

**Irene Kaufmann Settlement (Pittsburgh Pa.), Records, 1922-1957  
(bulk 1922-1936)**

**Rauh Jewish Archives**

**Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania Archives MSS# 78**

**One box (Box 1); 0.5 linear feet**

History of the Irene Kaufmann Settlement (1895-1956)

The Irene Kaufmann Settlement (IKS) was Pittsburgh's largest and most prominent settlement house from the late 19th through the first half of the 20th century and the principal one for Jewish immigrants during that time period. The IKS (affectionately pronounced ikes) was also a leader in social, civic, health, recreational and educational activities for the City of Pittsburgh. The IKS was originally founded as the Columbian Council School and Settlement in 1895. The school's name was borrowed from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where the Congress of Women's Organizations challenged women from all over the country to establish social settlements for the assistance of immigrant assimilation into American culture. The Columbian School opened on January 5, 1896 through the efforts of Rabbi Lippman Mayer of Rodef Shalom Congregation (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), who developed the Russian School for Jewish immigrant children, and Mrs. A. Leo (Cassie) Weil, President of the Columbian Council.

With a volunteer staff and philanthropic support, the school had over 200 students by the end of the first year. The school began in a small room in a house on Miller Street, then moved to the Sunday School rooms of Rodef Shalom by 1897. By the fall of 1897, the School had rented two rooms in a house on 32 Townsend St. and by the next year, the Council occupied the entire house. In 1899, the Russian School and the Columbian School were officially merged. The expanded size of the school's facilities reflected their change in functions within the Jewish Community. The school's mission changed from basic Jewish education for immigrant children, to one including services to their parents and siblings, home visitations, health care, and activities ranging from crafts to athletics. Although the original service area, the Hill District, was predominantly Jewish at the time (late 19th century and would continue to be through the first two decades of the 20th century), the activities of the School attracted and included all area immigrant groups. The Settlement was one of the earliest in this country and became one of the largest worldwide, hosting national and international conferences and visitors who looked to it for ideas and inspiration.

To accommodate its rapid growth, the School purchased the Slagel Homestead at 1835 Center Street, and formally opened the Columbian School building in January 1901. The charter incorporators and officers included: Mrs. A. Leo Weil (president), Mrs. Enoch Rauh (vice president), Mrs. A.J. Sunstein (secretary), Mrs. Albert Blumberg (treasurer), Mrs. Philip Hamburger, and Mrs. Henry Oppenheimer. However, the all-volunteer staff could not keep up with the great demands on the School's increasing membership. In 1909, an all out fundraising effort was made to the general Jewish community for the first time. Mr. Nathaniel Spear replaced Mrs. A. Leo Weil as president and marked the changeover from a female to a male dominated Board. In an effort to not cut back services, Mr. A. Leo Weil and Rabbi J. Leonard Levy of Rodef Shalom approached Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kaufmann, owners of Kaufmann's

Department Store, one of the largest in Pittsburgh. Weil and Levy suggested that the Kaufmanns donate a memorial to their daughter Irene who had recently died. In 1909, the Kaufmanns donated \$150,000 for the construction of a new building on the same site, and established a \$40,000 endowment in their daughter's memory. The Kaufmanns gave generously to the Settlement up to the time of Henry Kaufmann's death in 1955, when a large endowment was left to the Settlement. In 1911, the Irene Kaufmann Settlement was dedicated, with the assistance of Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull House and Lillian Wald of New York City's Henry Street Settlement. With this new source of financial support, the IKS was able to boost its operating expenditures from less than \$2,000 in 1909 to over \$89,000 in 1939.

