
Summary Information

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Abstract: Abigail Klionsky is a member of the Princeton University undergraduate Class of 2014 who undertook an oral history project on Jewish student life at Princeton as part of her senior thesis. The collection consists of fifteen transcripts of Klionsky’s interviews with Jewish alumni and also includes a copy of a transcript of Henry Morgenthau III’s interview with David Frisch in 1979.

Location: This collection is stored onsite at the Mudd Manuscript Library.
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Biography/History

Abigail Klionsky is a member of the Princeton University undergraduate Class of 2014 who undertook an oral history project on Jewish student life at Princeton as part of her senior thesis. Her senior thesis entitled In the Tiger’s Lair: The Development of Jewish Student Life at Princeton University 1915-1972 featured the perspectives of Jewish alumni whom she interviewed in 2013-2014. In the spring of 2014, Klionsky received a Bachelor of Arts in History with a certificate in Judaic Studies. After graduation she went on to work as a research associate for the Institute for Southern Jewish Life.

Description

The collection consists of fifteen transcripts of Klionsky’s interviews with Jewish alumni and also includes a copy of a transcript of Henry Morgenthau III’s interview with David Frisch in 1979. The interviews address several aspects of Jewish life both within and outside of Princeton, including Jewish upbringing, attendance to Jewish services-- particularly during the chapel requirement and high holidays-- colloquiums, the bicker process, and the demographic of the various eating clubs. Interviews with more recent alumni address the beginnings of kosher dining and the development of the Hillel, which later became the Center for Jewish Life. Other topics include the interactions with administrators, faculty and other affiliated individuals such as President Harold W. Dodds, Dean Christian Gauss, Rabbi Irving Levey and Albert Einstein. Lastly, the interviews include details of post-graduation involvement with Jewish life.

Arrangement

Materials are arranged alphabetically by interviewee last name.

Access and Use

Access

The collection is open for research use. Original audio files exist but are restricted.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

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Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

This collection consists of PDF files. Researchers are responsible for meeting the technical requirements needed to access these materials, including any and all hardware and software.

Acquisition and Appraisal

Provenance and Acquisition

The collection was transferred to the University Archives in March of 2014.

Appraisal

No materials were separated from the collection at the time of accessioning.

Processing and Other Information

Preferred Citation

Abigail Klionsky Oral History Collection on Jewish Student Life at Princeton, Name of Digital File, Princeton University Archives, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Encoding

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Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

Subject Headings

· Klionsky, Abigail
· Universities and colleges -- Alumni and alumnae -- New Jersey -- Princeton.
· Minorities -- Education (Higher) -- United States.
· Jewish students -- New Jersey.
· Oral histories.
· Princeton University
· Born digital.
Dr. Bob Adelstein ’1955, 2014 January 29

Description: Adelstein discusses his upbringing in New York City and his participation in Jewish life at Princeton, particularly his position as president of Hillel. He mentions his role at the Interclub Committee meeting that secured bicker bids for students in 1955, his attendance of Jewish religious services, and his observance of Jewish traditions including putting on Tefillin.

Mark Biderman ’1967, 2014 January 23

Description: Biderman addresses his participation in Jewish life during and after his time at Princeton. Among the topics he addresses are attendance to services, the proportion of Jewish students in eating clubs, and his post-graduation involvement as a board member of the Center for Jewish Life on campus.

Robert Bloom ’1951, 2013 October 28

Description: Bloom explains the development of his Jewish experience from growing up in a seldom observant home to his involvement in Jewish services at Princeton and after graduation. He recounts his interactions with famous individuals including Albert Einstein, whom he met while attending the first formal Jewish service on campus. Also mentioned are Bloom's experiences as a member of the Prospect Club.

Morton Denn ’1961, 2014 January 24

Description: Denn recounts anecdotes of his childhood in Patterson, New Jersey, his experiences as a Jewish student at Princeton including dealing with anti-Semitism, and organizing events for Hillel. Some of the notable events that are mentioned are the “dirty bicker” of 1958, the Princeton-Yale colloquium, and the UJA campaign. In addition, Denn addresses mandatory Saturday courses, Marc Diamond’s course on Judaism, and changes in the compulsory chapel requirement.

John Gartner ’1960, 2014 March 04

Description: Gartner discusses his involvement with Jewish life on campus including participating in Hillel services, organizing the Harvard-Princeton-Yale colloquium, and leading the student Hillel Cabinet. The interview also reveals details of his bidding experience during the “dirty bicker” of 1958. Some other events mentioned are the recitals of Karl Weinberg at the University Chapel and Melvin Tumin’s sociology course on social stratification.

Jim Grielsheimer ’1959, 2014 April 23

Description: Grielsheimer talks about his experiences with the bicker process of 1957 and 1958 as both a participant of the process and as a member of the Bicker Committee. He attributes the creation of the residential college system
to the bicker controversy and discusses his efforts as Hillel president to get outside Jewish agencies involved, and, furthermore, to tackle racial issues at the university. Also mentioned in the interview are his participation in Whig-Clio, his relationship with other Jewish students and contemporary issues including racial integration in the east side of Manhattan and the severity of polio.

