

---

## Guide to the Florence Freehof Collection, 1900-1990

### Collection number: 96/08

Western Jewish History Center

Berkeley, California

#### Contact Information:

- Western Jewish History Center
- Judah L. Magnes Museum
- 2911 Russell Street
- Berkeley, California, 94705
- Phone: (510) 549-6956
- Fax: (510) 849-3673
- Email: [WJHC@magnes.org](mailto:WJHC@magnes.org)
- URL: <http://www.magnes.org>

Processed by:

Kim Klausner

Date Completed:

1996

Encoded by:

Gabriela A. Montoya

© 1998 The Western Jewish History Center. All rights reserved.

---

### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Florence Freehof Collection,

**Date (inclusive):** 1900-1990

**Collection number:** 96/08

**Creator:** Freehof, Florence E.

**Extent:** 1.5 cubic feet

**Repository:** The Western Jewish History Center.

Berkeley, California 94705

**Language:** English

### Access

Collection is open for research by appointment only every Monday-Thursday, except for those Jewish and Federal holidays when it is closed.

### Publication Rights

It is the responsibility of the user to obtain copyright or publishing authorization from The Western Jewish History Center.

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Florence Freehof Collection, 96/08, The Western Jewish History Center, Judah L. Magnes Museum, Berkeley, California.

### Introduction

---

Asha Goldberg, a friend of Florence Freehof's from the dance community, donated these papers in July 1996. This collection contains materials collected by Florence Freehof and was processed by Kim Klausner in December 1996.

### History

Florence Freehof was born on August 27, 1909 in Nebraska. Originally named Florence Goldblum, she also used Florence Barlow as a stage name, according to an interview done with her husband in 1976 (WJHC Collection 76-6, Eastern European Jews in San Francisco, 1/3). At 27, Florence married Louis J. Freehof, an attorney practicing and teaching at the University of Chicago and the University of Denver. In 1945 (1946?), Temple Emanu-El offered Louis Freehof the newly created position of Executive Director and the couple relocated to San Francisco. Florence introduced and promoted Israeli dance and music in the United States as a teacher, director, author, choreographer, and musician. She wrote a number of books on Israeli folk dancing, including *Jews Are a Dancing People*. Florence Freehof was also active in a number of causes that benefited Jewish communities in both Israel and the United States. She was one of the founders of the Rikudon dance group and, with her husband, the Jewish Youth Conference. At her death on February 15, 1990, Freehof was president of Na'amat USA (formerly Pioneer Women).

The following collections and books at WJHC may provide more information about the groups with which the Freehofs were associated:

- Bernstein, Abraham. *"A History of Sinai Memorial Chapel in San Francisco."* Self-published: San Francisco, 1975.
- Rosenbaum, Fred. *Architects of Reform: Congregational and Community Leadership, Emanu-El of San Francisco, 1849-1980.* Western Jewish History Center: Berkeley, 1980.
- Scharlach, Bernice. *House of Harmony: Concordia-Argonaut's First 130 Years.* Western Jewish History Center: Berkeley, 1983.
- Richard Sloss Collection. WJHC 76-1.
- Eastern European Jews in San Francisco. WJHC 76-6, 1/3.

### Scope and Content

Most of the material in the collection dates from the second half of Freehof's life, the 1950s to the 1970s. The collection does include a copy of *The Chronicles of Temple Emanu-El* (1900) and a few other items dated prior to 1950 or after 1980. The majority of the collection, photographs and papers, was housed in 3-ring binders and photo albums that Freehof had arranged by organization or subject area. Freehof had labeled these binders Pioneer Women, Sol's Halacha, Shaare Zedek, and Sinai Memorial Chapel, and these titles were kept to identify some of the series. The material in the Dance and Music series was found, for the most part, in photo albums. The collection filled three boxes when it was donated but removing the photographs and papers from the binders and albums condensed it to fit into two boxes.