The influence of the Irene Kaufmann Settlement in the social services was pervasive, due in no small part to its dedicated staff, many of whom lived on the premises. By 1939, there was a total staff complement of over 60, 20 of whom were in residence, and a volunteer corps of over 100. One individual who deserves special mention is Miss Anna Barbara Heldman, R.N. ("Heldy"). A native of Castle Shannon, Heldman joined the staff in 1902 and served until her death in 1940. Not Jewish herself, she became fluent in Yiddish and her name was a household word throughout the City. Included among her many accomplishments during her 38 years of service were: initiation of the Visiting Nursing Service, supervision of medical inspection in the City's schools, laying the groundwork for the Children's Welfare Division of the City's Department of Health, field work for the Typhoid Study (1907, a part of the Pittsburgh Survey), the 1908 Housing Survey, supervision of what eventually became the Public Health Nursing Association (PHNA) of Pittsburgh, and establishment of the Better Baby Clinic (eventually taken over by the PHNA of Pittsburgh). Heldman published an accounting of some of her experiences in a memoir entitled "A Neighbor's Tales." To express their thanks to Heldman, in 1939, a year before her death, Overhill Street was changed to Heldman Street, and in 1957 the Settlement was renamed the Anna B. Heldman Community Center.

Recreational activities sponsored by the IKS included athletics, arts programs and clubs. Clubs were established for practically every age and interest group, totaling 101 clubs with an attendance of 24,300 in 1926. Each club created an organizational structure and often produced a newsletter. Clubs were organized around sports, cultural activities, drama, debate, immigrant acclimation, mothers, free loan, and B'nai B'rith Lodges. The Settlement initiated numerous programs that were eventually taken over by city agencies and by the Board of Education including English and citizenship classes, a visiting nurses service, the first pre-natal nursing service in Pittsburgh, Better Baby Conferences, a library reading room for local residents, and others. The IKS is also remembered for its vital work to promote health in the community. The work undertaken by the IKS included: a typhoid study, work on the influenza epidemic, investigation of women's work in the stogie factories, organization of Better Neighborhood Contests, leadership in slum clearance and provision of low cost housing, sponsorship of the Milk Well (a free milk program for kids in school during the spring and summer), organization of Free Kindergartens, scholarships, Free Employment Bureau, Immigrant Aid, and the Open Air School. The presence of the IKS in the social services was pervasive.

The IKS also made outstanding contributions in the areas of recreational and cultural activities. The clubs sponsored many of the athletic efforts, including all age and interest groups, utilizing

the physical facilities beyond their capacity. One individual, Nathan H. Kaufman (1910-1993), assistant athletic director and swimming coach from 1929-1938, was to youth athletics what Anna B. Heldman was to social services. Other activities were provided to the entire community, not only for members. The Annual Community Picnic in Schenley Park, Public Arbor Day, Civic Open Forums, and the Annual Neighborhood Reception & Tea are examples. The directors and boards of the IKS felt strongly that cultural activities were an important part of human development. The IKS was well known for its Music and Art Schools and Little Theater productions. Many students of Anna Perlow (music) and Samuel Rosenberg (art) went on to become well known musicians and artists. Summertime recreational and social activities were also trend setters in Pittsburgh and beyond, namely their play school, citywide day camps and playgrounds, and Emma Farm Camp in Harmony (Butler County), Pennsylvania. The IKS also housed the activities and offices of various public and private agencies such as the Public Health Nursing Association, Board of Education adult education classes, Center Avenue Religious School, University Maternity Dispensary, and American Red Cross.

Sister institutions and descendants of the Irene Kaufmann Settlement also played an important part in the history of the IKS. Paralleling the development of the IKS, sixteen young men formed the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) in 1910, meeting in the Tree of Life synagogue on Craft Avenue in Oakland. In 1919, the YMHA merged with the Young Women's Hebrew Association to form the YM&WHA. On May 23, 1926, a new building for the Association was dedicated on Bellefield Avenue, across from the Heinz Chapel, in Oakland. The first Executive Director, Herman Passamaneck, served in that capacity for more than twenty-five years. The Kaufmann family played a significant role there as well, when Edgar J. Kaufmann Sr. donated \$35,000 for the Morris Kaufmann Memorial Auditorium.

