



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

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**A Finding Aid to the  
Abraham Zygielbaum Papers  
Manuscript Collection No. 768**

## Collection Summary

<b>Title</b>	Abraham Zygielbaum Papers
<b>Dates</b>	1919-1986
<b>Collection Number</b>	MS-768
<b>Repository</b>	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Zygielbaum, Abraham, 1912-1989
<b>Extent</b>	3.2 linear feet (8 Hollinger boxes)
<b>Language of the Material</b>	English, Polish, and Yiddish

## Administrative Information

**Biographical Sketch** Abraham Zygielbaum (1914-1989) was born in Poland, where he attended a Jewish Secular Grammar School in Chelm Lubelski. He also attended a Yeshiva in Warsaw. After the Holocaust, but before emigrating to the United States, Zygielbaum acted as the director of Jewish Schools and Theater at the Freed Camps in Germany. On his vita, he describes his areas of interest as Holocaust literature, drama, talmudic lore, folklore, and Hebrew and Yiddish literature.

Zygielbaum pursued his higher education after arriving in the States. He obtained a bachelor's degree from Jewish Theological Seminary, a master's degree from Hebrew Union College (HUC), and his Ph.D. from HUC. He also studied at the University of Judaism, and University of California-Los Angeles. Somehow, Zygielbaum managed to continue pursuing all of his "areas of interest" throughout his life. As can be seen from his many teaching and speaking engagements, he loved sharing his knowledge of Eastern European Jewish life with any and all audiences. Students at HUC likewise benefited from his gift for presentation. His talent in making this bygone way of life come alive for his classes can be appreciated best by reading his correspondence. Excerpts taken from letters written by grateful listeners to his inspirational storytelling and style of teaching follow:

"You are now a part of my history - a very special, gentle part. I won't forget you. Your class was very moving for me ... May God keep you as beautiful as you are - Love from your Christian friend ... "

"There are few words which can express how beautiful and meaningful was your participation in our conference on The Shtetl [here] in Oakland. You transmitted a spirit and life such as our kids have never felt. Indeed, I hope you gained a little for you gave so much truly - by being so wonderful and taking a little time to be with us and share a spirit that so few have."

"I loved your class - as you sparked life in a vital part of our Jewish soul - Thank you so much for sharing a part of your soul with us - I loved seeing or catching a glimpse of your wisdom through your soft, knowing eyes - I know I'll see you again - It's always such a joy."

Plainly here was a teacher who had his students reaching for superlatives.

Abraham Zygielbaum was married to Tema. He died in 1989 of unknown causes.

**Scope and Content** Consists of documents written in English, Yiddish, and Polish. Certainly the motif of his papers would be Zygielbaum's deep love of the east European shtetl coupled with the way of life described as yiddishkeit. His desire to share what he knew about that way of life through performance art imbued everything he did. The impression derived from his papers is that his higher education served merely as a means toward that all-important end. As an interesting aside, eighteen different ways of spelling "Zygielbaum" were encountered while processing the collection.

**Arrangement** The collection has been arranged into three (3) series: A. Correspondence; B. Subject Files; C. Audio Tapes.

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

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

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-768. Abraham Zygielbaum Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Provenance** Received from the Frances Henry Library, Los Angeles, Calif., 28 November 1990.

**Processing Information** Processed by Vicki Lipski, March 2009.

## Index Terms

**Subjects** Holocaust survivors / Theater, Yiddish / Yiddish actors / Yiddish language / Yiddish poetry  
**Personal Names** Zygielbaum, Abraham, 1912-1989 / Zygielbaum, Arthur  
**Corporate Names** Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring / Yiddish Culture Club (Los Angeles, Calif.) / Yivo Institute for Jewish Research

## Series A. Correspondence, 1900-1986

**Extent** 0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Consists of letters written in English, Polish, and Yiddish. The bulk of the English correspondence has to do with presentation dates, thank you's for presentations, and professional correspondence having to do with his tenure at HUC in Los Angeles.