Freehof's interests and activities frequently overlapped with those of her husband, Louis. In a number of cases, particularly their participation in the Friends of Shaare Zedek Hospital, Israeli Independence Day celebrations, and interest in burial customs, Mr. Freehof assumed an appointed, official role while Ms. Freehof worked "behind the scenes." Some of the collection, primarily the Sinai Memorial Chapel and Louis Freehof series, documents Mr. Freehof's professional and cultural activities.

A few articles are stored in the Oversize Collections room.

### Condition Report

Many of the photographs were, or are, affixed to construction or black scrap-book paper; some pages have a photo on each side. Some of the photos have been removed from the paper, although bits of it remain on the back of the photos.

**Series I: Dance & Music, 1947-1983**

**Physical Description:** 22 Folders

**Scope and Content Note**

This series is composed, primarily, of photographs of people dancing Israeli folk dances, both in the United States and Israel. There are photographs of some of the workshops Freehof organized, including ones at the Camp for Living Judaism, Saratoga, CA, and in other parts of California, Nevada, and Pennsylvania. There are several pictures of Rivka Sturman, the Israeli dancer. There are also a number of items about shofars since Freehof was an avid collector.

**Series II: Pioneer Women, 1967-1971**

**Physical Description:** 12 Folders

**Scope and Content Note**

Contains organizational, educational, and promotional materials about Pioneer Women, The Women's Labor Zionist Organization of America (later Na'amat USA), particularly the Rachel Group, the San Francisco Chapter. Includes a short speech, written by an unknown author, about conditions of women pioneers in Israel in the early 20th century.

**Series III: Sol's Halacha, 1933-1990**

**Physical Description:** 9 Folders

**Scope and Content Note**

This series contains the writings of Solomon Freehof, Louis' brother. Solomon Freehof, Rabbi at Rodef Shalom, Pittsburgh, PA for 32 years, was a noted scholar of Reform Judaism. He was chairman of the Central Conference of American Rabbis' Responsa Committee and sent Florence many of his Halachic interpretations. While many of these responsa deal with questions about death and burial, there are some addressing issues arising in the 1960s and 1970s, such as space travel, psychedelic drugs, women wearing pants suits, homosexuality, unmarried seniors living together, and whether microwave ovens are suitable in a kosher kitchen. There was some dated correspondence that had been separated from the accompanying responsa prior to processing the collection, leaving most of the responsa undated.

**Series IV: Shaare Zedek, 1962-1973**

**Physical Description:** 21 Folders

**Scope and Content Note**

This series contains organizational, educational, and fundraising materials from the Friends of Shaare Zedek Hospital, particularly the San Francisco Chapter. The hospital, founded in Jerusalem in 1873, relied on financial support from abroad to carry on its programs. Correspondence from Elchanan Pels, the hospital's Director of Public Relations, materials concerning a photographic exhibit at Mt. Zion Hospital, and accounts and photos of the effects of the 1967 war on the hospital are included.

**Series V: Israel, 1950-1967**

**Physical Description:** 4 Folders

**Scope and Content Note**

Of particular interest in this series is the folder, "Booklets," 1950-1967, which contains "Israel Welcomes You: Information and Regulations for Visitors to Israel" (1950), "The Israel Festival Digest: Passover Edition" (1955), "Guide to a New Life: A Handbook for Those Who Plan to Live in Israel" (1956), and "Facts About Israel" (1957).

**Series VI: Sinai Memorial Chapel, 1958-1974**

**Physical Description:** 17 Folders

**Scope and Content Note**

Contains annual addresses of the President and Executive Director, financial reports, photographs of David Ben Gurion and Sinai Memorial Chapel board of directors in Israel, and other materials related to Louis Freehof's tenure as Executive Director. Of interest are two undated articles about a San Francisco Cemetery Workers' strike, materials about the Jewish Funeral Directors of America's Israel Forest Committee, and a preliminary response from the National Funeral Directors of America to Jessica Mitford's critique of the funeral industry, *The American Way of Death*.

