

*“I have participated in several ‘Travels’ programs. We visit amazing places that I would never have visited on my own.”*

## TRAVELS IN AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

Philadelphia, PA, May 1-5, 2013

Dr. Gary P. Zola, executive director, and Ms. Lisa B. Frankel, director of programs, led the AJA’s 7th biennial “Travels in American Jewish History” to Philadelphia. Highlights included visits to the National Museum of Jewish History, the Rosenbach Library, the Constitution Center, the Delaware Valley Farm School and featured tours of historic congregations in the area: Mickve Israel, Keneseth Israel, Rodeph

Shalom, and Beth Shalom. Thirty participants were treated to interactive study sessions led by Dr. Jonathan D. Sarna, Rabbi Lance Sussman, Ph.D., and Dr. Dianne Ashton, relating to the fascinating people, organizations and events that are part of the rich American Jewish history of Philadelphia. Special guest, Mr. Michael M. Lorge, led the group in Havdallah on Saturday night.



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES  
LOCATED ON THE HISTORIC CAMPUS OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

3101 CLIFTON AVENUE, CINCINNATI, OH 45220

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[WWW.AMERICANJEWISHARCHIVES.ORG](http://WWW.AMERICANJEWISHARCHIVES.ORG)

## DIGITAL COLLECTIONS GOING ONLINE

The AJA is currently involved in many projects to digitize and make available online the full contents of a number of our collections. Through the generous support of Dr. Georgette Bennett, the digitization of the Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Papers is nearly complete, while plans are being made to digitize

the papers of Rabbi Herbert Friedman (1918-2008) through the support of the Wexner Foundation.



**Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum** (1925-1992) was a major architect of modern Jewish-Christian dialogue. Both nationally and internationally, he was one of the most widely respected representatives of the Jewish community on interreligious affairs in the late 20th century. Throughout his ca-

reer, he forged close friendships with Christian leaders from a wide range of denominations including Pope John XXIII, Pope John Paul II, Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He worked to change nearly 2,000 years of mutual animosity, ignorance and suspicion by helping Jews and Christians understand each other better. Over the years, Tanenbaum found himself at the center of most major Jewish-Christian controversies and agreements.

### The Staff

**Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus** ז"ל  
*Founding Director*  
(1947-1995)

**Dr. Gary P. Zola**  
*Executive Director*

**Ms. Lisa B. Frankel**  
*Director of Programs & Administration*

**Dr. Dana Herman**  
*Managing Editor, AJA Journal*

**Mr. Kevin Proffitt**  
*Senior Archivist for Research and Collections*

**Ms. Dorothy Smith**  
*Archivist*

**Mr. Nathan Tallman**  
*Associate Archivist*

**Ms. Elisa Ho**  
*Associate Archivist*

**Ms. Michelle Detroit**  
*Special Projects Archivist*

**Mr. Phil Reekers**  
*Digitization & Design*

**Mr. Al Simandl**  
*Building Operations Manager*

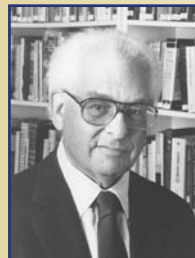
**Ms. Nancy Dowlin**  
*Senior Staff Assistant*

**Ms. Stacey Roper**  
*Executive Assistant*

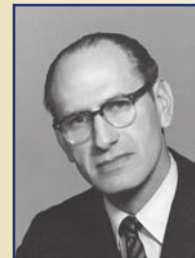
**Ms. Camille Servizzi**  
*Assistant to the Archivists*



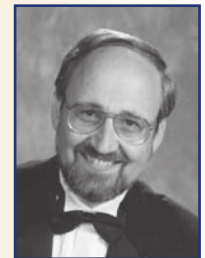
Marc H. Tanenbaum



Herbert A. Friedman



W. Gunther Plaut



Benny Kraut

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

In the past twelve months, the American Jewish Archives has received 375 new accessions to our archival collection. One of the most significant of these accessions was archival material from forty-four Sisterhood chapters across the country as part of Women of Reform Judaism's 100th anniversary celebration. These records highlight the activities of these local sisterhoods inside and outside their congregations, including involvement in areas of social action such as women's rights, civil rights, AIDS activism, and the legalized use of medical marijuana, among others.

