

**Congregation Poale Zedeck Records, 1922-2006 (Bulk 1951-1969)**

**Creator: Congregation Poale Zedeck**

**Call number: MSS#595**

**Extent: 7 linear feet**

**Language of Materials: English, Hebrew and Yiddish**

**Rauh Jewish Archives, MSS#595**

**Senator John Heinz History Center**

**1212 Smallman St.**

**Pittsburgh, PA 15222**

Abstract

The Austro-Hungarian Orthodox Jewish congregation Poale Zedeck was chartered in 1881. The existing synagogue in Squirrel Hill was dedicated in 1929. In 1956, the Rabbi Joseph Shapiro Educational Center adjacent to the synagogue was dedicated as the site of the congregation's Hebrew school. The congregation currently has a membership of about 300 families.

The collection consists of materials relating to the administration, the board of directors, the membership and auxiliary organizations. The materials include account ledgers, correspondence, death certificates, event programs, membership lists, minutes, school class lists, sisterhood newsletters, a sisterhood scrapbook, seating assignments and a few photographs from the congregation's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary banquet.

Historical Note

Poale Zedeck (Workers of Justice) was chartered in 1881 by Jews from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. At that time, the congregation had forty member families who were meeting in the second floor of a building at Second Avenue and Grant Street. In 1885, the congregation established a cemetery in Sheridan.

When the congregation outgrew its space, it purchased a house on Federal Street in the Hill District, the area of the city in which newly arriving Jewish immigrants were settling. The house was renovated and served as the synagogue until 1900 when the congregation purchased an existing synagogue building at Crawford and Rose Streets. That building burned down in 1916 and was rebuilt. In 1926, the congregation purchased a lot at the corner of Shady and Phillips Avenues in Squirrel Hill where the current synagogue was built and dedicated in 1929. The congregation continued to expand after its move to Squirrel Hill. In 1954, it established the Poale Zedeck Memorial Park cemetery in Richland Township. There are about 300 member families today.

In response to the growing number of children attending the congregational Hebrew school, a new building was constructed adjacent to the synagogue and dedicated as the Rabbi Joseph Shapiro Education Center in 1956. Nursery school and Hebrew school classes were held in the Center. In 1961, Poale Zedeck entered into an agreement with

United Mental Health Services of Allegheny County, Inc. to provide education to children with psychological problems. The project was to be a 5-year pilot project designed to provide education and therapy to children with psychological problems, to do psychological research, and to train teachers. The school merged with Technoma Workshop in 1964 to extend more services to more children. Today, the institution is called Friendship Academy and is located in the Friendship neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Beginning in 1975, special education classes were held in the Education Center to provide religious education to Jewish children who were deaf, blind, or had other physical disabilities.

Five full-time rabbis have served Poale Zedeck. Rabbi Sol B. Friedman became the rabbi in 1920. He served until 1932 when he moved to a synagogue in Brooklyn. Rabbi Joseph Shapiro was the longest-serving rabbi in Congregation Poale Zedeck's history. He started in 1933, retired in 1974 and served as Rabbi Emeritus until his death in 1995.

The succeeding rabbis have been Eliyahu Safran, who served from 1974 to 1985; Yisroel Miller, who served from 1985 to 2009; and Daniel Yolcut, who began his tenure in 2010.

During the time period represented in the collection, the Chevra Kedisha (Holy Society) was responsible for maintaining the cemeteries and for memorializing the dead. Founded in 1910, the organization hosted an annual *Sudah* at which the names of the dead were read, the cantor recited memorial prayers, and the rabbi gave an address. A business meeting was also held at which new members were selected and new officers voted on.

The Men's Club was established in 1928. Between 1959 and 1972, the Men's Club hosted fundraisers and activities, such as picnics and an annual Mother's Day banquet. The funds raised allowed the Men's Club to host activities and to assist the synagogue with its needs, such as new office furniture.

The sisterhood began in 1912. During the time period represented by the collection, 1922-2006, the sisterhood raised money and used the funds to donate to charities and to assist the schul with operating expenses. The group maintained the kitchen, tracking who used it and keeping it stocked with supplies.

#### Scope and Content Note

The collection is stored in seven archival boxes and divided into seven series, some of which are further divided into groupings. The series and folders are arranged alphabetically by topic. The materials in the folders are arranged chronologically. Series have been designated for administration, board of directors, education, events, membership, organizations and photographs.

