

Jewish Public Library Archives

Finding Aid - Motel and Chienke Sivak Fonds (1040)

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Motel and Chienke Sivak Fonds

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Summary information

Repository:	Jewish Public Library Archives
Title:	Motel and Chienke Sivak Fonds
Reference code:	1040
Date:	[1925]-2011 (date of creation)
Date:	[1925]-2011 (date of creation)
Physical description:	Contains .38m of textual records, 41 photographs, and 18 sound recordings
Physical location:	JPL-A Bays
Language:	English
Language:	Hebrew
Language:	Yiddish
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	This description was created by Processing Archivist Kate Moore in June 2022.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Motel Sivak was born in a Ukrainian shtetl (small town) called Monastyrshche in 1909 to parents David (a Hasid and a Zionist) and Friede. Motel's family was forced to flee their village in 1920, and in 1923 they arrived to settle in Montreal. The following year, Motel helped establish the Montreal Hashomer Hatzair with the dream of becoming a halutzim (pioneer) in a kibbutz in Palestine. Motel also initiated the Marxist-Zionist movement of the Left Poale Zion and was involved in a number of other Zionist Youth Movements. In 1925, Motel met Lithuanian-born Chienke Sivak, who he would go on to marry. Motel and Chienke spent some time in a kibbutz in Palestine before returning to Canada, where they continued with active membership in the Zhitlovsky Branch of the Labour Zionist Farband Movement. Motel passed away in 2002. His memoir is entitled "Chiekne's Motl and Motl's Chienke: A Twentieth Century Story," and exists in both Yiddish and English.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Chienke Sivak was born in a Lithuanian shtetl (small town) called Pilvishok in 1909 to parents Gershon and Mary. While in Lithuania, Chienke was involved in the Hashomer Hatzair which prepared her for a pioneering life in Palestine. Chienke's family decided to relocate to Montreal, however, in order to stay close to family members who had recently emigrated. In 1925, Chienke met Motel Sivak, who she would go on to marry. Motel and Chienke spent some time in a kibbutz in Palestine before returning to Canada, where they continued their Zionist activities, including active membership in the Zhitlovsky Branch of the Labour Zionist Farband Movement.

Chienke passed away in 1996. Her memoir is entitled "Chiekne's Motl and Motl's Chienke: A Twentieth Century Story," and exists in both Yiddish and English.

Scope and content

The fonds contains records which attest to Motel Sivak and Chienke Sivak's upbringings in the shtetels of Monasteryshche and Pilvishok (respectively), including photographs, articles, and booklets. A number of records, including photographs, newspaper articles, and correspondence document Chienke and Motel's involvement in the Zionist movement in Montreal, particularly with the Farband Labour Zionist Organization and the Zhitlovsky Branch of the Labour Zionist Farband Movement. Memoirs and transcribed stories pertaining to several of Chienke and Motel's family members can also be found in the fonds, as well as handwritten copies of Chienke's favourite poems and poems of Chienke's own creation. The records culminate in English and Yiddish manuscripts of Motel and Chienke's memoir entitled "Chiekne's Motl and Motl's Chienke: A Twentieth Century Story," as well as a bound copy and Yiddish and English audio recordings of the memoir on cassette.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the subject of the fonds.

Immediate source of acquisition

The fonds was donated to the Jewish Public Library Archives by Motel Sivak on September 12, 1995.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Draft

Access points

- Farband
- Labour Zionist Alliance (Montreal, Quebec)
- Poale Zion (subject)
- Textual record (documentary form)
- Sound recording (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Yiddish poetry (subject)
- Labour Zionism - Canada (subject)
- Labour Zionism (subject)
- Monastyrshche (Ukraine) (place)
- Pilviškiai (Lithuania) (place)
- Montreal (Quebec) (place)

Series descriptions

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
1040-[1]	File - Chapters 1-10 of Motel and Chienke Sivak's Yiddish autobiography manuscript <i>Scope and content:</i> Contains chapters 1-10 of Yiddish autobiography manuscript, handwritten on lined paper. <i>Note [generalNote]:</i> Chunks of chapters are bound with metal bolts. <i>Physical location:</i> JPL-A Bays	[199-?]	
1040-[2]	File - Chapters 11-16 of Motel and Chienke Sivak's Yiddish autobiography manuscript <i>Scope and content:</i> Contains chapters 11-16 of Yiddish autobiography manuscript, handwritten on lined paper. <i>Note [generalNote]:</i> Chunks of chapters are bound with metal bolts. <i>Physical location:</i> JPL-A Bays	[199-?]	
1040-[3]	File - Chapters 4, 6, and 7 of English translation of Motel and Chienke Sivak's Yiddish autobiography <i>Scope and content:</i> Contains chapters 4, 6, and 7 of English translation of autobiography, both photocopied and handwritten. <i>Note [generalNote]:</i>	[199-?]	