**Arrangement** The series is arranged chronologically.

## Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence [English], 1960s  
Box 1. Folder 2. Correspondence [English], 1970-1973  
Box 1. Folder 3. Correspondence [English], 1974-1975  
Box 1. Folder 4. Correspondence [English], 1976-1977 June  
Box 1. Folder 5. Correspondence [English], 1977 July-1979  
Box 1. Folder 6. Correspondence [English], 1980-1981  
Box 1. Folder 7. Correspondence [English], 1982-1986  
Box 1. Folder 8. Correspondence [English], undated  
Box 1. Folder 9. Wanland, Donna, 1972, 1981, undated  
Box 2. Folder 1. Correspondence [Polish], 1953-1966, undated  
Box 2. Folder 2. Correspondence [Yiddish], 1940s, 1950s  
Box 2. Folder 3. Correspondence [Yiddish], 1960-1961  
Box 2. Folder 4. Correspondence [Yiddish], 1962  
Box 2. Folder 5. Correspondence [Yiddish], 1963  
Box 2. Folder 6. Correspondence [Yiddish], 1964-1965  
Box 2. Folder 7. Correspondence [Yiddish], 1966  
Box 2. Folder 8. Correspondence [Yiddish], 1967-1968  
Box 2. Folder 9. Correspondence [Yiddish], 1970s, 1985  
Box 2. Folder 10. Correspondence of unknown origin [Yiddish, translated into English], 1900, 1901  
Box 2. Folder 11. Correspondence [Yiddish], undated  
Box 2. Folder 12. Correspondence [Yiddish], undated  
Box 2. Folder 13. Shore, William [Yiddish], 1972-1982

## Series B. Subject Files, 1919-1984

**Extent** 2.4 linear feet (6 Hollinger boxes)

**Scope and Content Note** Subjects of particular interest or relevance in the collection include Affiliations, Hillel, HUC/LA, Music, Pedagogical Materials, Speaking Engagements, Teaching Engagements, Workmen's Circle, and Arthur Zygielbaum. This last subject is of special note. Arthur Zygielbaum was one of Abraham's nine brothers and sisters. He endured the horror of the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. This, along with his despair regarding the fates of his siblings, and his disbelief at the world's seeming disregard for the Jews of Warsaw, caused him to take his own life in 1943. Arthur Zygielbaum was instantly declared a martyr of the Holocaust, and is, to this day, an object of international reverence.

**Arrangement** The series is arranged alphabetically.

### Box and Folder Listing

- Box 3. Folder 1. Activism, Jewish, 1970
- Box 3. Folder 2. Activism, Student Jewish, 1965-1970
- Box 3. Folder 3. Affiliations. A-K [English and Yiddish], 1958-1973
- Box 3. Folder 4. Affiliations. L-Z [English and Yiddish], 1951-1973
- Box 3. Folder 5. Anniversaries, 24th, 25th, and 29th, of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and/or the Holocaust [English and Yiddish].
- Box 3. Folder 6. Anniversaries, 30th, 33rd, and 34th, of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and/or the Holocaust [English and Yiddish].
- Box 3. Folder 7. Arab propaganda, 1966-1972
- Box 3. Folder 8. Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists, 1968-1973
- Box 3. Folder 9. Camps, Jewish Children's, 1969-1975, undated
- Box 3. Folder 10. Certificates [English, Yiddish], 1964, 1983, undated
- Box 3. Folder 11. Congress of American Jews from Poland [English and Yiddish], 1975-1976
- Box 3. Folder 12. Conventions [English and Yiddish], 1976, 1979
- Box 3. Folder 13. Drawings.
- Box 4. Folder 1. Family history [Yiddish, Polish], 1919, 1945
- Box 4. Folder 2. Hillel-UCLA, 1964-1967
- Box 4. Folder 3. Hillel-UCLA/UC-Berkeley, 1968
- Box 4. Folder 4. Hillel-UCLA/UC-Berkeley, 1969
- Box 4. Folder 5. Hillel-UCLA/UC-Berkeley, 1970-1974
- Box 5. Folder 1. HUC, Los Angeles, 1961-1969
- Box 5. Folder 2. HUC, Los Angeles, 1970
- Box 5. Folder 3. HUC, Los Angeles, 1971-1977
- Box 5. Folder 4. HUC, Los Angeles. Rhea Hirsch School of Education, 1969-1972
- Box 5. Folder 5. Jewish Free University, 1969
- Box 5. Folder 6. Jewish State Theatre of Rumania [English and Yiddish], 1972, undated
- Box 5. Folder 7. Jewish survivors of concentration camps, 1949, 1952
- Box 5. Folder 8. Jews in Eastern Europe, 1969

Box 5. Folder 9. Jews in Western Europe, 1975

Box 5. Folder 10. Library Light, 1972

Box 5. Folder 11. Library, Samuel J. Borowsky.

