand the Soloff family dynamics.

**Arrangement**

The series is arranged alphabetically.

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box 1. Folder 1. A, general.
Box 1. Folder 2. Australian correspondence, 1982-1983
Box 1. Folder 3. Australian correspondence, 1983-1984
Box 1. Folder 4. Australian correspondence, 1984
Box 1. Folder 5. B, general.
Box 1. Folder 6. Book sources and suggestions, 1931-1940
Box 1. Folder 7. Books, 1930-1941
Box 1. Folder 9. Brower, Steven, 1976
Box 1. Folder 11. C, general.
Box 1. Folder 12. Central Synagogue, 1944-1945
Box 1. Folder 13. Chaplaincy, 1942
Box 1. Folder 14. Columbia Teachers College, 1927-1928, 1936
Box 1. Folder 15. Cumberland, Maryland, 1948
Box 1. Folder 17. Danville, Virginia, 1945-1946
Box 1. Folder 18. E, general.
Box 1. Folder 19. Essex, Maryland, 1950-1953
Box 1. Folder 20. F, general, 1934-1986
Box 1. Folder 22. G, general.
Box 2. Folder 1. Gamoran, Emmanuel, 1934-1952
Box 2. Folder 2. General Tours, 1983-1985
Box 2. Folder 8. Hebrew Union College graduation, 1940
Box 2. Folder 10. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Honorary degree
[photographs], 1965
Box 2. Folder 11. How the Jewish People Live Today correspondence, 1969
Box 2. Folder 12. How the Jewish People Live Today revision letters, 1948
Box 2. Folder 13. I-J, general.
Box 2. Folder 14. Jacobs, Maurice, 1947-1959
Box 2. Folder 15. Jewish war veterans, 1962
Box 2. Folder 17. K, general.
Box 3. Folder 1. L, general.
Box 3. Folder 2. Landau, Jacob, 1963
Box 3. Folder 3. Leventhal, Will, 1985
Box 3. Folder 4. Israel trip, 1967
Box 3. Folder 5. M, general.
Box 3. Folder 7. Marcus, Jacob Rader, 1949-1956
Box 3. Folder 10. Morganstern, Julian, 1944-1947
Box 3. Folder 13. Personal correspondence and awards, 1930-1986
Box 3. Folder 15. Pomerantz, 1984-1986
Box 3. Folder 16. Pomona, Calif. Temple Beth Israel, 1976
Box 3. Folder 17. Primary holidays, 1957-1958
Box 4. Folder 3. Resignation comments, 1952
Box 4. Folder 4. Retirement, 1973
Box 4. Folder 7. Soloff, Asher, 1942-1945
Box 5. Folder 2. Soloff, Lillian and Ruby, 1975-1978
Series B. Writings and Notes, undated

Extent 2.2 linear feet (5.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note The series displays the full breadth of Soloff's work. In reading his notes on various topics you can gain a sense of his workflow methodology and the issues that interested him the most. He was very interested in the philosophies behind teaching methodologies.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 8. Folder 7. Aging and Judaism.
Box 8. Folder 8. Amos notes.
Box 10. Folder 1. Education in Ancient Israel, 1938
Box 10. Folder 2. Hasidism in Psalms, 1940
Box 10. Folder 3. Hasidism notes.
Box 10. Folder 4. Hebrew Union College. Introduction to Jewish Education, 1931
Box 10. Folder 5. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Funding Jewish Education, 1953
Box 10. Folder 10. Isaiah.
Box 10. Folder 11. Israel trip, 1974
Box 10. Folder 15. Jewish education in Rhode Island, 1936
Box 11. Folder 1. Jewish Life under the Hasmoneans film, 1971
Box 11. Folder 2. Jewish philosophy.
Box 11. Folder 3. Jewish Vocational Education in Palestine.
Box 11. Folder 5. Job.
Box 11. Folder 7. Loyalty oaths.
Box 12. Folder 2. Philosophy of Jewish Education.
Box 12. Folder 5. Pre-consecration service, 1943
Box 12. Folder 7. The prophets.
Box 13. Folder 1. Religion.
Box 13. Folder 2. Report on religious school. Milwaukee, 1941-1942
Box 13. Folder 4. Teaching religion techniques.
Box 13. Folder 6. Teaching Bible.
Box 13. Folder 8. Theology class.