**Series VII: Louis Freehof**

**Physical Description:** 6 Folders

**Scope and Content Note**

Among other things, contains photographs of Louis Freehof in Concordia Argonaut Club musicals. Refer to Richard Sloss Collection (WJHC 76-1) for identification of photos. Folder 2/22 in this series contains photos of a 20th anniversary celebration held in 1978. It is possible that this was for his tenure as director of Sinai Memorial Chapel and, if it can be identified as such, it should be moved to series VI.

**Series VIII: Miscellaneous, 1900-1969**

**Physical Description:** 6 Folders, 1 Bound Volume

**Scope and Content Note**

This series contains family photographs, The Chronicles of Emanu-El, and a few items that did not fit in the other series.

**Descriptive Guide**

Box 1

**Descriptive Guide**

**Dance & Music**

Box 1, Folder 1	<b>Folk Dance Institutes 1947, 1950, n.d.</b>
Folder 2	<b>Camp for Living Judaism 1954, n.d.</b>
Folder 3	<b>4th Annual Jewish Dance Institute 1957</b>
Folder 4	<b>Camp Hess Kramer Folk Dance Institute 1957</b>
Folder 5	<b>Four Couples Dancing n.d.</b>
Folder 6	<b>Israel Independence Day Celebration 1969</b>
Folder 7	<b>Temple Emanu-El Israel Independence Day n.d.</b>
Folder 8	<b>Florence Freehof in Costume n.d.</b>
Folder 9	<b>Jews Are a Dancing People n.d.</b>
Folder 10	<b>Ruth Hozz Photos 1967</b>
Folder 11	<b>Tel Aviv &amp; Jerusalem Dance Photos 1956</b>
Folder 12	<b>Israeli Dancers n.d.</b>
Folder 13	<b>Rivka Sturman 1957</b>
Folder 14	<b>Children Dancing 1964, n.d.</b>
Folder 15	<b>Dance Photo Negatives n.d.</b>
Folder 16	<b>Brandeis Day School's Passover 1970</b>
Folder 17	<b>Instrument Photos 1957, n.d.</b>
Folder 18	<b>Shofar Collecting 1971</b>
Folder 19	<b>Shofar Press Clippings 1965-1968, n.d.</b>
Folder 20	<b>Shofar Art 1983, n.d.</b>
Folder 21	<b>Shofar Photos 1967-1969, n.d.</b>
Folder 22	<b>Miscellaneous 1968, n.d.</b>

**Pioneer Women**

Box 1, Folder 23	<b>Membership List 1969</b>
Folder 24	<b>Installation Service n.d.</b>
Folder 25	<b>Meeting Announcements 1968-1971</b>
Folder 26	<b>National Office 1967-1969, n.d.</b>
Folder 27	<b>National Convention 1967</b>
Folder 28	<b>West Coast Region Office 1968-1969</b>
Folder 29	<b>West Coast Area Conference 1969</b>
Folder 30	<b>Correspondence 1967-1970</b>
Folder 31	<b>Fundraising 1968-1969</b>
Folder 32	<b>Educational Materials 1968-1969</b>
Folder 33	<b>News Clippings 1968-1970</b>
Folder 34	<b>Miscellaneous 1968-1970, n.d.</b>

**Sol's Halacha**

Box 1, Folder 35	<b>Solomon Freehof Biographical Information 1980-1990</b>
Folder 36	<b>Responsa 196?-197?</b>
Folder 37	<b>Responsa 1974, n.d.</b>
Folder 38	<b>Responsa 1974-1983, n.d.</b>
Folder 39	<b>Responsa 1977, 1980, 1987, n.d.</b>
Folder 40	<b>Correspondence 1958-1989</b>
Folder 41	<b>Solomon Freehof Sermons 1933, 1977-1989</b>
Folder 42	<b>Temple Bulletin 1958, 1973</b>
Folder 43	<b>Miscellaneous 1985-1990</b>