#### **Series I: Administration**

The materials in the administration series are housed in two boxes. The files are arranged alphabetically by topic. The materials in the files are arranged chronologically with the exception of the acknowledgements which are arranged alphabetically. Groupings within

this series are correspondence, financial and memorial plates. The correspondence consists of general congregation business letters, as well as the business letters, and a few personal letters of Rabbi Joseph Shapiro and of three congregation presidents; Leo Berger, (1966-1969), David Klein, (1953-1955 and 1959-1963) and Harry Morris, (1955-1959 and 1963-1966). The financial grouping includes account ledgers, bank statements, bequests, donation acknowledgements, dues reminders and pledges, There is one box of six receipt books that is out of sequence because of their size. Two of the receipt books are clearly for a special fund charity, but it is unclear if the remaining books contain receipts for the same fund or for something different. The memorial plates grouping includes orders for memorial plates and lists of names with corresponding death dates. Newspaper announcements are included in the administration files.

### **Series II: Board of Directors**

The board of directors' files are housed in eight folders. They are arranged alphabetically by topic. There are board and committee member lists, board meeting minutes, committee reports, the 1987 version of the congregation's constitution, executive committee meeting minutes, installation programs, notifications of appointments to the nominating committee and notifications of board and committee nominations.

### **Series III: Education**

The materials in the education series are housed in thirteen folders arranged alphabetically by topic. There are two groupings: library and Rabbi Joseph Shapiro Education Center. Included in the library groupings are book orders and book loans from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. The Rabbi Shapiro Educational Center grouping includes school class lists, notices to parents, school budgets, acknowledgments of donations to the education center, graduation programs, registration forms and source books. The materials for the Poale Zedeck School, an entity which differed from the Education Center, include the minutes of a members' meeting and of a committee meeting during which the school was discussed, a school pamphlet and an informational pamphlet that tells the story of the school.

### **Series IV: Events**

The events series is housed in eleven folders and arranged alphabetically by topic. There are programs, event announcements and correspondence for events such as the congregation's 70<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup> anniversaries and for the Harry Morris and the Rabbi Shapiro testimonials.

### **Series V: Membership**

The membership series is housed in eighteen folders and is arranged alphabetically by topic. The materials consist of correspondence and form letters related to welcoming new members, member resignations, membership lists, seating lists and congregational meeting minutes. There is a separate grouping for life cycle materials that includes bar mitzvah correspondence, and lists, congratulations on births and marriages, death certificates and yahrzeit notices.

**Series VI: Organizations**

The organization series is housed in 45 folders and one shelf volume and is arranged alphabetically by topic. There are separate groupings for the Chevra Kadisha, the Men's Club and the Sisterhood. The Chevra Kedisha grouping includes minutes, meeting and event announcements and lists of congregants who died during the year. The Men's Club grouping is the most extensively represented of the organizations. It includes minutes, materials related to the various events hosted by the Men's Club, membership lists and newspaper announcements. The Sisterhood grouping includes a scrapbook of newspaper clippings, notes and invitations dated from 1958-1966. The scrapbook pages have been copied for use, while the book itself has been wrapped for preservation purposes. Materials include some correspondence, newsletters and meeting minutes.

**Series VII: Photographs**

This series is housed in two archival folders and is arranged alphabetically by topic. It includes photographs of the congregation's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. The photographs were removed from the original album for preservation purposes with the original order maintained. Most of the people in the photographs have been identified. The remaining folder contains a photograph labeled Men's Club Affair, 1962, with no identification of the people in the photograph.

Statement of Acquisition: The papers and photographs of Congregation Poale Zedeck were received in three accessions. All three accessions were given on behalf of Congregation Poale Zedeck.

Accession #2011.0165 was a gift from Anita Kornblit on June 13, 2011.

Accession #2009.0148 was a gift from Glenn Foxson on June 2, 2009.

Accession #2007.0244 was a gift from Ruth Markowitz on February 28, 2007

Preferred Citation:

Congregation Poale Zedeck Records, 1922-2006, MSS#595  
Rauh Jewish Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center

Restrictions: None

Separations:

The following published booklets were transferred to the library.

