

IHLC MS 1109

**Sybil Mervis Collection on Central Illinois  
Jewish Communities, 1808 and 1834-2022**

# **Manuscript Collection Inventory**

Illinois History and Lincoln Collections

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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**Sybil Mervis.**  
**Collection on Central Illinois Jewish Communities, 1808 and 1834-2022.**

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**Writings**

Box 1

Authored by Sybil Mervis

- History of Jewish people in Danville (essay draft), 1987
- Various issues of *The Heritage of Vermilion County* magazine (includes an article by Donald and Susan Richter), 1986/1987 and 2002
- Speech for Sinai Temple gathering, 2011
- "Jewish Life in Danville, Il., from 1958 forward" (speech script), 2011
- Versions of "The History of the Jewish Community of Danville, Illinois" (includes an issue of *The Heritage of Vermilion County* magazine in which the article appeared, as well as notes and correspondence), 2015
- In the Middle: Growing Up in the Middle of America, in the Middle Class, in the Middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (book), 2015 [IHLC Stacks, 977.359 M559mi]
- "Beyond Chicago: Illinois Jewish Roots - Families of Downstate Danville" (article), 2018
- "Final History of the Jewish Community in Danville" (article), 2019
- "Early History of Congregation Anshe Knesset Israel, the Orthodox/Conservative Jewish Synagogue in Danville, IL" (article), 2020
- "History of the Danville, Illinois Reform Jewish Congregation" (article), 2020
- Portions of text about Danville's Reform Jewish community and the history of Congregation Anshe Knesset Israel, undated

## Other Authors

- Book by Helen Wells, *Cherry Ames at Hilton Hospital*, 1959 [IHLC Stacks, 813.52 W4625chhi]
- Copy of Zachary Baker's "Eastern European 'Jewish Geography': Some Problems and Suggestions. Or, How to Get from Amshinov to Mszczonów without Moving an Inch," 1978/1979
- Copy of Asa Rubenstein's "Midwestern Jewish Commitment and Practical American Idealism: The Early History of Sinai Temple, Champaign, Illinois," 1982
- Copies of Eileen Ogintz's "Grim Tales the Kids Should Know" (includes a packet of quotes), 1990
- Scans from Lee Shai Weissbach's *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History*, 2005
- Issue of *The Peoria Jewish Spark*, 2010
- Book by Andrew J. Theising, *Main Street USA: The Life and Photography of H.H. Bregstone*, 2018 [IHLC Stacks, 770.232 B746th]
- Copies of postcards by H.H. Bregstone, 2018
- Issue of *Chicago Jewish History* featuring the Central Illinois Jewish Communities Archives, 2022
- Copy of Rabbi Louis A. Josephson's "Moses Montefiore Congregation: A Chronology," undated
- Booklet by Solomon B. Freehof, *What is Reform Judaism?* (Popular Studies in Judaism series), undated

## Research Materials on Jewish Communities

### Danville

#### Jewish Residents

##### Local media and official records

- Copies of city directories, 1883, 1907-1923, and 1970
- List of Jewish persons in the 1904-1905 city directory, undated
- Newspaper clippings about the shooting of Daniel Cohen, 1922
- "Government Nabs Local Shoe Man: Jack Kolbrenner [*sic*] Arrested by Federal Officer on Texas Indictment" (copy of newspaper clipping), circa 1924
- Partial address list of Danville's Jewish residents and Jewish-owned businesses (1930-1937), undated
- Population data (20<sup>th</sup> century), 2016-2020
- Photo of Louis Platt (copy), undated
- Photo of Jewish women (copy), undated

##### Correspondence and personal accounts

- Post-WWII European Jewish immigration to Danville (biographies, copies of newspaper clippings, and correspondence), 1956-2019
- Letter from Florence DeNeal, 1998
- Recollections of Danville High School by Edward Robbins in *Maroon & White EXTRA!* (copy), 2003
- Eulogy for Buzz Cohen, 2005

Letter from Robert Bennett concerning the death of his wife, 2006  
 Letters from Pat and Lynn Wolgamot, 2008  
 Season's greetings letter from Marlene Mekel and Patrick  
 McConnell, 2009/2010  
 Thank you card from Thelma Lager Huebach, circa 2018  
 Correspondence with Shari Kaulig, 2019  
 Correspondence with Dana Menkus and Jim Pfeifer, 2019  
 Correspondence with Barry Steiger, 2019-2020  
 Correspondence with Katherine Read, 2019-2020  
 Correspondence with James Myers, 2021  
 Correspondence with Tim Smith about Isaac Stern and Solomon  
 Plaut (includes photos of legal documents), 2021

