The Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica is one of America’s foremost Judaica research collections. Located in the George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, it comprises over 90,000 fully cataloged volumes, incorporates three major private collections and is notable for its exceptional depth, scope and singularity.

This remarkable library was first established in 1977 with the purchase of Rabbi Leonard C. Mishkin’s personal collection of books, then the largest private library of Judaica and Hebraica in the US. A professor of Jewish history at the Hebrew Theological College, Mishkin had amassed over 30,000 volumes covering virtually every area of Jewish scholarship and in a variety of languages.

In 1978, the University of Florida also acquired a collection owned by the late Dr. Shlomo Marenof, lecturer in Hebrew and Near Eastern Civilization at Brandeis University. Marenof had assembled more than 3,000 titles, predominantly in Hebrew.

A third significant collection was secured the following year by the library’s new bibliographer, Robert Singerman. Singerman organized the purchase of Bernard Morgenstern’s bookshop on New York’s Lower East Side. Included in this hoard of 10,000 items were major Yiddish works.

With the acquisition of this [Mishkin] Collection, Florida [will be] catapulted into the ranks of the larger university collections in this field
(Charles Berlin, 1973)

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These “3-M” collections were officially dedicated as The Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica in March 1981. The library was supported by a large endowment created in 1977 by two University of Florida alumni, Jack and Samuel Price, in honor of their parents, Isser and Rae, who had instilled in them the importance of Jewish education.

The Isser and Rae Price Library Endowment Fund was formed to support the Judaica Library and to preserve a cultural legacy.

We hope our gift will be a spark
(Jack Price, 1981)
Over the past 30 years, the Price Library of Judaica has gone from strength to strength. Above and beyond its core collection, the library is particularly noteworthy for its concentration of late 19th and early 20th century imprints. Among these volumes are a wealth of titles now scarce in the United States, including ephemeral materials such as pamphlets, brochures and newsletters not held elsewhere.

The library currently subscribes to more than 500 periodicals and newspapers. Many of the discontinued periodicals on the library shelves can no longer be found in Florida libraries or in the libraries of neighboring states.

In addition to an extensive Holocaust collection, the library holds more than five hundred limited print, post-war memorial books commemorating the lost Jewish communities of Europe. With the recent acquisition of a major post-war database and German archives on microfilm, the Price Library is now one of just ten libraries in the United States offering key resources dealing with the aftermath of the Holocaust.

The Price Library of Judaica continues to be enriched by personal donations. A number of these form special collections such as the James and Adina Simmons’ Holy Land Map Collection; individual archives like Morton D. Winsberg’s photographs of a Jewish agricultural colony, or they are incorporated into the established Rare Judaica Collection like Beth Pagel’s set of illustrated 20th-century books.

Rich in resources that facilitate study and research in many disciplines, the Price library of Judaica is a library without peer in the southeastern United States and a source of great pride for the Jewish communities of Florida.

Yes, I/we wish to support the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica at the University of Florida!

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For more information contact:
Rebecca J. W. Jefferson – Head, Price Library of Judaica
Library West • PO Box 117010
Gainesville, FL 32611-7000
(352) 273-2650
rjefferson@ufl.edu
http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/cm/plj/PLJ.html

For additional information, please call the Office of Development, (352) 273-2505, or e-mail Samuel Huang at Huang888@ufl.edu.

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