**Shaare Zedek Hospital**

Box 1, Folder 44	<b>Centenary Booklet &amp; Brief History 1973, n.d.</b>
Folder 45	<b>SF Friends Membership Records n.d.</b>
Folder 46	<b>SF Friends Board Meeting Minutes 1967-1970</b>
Folder 47	<b>Contact Lists 1966-1967</b>
Folder 48	<b>Shalom Newsletter 1963-1971</b>
Folder 49	<b>Mt. Zion Photo Exhibit 1968</b>
Folder 50	<b>Photo Exhibit Descriptive Manual 1968</b>
Folder 51	<b>Slide Show Commentary 1970, n.d.</b>
Folder 52	<b>Testimonial Lunch 1974</b>
Folder 53	<b>Correspondence from SF Branch 1967-1970</b>
Folder 54	<b>Correspondence from American Committee 1967</b>
Folder 55	<b>Correspondence from Hospital 1965-1973</b>
Folder 56	<b>Promotional Materials 1962-1970, n.d.</b>
Folder 57	<b>"Heartbeat" 1971-1973</b>
Folder 58	<b>Press Releases 1972-1973, n.d.</b>
Folder 59	<b>Newsletter 1966-1969</b>
Folder 60	<b>"At the Hospital" 1968-1974</b>
Folder 61	<b>Calendars 1974-1975</b>
Folder 62	<b>Guide for the Guide 1971</b>
Folder 63	<b>1967 War 1967</b>
Folder 64	<b>Miscellaneous 1967-1973</b>

**Israel**

Box 1, Folder 65	<b>Jewish National Fund Handbook 1968</b>
Folder 66	<b>Membership Plan for Midrasha of Sdeh Boker 1968</b>
Folder 67	<b>Hebrew Workbook n.d.</b>
Folder 68	<b>Booklets 1950-1967</b>

**Sinai Memorial Chapel**

Box 2, Folder 1	<b>President's Annual Message 1958-1961</b>
Folder 2	<b>Annual Meeting 1962-1970</b>
Folder 3	<b>Annual Meeting 1971-1972</b>
Folder 4	<b>Financial Statements 1966-1969</b>
Folder 5	<b>Cemetery Well &amp; Pump 1969</b>
Folder 6	<b>Business Tax Exemption 1968</b>
Folder 7	<b>Zion Adar Dinner 1965</b>
Folder 8	<b>The Story of Moses n.d.</b>
Folder 9	<b>Victor &amp; Daddy Story n.d.</b>
Folder 10	<b>Cong. Sherith Israel Annual Message 1959</b>
Folder 11	<b>Donation Thank You Letters 1960</b>
Folder 12	<b>Customer Thank You Letters 1959-1960</b>
Folder 13	<b>Correspondence 1969-1971</b>
Folder 14	<b>"The Director" 1963</b>
Folder 15	<b>Jew. Funeral Dir. of Amer. Israel Forest Comm. 1969</b>
Folder 16	<b>Nat'l Funeral Dir. Assoc. Study 1967</b>
Folder 17	<b>Miscellaneous 1963, 1974, n.d.</b>

**Louis Freehof**

Box 2, Folder 18	<b>Portraits n.d.</b>
Folder 19	<b>Concordia Argonaut Club Shows</b>
Folder 20	<b>Concordia Argonaut Club Shows</b>
Folder 21	<b>Israel Independence Day Celebration 1969</b>
Folder 22	<b>20th Anniversary Dinner 1978?</b>
Folder 23	<b>Miscellaneous 1961, 1974, n.d.</b>

**Miscellaneous**

Box 2, Folder 24    **Family Photos 1962-1969, n.d.**  
Folder 25            **Temple Sholem, Chicago 1946, n.d.**  
Folder 26            **"The Synagogue in Modern Jewish Life" 1939**  
Folder 27            **Jewish Center Program Aids 1949**  
Folder 28            **"The Youth Leader," NFTY 1953**  
bound\_volume Bnd. **"The Chronicles of Emanu-El" 1900**  
Vol.