#### Research notes

Jewish persons in local newspapers, census records, and city  
 directories (1850, 1865-1902, and 1930-1934), 2016 and undated  
 Notable residents, 2018  
 City directories (1876-1877), 1984  
 City directories (1878-1879, 1901, 1913, 1927, and 1929; includes  
 notes on 1949 city directory for Paris, Illinois), 2018  
 City directories (1903-1909), undated  
 City directories (1915-1952), undated  
 Adele and Samuel Bernsohn, undated  
 Daniel Cohen, undated  
 Jewish residents, undated

#### Family histories

Short family biographies (Margolin, Greenebaum, and Sperling), undated  
 Database results for the Loeb family at Pape Mortuary, 2011  
 Barnard, Cohen, and Diamondstone families  
 Correspondence, undated  
 Copies of legal documents and newspaper clippings (includes  
 notes), 1904-1992 [scattered dates]  
 Notes and correspondence, 2001 and undated  
 Basch, Goldman, and Weinstock (Wells) families  
 Notes on Robert Weinstock (Wells), undated  
 Photo of Louis Goldman's family with notes (copy), 2020 and  
 undated  
 Scanned Danville High School yearbook page with information on  
 Irene Basch, undated

#### Halpern family

Copy of newspaper clipping, "6 DH Seniors Tie for Top Honors –  
 Record in Scholastic Achievement," circa 1964  
 Correspondence with Alan Halpern (includes photos of the  
 Halpern family and correspondence with Allen Avner about  
 the American Hospital), 2020

## Koenig family

Newspaper clippings (includes a copy of "Dickerson's Grocery Store," a poem by David Koenig), 1962-1973, 1994-1999, and 2020

Book by David Koenig, *The Spiral Staircase*, 1999 [IHLC Stacks, 811.54 K8192sp]

## Landman family

Notes on tombstones in Moses Montefiore Cemetery (Lafayette, Indiana), 1995

Correspondence with Genevieve Rausch, 2003

## Meis family

Issue of *The Illiana Genealogist* featuring the Meis family, 2018

Correspondence with Dianne Hess, 2020

Correspondence with Diane Corenman Serber and Jason Freeman (includes notes on the Levin family and issues of *The Illiana Genealogist*), 2018-2021

## Jewish section of Spring Hill Cemetery

Maps, correspondence, and consecration service booklets, 1989-2018

Correspondence about dates of death (includes an alphabetized list of Jewish persons and a copy of "The History of the Jewish Community of Danville, Illinois" by Sybil Mervis), 2011-2012 and circa 2015

## Jewish obituaries

Introductory documents and aids (include a map of Spring Hill Cemetery), 2005

Surnames A-D, 1910-1997, 2004, and 2008

Surnames E-L, 1902-1918, 1931-2007, and 2015

## Box 2

Surnames M-Si, 1910-2006 and 2014

Surnames Sm-Y, 1917-1958, 1970-2006, and 2014

Notes on Jewish obituaries, undated

## Social Acceptance

Newspaper clipping, "Programs in Holiness" (copy), 1876

B'nai B'rith Lodge No. 568 (copy of meeting minutes with added notes, ephemera, member information, newspaper clippings, and photos), 1904-1930 and 1955-1973

Copies of newspaper clippings covering the union Thanksgiving service, 1913 and undated

List of Jewish applicants to the Danville Rotary Club, 1919-1960

Roselawn Golf Club (correspondence, legal documents, newspaper clippings, and a photo), 1923-2011 [scattered dates]

Jewish residents in local non-Jewish circles (lists of names and notes), 1933-2020

Inter-denominational congregation merger (proposal and meeting minutes), 1964

Newspaper clipping, "Jews to Note New Year," 1955

Newspaper clipping, "Temples Plan Services for Jewish New Year," 1969

Antisemitism in local media (newspaper clippings and correspondence),  
1973-2003

Reform Congregation of Danville  
Administration

- Copies of meeting minutes, 1913 and 1926-1928
- Copies of organizational documents and research materials, 1949-1959 and 2018
- Notes on the founding of Temple Beth El, 1993

Building - Temple Beth El

- Copy of Warranty Deed for land purchase, 1910
- Temple dedication service (copies of newspaper clippings and a bulletin), 1914
- Photos, ephemera, and copies of local newspaper clippings, 1904-1935, 1950s-1966, and 1999
- Copies of local newspaper clippings, 1936-1999

Box 3

Framed photo of interior, after 1972

Box 2 (cont.)

