



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Women of Reform Judaism (District 20)
Records**

Manuscript Collection No. 769

Collection Summary

Title	Women of Reform Judaism (District 20) Records
Dates	1922-2008
Collection Number	MS-769
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Women of Reform Judaism (U.S.). District 20
Extent	9 linear feet (15 Hollinger boxes, 3 oversize boxes)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch The "Women of Reform Judaism" organization was first known as the "National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods" (NFTS). It was under this guise that District 20 was first formed in 1922, by women from Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri. Its purpose, as stated by the organization's first president, was to actively promote "attendance at Divine Services, and the necessity of overcoming apathy toward the ideals of Judaism."

By 1951, the states of Colorado, Kansas and New Mexico had joined District 20. It is deserving of mention that Nelson Glueck was the keynote speaker at the 1951 Biennial Convention in St. Joseph, Missouri. Conventions were valuable in that they allowed members to share ideas, and provided the opportunity for them to worship together as Jews. In 1968, 26 Sisterhoods belonged to District 20.

Connie Kreshtool, of NFTS Headquarters, spoke at the District 20 convention in 1980. Her speech certainly began auspiciously, with the words, "These are the happiest times in our Sisterhood and in our community." Volunteerism was discussed at this same meeting, with the realistic observation that volunteers had become harder to come by with more women joining the work force. Another speaker, Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, addressed the subject of women entering the political arena.

Staying aware and staying involved - Jewishly, politically, and socially - were constants of NFTS conventions. The Diamond Jubilee celebration in 1987 featured workshops, speakers, and services, with a focus on religious freedom. Based upon suggestions gathered at the previous Biennial, the 1996 convention offered more discussion about Sisterhood, and additional time for learning about the various Sisterhoods in the district. Declining membership was a serious issue, and by the 2006 Convention, it had become the top priority. Despite a number of good ideas for retaining and growing membership, it continued to decline, and by 2008, District 20 had disbanded, various member states merging with other districts.

Scope and Content Consists of convention scrapbooks, scrapbooks of newspaper articles, convention-planning documents, bulletins, correspondence, publicity, photographs, notebooks containing meeting minutes, WRJ publications, videos and CDs.

Arrangement The collection has been arranged into five (5) series: A. District History and Conventions; B. Publications; C. Awards; D. Miscellaneous; E. Audiovisual.

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

Preferred Citation Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Women of Reform Judaism (District 20) Records and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:
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Index Terms

Subjects	Jewish women / Literature
Corporate Names	National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods / Women of Reform Judaism (U.S.). District 20

Series A. District History and Conventions, 1922-2008

Extent 6.6 linear feet (9 Hollinger boxes, 3 oversize boxes)

Scope and Content Note Scrapbooks and notebooks constitute a good portion of the series. The two unfolded notebooks in Box 1 tell of NFTS's beginnings, as does the Historian's Scrapbook in Box 2, and are an excellent source of historical information.

Arrangement The series is arranged chronologically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Disposition of records, 1989-2008

Box 1. Folder 2. National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, District 20. Convention minutes [includes constitution and minutes of first organization meeting], 1922-1941

Box 1. Folder 3. National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, District 20. Executive Board meeting minutes and convention minutes [includes presidential addresses and correspondence], 1922-1945

Box 1. Folder 4. National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. Presidents' messages and miscellaneous, 1949-1987

Box 1. Folder 5. National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. Presidents' messages and miscellaneous, 1949-1987

Box 2. Folder 1. Historian's scrapbook [includes information sheet regarding conventions 1 - 29, 1922-1972; by-laws, historian reports, convention documentation, narrative history of district, service to the blind, list of presidents], 1941-1974

Box 3. Folder 1. Notebook. Meeting minutes, committee report, 1945-1949

Box 3. Folder 2. Notebook. Convention. Omaha, 1955

Box 3. Folder 3. Notebook. Conventions, 1970, 1972, 1974

Box 4. Folder 1. Notebook. Conventions, 1976, 1978

Box 4. Folder 2. Notebook. Conventions, 1980, 1982, 1984

Box 4. Folder 3. Biennial conventions. Taken from notebook divided into sections, 1984-1988

Box 4. Folder 4. Biennial conventions. Taken from notebook divided into sections, 1984-1988

Box 5. Folder 1. Scrapbook pages. Biennial convention. Chicago, 1987

Box 5. Folder 2. Executive Board minutes, 1987-2003

Box 5. Folder 3. Biennial convention, 1992

Box 5. Folder 4. Biennial convention, 1994

Box 5. Folder 5. Interim Board meeting (St. Joseph, Mo.) [includes photographs], 1995

Box 5. Folder 6. Convention. Denver, 1996

Box 5. Folder 7. Biennial convention (Overland Park, Kan.), 2003

Box 5. Folder 8. Membership campaign. Leadership Development. Intentional Listening. Shabbat services, 2006

