

McLean County Museum of History

Moses Montefiore Temple Collection

Processed by Torii Moré
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1884-2002
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

Brief History

On May 14, 1882, a group of men of the Jewish faith met in Bloomington “for the purpose of forming a Congregation.” One week later it was decided that the congregation would be named Moses Montefiore, after the Jewish philanthropist of the same name. The President was Aaron Livingston, Vice President Sam Altman, Secretary Jacob Heldman, Treasurer Wolf Griesheim, and Trustees Sig Heldman, I. Freeland and Wm. Friedman.

Services were first held in the basement of the Free Congregational Church (which was later called the Independent Church, then the Unitarian Church). On April 6, 1884 Maik Livingston gave a donation of \$100 to go towards building a house of worship. In five years, a Byzantine edifice was constructed on the southeast corner of Jefferson and Prairie. The new temple was formally dedicated on Friday, May 31, 1889. All members of the congregation closed their businesses that day.

The congregation grew and prospered as time passed. Many rabbis ministered to the spiritual needs of the congregation, the most well-known being G. George Fox. Moses Montefiore was Rabbi Fox’s first pulpit, in 1909, upon graduation from Hebrew Union College.

In 1911, the Jewish Ladies Aid Society became the Temple Sisterhood and was so designated from 1921 onward. Some notable members of that society were Fannie Schwartzman, Mame Griesheim, Fannie Ochs and Hannah Livingston.

By the 1940s the population of the congregation was becoming too large for the temple to accommodate. In 1956, under the leadership of Rabbi Moses Landau, a movement was begun to build a new, larger temple. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Sam Stern and his building committee, and to Oscar Cohn, funds were raised and construction began in the fall of 1958. These efforts can be seen in this collection, as there are many records of letters and donations. The new temple, also called Moses Montefiore, was completed in the summer of 1959.

Scope Note

This collection includes record books, constitutions, correspondence, architecture plans, event programs, etc.

Box and Folder Inventory

Loose Items:

Record book- 8" x 13" Cash ledger, dues, assessments. Hand written 1884-

Record book- 8" x 13" Cash ledger, hand written 1876-

Bound book- 8" x 11" Original of minutes May 1882-Jan 1900, plus member lists 1952-53; and 1952 letter inside cover from Fannie Ochs.

Folder 1: Constitution and By-Laws

- 1.1 By Laws of Sir Moses Montefiore Congregation (handwritten, undated. bound)
- 1.2 By Laws of Sir Moses Montefiore Congregation, hand printed, 9 pp.
- 1.3 Constitution Moses Montefiore Congregation Bloomington, Illinois 1947. 2 copies.

Folder 2: Meeting Minutes May 1882-August 1898 (see loose items for original of this)

- 2.1 photocopy of book containing meeting minutes, secretary reports, officers, and financial contributions

Folder 3: Livingston Family Tree

- 3.1 Lowenstein/Livingston family tree 1760-1965

Folder 4: Letters to Community

- 4.1 Letters to local businesses asking for donations for remodeling dated March 27, 1946 (25 pages, carbon copies)
- 4.2 Reminders for 1946 Moses Montefiore Building Fund pledge, dated December 4-7, 1946 (37 pages, carbon copies)
- 4.3 Reminders for 1947 Moses Montefiore Building Fund pledges, dated October 17, 1947 (22 pages, carbon copies)
- 4.4 Letters asking for checks, dated December 17, 1947 (18 pages, carbon copies)

