

Jacob Gitelman Papers

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Summary Information

Repository	Local History & Genealogy Division
Creator	Gitelman, Jacob, 1899-1991
Title	Jacob Gitelman Papers
Date [inclusive]	1936-1991
Extent	1.0 Cubic feet
Language	English
Abstract	The papers of Jacob Gitelman, which includes personal items related to his tenure as a judge and attorney and records of and papers presented to the Philosophers' Club, offer insight into a progressive thinker and social advocate who used his position to make positive changes in Rochester, a city already known for its history of reform. The papers date between the years 1936 and 1991.

Citation

Jacob Gitelman/Philosopher's Club Papers, Local History & Genealogy Division, Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County, N.Y.

Biographical Note

Jacob Gitelman (1899-1991) graduated from New York University Law School and settled in Rochester in 1923. During his tenure as a City Court judge from 1934 to 1940, Gitelman's progressive views and interest in social welfare prompted him to enforce jail sentences on those caught driving while intoxicated. Taking into consideration the social and economic ramifications of jail time, Gitelman introduced the "weekend sentence," which allowed people to serve their time on weekends or other convenient days so that their employment and family life were not jeopardized. After its initiation in 1935, the weekend sentence became widespread throughout New York State. In addition, Gitelman advocated for the establishment of a Family & Children's court and reforestation camps for the rehabilitation of alcoholics. Throughout his life, Gitelman was involved in many charitable and community causes, serving as president of the Safety Council, Community Recreation Council, City Club, American Jewish Committee of Rochester, Monroe County branch of the American Cancer Society, the Rochester Board of Education, and the Legal Aid Society, in addition to terms on boards of countless other organizations. In 1937, he co-founded of the Philosophers' Club. Gitelman's wife Belle, an artist, was a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and a board member of the Memorial Art Gallery.

Scope and Content

The Jacob Gitelman/Philosophers' Club papers comprise approximately one cubic foot of materials related to Gitelman's career as a private attorney and City Court judge. The papers, which date from 1936 to 1991, include speeches, programs, awards, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and photographs. In addition to the papers Gitelman presented to the Philosophers' Club, there are also several papers by other members. Also included are correspondence, meeting notes and schedules, and member lists related to the Philosopher's Club. The collection includes a program signed by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, and letters signed by Representative Frank Horton, Jimmy Carter, and Joseph C. Wilson.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Local History & Genealogy Division

Access

There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

Custodial History

The Jacob Gitelman/Philosopher's Club Papers were donated by his daughter, Natalie Schwartz. Mrs. Schwartz is a graduate of R.I.T.'s Master of Fine Arts program and an accomplished artist.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Philosophers' Club, 1937-.

Subject(s)

- Law and social problems -- New York (State) -- Rochester