Reflecting the change in the population in the Hill District in the 1940s and 1950s, the IKS became the Anna B. Heldman Community Center in 1957. By this time, the majority population served by the Center on the Hill was African-American and the Jewish population had moved to East End neighborhoods such as East Liberty and Squirrel Hill. To reflect this population shift, the IKS opened centers in 1943 on Forbes Avenue in Squirrel Hill, in the former Squirrel Hill Boys Club, and in the East End, at using facilities of two synagogues and a high school in 1948. The East End center served over 1,000 members immediately after the opening, but was closed in 1973, reflecting another population change. The YM&WHA continued programming independently until 1961 when it merged with what was by now called the Irene Kaufmann Centers, becoming the Y-IKC's. This new organization had two equal directors, Arnold Jerry Auerbach for the functions formerly run by the YM&WHA and Sidney Lindenberg for the functions formerly run by the IKS. In 1984, the Bellefield Avenue building in Oakland was sold to the University of Pittsburgh, with the proceeds going towards the new facility in Squirrel Hill. This facility, called the Jewish Community Center, was built at 5738 Forbes Avenue, in the center of Squirrel Hill's commercial district. The Center is a member of the Jewish Community Centers of America and continues to serve a vibrant urban Jewish community into the 1990s. In 1964 the Anna B. Heldman Center on the Hill was closed and all but the original auditorium of the IKS was demolished. A new social organization, Hill House, was built on the site of the original IKS building and primarily serves the African-American community.

## Scope and Content Note

The Irene Kaufmann Settlement Records are housed in one archival box and are arranged in two series. Series have been designated for the Administrative Materials and for General Activities of the Settlement. These records include organizational histories, annual reports, newsletters, employee manuals, and representative samples of publicity material used to promote the activities of the IKS. Though by no means comprehensive, these records provide information on the activities and organization of the IKS during the 1920s through the 1950s. Since the bulk of this material documents a relatively short time period, the limited number of available resources provide enough information to adequately document the organization during the 1920s and 1930s. Furthermore, the bulk of the material documents the period of most precipitous growth for the organization in the years when the only site was in the Hill District, and primarily served a Jewish population. The far reaching influence of the IKS can be seen through the variety of publicity materials and administrative materials. The best documentation of the activities of the IKS are found in the photographs (arranged and described separately as MSP #78).

### **Series I: Administrative Materials (1923-1957)**

The Administrative Materials are arranged alphabetically by folder title and include annual reports, building plans, employee manuals, an Anna B. Heldman tribute, histories, membership and promotional materials, various newsletters and statistical data. Administrative materials primarily include printed items that were produced for the staff and the general public and do not document the decision making process at the IKS. The annual reports and statistical data written by the executive directors contain a great deal of data on the population served, financial status of the institution, as well as brief historical overviews. The 1926 and 1953 annual reports add particular depth to the records, as the former reflects the height of Jewish involvement on the Hill, whereas the 1953 report reflects the various centers which developed as a result of population shifts. The histories from 1936 and 1957 represent very different pictures of an institution continuously striving to serve its changing constituency. The membership material consists of booklets that include fee structure and schedule of classes and activities. The newsletters provide a small sampling of the weekly newsletters that announced all related IKS happenings to the community. The staff manual (c1950) explains the relationship between the IKCs and other community agencies and resources, the physical facilities with maps and floor plans, fee structure, staffing and benefits, and other information.