Folder 5: Donation Records

- 5.1 Blank pledge cards
- 5.2 Miscellaneous donation documentation
- 5.3 Letter from Edgar E. Lundeen to Sam Stern dated November 28, 1945 (Gives itemized list of costs for addition to temple)
- 5.4 Letter from Raymond Grossman donating \$50 dated April 17, 1946
Letter from Ernst Goldman pledging \$100, dated May 8, 1946
- 5.6 Letter from Mrs. Herman S. Ochs dated November 29, 1946
- 5.7 Draft of letters
 - List of members and addresses
 - List of members and donations (handwritten, 3 pages)
 - List of pledges and payments 4-8-1946
 - Letter to Mr. J. J. Woltman from Sam Stern regarding surveyor's plot of property at corner of Prairie and Monroe streets
 - List of pledges and payments 2-7-1947
 - Letter to Sam Stern from Chairman Building Committee postponing remodeling due to increased costs of materials
 - Letter to Sam Stern from Blanche Lurie, Secretary of Moses Montefiore Congregation requesting the temple be remodeled. Dated May 4, 1948
 - List of pledges and payments 10-26-1951
 - List of officers and members, 1952 (8 pages)
 - American State Bank Temple Rebuilding Fund account book-First entry: Jan. 24, 1957, Last entry: May 15 1959, Closed: April 5, 1971

Folder 6: Architecture Plans

- 6.1 First Floor Plan, Lundeen and Hilfinger Architects, 1957
- 6.2 Second Floor Additions, Lundeen and Hilfinger Architects, April 1945
- 6.3 Flier explaining the architecture of the temple
- 6.4 Blueprint, Proposed Landscaping Scheme, Lundeen & Hilfinger, September 10, 1959.

Folder 7: Anniversary and Building Dedication Programs and Booklets

- 7.1 Fiftieth Anniversary program, May 26, 1939.
- 7.2 Quotes from *Pantagraph* article and from Fannie Livingston Ochs, both June 5, 1952. One page.
- 7.3 Dedication program, February 19-21, 1960 (3 copies)
- 7.4 Centennial Anniversary, 1982. 56 pp. Includes history, founding families, rabbits, etc.
- 7.5 Centennial Year, 1982, 4 pp.
- 7.6 Centennial book print order form- March 1982 Ron Smith Printing Co., Inc.

Folder 8: Newspaper Articles and Histories

- 8.1 Letter to the editor, *Pantagraph*, December 17, 1888 (describes construction of new synagogue)
- 8.2 "The Temple Dedicated," *Pantagraph*, June 1, 1889
- 8.3 "Jewish Congregation Seventy Years Old—Sets Observance" in *The Pantagraph* Thursday, June 5, 1952
- 8.4 "Return to the Temple," *Pantagraph*, June 8, 1997

- 8.2 Moses Montefiore Temple by Leo Ludvig, undated. (3 pages)
- 8.3 “The Story of Moses Montefiore Temple plus answers to general questions about Judaism, 6 pp., typed c. 1973.
- 8.4 “Events listed in the Minutes of the Moses Montefiore Temple, 1882-1899, plus Jewish Periodicals in Illinois 1940, total 2 pp. Plus one page on “Important Dates in McLean County Jewish History.” All by Steven Schwartz and undated.

Folder 9: Service Programs

- 9.1 Confirmation Service, June 3, 1917.
- 9.2 Confirmation Service, May 27, 1923. Photocopy only.
- 9.3 Confirmation Service, June 16, 1929.
- 9.4 High Holy Day Schedule, Sept 1981. 16 pp. 2 copies.
- 9.5 Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day), April 23, 2017.

Folder 10: Annual Meeting and Reports

- 10.1 Centennial Annual Meeting and Reports, Feb 28, 1982.
- 10.2 Annual report packet, February 1983.

Folder 11: Member Directories

- 11.1 1981-82.
- 11.2 1872-83.
- 11.3 1998-99. Combined calendar and directory.

Folder 12: Miscellaneous

- 12.1 Bulletin No. 3 from District Grand Lodge No. 6, B' nai Brith. 1946 or 47.
- 12.2 Refusenik Bulletin, February/March 1982
- 12.3 Letter seeking funds to stop sale of U.S. arms to Saudi Arabia from American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Oct 1981.
- 12.4 Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Awards from Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois. 2002.
- 12.5 “Old Moses Montifore Temple,” notes on history and architecture of temple and application to national historic register, 2015. Plus flier on history of Temple event on 22 November 2015.