

From: [Joan Goodman](#)
To: [Covid Archive](#)
Subject: FW: JTS Library seeks to document your pandemic experiences
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:45:11 AM

Sending on behalf of Art Rosenbloom:

I count me and my family among the fortunate during this pandemic. We have had no difficulty in being tested on multiple occasions and getting the results at once and the blessing of having none of our family seriously ill from the virus.

Enforced idleness has provided ample time for reading and Zoom lectures from many sources among them, those from JTS.

Of course we are appalled at the physical, societal and economic devastation here and around the world resulting from the pandemic and believe that the simple fact of the pandemic and the agitation it causes, exacerbates the horrible problems we face today in battling systemic racism and other societal ills.

Synagogue life at Congregation Or Zarua here in New York City to which my wife and I belong is only virtual but vibrant nonetheless. We have Zoom minyans, online lectures, and pre-Shabbat prepared Shabbat sermons and related materials from our rabbi. Obviously, our High Holiday plans are up in the air, subject to the rules of the state and local authorities and the input from our shul opening committee, one of whose members is a board qualified infectious disease specialist. The shul's president has emailed a comprehensive survey to members to get their take on under what conditions, if any, they would be prepared to attend High Holiday services.

Meanwhile shuls continue to improvise. In Westhampton where we summer, Tisha B'Av services will be held on the local beach.

We eagerly await the availability of a vaccine, available to all. that will put an end to the scourge we face today.

Arthur H. Rosenbloom

On Thu, Jul 23, 2020, 6:06 PM Joan Goodman <JoGoodman@jtsa.edu> wrote:

Dear Art,

The Library of Jewish Theological Seminary Archives is calling on students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other members of our community to help us preserve documentation of their experiences during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It is crucial that we preserve the

story of this time to ensure that future researchers will understand how our community has been affected by this experience. The stories and documents we collect will allow researchers to look back upon and analyze the impact of the crisis unfolding today. Your experiences are part of this history, and we invite you to help us create the record that will be of value to future historians. All members of the community are encouraged to participate. We value all voices.

We are interested in collecting a wide variety of stories and materials, and we welcome documentation that represents both individual experiences and your community's experience. What changes are you noticing in the world around you? How has the shift to remote instruction and studying affected you? What are you anxious or frustrated about right now (caring for loved ones, finding toilet paper, making ends meet)? What are you grateful for (Zoom gatherings with friends, virtual game nights and book clubs, a helping hand from a neighbor, our nurses and doctors)? ***Remember that what might feel mundane to you now may be exactly what those in the future will want to know.*** No stress should be placed on grammar, spelling, or style. The emphasis is on self-expression, candor, and a willingness to share. If privacy is a concern, you will be able to designate different levels of future access.

Ideas for submissions include (but are not limited to):

- Journal entries and personal thoughts
- Descriptions of how your environment has changed
- Oral history interviews with family, friends, or yourself
- Poetry or other writings
- Tweets, Instagrams, or other social media posts
- Photographs and videos

SUBMIT MATERIALS by emailing them to covidarchive@jtsa.edu

Thank you for answering the call to document your experience. We look forward to receiving your submissions.

JTS Library and Archives staff

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Please include your name and relationship to the JTSA community(student, faculty, staff, etc.) You are also encouraged to share as little or as much biographical information that you are comfortable with. This can be a brief paragraph, outline, or whatever you would like. Consider sharing your age, job, location, marital status, background, and more to provide

future researchers some context around your personal experiences.

We understand that some may have some concerns about privacy and would prefer a level of anonymity in order to feel comfortable submitting materials for future research.

When submitting your materials, **please indicate if you are open to submitting materials to students and other researchers making use of these materials and citing them:**

A) During your lifetime and after.

B) Five years from the date of this submission, during your lifetime and after.

If you would like your name removed from the materials, please specify this when submitting them.

Please include a brief description of what type of content you are submitting (photos, social media posts, written thoughts, etc.), and when applicable describe the context of your items, including locations, event, dates, and names of people included (if known).

At this point, this project is open ended as the situation continues to evolve. You may continue to submit new material for as long as you are willing and able.

Below are some writing prompts to consider:

- Share your experiences of social distancing – both inside and outside your home.
- List some of the changes to engagement with peers/staying in touch with friends and family.
- Struggles adapting to an online learning platform.
- Moving to a home work environment.
- The experience of moving out of residence halls.
- Decisions to move home (for off-campus housed students).
- Have you had to become a caregiver to family members or loved ones?
- Has the pandemic changed your responsibilities either at home or with work outside of school?

- Are there specific Jewish rituals that have been particularly meaningful or you've changed your perspective on during the pandemic?
- What made this Passover different from past Passovers? Did you participate in a zoom seder?
- Whether or not you sought out more ways to engage Jewishly due to isolation.

These are only a few suggestions! We look forward to seeing what you decide to contribute to the archive.

Please send submissions to covidarchive@jtsa.edu.

Thank you for helping ensure that our stories will be told and preserved.