*Shaare Torah Congregation, 1955*

*Temple Sinai 1955-5716 Building Fund Canvas, 1955*

*Temple Sinai Fifth Anniversary Dinner, December 23, 1951*

*Tree of Life Congregation, 1952*

An undated map of the East End and Oakland was transferred to the map collection in the library.

One copy of the following record album, entitled *The Synagogue: Rabbi, Cantor and Choir*, written and narrated by Rabbi Joseph S. Shapiro, music composed, directed and solos sung by Cantor Uri Frankel, was transferred to the library. A second copy was transferred to the Judaica Sound Archives at Florida Atlantic University.

The following materials were transferred to the serials collection in the library:

*Congregation Poale Zedeck Bulletin*, Congregation Poale Zedeck,  
1982, 1988-2002

*Horizon*, Congregation Poale Zedeck, 1962, 1963, 1965

The program *Temple Sinai Sisterhood and Men's Club presents "The Last Resort": a Musical Extravaganza*, March 31, 1954 was transferred to the vertical file.

Related Material: None

Processor: The collection was processed by Kelly J. Smith in August 2011.

Container List:

**Series I: Administration**

Box 1	Folder 1	Building Rental	1956-1968
	Folder 2	Cemetery	1953-1969
	Folder 3	Contracts	1953-1965

Correspondence

Folder 4	General	1951-1969
Folder 5	Leo Berger	1966-1969
Folder 6	David Klein	1959-1968
Folder 7	Harry Morris	1956-1969
Folder 8	Rabbi Joseph Shapiro	1953-1968

Folder 9	Employment (Yiddish)	1954-1969
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Box 2

Financial

Receipt Books

Volume 1	April 2, 1979-June 17, 1980
Volume 2	August 29, 1979-March 10, 1980
Volume 3	November 22, 1978-August 18, 1979
Volume 4	October 19, 1977-April 2, 1979
Volume 5	May 8, 1978-November 16, 1978
Volume 6	September 1, 1977-May 8, 1978

Box 3

	Acknowledgements	
Folder 1	14 <sup>th</sup> Ward Republican Committee-F	
Folder 2	G-J	
Folder 3	K-L	
Folder 4	M-O	
Folder 5	P-S	
Folder 6	T-Z	
Folder 7	Addressograph Plates	1956-1971
Folder 8	Appeals	1954-1969
	Bank Statements	
Folder 9	1956-1957	
Folder 10	1958	
Folder 11	Banking	1956-1965
Folder 12	Bequests	1956-1989
Folder 13	Building Repairs and Renovations	1954-1967
Folder 14	Cash Disbursements	1975-1978
Folder 15	Cash Receipts	1976-1978
Folder 16	Congregation Donations (Yiddish)	1955-1968
Folder 17	Deposit Slips	1956-1959
Folder 18	Donations	1955-1970
Folder 19	Donation Lists	1958-1970

Box 4

Folder 1	Dues	1955-1969
	Dues Receipt Ledgers	
Folder 2	B-L	
Folder 3	M-Z	
Folder 4	Honorariums and Transfer Items	1956-1958
	Memorial Plates	
Folder 5	Lists	1961, Undated
	Orders	
Folder 6	From members	1961-1967
	To vendors (inscriptions in Hebrew)	
Folder 7	1954-1959	
Folder 8	1960-1964	
Folder 9	1965-1968	
Folder 10	1969-1971	
	Pledges	
Folder 11	1954-1973	
Folder 12	Ledger Sheets	1949-1958
Folder 13	Receipt Books	1977-1980
Folder 14	Receipts	1953-1964
Folder 15	Vendor Correspondence	1954-1969

	Newspaper Announcements	
Folder 16	1956-1958	
Folder 17	1959-1972	

**Series II: Board of Directors**

Box 5	Folder 1	Board of Directors Meeting Minutes	1960-1991
	Folder 2	Committee Nominations	1955-1968
	Folder 3	Committee Reports	1987-1990
	Folder 4	Constitution	1987
	Folder 5	Executive Committee Meeting Minutes	1989-1991
	Folder 6	Installation	1953-1968
	Folder 7	Meeting Notices	1955-1971
	Folder 8	Nominations to the Board	1955-1968

**Series III: Education**

	Library	
Folder 9	Book Purchases	1957-1963
Folder 10	Loans from Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	1958-1960
Folder 11	Poale Zedeck School	1960-1961

