



FINDING AID

ISIDOR OSTROFF PAPERS

1933-1968 AND UNDATED

National Park Service

Catalog Number: INDE 53514

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Copyright and Restrictions	ii
History	1
Scope and Content	3
Hierarchy	4
Series Descriptions	5
Container List	6

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HISTORY

Isidor Ostroff was born on September 23, 1906 in Camden, New Jersey, the son of William and Minnie Ostroff, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. He attended public schools in Camden before continuing his education at the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated in 1927. After college he entered the University of Pennsylvania Law School and received his L.L.B. in 1930.

Upon admission to the Pennsylvania and District of Columbia bars in 1930, Ostroff entered into private practice, specializing in immigration and nationality law. Ostroff formed at least two partnerships in his career, practicing first as Ostroff and Brodsky and later as Ostroff and Lawler. He was active in a number of professional organizations, including the Philadelphia Association of Immigration and Nationality Lawyers, and served as president of the National Association of Immigration and Nationality Lawyers and the Consular Law Society of New York City. His work in the field earned him the title of honorary consul to Guatemala in the 1950s.

Isidor Ostroff was an active member of the Democratic Party in Philadelphia. In 1937, he won the seat of the 5th Ward in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Ostroff's legislative career was short-lived, ending in 1938, though he remained active in the politics of the 5th Ward and served as a committeeman for a number of years. Ostroff's connection with the Democratic Party would prove useful in later years, as he garnered political support for the creation of Independence National Historical Park.

In 1941, Ostroff led the movement to petition Congress to create a national historical park in Philadelphia. The widely-supported petition was presented to Representative Leon Sacks but floundered in Congress after the outbreak of World War II. Undeterred, Ostroff joined forces with Judge Edwin O. Lewis and others to create the Independence Hall Association, an organization dedicated to preserving Independence Hall and advocating for the creation of a national park in Philadelphia. With the help of their political connections, Isidor Ostroff and Judge Lewis successfully raised the funds and garnered the legislative support necessary to create Independence National Historical Park.

For thirty years, Ostroff worked with the Independence Hall Association to raise public and political awareness about urban renewal and historic preservation in Philadelphia's Old City district. In 1949, Ostroff joined forces with the Independence Neighborhood Association, an organization dedicated to preserving historic structures in the city. In the 1950s, the organization restored the eighteenth-century Head House Market stall at 2nd and Lombard Streets. Throughout this period, Ostroff provided pro bono legal advice to the Association and guided their negotiations with the City of Philadelphia.

Isidor Ostroff was married to Ella Wolson and they had one daughter. He was a member of Congregation Mikveh Israel, the oldest synagogue in Philadelphia. He died on November 26, 1976.

SCOPE AND CONTENT**INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ISIDOR OSTROFF PAPERS
1933-1968 AND UNDATED**

<i>CATALOG NUMBER</i>	INDE 53514
<i>VOLUME</i>	1 LF
<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	The Isidor Ostroff Papers document Ostroff's involvement with two Philadelphia-based organizations: the Independence Hall Association and the Independence Neighborhood Association. Materials include correspondence, historical research files, and legal documentation. Records in this collection date from 1933-1968.
<i>ORGANIZATION</i>	This collection is organized into four series: Series I: Independence Hall History Reports, Series II: Independence Hall Association, Series III: Independence National Historical Park, and Series IV: Independence Neighborhood Association.
<i>RESTRICTIONS</i>	NO
<i>ASSOCIATED MATERIALS</i>	Independence National Historical Park Archives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Edwin O. Lewis Papers- Independence Hall Association Records

HIERARCHY

- I. SERIES I: INDEPENDENCE HALL HISTORY REPORTS, undated
- II. SERIES II: INDEPENDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION, 1933, 1941-1968
- III. SERIES III: INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, 1950
- IV. SERIES IV: INDEPENDENCE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, 1948-1958, undated

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

I. SERIES I: INDEPENDENCE HALL HISTORY REPORTS, undated

This series is arranged alphabetically.

This series contains history reports and historical research files related to Independence Hall and Independence Square. The files contain excerpts from newspaper articles and historical accounts related to the Independence Square buildings and late eighteenth-century Philadelphia.

II. SERIES II: INDEPENDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION, 1933, 1941-1968

This series is arranged chronologically.

This series contains correspondence on behalf of the Independence Hall Association to raise funds and garner support for the creation of Independence National Historical Park. Correspondents include Judge Edwin O. Lewis, D. Knickerbacker Boyd, and a number of federal and state politicians. Some files include the meeting minutes of the Independence Hall Association.

III. SERIES III: INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, 1950

This series contains a map that documents the proposed land acquisition for Independence National Historical Park. The map contains some notations.

IV. SERIES IV: INDEPENDENCE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, 1948-1958, undated

This series is arranged alphabetically and thereafter chronologically.

This series contains records related to the Independence Neighborhood Association. Most of the series is composed of correspondence with Association members and with City of Philadelphia agencies such as the City Council, the Department of Public Property, and the Redevelopment Commission. This series contains Association meeting minutes. Also included are legal records relating to the incorporation of the Independence Neighborhood Association, its charter and by-laws, as well as its non-profit tax status.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

SERIES I: INDEPENDENCE HALL HISTORY REPORTS, undated

Folder 1: Independence Hall history report, undated

Folder 2: Independence Hall Supreme Court Room history report, undated

Folder 3: Independence Square research files, undated

SERIES II: INDEPENDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION, 1933, 1941-1968

Folder 4: Correspondence, 1933, 1941-1942

Folder 5: Correspondence, January -June 1943

Folder 6: Correspondence, July-December 1943

Folder 7: Correspondence, 1944

Folder 8: Correspondence – Congressional Bills, 1946-1947

Folder 9: Correspondence, 1954-1955

Folder 10: Correspondence, January-June 1956

Folder 11: Correspondence, July 1956-1960

Folder 12: Correspondence, 1961-1963, 1966, 1968

SERIES III: INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, 1950

Folder 13: Plan of Proposed Land Acquisition, 1950

SERIES IV: INDEPENDENCE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, 1948-1958, undated

Folder 14: Correspondence, 1948-1951

Folder 15: Correspondence, 1952-1955

Folder 16: Correspondence, January-June 1957

Folder 17: Correspondence, July 1957-1958

Folder 18: Legal files, 1949

Folder 19: Legal files, 1950

Folder 20: Legal files, 1951

Folder 21: Legal files, 1952

Folder 22: Legal files, 1953

Folder 23: Legal files, 1956

Index Card Box

Membership card file, undated