**Series C. Sermons, undated**

**Extent** 6 linear feet (15 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Sermons are divided by occasion, and then a subseries follows of general topics of holidays and events.

**Arrangement** The series is divided into two (2) subseries: 1. Life Cycle Events; 2. General.

**Subseries 1. Life Cycle Events, 1943-1990**

**Extent** 1.6 linear feet (4 Hollinger boxes)

**Arrangement** The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box 14. Folder 2. Circumcisions.
Box 14. Folder 5. Funerals, 1943-1953
Box 15. Folder 1. Funerals, 1959-1961
Box 15. Folder 2. Funerals, 1962-1964
Box 16. Folder 3. Funerals, 1980s
Subseries 2. General, undated

Extent 8.4 linear feet (21 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note These are almost all handwritten on the back of scrap paper with many corrections and additions which disclose his thought process. Much of the subseries is divided by Torah portion.

Arrangement The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 18. Folder 3. Acharey Mot.
Box 18. Folder 4. Adult Education Interfaith.
Box 18. Folder 5. American Jewish Conference.
Box 18. Folder 7. Anti-Semitism.
Box 18. Folder 8. Aykev.
Box 20. Folder 1. Brotherhoods.
Box 20. Folder 2. Building fund.
Box 20. Folder 5. Chanuka.
Box 20. Folder 8. Chukat.
Box 20. Folder 9. Church and state.
Box 21. Folder 2. College students and religion, 1965
Box 21. Folder 5. Confirmation services.
Box 21. Folder 7. Confirmation services, 1944-1948
Box 22. Folder 1. D'verim.
Box 22. Folder 2. Death.
Box 22. Folder 3. Democracy.
Box 22. Folder 4. The Deputy, 1964
Box 22. Folder 6. Election day.
Box 22. Folder 7. Emor.
Box 22. Folder 8. Ethics.
Box 22. Folder 10. Graduation.
Box 22. Folder 13. Hadassah.
Box 23. Folder 1. Havdala.
Box 23. Folder 2. Holiday broadcasts.
Box 23. Folder 3. Honors Sabbath.
Box 23. Folder 4. Installation ceremonies.
Box 23. Folder 5. Installations and benedictions.
Box 24. Folder 1. Israel.
Box 24. Folder 2. Israel and Zionism.
Box 24. Folder 3. Israel and Zionism.
Box 24. Folder 5. Jewish beliefs.
Box 25. Folder 1. Jewish education.
Box 25. Folder 2. Jewish family.
Box 25. Folder 3. Jewish history.
Box 25. Folder 4. Jewish survival.
Box 25. Folder 5. Jewish social studies.
Box 25. Folder 7. Judaism.
Box 25. Folder 8. K'doshim.
Box 25. Folder 10. Ki Siso.
Box 26. Folder 2. Lag B'Omer.
Box 27. Folder 1. Miscellaneous.
Box 27. Folder 2. Miscellaneous.
Box 27. Folder 3. Mishpatim.
Box 27. Folder 4. Morality.
Box 27. Folder 5. Naso.
Box 27. Folder 6. Navy Day, 1948
Box 27. Folder 7. Nitsovim.
Box 27. Folder 8. Noach.
Box 28. Folder 1. Pesach.
Box 28. Folder 2. Pesach family services.
Box 28. Folder 5. P’ kudei.
Box 28. Folder 6. Pearl Harbor, 1943, undated
Box 29. Folder 1. R'ei.
Box 29. Folder 2. Race relations.
Box 29. Folder 3. Rosh Hashanah.
Box 29. Folder 4. Rosh Hashanah.
Box 29. Folder 5. Rosh Hashanah.
Box 29. Folder 6. Rosh Hashanah.