Box 6. Folder 1. Scrapbook, 1990-1998

Box 7. Folder 1. Annual reports by officers, 1990-1996, 2003

Box 7. Folder 2. Biennial board meetings. Publicity, agendas, etc., 1995-2001
Box 7. Folder 3. Bylaws, 1976-2000
Box 7. Folder 4. Procedure manual, 1983, 1986
Box 8. Folder 1. Scrapbook, 1998-2003
Box 9. Folder 1. Scrapbook, 2003-2005
Box 9. Folder 2. Convention. Denver, 2006
Box X-539. Folder Scrapbook, 1968-1970
Box X-539. Folder Scrapbook, 1973-1984
Box X-539. Folder Scrapbook, 2005-2007
Box X-539. Folder Scrapbook, undated, 1988-1990
Box X-540. Folder Scrapbook, 1960-1968
Box X-540. Folder Scrapbook, 1963-1966
Box X-540. Folder Notebook. Minutes, programs, pictures, conventions, 1951-1966
Box X-541. Folder Scrapbook, 1968-1970
Box X-541. Folder Scrapbook, 1959, 1960, 1947, 1951, undated
Box X-541. Folder Programs, 1965-1971, 1982 -1988
Box X-541. Folder District 20 scrapbook, 1956-1960
Box X-541. Folder District 20 scrapbook. Conventions, 1970-2006

Series B. Publications, 1981-2006

Extent 1.6 linear feet (4 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note The majority of the items in this series were published by Women of Reform Judaism.

Arrangement This series is divided into two (2) subseries: 1. By Subject; 2. By Publication.

Subseries 1. By Subject, 1985-2006

Scope and Content Note Contains material having to do with women's and children's issues. A way in which to address these issues is summed up in the contents of folder 5, concerning the creation of a Critical Issues Task Force.

Arrangement The subseries is arranged by subject matter.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 10. Folder 1. Beginning the Journey: A Women's Commentary on Torah, 1985
Box 10. Folder 1. The Torah: A Women's Commentary, 2006
Box 10. Folder 1. Finding Our Way: The Study and Resource Guide for Beginning The Journey Toward a Women's Commentary on Torah, undated
Box 10. Folder 2. Spousal Abuse in Rabbinic and Contemporary Judaism by Rabbi Julie Ringold Spitzer, 1985
Box 10. Folder 2. When Love is Not Enough: Spousal Abuse in Rabbinic and Contemporary Judaism by Rabbi Julie Ringold Spitzer, 1995

Box 10. Folder 3. The Mitzvah of Membership: A Guide to Successful Membership Campaigns. Includes Ice Breakers: An Addendum to The Mitzvah of Membership, and More About The Mitzvah of Membership: An Addendum for a Successful Membership Campaign, 1998

Box 10. Folder 4. Write the Vision: Creating Communities of Shalom for All Children. Children's Defense Fund, 2001

Box 10. Folder 4. 2001 Children in the States. Children's Defense Fund, 2001

Box 10. Folder 4. Hold My Hand: Prayers for Building a Movement to Leave No Child Behind by Marian Wright Edelman, 2001

Box 10. Folder 4. Background Materials on Key Sections of The Act to Leave No Child Behind by Senator Christopher Dodd and Rep. George Miller, 2001

Box 10. Folder 4. 2001 The State of America's Children. Children's Defense Fund, 2001

Box 10. Folder 5. To Do Justly: Creating a Critical Issues Task Force, 1999

Subseries 2. By Publication, 1981-2005

Extent 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note The publications treat issues individually, and include the subject of religious study and worship.

Arrangement The subseries is arranged chronologically by publication date.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 11. Folder 1. Hunger: At Home and Abroad. A Guide to Jewish Study and Action. Comes with instruction manual by Marjorie Yudkin, 1981

Box 11. Folder 2. From Tzedek to Tzedakah: Economic and Social Issues of Concern for Women and Children by Rabbi Marla J. Feldman, 1985

Box 11. Folder 3. Let's Talk Shop: Your Sisterhood Judaica Shop, 1986

Box 11. Folder 4. Wisdom You Are My Sister: 25 Years of Women in the Rabbinat. CCAR Journal, 1997 Summer

Box 11. Folder 5. Covenant of the Soul: News Prayers, Poems and Meditations from the Women of Reform Judaism, 2000

Box 11. Folder 6. Come Into God's Presence with Singing! Worship Music Guidelines for Small Congregations., 2001

Box 11. Folder 7. Parashat HaShavua: The Weekly Torah Portion. Parashat Vayeira. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Study Guide, 2005

Box 11. Folder 8. Stop the Violence!, undated

Box 11. Folder 9. Litapayach Tikvah To Nourish Hope. Eating Disorders: Perceptions and Perspectives in Jewish Life Today, undated