Morton Kahan ’1964, 2014 March 04

Description: Kahan talks about his experiences as a “Frum” or conservative Jewish student at Princeton including his role in starting the Yavneh House, a Jewish kosher dining facility with the help of Rabbi Teich and Abe Kaufman. He also discusses his membership in Wilson Lodge, which was an alternative to the club system, his responsibilities as president of Hillel and his overall views of Jewish life while attending an all- male university in the 1960s.

Emile Karafiol ’1955, 2013 December 31

Description: Karafiol, a Holocaust survivor provides details about growing up in a secular home despite his mother’s Orthodox background. He provides details of his parents’ political involvement with left wing groups like the Bundists and how moving to different countries during World War II influenced his life as a student at Princeton. Other topics discussed are Karafiol’s friendship with other students including Paul Sigler from the Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrated Genomics, and the lack of participation in Jewish activities.

Henry Morgenthau III ’1939, 2014 January 30

Description: Morgenthau discusses his upbringing including attendance to a prep school, his non-religious household and his parents’ involvement with the Henry Street Settlement and a poker club that included Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the publisher of the New York Times. The interview addresses tensions among German and Eastern European Jews and the exclusion of Jews in various social circles. Individuals mentioned include LeCorbusier; Morgenthau’s friend, Jerry Straus, heir to Macy’s department store; and Albert Einstein.

Henry Morgenthau III ’1939 interview with David Frisch ’1940, 1979 September 25

Description: David Frisch ’40, the son of a southern rabbi in Galveston, Texas, tells of his experiences as a Jewish student at Princeton in the 1930s, particularly his involvement in leading Jewish services at Murray Dodge along with Joseph Schein ’37 during the compulsory chapel requirement. Frisch also provides details about the Galveston Movement, which diverted Jewish immigration to the American South. Prominent individuals mentioned in the interview include Jacob Schiff, who led the Galveston movement, Erwin Panofsky, Roy Dickinson Welch, and Albert Einstein. Other topics of discussion include participation in eating clubs, places of employment and dating.

Theodore Perlman ’1946, 2014 February 01

Description: Perlman recounts his experiences growing up in Trenton as a second-generation Princeton student and his experiences at Princeton during
World War II. He compares his experience as a Jewish student in comparison to his father, a member of the Class of 1916. Also mentioned are anecdotes about Frank Glick, a Jewish football player.

Ernest Rubenstein ’1950, 2013 October 30

Description: Rubenstein talks about his Jewish upbringing in Brooklyn and provides details about student life in the post-war period. Some of the topics addressed are dormitory arrangements, anti-Semitism in the eating clubs, and admission quotas for Jewish students. Rubenstein also provides anecdotes about Daniel Polisar, provost of Shalem College, and Dick Kazmaier ’52, a Heisman trophy winner.

Dr. Gerald Sandler ’1957, 2014 January 30

Description: Sandler describes his upbringing in Portland, Maine and his involvement at the university including serving as vice president of Hillel and providing awareness of the bicker process to his fellow Jewish classmates. Sandler lists anecdotes of a number of famous classmates including literary theorist Edward Said, real estate magnate David Mandelbaum, and Lee Macht, a well-known psychiatrist. Other topics of discussion including the banning of Jews from certain communities, the grading system, and compulsory chapel.

Diana Savit ’1973, 2014 February 26

Description: Savit, a member of one of the first classes of women admitted to Princeton, discusses her experience as a conservative Jewish student at the University. Savit addresses her role in organizing kosher meals along with Marilyn Schlacter at Wilson College and in changing course registration policies that interfered with religious observance. Other topics mentioned are the admission process during the early days of co-education, participation at the Yavneh House, and other Jewish activities on campus as well as the opening of Stevenson Hall.

Joseph Schein ’1937, 2013 October 28

Description: Schein provides details of his role in establishing alternative Jewish meetings under the director of Dean Christian Gauss to satisfy the compulsory chapel requirement. He discusses his interactions with individuals like Albert Einstein, who he solicited for assistance with Jewish services; his mentor Abraham Flexner; then best friend William Pecora; Maurice Coindreau; and Lynn Townsend White Jr. In addition to discussing his role with Jewish life, Schein talks about his upbringing during the Prohibition era including his expulsion from a Hebrew school.

David Zielenziger ’1974, 2014 February 26

Description: Zielenziger describes his upbringing as a conservative Jew and his religious experiences as an undergraduate student. He provides details of his involvement with Jewish matters particularly in the solicitation of funds for the establishment of a kosher dining facility in Stevenson Hall. Other events mentioned are the Yom Kippur War and its effect on campus, Young Israel’s
contribution to Kosher dining, and rabbinical influences on the structure of religious services.