	Rabbi Joseph Shapiro Educational Center	
	Acknowledgements	
Folder 12	1956-1966	
Folder 13	1967-1970	
Folder 14	Adult Education	1983, 1990-1992
Folder 15	Class Lists	1955-1975
Folder 16	Correspondence	1956-1975
Folder 17	Financials	1956-1973
Folder 18	Graduation Programs	1959-1972
Folder 19	Notices to Parents	1956-1975
Folder 20	Pamphlets	1971, undated
Folder 21	Registration Forms	1967-1970

**Series IV: Events**

	Anniversaries	
Folder 22	70 <sup>th</sup>	1951
Folder 23	75 <sup>th</sup>	1956-1957
Folder 24	85 <sup>th</sup>	1966
Folder 25	Beth Hamidrash Dedication	1961
Folder 26	Event Announcements	1962-1969
Folder 27	Girls' Dinner	1952-1967
Folder 28	Harry Morris Testimonial	1961

	Folder 29	Prise Dinner	1964
	Folder 30	Programs	1953-1960
	Folder 31	Rabbi Shapiro Testimonial	1958-1959
	Folder 32	Samuel and Martha Cohen Dinner	1963
<b>Series V: Membership</b>			
	Folder 33	Condolence Letters	1953-1970
Box 6	Folder 1	Get Well (Yiddish)	1957-1970
	Folder 2	Honors and Aliyahs	1955-1968
	Life Cycle		
	Folder 3	Bar Mitzvah Correspondence	1956-1968
	Folder 4	Bar Mitzvah Lists	1956-1966
	Folder 5	Births	1956-1969
	Folder 6	Death Certificates	1952-1954
	Folder 7	Marriages	1960-1969
	Folder 8	Yahrzeit Notices	1956-1969
	Folder 9	Meeting Minutes	1988-1990
	Folder 10	Meeting Notices	1956-1969
	Folder 11	Member Resignation	1956-1969
	Folder 12	Membership Lists	1957-1971
	Folder 13	New Members	1955-1969
	Folder 14	Perspective Members	1956-1969
		Seating	
	Folder 15	Correspondence (Yiddish) Lists	1955-1969
	Folder 16	1956-1968	
	Folder 17	1946	
<b>Series VI: Organizations</b>			
	Chevra Kedisha		
	Folder 18	Announcements	1958-1967
	Folder 19	Minutes	1934-1952, 1964
	Folder 20	Pinkas	1958-1970
	Men's Club		
	Folder 21	Bank Statements	1959-1960
	Boy Scouts		
	Folder 22	Administration	1958-1959
	Folder 23	Ceremonies	Undated
	Folder 24	<i>Jewish Religious Service for Boy Scouts</i>	Undated
	Folder 25	Troop Reports	1957-1958



	Correspondence	
Folder 26	1956-1962	
Folder 27	1963-1968	
	Events	
	Affairs	
Folder 28	1959	
Folder 29	1960	
Folder 30	1961	
Folder 31	1962	
Folder 32	1963	
Box 7	Folder 1	1964
	Folder 2	1965
	Folder 3	1966
	Folder 4	1967
	Fundraisers	
	Lawn Fetes	
Folder 5	1959	
Folder 6	1960	
Folder 7	1962	
Folder 8	1963	
Folder 9	1964	
Folder 10	1966-1968	
Folder 11	Monte Carlo Day	1961
Folder 12	Installation Programs	1959, 1966-1967
Folder 13	Membership Lists	1958-1959, 1964
	Minutes	
Folder 14	1952-1958	
Folder 15	1959-1963	
Folder 16	1969-1972	
Folder 17	Newspaper Announcements	1959-1966
	Projects	
Folder 18	Air Conditioner	1958-1959
Folder 19	Blood Bank	1959
Folder 20	Receipts	1960-1961
	Sisterhood	
Folder 21	Correspondence	1958-1967
	Meeting Notices and Newsletters	
Folder 22	1973-1974	

Folder 23	1974-1975	
	Minutes	
Folder 24	1922-1930	
Folder 25	1933-1937	
Folder 26	1940-1947	
Folder 27	1984-2006	
Folder 28	Scrapbook (copy)	1958-1966
Shelf Volume	Scrapbook	1958-1966

**Series VII: Photographs**

Folder 29	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet	1980
Folder 30	Men's Club Affair	1962