### **Series II: General Activities of the Settlement (1922-1936)**

The General Activities of the Settlement Materials are arranged alphabetically by folder title and include advertising cards, programs, tickets, newsclippings, calendars and other sundry items used to advertise and inform the members and the community about IKS events. These published items were used to advertise athletic, club, community-wide, cultural, recreational and other events, as well as meetings and lectures discussing education, health, and welfare. These items document a wide variety of the activities sponsored by the IKS, but represent a small sampling of the breadth and depth of these activities. Well represented in these records are the

activities of the clubs and the material generated for cultural programs such as the art, drama and music schools. Of particular note among art materials are a series of etchings by Samuel Filner done in 1933, made into postcards, which depict IKS activities and neighborhood scenes. A very popular and well attended event was the annual community picnic held in Schenley Park, an event open to the entire community. Of interest as well are the many activities that the IKS co-sponsored with other community agencies and organizations.

Provenance: These items came in at least one accession and were combined into one body of records in 1994. No documentation is available for the donation of later material.

Acc# 1936x                      Gift of Sidney A. Teller, (Early Records. Mr. Teller was the first resident director of the Settlement).

Restrictions: None.

Separations: To the Photographic Collection, one linear foot of photographs have been separately arranged and described as MSP# 78.

Catalog Entries: The following entries are included in the Library and Archives catalog.

main entry: Irene Kaufmann Settlement (Pittsburgh, Pa.).

- subject 1. Athletics--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
entries 2. Camps--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
3. Charities--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
4. Clubs--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
5. Community Centers, Jewish--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
6. Hebrew Free Loan Association.  
7. Hill District (Pittsburgh, Pa.)--Social Life and Customs.  
8. Housing--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
9. Jewish camps--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
10. Jewish theater--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
11. Jews--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
12. Jews--Social Life and Customs--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
13. Parks--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
14. Pittsburgh (Pa.)--Social Life and Customs.  
15. Recreation--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
16. Social Settlements--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
17. Sports--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
18. Women--Societies and clubs--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
19. Women, Jewish--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.  
20. Women in Charitable Work--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.

added 1. Anna B. Heldman Community Center (Pittsburgh, Pa.).

- entries
2. Columbian Council School and Settlement (Pittsburgh, Pa.).
  3. Emma Farm Camp (Harmarville, Pa.).
  4. Emma Farm Camp (Harmony, Pa.).
  5. Heldman, Anna B. (-1940).
  6. Kaufman, Nathan H. (1910-1993).
  7. Kaufmann, Henry (-1955).
  8. Mulbish Arumin.
  9. Schenley Park (Pittsburgh, Pa.).
  10. Teller, Sidney A. (1883-1973).
  11. Visiting Nursing Service (Pittsburgh, Pa.).
  12. Young Mens & Young Women's Hebrew Association (Pittsburgh, Pa.).
  13. Y-IKC (Pittsburgh, Pa.).

Processor: c1988; Original inventory by Donald Haggerty. February, 1994; Records rearranged and inventory rewritten by Judith B. Ross.

### Container List

#### Series I: Administrative Materials (1923-1957)

Box 1	Folder 1	Annual Reports	1926-1953
	Folder 2	Building Plans	1933
	Folder 3	Employee Manuals	c1950
	Folder 4	Heldman, Anna B.	1927
	Folder 5	Histories	1936-1957
	Folder 6	Membership and Promotion	1927-1937
		Newsletters	
	Folder 7	IKS Neighbors ( <i>contents missing 6/18/07—LAL</i> )	1923-1928
	Folder 8	IKS News	1935-1936
	Folder 9	The Loudspeaker	1928
	Folder 10	Statistics	1927-1935
	Folder 11	Volunteers	1927-1928

#### Series II: General activities (1922-1936)

	Folder 12	Athletics & Recreation	1927-1936
		Clubs	
	Folder 13	Activities	1926-1928
	Folder 14	Newsletters	1922-1936
	Folder 15	Community-wide Events	1926-1936
	Folder 16	Co-sponsored Activities	1926-1935
		Cultural	
	Folder 17	Art	1928-1933
	Folder 18	Drama	1922-1936
	Folder 19	Music	1927-1936
	Folder 20	Health, Education & Welfare	1933-1934
	Folder 21	Socialization	1927-1936
	Folder 22	Summertime Activities	1926-1936