



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

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**A Finding Aid to the  
Temple B'nai Abraham (Newark, N.J.) Records  
Manuscript Collection No. 742**

## Collection Summary

<b>Title</b>	Temple B'nai Abraham (Newark, N.J.) Records
<b>Dates</b>	1924-1975
<b>Collection Number</b>	MS-742
<b>Repository</b>	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Temple B'nai Abraham (Newark, N.J.)
<b>Extent</b>	0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)
<b>Language of the Material</b>	English

## Administrative Information

**Biographical Sketch** Temple B'nai Abraham began life as Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in 1848. (Why this is not considered their birth year would be good cause for speculation. One hundred years later, the temple was variously referred to, in writing, as both Temple B'nai Abraham and Congregation B'nai Abraham, another reason for puzzlement.) Members hired their first rabbi in 1861, Reverend Edward Rubin. In October of that same year, the congregation's first building, a former Baptist church in downtown Newark, was dedicated.

By 1870 the congregation had built their first temple. Their rabbi at this time, Isidor Kalisch, is recognized as one of a group of men responsible for defining and practicing American Reform Judaism. Kalisch's tenure was, however, short-lived, his views and practices not in conformance with the congregation's more orthodox customs. Countless moves and rabbis later, congregants at last took ownership, in 1897, of a building that could seat nine hundred for the High Holidays. In 1902, Julius Silberfeld assumed the pulpit.

Rabbi Silberfeld oversaw the building of yet another temple in 1924. Newark had, by this time, grown into a prosperous community, and the congregation was in the uncomfortable position of having to turn away membership applicants. The new temple was not only much larger, it was part of a campus which included a community center, built for Jewish families and, especially, Jewish children and teenagers.

When the time arrived for new religious leadership, the temple's members showed the kind of vision that had been so lacking in earlier years. Only two years in the United States, Joachim Prinz became Temple B'nai Abraham's rabbi in 1939. Why the congregation hired a Reform rabbi is another cause for speculation (Silberfeld was not Reform); it is likely that Rabbi Prinz's reputation as a thought-provoking speaker and social activist had preceded him. The congregation soon learned that Prinz's sermons were worth anticipating. Coupled as they were with the operatic tenor of Cantor Abraham Shapiro, Friday night services inspired renewed interest on the part of members and non-members alike.

The now-wealthy congregation was able to devote its energy, under Prinz's able guidance, to new programs and projects. At the same time, it had to share the blessing of its rabbi's dedication with communities across the nation and around the globe. Initially outspoken in his vehement opposition to Hitler's Third Reich, Prinz became involved in subsequent years with immigrant rights, labor rights, and civil rights. It was while Rabbi Prinz served B'nai Abraham that it moved yet again, this time to Livingston, New Jersey.

**Scope and Content** The collection consists of bound copies of temple newsletters and programs for special events.

**Arrangement** The collection is divided into two (2) series: A. Temple Newsletters; B. Programs for Special Events.

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

**Preferred Citation** Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Temple B'nai Abraham (Newark, N.J.) Records and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:  
[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-742. Temple B'nai Abraham (Newark, N.J.) Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Provenance** Received from Clifford Kulwin, Newark, N.J., 2004.

**Processing Information** Processed by Vicki Lipski, May 2007.

## Index Terms

**Subjects** Jews -- New Jersey -- Newark / Rabbis / Synagogues -- New Jersey -- Newark  
**Personal Names** Prinz, Joachim, 1902-1988  
**Corporate Names** Temple B'nai Abraham (Newark, N.J.)

### **Series A. Temple Newsletters, 1942-1975**

**Extent** 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

#### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 1. Folder 1. Bulletin of Temple B'nai Abraham, 1942-1944  
Box 1. Folder 2. Temple B'nai Abraham News, 1954-1960  
Box 1. Folder 3. Bulletin of Temple B'nai Abraham, 1960-1962  
Box 1. Folder 4. Bulletin of Temple B'nai Abraham, 1971-1973  
Box 1. Folder 5. Bulletin of Temple B'nai Abraham, 1974-1975  
Box 2. Folder 1. Temple B'nai Abraham News, 1947-1950

### **Series B. Programs for Special Events, 1924, 1935, 1938**

**Extent** 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

#### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 2. Folder 2. Temple dedication, 1924 September 21-27  
Box 2. Folder 3. 85th anniversary celebration, 1938 November 18  
Box 2. Folder 4. 20th anniversary of Dr. Joachim Prinz as rabbi of Temple B'nai Abraham. Eightieth birthday of Congregation B'nai Abraham. Tenth new building anniversary, 1935 March 29-31