#### Members

- Early written history and list of members present at founding, undated
- Membership, 1902-1935 and 1965
- Congregation history (correspondence, copies of newspaper clippings, and other research materials), 1964 and 1984-1993
- Correspondence with Julie Friedman, 2020

#### Liturgy

- Rabbis (copies of newspaper clippings, correspondence, and lists of student rabbis conducting services at Temple Beth El), 1905-1936, 1946-1971, and 1990-1991
- Music (newspaper clippings and correspondence), 1985 and 2001
- Thanksgiving services (copies of newspaper clippings and bulletins), 1913-1915

#### Events

- Ceremonies (photos and copies of a service bulletin), circa 1938-1969
- Temple Beth El in local media, 1897-1905 and 1933-1969

#### Local Economy

- Copies of advertisements, 1881
- Copy of Sanborn map of downtown area, 1914
- Copies of Industrial Removal Office requests (includes correspondence between Sybil Mervis and the American Jewish Historical Society), 1912-1913 and 2008
- “Kahn & Co.’s Goose Supper” (copy of newspaper clipping), undated
- Ries Strauss Co.
  - Copies of newspaper clippings and advertisements, circa early 1900s

## Oversized folder ms1109\_h001

Branded paper bag, undated  
 Three oversized images of the Deutsch brothers (copies), undated

## Box 2 (cont.)

Notes on the Grand Opera House (Fischer Theatre), undated  
 List of Jewish-owned businesses (1967 and 1987) from *The Illiana Genealogist*, circa 2018

## Bloomington

## Jewish Residents

“Orthodox Jews Plan Synagogue: Structure to Be Named After Jacob Stern to Inaugurate Fund Drive” (copy of newspaper clipping with notes), 1922 and circa 2018  
 Photo of community members, 1938  
 Zionist Organization of America membership card and welcome letter for Sam Stern, 1943  
 Copies of genealogical information, newspaper clippings, correspondence, and ephemera; includes clippings from *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 1950-1965, 1982, 1990, and 2009-2016  
 Ancestry records, undated  
 Correspondence about the Urdangen family, 2000  
 Short story, “City Boy,” undated

## Oversized folder ms1109\_h001

Article by James Keeran on Oscar Cohn, "He Made a Gift to Science," 2000

## Box 2 (cont.)

Donation of Abraham Lincoln statue by Mayor Judy Markowitz (copies of newspaper clippings), 2000  
 Jewish obituaries  
 Purchase of land for a Jewish cemetery (copy of newspaper clipping), 1874  
 Surnames A-G, 1883, 1911-1913, 1923-1936, and 1948-2010  
 Surnames H-L (includes an index for the Livingston family), 1808, 1834-1837, 1862-1953, 1962, 1972, and 1984-2009  
 Surnames M-W, 1888, 1897-1903, and 1914-2011  
 Bob Markowitz, 2007

## Box 4

History of the Griesheim, Livingston, and Marblestone families  
 Correspondence with Greg Griesheim, 1999  
 Copy of photo taken at Amelia Griesheim's 80th birthday party (includes annotations), circa 1924  
 Correspondence with Dave Marblestone, Barbara Livingston Grimm, and Volker Hess, 2000-2001  
 Notes on conversation with Dave Marblestone, 2000  
 Partial family tree for Aaron Livingston, undated  
 Copy of Fannie Livingston Ochs's "Aaron Livingston Family," undated  
 Copy of Fannie Livingston Ochs's "Livingston's," undated

Article by Bill Kemp, "Livingston's Longtime Fixture of Downtown's Retail Scene," 2008

Issue of *On the Square: The Quarterly Magazine of the McLean County Museum of History* featuring the Evergreen Cemetery Walk, 2021

"Virtual Cemetery Walk 2021 Available for Viewing Through December 31" (pages from *On the Square: The Quarterly Magazine of the McLean County Museum of History*), 2021

Entries in the *American Jewish Year Book*, 1907/1908 and 1919/1920

Moses Montefiore Temple

Opening (copy of newspaper clipping), 1888

Dedication (copies of newspaper clippings), 1889

Meeting notices (drafts), undated

Congregation (copies of a service bulletin, a photo, and correspondence), 1950 and 2015