	<p>Chunks of chapters are bound with metal bolts.</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>
1040-[4]	<p>File - Yiddish memoirs written by Motel Sivak's father, David Sivak [199-?]</p> <p><i>Note [generalNote]:</i></p> <p>Contains one spiral-bound memoir and a collection of loose-leaf pages.</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>
1040-[5]	<p>File - Chienke Sivak's poetry compositions and copies of her favorite poems [195-?]</p> <p><i>Scope and content:</i></p> <p>Contains stapled loose-leaf sheets and small lined booklets with Chienke Sivak's poetry compositions, as well as a lined notebook with the title FIRST AID.</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>
1040-[6]	<p>File - English translation of 5 chapters of Motel and Chienke Sivak's autobiography, and Alyssa Sivak's term paper [199?-1993]</p> <p><i>Scope and content:</i></p> <p>Contains English translations of 5 chapters of Motel and Chienke Sivak's autobiography, as well as Alyssa Sivak's (Motel and Chienke's granddaughter's) term paper entitled "Chazak Veh Ematz--Be Strong and Be Prepared: Jewish Immigrant Youth and Labour Zionism in Montreal."</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>
1040-[7]	<p>File - Yiddish typescript memoir of Motel and Chienke Sivak's autobiography, with scanned pictures [199-]</p> <p><i>Note [generalNote]:</i></p> <p>282 unbound pages with cardstock dividers delineating sections.</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>
1040-[8]	<p>File - Booklets pertaining to the Farband Labour Zionist organization and correspondence 1972-1992</p> <p><i>Scope and content:</i></p> <p>Contains 3 jubilee booklets pertaining to the Farband Labour Zionist organization as well as correspondence between Motel Sivak and the Canadian Jewish News, Jewish People's Schools, Canadian Association for Labor Israel, Jewish Public Library, and Jewish National Fund of Canada. Includes newspaper clipping featuring Motel and Chienke Sivak. Includes a report entitled "A Special Report on the Geriatric Center of Petach Tikva" including colour photographs, and handwritten Yiddish notes.</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>

1040-[9]	<p>File - Photographs of the Zhitlovsky Branch of the Labour Zionist Farband Movement (Montreal) 1925-1985</p> <p><i>Scope and content:</i></p> <p>Contains photographs of the Labour Zionist Alliance in Montreal, certificates from Pioneer Women Na'amat, portraits of Poale Zion youth, and other various group portraits. Also contains newspaper clippings, including an article about periodicals on microfilm at the Jewish Public Library.</p> <p><i>Note [generalNote]:</i></p> <p>Photographs were originally housed in a photo album with the inscription "Zhitlovsky Branch of Labour Zionist FARBAND" and were removed for preservation. Contains 15 b&w photographs and 5 colour photographs. Some English and Yiddish inscriptions on back.</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>
1040-[10]	<p>File - Photographs and newspaper clippings from an album entitled "In Memory of Hometown - Monastrisht" 1947-1972</p> <p><i>Scope and content:</i></p> <p>Contains newspaper clippings and photographs pertaining to Monastrisht (Monastyryshche), Ukraine. Photographs feature family members at events, gatherings, and historic sites. Also includes certificates from the Organization of Peasantry of Monastrishche, a message of thanks from the Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture of Columbia University for contributions to the Language and Culture Atlas of Ashkenazic Jewry, and a number of Yiddish newspaper articles from 1947.</p> <p><i>Note [generalNote]:</i></p> <p>All contents previously housed in album and removed for preservation. Order retained. Contains 19 b&w photographs. Some Yiddish and English inscriptions on back.</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>
1040-[11]	<p>File - Yiddish scrapbook commemorating life of Chienke's brother and Yiddish books pertaining to a nearby shtetl [1972-1989]</p> <p><i>Scope and content:</i></p> <p>Contains two Yiddish books, one written for children pertaining to a shtetl near Sivak's shtetl (Monastyryshche). Also contains a family scrapbook with printed b&w photos, and a scrapbook commemorating the life of Chienke Sivak's brother.</p> <p><i>Note [generalNote]:</i></p> <p>English inscription inside one of the books and one of the scrapbooks.</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>
1040-[12]	<p>File - Copy of the Sivaks' memoir entitled "Chiekne's Motl and Motl's Chienke: A Twentieth Century Story" 2011</p> <p><i>Scope and content:</i></p> <p>Contains one copy of Chienke and Motel Sivak's memoir, published in 2011, edited with commentary by Jacob G. Sivak. Also contains copy of Motel Sivak's obituary and a business card of his.</p> <p><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p>JPL-A Bays</p>

1040-[13]	<p data-bbox="360 142 1528 178">File - Recordings on audiocassette of English "Chiekne's Motl and Motl's Chienke: A Twentieth Century Story" [2011]</p> <p data-bbox="360 254 1528 289"><i>Scope and content:</i></p> <p data-bbox="360 296 1528 359">Contains 18 audiocassettes, which are 2 sets of English memoirs. One set includes newspaper clipping of Motel Sivak's obituary.</p> <p data-bbox="360 369 1528 405"><i>Note [generalNote]:</i></p> <p data-bbox="360 411 1528 447">Contains 18 cassettes (2 sets of 9 cassettes). Cassettes are mostly labelled, in both English and Yiddish.</p> <p data-bbox="360 457 1528 493"><i>Physical location:</i></p> <p data-bbox="360 499 1528 535">JPL-A Bays</p>
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