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Special Collections Department**

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Peres family papers

Title: Peres family papers
Collection No: MSS.232
Creator: Peres family
Extent: 1.7 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1865-1968 and undated

Abstract: The collection contains the papers of the Peres family of Memphis, Tennessee, and includes printed reports, newsletters, programs, correspondence, clippings and newspapers.

Donor: Dr. Berkley Kalin, History Department, University of Memphis, 1979, 1982.

Processed by: Ed Frank, 1989; Gerald Chaudron, 2014, 2019.

Access: Open to all researchers.

Language: English

Preferred Citation: Peres family papers, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: 2019 July

Biographical information

Few families were more intimately involved in the public life of Memphis than that of Jacob Joseph Peres (1830-1879), who established the house here in 1859. Born in Haarlem, The Netherlands, Jacob was during his life a rabbi, lawyer, scholar, businessman, and public servant. He moved to the United States in 1857 and then settled in Memphis to become the first rabbi of Congregation Children of Israel. Jacob and Eva Chuts Peres had two sons, Hardwig (1859-1948) and Israel Hyman (1867-1925), and a daughter, Sarah (1857-1941). Jacob and his sons served as head or member of the Memphis School Board, and each was prominent in fraternal, charitable, and religious organizations. Israel graduated from Yale Law School in 1891 and gained an M.A. from Yale in 1899, practiced law in Memphis and was appointed Chancellor of the tenth Chancery Division. Hardwig was born in Philadelphia, Penn., and left school early to join his father's brokerage firm. He was active in civic and Jewish affairs, and a supporter of the Zionist cause.

Scope and contents

The great bulk of the material consists of printed reports and programs of the various (often Jewish) organizations with which they were involved. The personal and private correspondence is mostly that of Hardwig Peres and is typically concerned with the American-Jewish response to the growing threat of anti-Semitism in Europe in the 1930's and the resulting Holocaust.

More information on the family may be found in Samuel Shankman's *The Peres Family*, Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1938, and in Charles P.J. Mooney (ed.), *The Mid-South and its Builders*, Memphis: Mid-South Biographic and Historical Association, 1920.

Subject terms

Jews--Tennessee--Memphis.
Peres, Hardwig, 1859-1948.
Peres, Israel, 1867-1925.
Peres, Jacob, 1830-1879.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

- 1 Typescripts and carbons of articles and speeches by Hardwig and Israel Peres (mostly reprinted in Shankman's *The Peres Family*). 24 items.
- 2 Senior Hadassah Minute Book with membership lists, 1934-1936.
- 3 Programs, rosters, correspondence, and a ballot form, Memphis Zionist District, 1940-1949.
- 4 Programs: Memphis Zionist District, 1950-1962.
- 5 Annual reports of the Federation of Jewish Charities/ Welfare Agencies of Memphis, 1913, 1914, 1916, 1919, 1922, 1939, 1944.
- 6 Constitution and by-laws, yearbook (1925-1926), newsletters, and commemorative programs (1854-1929) of the Congregation Children of Israel, Memphis.
- 7 Commemorative and souvenir programs of other Memphis Jewish congregations: Anshei Sphard (dedication of tablet 1938; 50th anniversary, 1956), Beth El Emeth (1936), Baron Hirsch Sunday School graduation, 1937, and Temple Israel, 1944.
- 8 Secretary's report, District Grand Lodge No.7 of Independent Order of B'nai B'rith, 1929; "One Hundred Years of B'nai B'rith", centennial publication of Sam Schloss Lodge No. 35, Memphis, Tenn., 1958.
- 9 Letters, mostly received by Hardwig Peres, from or concerning national and international Jewish and Zionist affairs, 1938-1947. Correspondents include D. De Sola Pool, A.H. Silver, and Stephen S. Wise.
- 10 Newsletters, programs, pamphlets, and related materials from local fraternal and charitable organizations: Elks, Lions, Scottish Rite Masons, etc., 1916-1940's.
- 11 Memphis Public Schools Annual Reports, 1865-1866, 1898-1899. 2 items
- 12 Miscellany: Programs for John Gaston Hospital Dedication (1936) and for Brotherhood Day, Orpheum Theatre (1939); newsletter of the Rozelle Civic Club, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1930; cover of the Socialist Democratic Party's Address to the Voters of Tennessee (1900); program of Conference of Kentucky-Tennessee Association of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Temple Sisterhoods (1934); reprints of speeches by U.S. Senator James A. Reed on Jews and Jewish history and Rabbi Julian B. Feibelman on Jews in New Orleans (1968); Catalogue of Students of the University of Virginia Summer Law Class (1889).
- 13 Correspondence, newsletter, for Southwestern at Memphis, 1942-1946. Hardwig Peres was a major benefactor of the college.
- OS 2 Reprint of *Commercial Appeal* advertisement for fundraising campaign for Southwestern at Memphis, 19?? April 21.

Box 2

- 1 Correspondence (1898-1925), alumni newsletter (1925), commencement program (1889), and reports, Yale University. Israel Peres was a graduate.
- 2 Private and personal letters, mostly to the Peres brothers. Correspondents include K.D. McKellar, C.A. DeSaussure, Stephen S. Wise, Walter Chandler, M.A. Lightman, and Ernest Ball.
- 3 Correspondence: Hardwig Peres re: Abraham Fortas' entry to Yale University School of Law, 1930.
- 4 Correspondence: Abraham Fortas to Hardwig Peres, 1939-1946. Fortas was Undersecretary of the Interior during much of this period.

- 5 Naturalization papers of Jacob Peres, list of Israel Peres' private library (1907), biography of Israel Peres, pen sketch of Hardwig Peres at home (by his children?), miscellaneous carbon copies of clippings.

Clippings re: Peres family (copies):

- 6 Local press, 1919-1947.
7 Jewish press, 1934-1944.
8 Miscellaneous.

Newspapers: Issues and clippings:

- 9 *American-Jewish Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1955 November; 1955?, 4 pages.
OS 1 *Hebrew Watchman*, 18 issues, 1929-1944, scattered issues and clippings.
OS 2 *American School Board Journal*, Vol. 22 (23?), No. 8, August 1901. Israel Peres' speech "What Constitutes an Efficient Superintendent?" and drawing of its presentation aboard the Riverboat "Sappho" on July 11, 1901 at second session of Department of School Administration, National Educational Association, Detroit, Michigan. Also some pages from Vol. 22, No. 7, 1901 July.
Detroit Jewish Chronicle 1939 August 4, pp. 1, 2, 5, 6.
Institutional, Vol. 22, No. 28, 1939 March 17, pp.1-2.
Jackson Sun, Vol. 66, No. 104, 1940 April 29, pp.1-12.
Jewish Home, Greece, 1955 September 16.
Jewish Spectator, Vol. 66, No. 25, 1918 September 20, p.1-2.
Memphis Hebrew, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1925 September 26. Featured an obituary for Israel Peres who died on August 1, 1925.
New Palestine, Vol. 29, No. 2, 1939 January 13.
Southern Israelite, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1939 January 13.
- 10 Photographs: tintype of Jacob J. Peres seated, 3.5" x 2"; contact print of unidentified young man, 2.25" x 1.5"; print of unidentified middle-aged man in profile, 6" x 4".

Separated materials

The following material has been separated from the collection and disposed of as follows:
Commercial Appeal, Memphis, Tennessee, Extra ed., "Death Comes to E.H. Crump", 1954 October 17.

Transferred to Special Collections newspaper collection.