



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

COLLECTION

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**LEGENDARY COLLECTION OF JEWISH AMERICANA DONATED TO  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY**

One of the most important private collections of Jewish Americana has been donated to the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia by Rabbi Peter H. Schweitzer, who amassed his collection of an estimated 10,000 artifacts during more than 25 years of collecting.

The Peter H. Schweitzer Collection is significant for the field of American Jewish history because it contains objects of material culture that depict the everyday lives and experiences of Jews in America, both in their secular lives as well as their religious practice. Included in the collection are signs, posters, tins, bottles, photographs, trade cards, menus, neon clocks, Yiddish typewriters, yearbooks, autograph books, textiles and ritual items.

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## COLLECTION/ADD 1

The Museum will preserve the objects and artifacts for future generations and allow wider access to the collection by scholars and the public for the first time. Because the artifacts are devoted to the social world of everyday relationships and popular culture, the collection is highly evocative to both Jewish and non-Jewish audiences.

“We are excited and thrilled to be chosen as the home of this major collection of Jewish Americana,” said Michael Rosenzweig, President/CEO of the National Museum of American Jewish History. “A collection like this is a rarity. These objects that connect people and places to Jewish experiences in America will enable us to best tell our story.”

Rabbi Schweitzer, of New York City, gave his collection to the Museum because “I wanted to find an institution that would share my commitment to preserving the material culture that tells the story of our experience in America. I wanted to know that the Museum appreciated the diversity in the Jewish community, which is comprised of secular and religious Jews, and that no one interpretive stance would dictate over others. After meeting with the Museum’s professional staff, I felt assured that would be the case. I am confident that I am entrusting the collection into caring hands.”

“The donation of Peter Schweitzer’s collection to the National Museum of American Jewish History is a landmark event in the world of American Jewish museums. The gift will make accessible to scholars, curators and the general public a collection of extraordinary depth and richness,” said Dale Rosengarten, Ph.D., Curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection, Marlene & Nathan Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C.

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## COLLECTION/ADD 2

“The Schweitzer Collection is extraordinary in its variety and expansiveness. From items of popular culture to ritual objects to photographs, postcards, advertisements, and a host of material too numerous to list, this is perhaps the most ambitious effort to collect objects that reflect the range of American Jewish experience. It would be difficult to imagine a collection better suited for a museum dedicated to American Jewish history,” added Beth S. Wenger, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania.

Rabbi Schweitzer is the leader of The City Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in New York City. He is the author of “The Liberated Haggadah: A Passover Celebration for Cultural, Secular and Humanistic Jews,” published by The Center for Cultural Judaism, 20666) and contribute the Humanistic perspective to “Moment” magazine’s “Ask the Rabbi” column. He is a great-grandson of the renowned constitutional lawyer and Jewish civic leader Louis Marshall. His maternal grandfather, Jacob Billikopf, was a recognized Jewish communal leader who led the Federation of Jewish Charities in Philadelphia and directed the American Jewish Relief Committee that provided aid to suffering Jews in Europe after World War I.

“I consider this collection to be a living collection. I’m interested in finding new things for it,” said Rabbi Schweitzer, who will continue to serve as a consultant to the collection.