Collection Summary

Title
David Philipson Papers

Dates
1823-1949 (bulk 1885-1945)

Collection Number
MS-35

Repository
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

Creator
Philipson, David, 1862-1949

Extent
4 linear feet (10 Hollinger boxes)

Language of the Material
English and German

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch
David Philipson, Reform rabbi and author, was born to Joseph and Louisa (Freudenthal) Philipson on August 9, 1862 in Wabash, Indiana. During his early childhood the family moved to Columbus, Ohio, where Philipson attended the public schools of that city.

In March of 1875 Isaac M. Wise, a personal friend of Joseph Philipson, wrote to the Philipson family about his plans to open a rabbinical seminary in the autumn. David, who was thirteen at the time and the oldest of six children, was about to finish grammar school. He decided to come to Cincinnati and enter the new Hebrew Union College (HUC). In 1883 Philipson became one of the first four to graduate from the Hebrew Union College. At the same time, he received his A.B. degree from the University of Cincinnati.

After ordination he taught for several months at the College before accepting a pulpit in Baltimore, Maryland at Har Sinai Congregation. He served there from 1884 until 1888. From 1884 to 1886 he carried on post-graduate studies in Assyriology and other Semitic languages at Johns Hopkins University. In 1888 he returned to Cincinnati to serve as rabbi of Bene Israel Congregation (Rockdale Temple). He served there until his voluntary retirement in 1938 when he became rabbi emeritus. Philipson was awarded a D.D. degree from Hebrew Union College (1886), and honorary LL.D. degree by the University of Cincinnati (1941) and by Lincoln Memorial University (1922), a D.H.L. degree by the Hebrew Union College (1925), and an honorary D.D. degree by the Jewish Institute of Religion, in New York (1938).

Philipson served also as an instructor at the Hebrew Union College, teaching Biblical exegesis, Arabic and Assyrian from 1889 to 1891. He served as processor of homiletics from 1891 to 1906 and also lectured on the history of Reform Judaism at the College after 1906.

Philipson participated in the Pittsburgh conference which formulated the principles of Reform Judaism, the so-called Pittsburgh Platform (1885). He was a founding member (1889) of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and served as its president from 1907 to 1909. He was an influential figure in the Hebrew Union College, both as teacher and as a member of the College's Board of Governors and in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Philipson was a director of the Associated Charities of Cincinnati (1889-1942), a charter member and for many years a vice-president of the American Jewish Historical Society, and a member of the American Jewish Committee.

David Philipson wrote The Reform Movement in Judaism, The Jew in English Fiction and edited The Letters of Rebecca Gratz. He was a member of the board of translators of the Jewish Publication Society for the translation of the Holy Scriptures (1916), and editor of Selected Writings of Isaac M. Wise (1900), and a translator of Reminiscences of Isaac M. Wise (1901, 1945). In 1942 he wrote an autobiography, My Life as an American Jew. Through his writings and speeches, Philipson came to be regarded as a regarded as a represented spokesman of "classical" Reform Judaism.

Philipson was a staunch advocate of Americanism and remained throughout his life an opponent of Jewish nationalism of any sort, particularly Zionism. His views on the subject appear in the tract The Jew in America.

On September 9, 1886, David Philipson married Ella Meyer Hollander. Mrs. Philipson died in December of 1940.

Philipson died June 29, 1949 while attending a convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. He was buried in the United Jewish Cemetery in Cincinnati.
Scope and Content
The collection documents the career of David Philipson, Reform rabbi, author, founding member and president (1907-1909) of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and a member of the first graduating class of the Hebrew Union College (1883). The collection consists of correspondence, sermons, addresses, organizational minutes, notes, memorial newsslips, and miscellaneous items.

Arrangement
Organized into seven (7) series: A. Correspondence; B. Organization and Subject; C. Diaries; D. Sermons and Addresses; E. Notes; F. Autobiography; G. Memorial Material.

Copies
Available in microfilm; Available in repository and via inter-library loan.

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Preferred Citation
Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the David Philipson Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:
[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance
Received from David Philipson, Cincinnati, Ohio, circa 1949.

Processing Information
Processed by James W. Clasper, April 1978.