Centennial booklet, 1982

Cemetery lists, undated

Notes on tombstones, 2000

Correspondence with Allen Avner, 2000

Alphabetized list of notes on persons buried in the cemetery (includes correspondence with Richard Livingston), 2007 and 2018

Recollections of the Landauer sisters by Rabbi Barry Marks, 2022

Other Illinois and Indiana Communities

Central Illinois Jewish Federation (administrative documents, newspaper clippings, ephemera, and issues of the *Jewish Community Journal* (vol. 5, no. 5 and no. 7; vol. 8, no. 6), 1973-1987

Champaign's Jewish residents

Correspondence, newspaper clippings, a bulletin for The Reunion Project, and a copy of *Central Illinois Business Magazine*, 1923 and 2003-2021

Booklet by Allen Avner, Elaine Avner, and Tauby Shimkin, *Jewish Sections of Mount Hope Cemetery in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois* (includes a letter from Allen and Elaine Aver), 1999

*Costs for a Simple Jewish Funeral in Champaign-Urbana* (booklet), circa 2000

Decatur

Letter to Harry M. Stern and a newspaper clipping, 1933 and 1999

Article by Bob Fallstrom (copy), "Bargain Art: Bid for It at Temple Auction Sunday," circa 1996

Copy of photo of the Fisher family (Homer), undated

Hoopeston's Jewish residents

Correspondence, biographies, and memoirs, 2019-2020

Article on Ruby Yonkelowitz, "Scrap Metal Dealer and His Legend," undated

Lincoln (copies of newspaper clippings and book pages, copies of city directories, correspondence, and an article about Old Union and Holy Cross Cemeteries), 1910-1918, 1996, 2010, 2022, and undated

Yearbooks for Camp Ben Frankel (Makanda), 1986-1987

Talmud Torah Dedication program (Congregation B'nai Abraham, Springfield), 1938



River Bend Sukkot service (service bulletins and information about the holiday),  
2006-2007 and undated  
Article by Carol Roehm, "'Important Subject': County Classrooms Learn about  
the Holocaust" (Westville) 2020  
Card for the New Year from Lillian Stein, undated  
50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary photo, undated  
Indiana  
Copies of obituaries, circa 1910  
Jewish section of Riverside Cemetery in Attica, circa 2001  
Greetings from Rabbi Jon Adland of the Indianapolis Hebrew  
Congregation, 2004  
Work for the Indiana Jewish Historical Society Journal, 2016

Box 5

Framed and signed photo of Governor Samuel Shapiro, circa 1968/1969

**Research Materials on Jewish Life and Culture**

Box 4 (cont.)

Jewish Heritage

*The Flag of Israel* (booklet), undated  
Pamphlet of Hanukkah songs, circa 1963  
Program for the United Jewish Appeal National Conference Dinner, 1974  
*Book of Songs and Blessings* by the United Jewish Appeal, 1986  
Article by Jack Rosenthal, "The Last Jewish Farmer: In Lithuania, The Few Labor  
to Honor the Many" (includes a note from Debra Lane), 1990  
Article by Jonathan Kolatch, "Saving Jewish Heritage from a Second Holocaust,"  
1992  
Short story, "Erev Chanukah" (two copies), 1998  
Holiday rituals (religious texts, recipes, and other information), 2000-2005 and  
undated

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Newspaper clipping, "Jewish Families Find Expression in Haggada," 2000

Box 4 (cont.)

Article by Rom Grossman, "To Life in America," 2004  
Booklet for the "From Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life in America"  
exhibit at the Library of Congress, 2004  
Story by Hyman Bernstein, "The Peddler" (1937-1938), 2004  
List of global Islamic and Jewish Nobel Prize recipients, 2006  
Mezuzah ceremony (religious texts and ephemera), 2007 and undated  
Program booklet by the National Museum of American Jewish History, *Leading  
the Way: America's First Women Rabbis*, 2012  
Copies of newspaper clippings detailing the finding of Jewish artifacts in Iraq,  
2013  
"What Faith Means" (sermon text), undated  
"Sedar [*sic*] for Tu B'Shevat: New Year of the Trees" (booklet), undated

Contemporary Supplementary Service bulletin for Rosh Hashanah at the Temple of Aaron in Saint Paul, Minnesota, undated

Values and collective memory (includes information on Purim), undated

#### Antisemitism and Holocaust Remembrance

Review of *Why the Jews? The Reason for Anti-Semitism* by Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin (includes a "Jewish Best-Seller List"), 1983