Box 6. Folder 1. Music. Scores and lyrics [English, Yiddish, transliterated Yiddish], 1944, 1968, undated

Box 6. Folder 2. Notebooks [English, Yiddish].

Box 6. Folder 3. Notebooks [English, Yiddish].

Box 6. Folder 4. Notes [English, Yiddish].

Box 6. Folder 5. The Pharisees and Sadducees. Paper by Zygielbaum while student at HUC, 1963

Box 6. Folder 6. Pedagogical materials. Adult Ed. Midrash, 1968, undated

Box 6. Folder 7. Pedagogical materials. Children's education [Yiddish], undated

Box 6. Folder 8. Pedagogical materials. Children's education. Holidays [English and Yiddish], 1975, undated

Box 7. Folder 1. Photographs [labeled in Yiddish].

Box 7. Folder 2. Poetry, 1979, 1984, undated

Box 7. Folder 3. Poetry [Yiddish], 1979, undated

Box 7. Folder 4. Postcards [Yiddish], undated

Box 7. Folder 5. Poster of Nelson Glueck, undated

Box 7. Folder 6. Radio Broadcast, Eternal Light, 1945, 1948, 1949

Box 7. Folder 6. World Over Playhouse. WNBC.

Box 7. Folder 7. Soviet Jewry, 1965, 1975, undated

Box 7. Folder 8. Speaking engagements, 1960, 1967, 1971-1982

Box 7. Folder 9. Stephen S. Wise Temple (Los Angeles, Calif.), 1973

Box 7. Folder 10. Teaching engagements, 1966-1982

Box 7. Folder 11. Teaching Yiddish. World Council for Yiddish and Jewish Culture, 1980

Box 7. Folder 12. Temple Beth Hillel (North Hollywood, Calif.), 1966-1969, 1980

Box 7. Folder 13. Temple, Early [English, Yiddish], undated

Box 7. Folder 14. Temple Judea, 1979, undated

Box 7. Folder 15. Temple Sinai, 1972

Box 7. Folder 16. University of Judaism, 1961-1965

Box 7. Folder 17. University Synagogue, 1968

Box 7. Folder 18. Valley Cities Jewish Community Center, 1963

Box 7. Folder 19. Vita, 1970

Box 8. Folder 1. Westward from Skopishok. Compiled by Lennard Thal.

Box 8. Folder 2. Workmen's Circle [English, Yiddish], undated, 1947-1954

Box 8. Folder 3. Workmen's Circle [English, Yiddish], 1955-1968, 1976

Box 8. Folder 4. Writings in Yiddish, 1967, undated

Box 8. Folder 5. Yiddish organizations [Yiddish], undated

Box 8. Folder 6. Yiddish Stories from A to Z. By Abraham Zygielbaum [English and Yiddish], undated

Box 8. Folder 7. YIVO (Ateneo Literario en el IWO), 1965-1984

Box 8. Folder 8. Zygielbaum, Abraham, 1947, 1956, 1957

Box 8. Folder 9. Zygielbaum, Arthur [English, Yiddish].

Box 8. Folder 10. Zygielbaum, Tema, 1958, undated

Box 8. Folder 11. Zygelboim genealogy, 1961

### **Series C. Audio Tapes, 1967-1973**

**Scope and Content Note** There is one audiocassette and two reel-to-reel tapes in this small series. The audiocassette is a recording of a presentation made by Zygielbaum at the Skirball Museum in Los Angeles in 1973.

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

Item C-4563. An Afternoon of Yiddish Folklore. Skirball Museum, 1976 May 6

Item TR-3738. Camp Swig (Saratoga, Calif.), 1969 Summer

Item TR-3739. Interview with Pauline Rose, 1967