Index Terms
Subjects
Jews -- Ohio -- Cincinnati / Judaism -- Relations -- Christianity / Rabbis / Reform Judaism / Zionism

Personal Names
Philipson, David, 1862-1949

Corporate Names
Congregation Bene Israel (Cincinnati, Ohio) / Hebrew Union College. Faculty

Media
Autobiographies / Diaries / Sermons

Series A. Correspondence, 1850-1931, undated
Extent
0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note
Photostatic copies of letters from as early as the 1820s apparently were collected by Dr. Philipson and later donated with the collection. Among the important subjects covered in the series are anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism, and Jewish-Christian relations.

Arrangement
The series is arranged alphabetically by the name of the correspondent.

Box and Folder Listing
Box 1. Folder 1. A-B, General.
Box 1. Folder 2. C-D, General.
Box 1. Folder 3. E, General.
Box 1. Folder 4. Englander, Henry, 1909-1914
Box 1. Folder 5. F, General.
Series B. Organization and Subject, 1885-1939

Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Consists of correspondence, minutes, and miscellaneous materials of concern to Dr. Philipson. Zionism, religious education, anti-Semitism, and the publications of the Jewish Publication Society are discussed.

Arrangement The series has been arranged alphabetically by names of the organization or subject.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 2. Folder 8. American Jewish Committee, 1907-1916, 1939
Box 2. Folder 10. B’nai B’rith, 1913-1914
Box 2. Folder 12. Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1942
Box 2. Folder 14. Jewish Publication Society, 1885, 1911-1932
Box 2. Folder 15. Jewish Publication Society [minutes], 1908-1917
and from Cyrus Adler], 1914-1927
Box 2. Folder 17. Prayerbook revision, 1915-1922
Box 2. Folder 18. Sunday School curriculum, 1914-1917
Box 2. Folder 19. Synagogue and school matters, 1914-1936
Box 2. Folder 20. Zionism, circa 1914

**Series C. Diaries, 1888-1939**

*Extent* 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

*Scope and Content Note* Contains twenty-six journals. Philipson put in these journals his personal thoughts on numerous topics

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box 3. Folder 1. Diaries, 1888 January-1891 November
Box 3. Folder 2. Diaries, 1905 July 19-1906 February 22
Box 3. Folder 3. Diaries, 1927 July 5-1939 April 13

**Series D. Sermons and Addresses**

*Extent* 1.6 linear feet (4 Hollinger boxes)

*Scope and Content Note* Consists of sermons, addresses and lectures by David Philipson.

*Arrangement* Those with titles have been alphabetized.

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box 5. Folder 1. M, General.
Box 5. Folder 3. O, General.
Box 5. Folder 4. P, Q, General.
Series E. Notes

Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Consists of notes used by Philipson in the preparation of his sermons and addresses. The majority of the NOTES are neither titled nor dated.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 8. Notes on various topics used for sermons and addresses.

Series F. Autobiography, 1937, 1942, undated

Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Consists of Philipson’s autobiography, My Life as an American Jew, in manuscript form.

Box and Folder Listing


Series G. Memorial Material

Extent 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of newscuttings, telegrams, letters, notes and letters commemorating some of the significant events in the career of David Philipson. Included here is a memorial album dealing with his 40th anniversary as rabbi of Congregation Bene Israel in Cincinnati, OH.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 9. Folder 3-4. Memorial material consisting of newscuttings, telegrams, letters and paraphernalia.

Box 10. Folder 1. Newspaper clippings relative to the 75th birthday of Dr. David Philipson, 1937 August 9

Box 10. Folder 2-4. 40th anniversary album [consists of telegrams, newscuttings, notes, and letters].
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Subject Tracings

Note: The following list of subjects is a selective index to many of the topics and individuals in the CORRESPONDENCE series and the ORGANIZATION AND SUBJECT series of the DAVID PHILIPSON PAPERS. It is selective in that it only attempts to draw attention to the more significant items in the collection. It does not attempt to list every subject or individual nor does it try to indicate all places that a listed subject or individual appears in the collection. When used in conjunction with the Box and Folder List, the Subject Tracings should help the researcher locate topics. References are to boxes and folders: e.g., 1/12 means Box 1, Folder 12.

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Rabbinical Confession of Faith
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Realities of Life
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Reform Judaism and Zionism
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