Box 29. Folder 7. Russian Jewry.
Box 30. Folder 1. S'fira.
Box 30. Folder 2. Scouting.
Box 30. Folder 3. Sh'lach L'cha.
Box 30. Folder 4. Sh'mini.
Box 30. Folder 5. Sh'mot.
Box 30. Folder 7. Shabbat.
Box 30. Folder 8. Shabbos.
Box 30. Folder 10. Shabbos Zohar.
Box 30. Folder 11. Shalom.
Box 31. Folder 1. Shavuot.
Box 31. Folder 2. Shavuot.
Box 31. Folder 3. Shoftim.
Box 31. Folder 4. Siddur.
Box 31. Folder 7. Synagogue.
Box 31. Folder 8. Synagogue.
Box 32. Folder 1. Tazria.
Box 32. Folder 2. Teachers.
Box 32. Folder 3. Teachers.
Box 32. Folder 4. Teachers and school staff Sabbath.
Box 33. Folder 1. Television sermons.
Box 33. Folder 2. Three-hundred years of Jewish history.
Box 33. Folder 3. Three-hundreth sermons.
Box 33. Folder 4. Thanksgiving.
Box 33. Folder 5. Tisha b'Av.
Box 33. Folder 6. Tisha b'Av.
Box 33. Folder 7. Tol'dot.
Box 34. Folder 1. Tr'uma.
Box 34. Folder 2. T'sav.
Box 34. Folder 3. T-tsave.
Box 34. Folder 4. Tu Bi-sh'vat.
Box 34. Folder 5. Tu Bi-sh'vat.
Box 34. Folder 6. Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1929-1934
Box 34. Folder 7. Union of American Hebrew Congregations [photographs], 1964-1965
Box 34. Folder 8. United Jewish Appeal.
Box 34. Folder 9. Unveilings.
Box 34. Folder 10. Unveilings.
Box 35. Folder 1. Va-ayra.
Box 35. Folder 2. Va-etchanan.
Box 35. Folder 3. Va-yayra.
Box 35. Folder 4. Va-Yakhel.
Box 35. Folder 5. Va-yaytsay.
Box 35. Folder 6. Va-y'chi.
Box 35. Folder 7. Va-yeshev.
Box 35. Folder 8. Va-yigash.
Box 35. Folder 9. Va-yikro.
Box 36. Folder 1. Va-yishlach.
Box 36. Folder 2. Victory services.
Box 36. Folder 3. Wallenberg, Raul.
Box 36. Folder 5. Women's festivals.
Box 36. Folder 7. Yizkor.
Box 36. Folder 8. Yizkor.
Box 37. Folder 1. Yom Ha-atsmat.
Box 37. Folder 2. Yom Ha-shoah.
Box 37. Folder 3. Yom Kippur.
Box 37. Folder 4. Yom Kippur eve.
Box 38. Folder 1. Yom Kippur morning.
Box 38. Folder 2. Yom Kippur morning.
Box 38. Folder 2. Yom Y'sushalayim.
Box 38. Folder 3. Youth symposiums.
Box 38. Folder 4. Youths.
Box 38. Folder 5. Youths.

Series D. Personal and Miscellaneous, 1947-1986, undated
Extent  1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note  Also very intriguing in Soloff's papers are his diaries. He has diaries from his time in Israel in 1967 and other important times are crucial for understanding American rabbinic thought during the formation of Israel.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 39. Folder 2. Truman, Harry [photograph], 1947
Box 39. Folder 5. Photographs.
Box 40. Folder Photographs and audiocassettes.
Box 41. Folder 1. Biography.
Box 41. Folder 2. Certificates.
Box 41. Folder 3. Diaries. Israel, 1958
Box 41. Folder 4. Diaries. Israel, 1967
Box 41. Folder 5. Diary, 1970
Box 41. Folder 6. Diary, 1986
Box 41. Folder 7. Eightieth birthday photographs.
Box 41. Folder 8. Israel property.
Box 41. Folder 9. Israel tour.
Box 41. Folder 10. Palestine trip games.
Box 41. Folder 11. Passports.
Box 41. Folder 13. Will.