Box 11. Folder 10. Women of Reform Judaism at the United Nations: Tikkun Olam - Healing the World UN Task Force at Work, undated

Box 11. Folder 11. Fundraising Fundamentals, undated

Box 12. Folder 1. In the Beginning: The Jewish Baby Book by Naomi Patz and Jane Perman, 1983

Box 12. Folder 2. D'var Torah Study Packets, 1988, 1990

Box 12. Folder 3. Seven Blessings: Our Jewish Wedding Book by Susan Marks and Bruce Black, 1997

- Box 12. Folder 4. Jewish Women's Voices from the Past, 1998
- Box 12. Folder 5. Holiday study guides.
- Box 12. Folder 6. Holiday study guides.
- Box 12. Folder 7. Holiday study guides.
- Box 12. Folder 8. WRJ souvenirs.
- Box 12. Folder 9. Pictures of WRJ artifacts.
- Box 13. Folder 1. In Pursuit of Justice: Resolutions and Policy Statements, 1998
- Box 13. Folder 2. The Mitzvah of Caring: Creating a Caring Community in your Sisterhood and Congregation. Caring Community Task Force, 1998
- Box 13. Folder 3. Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection for Action. Interfaith Partnership For the Environment, 2000
- Box 13. Folder 4. Repairing Our World from the Inside Out: A Three-Session Adult Education Program on Jewish Ethics. Facilitator's Guide and Student Workbook by Michelle Shapiro Abraham, R.J.E. Based on the work by Rabbi Jan Katzew, 2002
- Box 13. Folder 5. Visiting Miriam's Well: A Study Guide, 2003
- Box 13. Folder 6. Outreach Families in the Sacred Common: Congregational Responses to Interfaith Issues. Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, undated
- Box 13. Folder 7. The Symbols of our Seasons. "Tour of Living Judaism" Series. Sisterhood, Temple Congregation B'nai Jehuda (Kansas City, Mo.), undated
- Box 13. Folder 8. Staying in Touch by Glynis Conyer, undated

Series C. Awards, 1983-2005

Extent 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Two of the important awards given at conventions were the Book of Numbers Award (increase in membership) and the Or Ami Award (programming); sustaining and growing membership was always a matter of high interest for this region, since it is not densely populated with Jewish people.

Arrangement The series is arranged chronologically.

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 14. Folder 1. Or Ami: Light of My People Award For Excellence in Sisterhood Programming, 1983-2005
- Box 14. Folder 2. Awards. District 20 winners, 1984-1998
- Box 14. Folder 3. Awards. Youth groups, 1990, 1992
- Box 14. Folder 4. Book of honors, 1995-2005
- Box 15. Folder 1. Book of Numbers Awards entries, 1996
- Box 15. Folder 2. Application for "Caring is Catching" award, 1998
- Box 15. Folder 3. Application for Or Ami Award, 1999
- Box 15. Folder 4. Awards. "Caring is Catching."

Series D. Miscellaneous, 1987-2004

Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Within this series, subjects include the District History Program, musical scripts, and holiday services.

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 15. Folder 5. District history program, 1987
- Box 15. Folder 6. Musical scripts, 1994, 2004
- Box 15. Folder 7. District website, 2003
- Box 15. Folder 8. Emails, cards, 2001, 2003, undated
- Box 15. Folder 9. Member biographies, 1996
- Box 15. Folder 10. Sisterhood Leadership Conference. Blessing, 2006
- Box 15. Folder 11. D'var Torah, 1991, 1997
- Box 15. Folder 12. Holiday services/seders, undated
- Box 15. Folder 13. Rosh Chodesh Shabbat services, 1997-2001, undated

Series E. Audiovisual, 1988-2006

Scope and Content Note The CDs are all recordings of later WRJ conventions, whereas the content of the videotapes varies widely.

Arrangement This series is divided into two (2) subseries: 1. Compact Discs; 2. Videotapes.

Subseries 1. Compact Discs, 2003-2006

Arrangement The subseries is arranged by call number.

Box and Folder Listing

- Item CD-532. Women of Reform Judaism, District 20, 2003
- Item CD-533. Women of Reform Judaism, District 20 final convention, 2006
- Item CD-534. Women of Reform Judaism, District 20 biennial convention, 2005

Subseries 2. Videotapes, 1988-2001, undated

Arrangement The subseries is arranged by call number.

Box and Folder Listing

- Item VT-844. Siyum ceremony, 2001
- Item VT-845. Caring for Children, Caring for Creation, 2001
- Item VT-846. Women of Reform Judaism: Determination, Vision, Idealism, 1998
- Item VT-847. President's message, 1988

Item VT-848. Touching Lives. Say YES, 1999

Item VT-849. Panel discussion on medical marijuana.

Item VT-850. Archives of interviews, part 1.

Item VT-851. Archives of interviews, part 2.

Item VT-852. L'Dor V'Dor, The Sisterhood of Congregation Emanuel.