Other significant acquisitions include the papers of Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut (1912-2012) and his son, Rabbi Jonathan Plaut (1942-1912). Gunther Plaut was the author of many works,

including his acclaimed series of commentaries on the Torah. Jonathan Plaut was rabbi of Temple Beth Israel in Jackson, Michigan and also the author of many works, including a history of the Hart family of Canada. In addition, the AJA received a large collection of records from the Central Conference of American Rabbis together with the papers of Rabbi Eric Yoffie, from his tenure as president of the Union for Reform Judaism. The AJA also received the research files of Dr. Benny Kraut (1947-2008), a professor of history and director of the Center for Jewish Studies at Queens College, CUNY. These files center on his *The Greening of American Orthodox Judaism: Yavneh in the 1960s*, a history of the Yavneh religious students collegiate organization that flourished in the 1960s.

## THE AJA CELEBRATES WRJ'S CENTENNIAL

This June will mark three years since members of the AJA's staff met with members of Women of Reform Judaism's (WRJ) Executive Committee who came to Cincinnati to explore ways in which they could partner with us in marking their centennial anniversary.

The AJA's archival professionals were given the task of selecting documents from the AJA's large and valuable WRJ collection that were displayed in the AJA's reading room and assembled in a booklet that was presented to these visitors. One of the featured items was a recording of the Sisterhood "Song of Welcome," which likely had not been sung in quite some time!

This group has an incredible sense of vision and their untiring enthusiasm for learning about their organization's history is impressive. Having dedicated so many years of their lives to WRJ certainly afforded them a cherished "insider's knowledge," but they understood that there was still much to glean from the national and district records of the organization that would make their centennial a truly historic experience.

The women returned the following June and delved deeper into the archival holdings. By this point, they had a clearer vision of what they were looking for, but remained open to letting the documents guide the outcome of their research. While they discovered

the names of past sisterhood members, activities, and events long forgotten, they also reminded us that the AJA's work in safekeeping WRJ history—and the history of Jewish life in America—is vitally important. They left the AJA with a wonderful motto that they themselves adopted: "Inspired by the Past. Committed to the Future."

Our enthusiasm was redoubled during the WRJ Fried Leadership Conference, which was held this past January in the historic city where the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS) was first established, Cincinnati. We were pleased to welcome more than 250 women to the AJA where we unveiled a joint venture that had been months and months in the making—a beautiful series of nine educational posters that highlight the major achievements of WRJ over the past century.

The next major centennial event will be held on June 2, 2013, when the AJA and WRJ will come together once again for the WRJ Centennial Symposium in another city that has played a central role in WRJ's history, New York.

One of the highlights of the symposium will un-

doubtedly be the keynote address, which will be delivered by Professor Jonathan D. Sarna, one of the leading historians of the American Jewish experience. In addition, a lively and stimulating panel discussion on the future of WRJ will be moderated by Professor Carole B. Balin. While it is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day activities of individual chapters, the Symposium will give participants the opportunity to explore the collective impact of 100 years of WRJ members working together to better our world.

The culmination of the centennial will take place at the Union of Reform Judaism's Biennial in December, 2013 where there will be an exhibit produced by the AJA utilizing documents, images, and objects from its WRJ collection.



Members of the WRJ's executive committee with Dr. Dana Herman

### ***Sisterhood: A Centennial History of Women of Reform Judaism***

Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) in partnership with the AJA is pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of a substantial new volume focusing on the remarkable and rich history of WRJ/NFTS. This book constitutes the first collection of historical scholarship devoted exclusively to the history of the organization.

Edited by Carole B. Balin, Dana M. Herman, Jonathan D. Sarna & Gary P. Zola, this title will be available in December 2013 from Ktav Publishing House.