Article by Richard D. Zelin, "Yes, Jews Oppose Quotas – But Don't Doubt Their Passion for Civil Rights," circa 1980s

Article by Alvin H. Rosenfeld, "The Anne Frank We Remember," 1989

Holocaust survivor stories (newspaper clippings), 1990 and 1995

Article by Ann Landers, "Anti-Semites Have a Lot to Thank Jews For," circa 1991

Perspectives on Jewish culture and antisemitism (includes information on Matt Hale's visit to the Danville Public Library), 2001-2005 and undated

Article by Nat Hentof, "No End to World's Anti-Semitism," 2002

#### Box 6

Booklet by Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *Anti-Americanism and Anti-Semitism: A New Frontier of Bigotry*, 2003

Article from *B'nai B'rith Magazine*, "Fear Factor: A Global Groundswell of Antisemitism Has Some Jews Wondering Whether a Second Holocaust Is Possible," 2004

Article from *U.S. News & World Report*, "The Holocaust: Sixty Years Later. Has the Spirit of Auschwitz been revived?" 2005

Copy of article by Jonathan Judaken, "Anti-Semitic Hitmen and the New Judeophobia," 2013

*News-Gazette* article, "Elie Wiesel, Holocaust Survivor, Author Dies," 2016

Article from *Terre Haute's Tribune-Star*, "Eva Kor's Life and Work Will Continue to Inspire Others," circa 2019

Article by John von Rhein, "'I Was Lucky': Violinist Victor Aitay Pays Tribute to the Man Who Saved Him from the Nazis," undated

#### Notes, Correspondence, and Reference Materials

##### General Research and Notes

List of names, undated

Notes on Jewish persons, undated

List of Jewish persons on children's home [board?], undated

Notes on Reform Congregation of Danville, 2013

Notable dates and events for Congregation Anshe Knesset Israel, 2019

Notes on writing the history of Congregation Anshe Knesset Israel, undated

Notes on the Danville Jewish community, circa 2020

Notes on Danville and Hoopeton Jewish residents, undated

Composition book of research notes, undated

Note on temple reading materials (1972), undated

Notes on materials at the Danville Public Library, undated

Notes on the availability of Sanborn Maps for Danville, undated

Notes on research findings and next steps, undated

Copy of webpage for Edwin Black's *IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation*, 2004

Copy of Wikipedia page for "Mikvah," 2009  
 Notes from an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 2012  
 Information on Jewish businesses, undated

#### Correspondence

Suggestion for Temple history (letter), undated  
 Letter from Lynn Wolgamot to Sybil Mervis, undated  
 Letter from Jane Loettler to Sybil Mervis, 1989  
 Letter from "Barry" [Marks?] to Sybil Mervis, undated  
 Request for information, undated  
 Recommendation of Sara Askotzky by Alexa Ehrlich to help document the history of Danville's Jewish community, 2008  
 Correspondence with Rabbi Sheldon Switkin, 2012  
 Correspondence with Rabbi Jonathan Rosenbaum (includes notes), 2020  
 Copy of chain email text, "The Non-Official Guide to Jewish Food," 1999  
 Copy of chain email text, "This Is Why I Love Being a Jew," 2009  
 Copy of chain email text, "Brisket Is NOT Corned Beef," undated

#### Reference Materials

Copies of guides to collecting and organizing historical information, undated  
 Booklet by Jacob R. Marcus, "How to Write the History of an American Jewish Community," 1964  
 "Jewish Institutions of Higher Learning in the United States of America" (booklet), circa 1986  
 Booklet by the American Jewish Archives, undated  
 Copy of newspaper clipping, "Our Past Preserved," undated

### **Donation Documents**

This series includes correspondence with Jewish archives and research institutions, notices of donation receipt, and a booklet describing archival donation. The instances involved precede the donation of materials to the Illinois History and Lincoln Collections.

Notice of donation receipt by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (letter), 1991  
 Notice of donation receipt by the American Jewish Archives (letter), 2003  
 Request for donation by the American Jewish Historical Society (letter), 2003  
 Correspondence with the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership and the American Jewish Archives, 1992 and 2018-2019  
 Correspondence with the American Jewish Archives and the Indianapolis Chapter of Hadassah (includes notice of donation receipt by the Indiana Historical Society), 2012-2013  
 Booklet published by the American Jewish Archives, *The Archives Story*, 1959